Rev. Caroline Braskamp

Preston Hollow Presbyterian

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**Pandemic Parenting: Emotion Coaching**

**Welcome**

* Welcome to PHPC Parents (Covenant Community)
* Introduce self
* Week 1 of Pandemic Parenting series

**Purposes for gathering today**

* Start with how our faith can help us with parenting
* Reflect on our own parenting strategy (with respect to emotions)
* Learn emotion coaching framework to help our kids (and ourselves) handle big emotions
* [Timeless parenting skill, especially helpful in a chronically stressful situation like a pandemic]

**Opening Prayer**

**Scripture: Proverbs 15.1-2**

* Bible is not a parenting manual, does give guidance that we can apply to parenting
* Book of Proverbs (close as Scripture gets to “self help,” part of genre of wisdom literature, how to live a godly life)

A soft answer turns away wrath,  
but a harsh word stirs up anger.  
2The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge,  
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

* Theme? Speech/coaching, contrast in styles: “soft answer” vs. “harsh word”, “tongue of the wise” vs. “mouths of fools”
* We as parents can talk to our kids/coach our kids in such a way that calms and directs, or frustrates and amplifies
* Foundation for effective emotion coaching is the presence of God in us, being able to access peace & wisdom in the midst of the storm

**Opening Question**

* Where are you having trouble in dealing with big feelings in your family right now? (often repeat scenario, repeat offender) [speak or use chat]

**Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting (John Gottman)**

* John and Julie Gottman: psychologists at the University of Washington, scientifically measure what works in marriage and parenting (ex. Love Lab)
* What is “emotion coaching”? “how to deal with children when emotions run high,” way of teaching social & emotional intelligence
* And we parents need to offer it 30-40% of the time our kids have big feelings in order to be effective
* Some of us emotion coach in our sleep. Some of us are learning how to do it for ourselves.

**Parenting Styles (with respect to emotions)**

1. ***Dismissing***: disregard, ignore, belittle kids’ negative emotions; try to distract/redirect towards positive
2. ***Disapproving***: critical of kids’ expression of negative emotions; reprimand or punish negative emotions
3. ***Laissez-faire***: accept and empathize with kids’ emotions; yet do not offer guidance or set limits
4. ***Emotion-coaching***: accept and empathize with kids’ emotions; offer guidance/coaching/problem solving and set limits/consequences

Example: What parent says to kid struggling with virtual learning

1. ***Dismissing***: at least you get to learn somehow, distract: what do you want to do after school?
2. ***Disapproving***: tired of hearing you complain, if you keep talking you’ll get punished
3. ***Laissez-faire***: I’m so sorry that you are having a hard time, what are you feeling?...
4. ***Emotion-coaching***: Tell me about it. What’s hard? What are you feeling right now? What do you want to do about it? What could help? How can I help? Those kinds of behaviors are not ok and have consequences…

**Questions? What is your parenting style? (hand vote, chat)**

**5 Steps of Emotion Coaching**

1. Be aware of your child’s emotions
2. Use your child’s emotions as an opportunity to connect and teach
3. Listen empathetically and validate child’s feelings
4. Help child verbally label emotions
5. Set limits and problem solve together
6. Be aware of your child’s emotions

* tune in: facial expressions, tone of voice
* need to be aware of own emotions before you can help your child—solitude, emotion log
* source of child’s emotions may seem mysterious

1. Use your child’s emotions as an opportunity to connect and teach

* go towards emotions rather than away
* through rather than around
* growth mindset

1. Listen empathetically and validate child’s feelings

* open-ended questions: be curious, seek to understand
* get the story behind the feeling(s)
* may need to read body language
* all feelings are valid, but not all behaviors, see #5
* reflect back what you hear and say it’s ok/normal/valid

1. Help child verbally label emotions

* “name it to tame it”—Daniel Siegel
* may need to suggest possible emotions to kids
* naming is soothing for the nervous system
* not what you “ought” to feel, but what you actually feel (accept reality)

1. Set limits and problem solve together

* limit setting: problem is misbehavior, not feelings (ex. we don’t hurt other people or things when we’re angry)
* identifying goals: what would you like to do about this problem?
* thinking of possible solutions: encourage child to generate ideas
* evaluating possible solutions based on family’s values: rule out ideas that don’t fit with your values (that’s not safe right now)
* helping your child choose a solution: empowering the child
* child is feeling helpless to handle their feelings, give child tools to handle them, give them agency, and they feel empowered and in charge again

**Chat rooms:** How might you use this method to handle the big feelings that come up in your family? (initial problem)

**Scripture: Proverbs 15.1-5**

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**Closing Prayer**

**Looking Ahead**

October 18 How to Support our Kids During this Season: Conversation with Counselor Nancy Umphres