

# OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2009

SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST SCHOOL – HYDES



Dear Parents,

October is a time of transition from one season to another. Fall has arrived and everyone is making the change from the “Lazy, hazy, days of summer” to the routines of the new school year. In this season we are encouraged to celebrate the wonders of God who walks with us through the transitions of life.

## **Last but not Least:**

I apologize for not including in the Summer or September Newsletters the fact that Mrs. Donhauser is no longer working at Saint John School. Linda began as a Kindergarten aide in 1995 and, more recently, she has been an aide in the Library. We thank her for her years of service to our children and want her to know that the faculty misses her smiling face! We wish her well and hope to see her visiting with us in the coming months.

## **Thank You:**

As always, the turnout for “Back to School” night was wonderful. You could feel the excitement in the air as everyone reconnected. Thanks to you for making the effort to be with us, and to our faculty for their time in putting together the presentations. What a wonderful way to begin a new school year.

Please feel free to contact the teachers or myself if you need clarification, if you have concerns, or if you need to share something with us that may be affecting your child. E-mail will most likely be the preferred method. The school address is [school@stjohnhydes.org](mailto:school@stjohnhydes.org) and my personal address is [jdelcher@stjohnhydes.org](mailto:jdelcher@stjohnhydes.org). Every teacher has e-mail: use their first name initial and their last name @stjohnhydes.org. This will most likely have the quickest response time. Almost all full-time teachers have voice mail, and have initialized it to make it active. They can be reached by a three-digit code which some teachers have given to their students and parents, or you can phone the school number and follow the prompts to use the directory of names.

## **Lunch Time:**

I have the same suggestion as last year. As you know, the students eat lunch at their desks. Many students use their napkins as a placemat, leaving them without a napkin for their hands or mouth. I am suggesting that each student bring in a foldable cloth placemat that will fit in his/her lunch box which leaves the napkin to be used as is intended. If the cloth placemat becomes soiled, it can be washed.

## **Weather Reminder:**

Fall has officially arrived. I ask for your continued cooperation in seeing that your child/children come to school dressed for the weather: jackets, raincoats, umbrellas, etc., when needed. There are times when we must walk across the parking lot for Mass, Hot Lunch, or PE class. We also have outdoor recess every day we can. We ask that you **please label your child’s/children’s clothing, backpacks, lunch containers**, etc. so that they may be promptly returned if misplaced. Every year, we have many items in our “Lost and Found” which cannot be identified.

## **Uniforms:**

Once again, I remind you that school uniforms are required for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. If a sweater is needed, the official school sweaters from Flynn & O’Hara may be worn in the classroom. On gym days, only the official sweatshirts may be worn in and around campus. All other coats, jackets, and sweats may be worn to recess and to and from school.

Although several students have been wearing the winter uniform, the official day to begin wearing them, as explained in the Handbook, will be November 1. At that time no summer uniforms should be worn. The gym wear includes sweatpants and sweatshirt. Students may wear the summer gym shirt with the sweatpants.

**Interims/PowerSchool:**

Just a reminder, grades 1 and 2 will receive Interim Reports on October 7. Grades 3 through 8 will not be receiving Interim Reports. PowerSchool Parent Access will open for parents on, or about, October 5, 2009. Letters have been sent home, via the children, with new username and passwords for your child. In addition, new directions on how to access PowerSchool were included.

Parents of all third grade students and students new to the school in grades 4 through 8 have been notified with directions for training and obtaining username and passwords for their children. If you have not completed the online training, we urge you to do so and to send in the disclaimer form as directed. Your child's username and password will be sent home with your child upon completion.

\*If you have attended an access meeting in prior years or completed the online training, and have another child in grades 3 through 8, a letter with your child's username and password will be sent home with that student.

**STAND for the Protection of Children and Youth:**

Part of the certification process for STAND is to complete the online training. In addition to the video presentation, an application and consent form should be completed and returned to the office. Upon completion, a Certification Card will be given which is valid for five years. All parents are asked to complete this training, but it is mandatory for parents who would like to help in the classrooms or to attend parties and field trips to be STAND certified.

**Halloween:**

Since this is a noon dismissal day, our parade will be at 10:00 AM. Students may wear their costumes to school on that day. We ask that masks not be worn during the day, but will be allowed if students can see clearly enough to walk in the parade. Some classes will have parties in their rooms after the parade. All are invited to watch the parade. We walk from the school to the Parish Center for "Trick or Treat." If it rains, our parade will be inside the school.

**Pictures:**

Individual pictures for grades PK 3 through 8 will be taken on October 21. Since these are school pictures, we suggest the students wear their uniforms; but, as in years past, if you wish them to wear dress clothes, they may do so. Envelopes will be sent home. Please complete the order form and enclose payment. (Make checks payable to F. Paul Galeone.) Students must have their envelope on picture day to give to the photographer.

**Volunteers:**

Thanks to all who replied to our call for volunteers. As always, we are overwhelmed with the response. Class moms were selected for each grade. They have received a list of all other moms who also volunteered and will, most likely, be calling on you for help this year.

**In order to volunteer at Saint John the Evangelist School, in any capacity, you must be STAND certified.**

**Lunch/Recess:**

Thanks to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents who started this year's recess duty. Please know that we appreciate this generous gift of your time. We depend on you to have enough supervision on the playground. You are sorely missed if you cannot make it. Please make arrangements to switch with

someone if you are unable to come, or call the office as early as possible so we can have additional teachers ready to go outside. Again this year, the class moms will organize the yard duty schedules. You will be receiving a call from them sometime this year when it is your grade's turn. I ask that you be courteous to these parents who call for your help. The safety of the children is our concern and without proper supervision that safety may be compromised. We need you to help in this important volunteer work. Grades 3, 4 and 5 are the first out to recess and are ready at 11:45 AM. We ask that you check in at the office prior to that time, so that all students have their complete recess.

**Dismissal:**

If, on rare occasions, your child has to leave school early, we ask that you send a note to the homeroom teacher. Please park in the safety zone where you will wait for your child to be dismissed. You will need to be off the lot before the full school dismissal.

**Applause, Applause:**

We applaud Mrs. Meloni! She, and teachers from several Dioceses on the east coast, attended the Washington, DC Regional "Bearing Witness Program: Anti-Semitism, The Holocaust, and Contemporary Issues" this summer. The program is held in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Washington, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Catholic Education Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It was a learning experience for Mrs. Meloni, and she presented a program to our faculty during our August in-service days. As a result of this presentation, we, as faculty, have decided to spend our retreat day this year traveling to DC to visit the Holocaust Museum. Thanks to the H.A.S.A. for contracting with the bus company to transport us to DC.

How proud we are of Elaina Cain, grade 5! She donated 8 inches of her hair to Pantene Beautiful Locks, an organization who helps by getting wigs for children who are undergoing cancer treatment. What a great thing to do, Elaina!

Congratulations to our newly-elected Student Council officers. Our 2009-2010 Council consists of the following: Matthew Fazzini, President, Rachel Weskalnies, Vice President, Reese Jones, Secretary, Kelly Fischer, Public Relations, Grade 8, Sarah Swain, Public Relations, Grade 7, Class Reps for Grade 8, Marisa Jara and April Moscati, Class Reps for Grade 7, Maria Ernest and John Goska, and Class Reps for Grade 6, Mary Cochran and Matthew Jones.

**High School Open House:**

October and November are traditionally the months that our Catholic High Schools host their "Open Houses." We urge not only 8<sup>th</sup> Grade parents and students to attend, but, even more importantly, the parents and students of Grades 6 and 7. When your student is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the fall will be busy scheduling "shadow days" for the students, so check out the schools early. Another way is to attend one of the Regional Fairs. The list was sent home with all Middle Schoolers in September. If you need more information, please call the office.

**Drama Club:**

On September 29, 2009, there will be auditions for Grades 7 and 8 for the upcoming school play. On September 30, 2009, we will have auditions for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. We will accept a total of 25 students for all aspects of the play. This will be our 12<sup>th</sup> production. We look forward to a great year. Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Donohue will be leading the group with help from interested parents. If you have any expertise in set design, costuming, or publicity, please let us know. Thanks for all of your support.

**H.A.S.A.:**

General Meeting:

Thank you to everyone who turned out for the H.A.S.A. Meeting/Wine & Cheese Social in September; it was our largest crowd in recent memory! If you missed it and want to hear the details

of the 09-10 plans that H.A.S.A. has, please visit the website, click on "H.A.S.A." and then "General Meeting Notes." Valley Wine donated all of the wine for the evening and some moms and dads found a new favorite! Maggitti's Italian Market & Gourmet Bakery on Baldwin Mill Road gave us a fabulous cheese tray, assorted fruits and dips and some great crackers and breadsticks. If you are in Maggitti's or Valley Wine, please thank them for their donation to the evening's success!

#### Innisbrook Gift Wrap:

Thanks to Mrs. Schumacher and Mrs. Bressler for chairing the first fundraiser of the year. Once again, everyone did a wonderful job. As a school, we sold about \$22,000 in wrapping paper and gifts, and we receive 50% of the amount sold.

The top ten sellers are: Tara Tabassi, Catherine Ruzala, Gabriella LoPresti, Haley Wehberg, Kayla Wehberg, Jakob Kelly, Courtney Mohn, & Alec Jara. These students and I will be enjoying a trip to Pizza Hut in a Limo! Congratulations to all and a big thanks to everyone who participated.

If you have questions about your order or would be available to help sort the incoming orders, please contact Mary Beth Bressler at 410-592-6180 or Martha Schumacher at 410-557-6989 or [mhschumacher@comcast.net](mailto:mhschumacher@comcast.net).

#### Race for Education:

Race day is fast approaching - October 16! Thanks for nearly 100% participation! Everyone is invited to attend the day's festivities. The children will 'race' in groups starting at 9:00 AM. PK will 'race' on Thursday, October 15. Kindergarten through Grade 2 race at 9:00 AM; Grades 3 through 5 start at 10:15 AM and Grades 6 through 8 begin at 11:30 AM. Be sure to keep track of our total donations received by looking at the bulletin board in the main hallway. If you have any questions about Race for Education, please contact Sherry Rukowicz at (410) 877-0578.

#### H.A.S.A. Dues:

Each family is an H.A.S.A. member; dues are \$5.00 and a flyer with an envelope was sent out in late September. If you haven't returned yours, please do so at your earliest convenience. Laura Basilio, H.A.S.A. Treasurer, is collecting dues.

#### "Big Easy Fundraiser!"

As announced at the H.A.S.A. meeting, one of our biggest fundraisers this year will be a Marti Gras-themed night at Towson Golf and Country Club on March 6, 2010. This entertaining night will feature gourmet food, an open bar, and the Band, *Hero*, the same band from last year's Gala that really had the room hopping! As usual, we will have a live and silent auction with fabulous items on which to bid. If anyone has any items to donate to the auction, or has a business that would like to donate a service, please contact Paula Rusinovich at [mprus@comcast.net](mailto:mprus@comcast.net). Tickets will go on sale in November and will be \$60.00 a person. If you have any questions or would like to help plan this event, please contact Renee Banashak at (410) 692-0555. Cocktail attire is requested.

#### B-I-N-G-O Thank you!

Another fun filled night of bingo was held last Friday and everyone had a rousing time! Thanks to Laura Kozak and her group of volunteers for all of their work!

#### Bull Roast Cancelled:

The Knights of Columbus Bull Roast planned for October 3<sup>rd</sup> has been cancelled. They are hoping to reschedule sometime in the future.

#### Lunchbox Program:

Parents .... don't forget about our LUNCHBOX PROGRAM. This program offers a wide variety of healthy and nutritious lunches and best of all you get a break from packing lunch. Once a month,

hot lunch is offered and at least 2 times a month classroom lunch is offered. All you have to do is go online to [www.lunchboxprogram.com](http://www.lunchboxprogram.com) and click on "order now" to start your account. Once you have placed your orders for the month, you can print out your confirmation sheet to remind your child of his/her lunch selection for that day.

Important Reminder .... Be sure to select your lunch choices for the current month before the 15th of that month. For example .... for October lunches, go on before October 15th and make your choices for the entire month. After October 15th, the program puts up the November selections.

Thanks to Chrissy Cassidy for coordinating hot lunch and to Chip Snouffer for delivering classroom lunch every Wednesday! The school-lunch-packers say "THANK YOU" for giving us a day off each week! If you haven't ordered yet, visit [www.lunchboxprogram.com](http://www.lunchboxprogram.com).

Market Day:

Remember Market Day! This monthly fundraiser is a great way to keep the "fridge" stocked while helping the school earn money. If you have any questions, contact Diane or Bob Elliott at (443) 299-8220; Market Day pick-up days are listed on the website; click on H.A.S.A. Thanks to Bob and Diane for taking this on!

Fall Fest:

The Fathers' Club is hosting a Fall Fest on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM. Bring your own candy to hand out trick-or-treat style. There will be a costume contest, crafts, games, prizes and more. This is sure to be the start of an annual tradition! More information will be forthcoming soon. If you would like to help with Fall Fest, please contact Eliot Latchaw at [emlatch@aol.com](mailto:emlatch@aol.com).

Open House:

Although this year feels like it has barely even started, we are already planning for next year's enrollment. We will have our first Open House on October 6 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. If you'd like to help give tours to perspective families, please contact Theresa Alcarese at (410) 593-9874. And remember, there is a \$500.00 referral tuition credit for any current family that refers a family who enrolls and attends! Tuition credit will be applied upon 1<sup>st</sup> payment by the new family.

Have a Great Month,

*Jean Delcher*



# Parents make the difference!

Early Childhood - October 2009

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## Organizing thoughts prepares your preschooler for writing



As early as first grade, your child will be given a topic and asked to write about it. Teachers won't expect polished prose at that age, but they will look to see if your child can write a few sentences while staying on the topic. "My favorite color is yellow. The sun is yellow. Bananas are yellow."

Staying on the topic requires organization. You can prepare your preschooler for writing by helping him learn to organize his thoughts.

Here's how:

- Ask your child questions that require him to think about categories. "Can you name three things that are red? Can you name four farm animals?"
- Combine drawing and categorizing with your child. Drawing is another important step toward writing. For example: Draw a simple picture of a cat. Then say to your child, "Look, I drew a cat. This is a pet. Can you draw two other pets?"
- Get moving! Your child can use his body to help organize his brain. Ask your child to walk toward you. Then say, "You are walking. What is another way you can move?"

If he is not sure, suggest running or hopping. This will help him get the idea and he may then be able to come up with another way of moving on his own. Or say, "Fish swim. What do other animals do?" Encourage him to demonstrate animal movements such as crawling, jumping and wiggling.

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### Building Character

## Caring is the cornerstone of your preschooler's character

Caring is the foundation for all the pillars of character parents and teachers want to see in children. If a child doesn't care, she will never see the point of being responsible. Honesty, and other virtues too, only happen when your child cares about doing the right thing.

Here are some ways to build the caring trait in your preschooler:

- Care for your child. This is not just about basic needs, or even just about love. Sympathize with your child. Let her know you understand her feelings, even if they result in behavior you must correct her for. Express interest in things she likes.
- Help your child think of others. This can be hard for young children, but they can learn. Ask questions like, "Do you think Jen might want to play? She looks a little sad sitting over there by herself."
- Be specific about caring and non-caring. If you see your child hurt someone's feelings, call her on it. Tell her exactly why what she did was not caring. Talk about what she could have done instead. On the other side, your child's caring actions deserve your notice, encouragement and praise.

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## Prepare your kindergartner for a successful school day

A great day for your child begins the night before school. Most children this age need about 11 hours of sleep to wake up rested and alert. Add a healthy breakfast in the morning, and your child will be ready for a productive day of learning. What else can you do?



- Show confidence in your child. Starting kindergarten is a huge step, especially for children who are not used to being away from parents for long stretches of time. Your child needs to know you believe she will do fine.
- Have a routine. Children find comfort in the familiar. Now, when so much is changing, a routine at home--dinner, bath, teeth, story, bed--will reassure your child.
- Encourage friendships. Invite a classmate your child likes over to play. Children who have a solid friendship at school feel better about going each day, and often do better as a result.

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## Homework/Study Skills

# Kindergarten homework can set the tone for school success

There is no "right answer" when it comes to assigning homework in kindergarten. Some teachers begin on day one. Others ease into it after several months. Still others put it off until first grade.

Whenever your child starts receiving assignments, make the most of them! Promote habits that lead to long-term success, such as:

- Divide big jobs into small parts. Sometimes teachers give out weekly packets to finish by Friday. Plan how to break up the tasks (such as one page per day).
- Take pride. Compliment your child for being grown up enough for this important job. Be supportive, interested and confident that he can handle (and enjoy) this responsibility.
- Include his name. Before your child begins, have him write his name on the paper. Forgetting to do this is a common mistake. He deserves credit for his work!
- Stay organized. Pick a time and place to work together. When and where does your child concentrate best? Also choose a special spot for assignments so they're never lost.

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October EC Activity Calendar**

# Parents *make the difference!*

## Elementary School - October 2009

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### Keep your child's schedule in balance for school success



Some kids rush from school to soccer practice to karate. Sure, each of these activities can be a good thing on its own. But together, they may be too much of a good thing.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says that kids need "down time." They suggest that play should remain a central part of childhood.

There's no question that kids benefit from organized activities. But it is just as important for kids to have time to organize themselves.

Does your family's schedule strike the right balance? Here are some things to think about:

- Recognize how important free play is to children. Build in time for your child to hang out with her friends, develop hobbies, read or just daydream. This unstructured time is when she exercises her body and her imagination.
- Take cues from your child. Does she love soccer? Or is she only on the team because the sport is important to you? Many families allow each child to choose one activity per season.
- Make family time a priority. If you feel like you only see your child while you're in the car, rethink your schedule. The most important parenting jobs--listening, caring, guiding--need time to develop.
- Remember that school comes first. If your child never starts homework until after practice at 8:00, she is overscheduled.

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## Testing Tips

# Improve test success by building your child's reading muscles

You can't win a race if you quit before getting to the finish line. Sometimes, that's what happens when kids are taking important tests that involve a lot of reading.

There are children who simply don't have the stamina to stick with the reading passages on tests. They do fine when they are reading a short passage. But by the end of a longer test, they are simply too tired to read the information and answer the questions.

Just as athletes can increase their stamina, so can readers. You can help your child do better on tests by building his "reading muscles."

Here are some ideas:

- Schedule a regular time for your child to read. Start with a short time--perhaps only five or 10 minutes. But gradually increase the time so he can read independently for 30 minutes.
- Help your child get motivated. Have him color in a chart for every 10 minutes he spends reading. Or start a paper chain, adding a link for each 10 minutes.
- Teach your child other ways to build his stamina. Have him look up occasionally to rest his eyes. Or encourage him to take a short break, grab a snack and then go back to reading.

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## Talking & Listening

# Get your elementary schooler to open up, talk about feelings

From the minute the door opens, you know something is wrong. But when you ask your child what happened at school, she says, "Oh, nothing" and heads to her room.

What can you do to get your child to open up and talk about what is bothering her? Here are a few techniques to try:

- Reflect what you see. "You seem sad today. Anything happen at school?"
- Try to avoid being judgmental. Don't say things like, "You can't really feel bad about a silly thing like that."
- Help label your child's feelings. "That must have made you pretty disappointed."

- Let your child know you understand her feelings. "I can imagine how crummy you felt when Madison said that."
- Share an experience of your own. It can be good for your child to know that you have had similar experiences. "Did I ever tell you about the time my best friend in school stopped speaking to me for a week?"

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## Discipline

# Research reveals discipline that really works

Think about how your parents raised you. What discipline methods did they use? In a study, even if parents didn't agree with how they were disciplined as children, many used these same approaches themselves.

For example, adults who were yelled at as kids were more likely to yell as parents--even if they thought yelling didn't work, according to the research.

In order to discipline well, consider what you believe will work. Experts say certain methods are most effective. For example:

- Acknowledge good behavior. What are the most important behaviors for your child to learn? When you see them, take notice. Say, "It's nice that you invited the new girl to sit with you at lunch. I bet that made her feel good."
- Use natural and logical consequences. When your child does something inappropriate, choose a natural or logical response, if possible. A natural consequence of forgetting homework is getting a zero. A logical consequence of losing an item is having your child replace it.
- Plan ahead. Talk with your child about discipline. Why is it helpful? How does it work? After considering her ideas, list basic rules and consequences. Then follow through with consistency, fairness and respect.

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**Click here to view the  
October EL Activity Calendar**

# Parents still make the difference!

Middle School - October 2009

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## Aim for total clarity when setting expectations for your preteen



When your child was small, you used clear, concrete language to convey your expectations. Why? You wanted to make sure she could understand and comprehend.

Now your child is older, but clear expectations are still the way to go. With a preteen or young teen, anything less gives her too much "wiggle room." At this age, do not give your child an out. She just might take it. Instead:

- Speak in terms of what you want and the expectations you have. Telling your child what she must do may not work. In the end you cannot control her behavior. You can only control yours. "I expect you to complete your homework before you leave the house," is more effective than, "You'd better do your homework now."
- Encourage your child to be clear about her own expectations. If she says she expects an A on the next test, have her tell you exactly how she plans to get there. Writing down the plan is even better.
- Discuss teachers' expectations. "When Mrs. Jones tells you on Friday that you have a test on Monday, what does she expect?" If you get a blank look in return, supply the answer for your child. "She expects you to start reviewing the material right away so that you will be prepared on Monday."

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### Encouraging Reading

## Give your middle schooler some extra incentive to keep reading

All the way through college and beyond, the best readers are often the best learners. The more your child reads, the better off he'll be. The trick, of course, is getting him to want to read. Try a few of these ideas:

- Issue a challenge. Research has shown that reading at least four books over a summer is particularly helpful. So apply that to another three-month period--October, November

and December--and challenge your child to read four books by 2010. Offer some incentive, such as the chance to stay up later, or have an additional privilege for doing so.

- Ask your child questions about what he is reading. If you are really at a loss, help him choose at least one book that has discussion questions at the end. Once he's finished reading the book, get his opinion on the questions.
- Enlist help. Seek out the librarians at your child's school and ask them to recommend books based on your child's reading level and interests. Make a point of telling them you are actively trying to get him to read more. Do the same at your community library. Every so often, visit it with your preteen. Each of you should check out a book or two.
- Take advantage of the upcoming holiday movie season. Some of the movies your child hopes to see may be based on books. Make reading the book a condition for seeing the movie.

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## Use empathy, advice to teach your preteen self-control

Does your preteen "lose it" when he gets upset? It's time to work on his self-control. Teaching your preteen to control himself when he's angry or frustrated will help him grow into a conscientious, mature adult.



The next time your preteen blows a fuse:

- Define the problem. "You're upset about having so many projects due at once."
- Empathize. "It's a lot of work. I'd feel overwhelmed, too."
- Give instructions. "Take a few deep breaths and sit down."
- Stay calm. He won't stop yelling if you start yelling.
- Talk about it. Once your preteen's anger has blown over, talk about how he could use self-control to better handle his emotions next time.

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### Building Respect

## Show your child how to act respectfully by earning respect

Your child has reached the age where she can see through phoniness. If you say one thing and do another, the bad consequences will come in threes. First, she'll do what you do, not

what you say. Second, she'll lose respect for you. Third, she won't know how to act in a respectful way, affecting home life, school life and the rest of her life.

So live by these values and it's likely your child will too:

- Be honest. Tell the truth. Admit mistakes--don't blame others for them. Apologize (yes, to your child, too) when you are wrong.
- Be consistent. When you make a rule, stick to it. That applies to rules you make for your child and those you make for yourself.
- Be selfless. You're a parent--therefore, your child's needs come first. (Take note that the word is needs, not wants.) Your child is not a parent and so cannot completely emulate you here. But your example shows her how to be considerate of others.
- Show dignity. Convey to your child that no one can make you feel small unless you allow it. Ugly words hurt. And so does being disrespected. Instead of stooping to someone else's level, tell your preteen to rise above it.

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