

# Summer of Blessings

## Immaculate Conception Church

Generations of Faith



July 11, 2010

### YOUR GOOD EXAMPLE MAKES A DIFFERENCE LIFETIME LEARNING AND TEACHING

Ever stop and think about the way your actions might influence others? Few of us do. And yet the things we do every day—even the most insignificant things—can end up having a lasting effect.

Take something as simple as putting a shopping cart back where it belongs after you've used it. Doesn't seem like much, does it? But consider this story, which came from writer Michael Josephson.

A father and his young son, out shopping one day, had unloaded their groceries into the family car when the father asked the boy to return the cart. "C'mon Dad!" the son replied. "There are carts all over," the son replied. "No one returns them. That's why they hire people to collect them."

The father hesitated for a minute, wondering whether or not the discussion was worth continuing. Then he noticed an elderly couple nearby, walking together back toward the store to return the cart they had just used. "Son," he said, "there are two kinds of people in the world: those who put their carts away and those who don't. We are the kind that returns their shopping cart."

Score one for that elderly couple, and score one for the father, too. Together they combined to teach a lesson that the boy isn't likely to forget. The elderly couple never knew it, but their simple act of returning a shopping cart provided a teaching moment. That little incident is a reminder that often, examples are given when we least expect them. "Whether you realize it or not, you are a role model," Mary Wheelchel, founder of *The Christian Working Woman*, said. "Someone is looking at you watching how you live, and modeling their behavior after yours. Probably a lot more people than you ever thought."

**What you are speaks  
so loudly I cannot  
hear what you say.**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Lessons come anytime, anywhere. "When I was a little kid, the Old Man would haul me out of bed early for Sunday Mass," wrote Bob Lockwood in his book, *A Faith for Grown-Ups, A Midlife Conversation about What Really Matters*. He ushered those Masses and I watched him get people to shove over in their pews to make room for late

arrivals. Then he went from row to row with the collection basket at the end of a long pole. The whole thing looked like a pretty sharp job to me. After everyone had left, the two ushers would carry the collection bags over to the rectory, and I asked the Old Man why two guys did what one guy could have accomplished. "Just in case somebody wants to try something, he said, which made me think that in addition to everything else, the Old Man was like a cop for the church. Pretty sharp job, indeed."

**Let your light shine  
before others, so  
that they may see  
your good works  
and give glory to  
your Father in  
heaven.**

**Matthew 5:16**

Every day parents set an example for their children, for better or worse. But they know that what children retain, and what they forget, is far beyond parental control. The same holds true for every one of us, everywhere. We influence others far more than we'll ever know.

- Until September 5th  
7:30am Extra Sunday  
Mass at ICC
- July 31st  
ICS Alumni Golf Outing
- August 1st  
Breakfast at Wellsville  
Airport by the ICS  
Strings Program
- August 19th  
Altar Servers Picnic &  
Bisons BB Game
- September 11th & 12th  
ICC-ICS Fun Fair  
Island Park
- September 12th  
Back To Church Sunday



**OUR FAITH IS  
A LIFE LONG  
EVENT**

## YOUR GOOD EXAMPLE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

### Taking Example

Role models surround us. Those closest to us—parents, spouse, siblings, relatives, and friends—have a powerful impact. Influential people also include religious leaders, teachers, coaches, bosses, co-workers. Our culture, the world in which we live affect us, too.

Learning *how* to learn from example is important since certain moments change lives. Actor Denzel Washington, in his book, *A Hand to Guide Me*, described a “teaching moment” from a man who ran the Boy’s Club in Mount Vernon, New York, when the actor was young: “One of Billy’s great innovations was to hang college pennants from the wall of the club’s main hall - one for each school his ‘kids’ went on to attend. ...When you graduated from high school and went away to college, you had to send Billy back one of those banners. ...He just put them up and let them speak for themselves. I used to look at these names, these places, and think, ‘Man, anything is possible!’”

But we must not follow anyone blindly. “Never idealize others,” author Leo Buscaglia warns. “They will never live up to your expectations.” This is a constant fear of parents: that their children idolize celebrities or athletes who send a mixed message. Jan Faull, an educator and author, advises parents that at “age 10, a child is old enough to understand that people are complex and have many dimensions.” She says that if an athlete a child admires has been in the news for troubling behavior, parents should discuss with their child why they look up to that person.

“Acknowledge the player’s amazing free throws, incredible record, and great charity work - but also point out bad off-court choices,” she continues. Children may be disappointed to find that a superstar has feet of clay, but they might also realize

that their “hero” doesn’t really deserve their adulation or emulation.

Without introducing a wholesome range of good examples for young people, “you are deferring to what’s on television,” noted Dr. Antronette K. Yancey. Co-author of a study on young people and role models, Dr. Yancey advises parents to “make sure there’s a diversity of images available in your home - in books, magazines, artwork.”

### A Family Example

In Denzel Washington’s previously mentioned book, *A Hand to Guide Me*, General Colin Powell (Ret.), former U.S. Secretary of State, writes that the old African proverb - “it takes a village to raise a child-is good, but it needs to be extended. I say it takes a tribe to raise a child. ...If you don’t pass on accumulated wisdom and experience, where does the child get it?”

General Powell described what he called the “Auntnet” that existed in the Bronx of his childhood: “All these aunts were hanging out windows, looking down on the street, watching out for us kids ... You couldn’t get into trouble without getting caught by this network of aunts and uncles and cousins, and when you were caught, the speed of the Auntnet brought it to your parents for retribution before you even made it home.”

It’s known that children who have positive role models are more likely to succeed at school, have higher self-esteem, and are less likely to fall into substance abuse.

For teenage daughters, mothers are a vital influence. A recent Harris Poll found that half of teenage girls saw

their mothers as the best examples of ‘inner beauty’ and the best source for trusted advice.

“The often overlooked link between mothers, daughters, dieting, and health is a key to driving a healthy generation of daughters,” said Debra Waterhouse, international nutrition expert. “Once mothers become aware of both their spoken and unspoken influence, they are usually highly motivated to become healthier role models.” Syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman once described her mother as “someone who will listen to your problems until you are bored with them.” Her mother, she said, “taught me everything I know of family values. She taught me that family came first. She taught me to make cheesecake and keep peace. She taught me that a real home was a place where you were welcome for Sunday brunch and conversation. She taught me to accept your children’s life choices without criticism and with confidence in their judgment. We were gathered for Thanksgiving weekend when she died. That would have mattered to her. It mattered to us.”



***I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.***  
**John 3:15**