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Metro Lutheran
Positive Parenting
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STRAUBS ... YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE!

Love one another as I have loved you.

John 15:12

September, 1975, we entered our church for the first time ... and that Sunday changed our lives. The first face we saw was the Director of Christian Education (who later became both my cherished colleague and beloved friend). Seeing our lost, overwhelmed faces, she took pity on us. Yes, we were new, and we had a three year old, ready to start Sunday school. She ushered us across the hall and introduced us to the Straubs - Joan, the mother, and her two junior high age daughters, Rhonda and Linda. They were gifted teachers of three year old Sunday school and had already taught together for several years ... and 36 years later, they are still teaching three year olds together!

Three years later, they taught our second daughter. Three years after that, they taught our son. Since then, these three wondrous women have been important to the lives of all three Sharpe kids ... and their parents! They have come to confirmation celebrations and to high school graduation parties. They matter.

This past Christmas, when we unpacked our decorations, out came a precious manger set, made out of toilet paper rolls, felt, nylon-covered styrofoam heads, and rick rack embellished crowns. This set is 30 years old, a gift to our son, made by the Straubs. Now our son's three children get to enjoy this darling set and hear the story again about the Straubs, three wise women who brought the Good News to all three of our children. They have indeed been a guiding star for our children and countless others they have shaped in the faith.

The Sunday before Christmas last year, the back door of the sanctuary opened, and in came the youngest Sunday school children and their teachers to sing carols to all of us. And there were the Straubs, shepherding yet another generation of children, who will know the light and love of Jesus because of them.

Sunday after Sunday, year after year, they make a difference in the lives of children and their families. They tell the stories of faith. They help children make crafts that illustrate the stories they have learned. They teach songs of faith. They pray with and for these

children. And, more than anything else, they love children with the love of Christ and help them know the One who created them in love and will not let them go.

So, what is the lesson the Straubs teach us all? What if I'm not patient enough to teach three year olds? What if I'm not sure I know enough to teach the Bible? What if I can't do crafts? What if I can't do the same thing, year after year?

The Straubs' lesson to all of us is to do what God has gifted us to do. Share the love of Jesus with others. Make a joyful noise ... maybe in the choir or caroling or singing for a nursing home. Learn God's story and share it with others. Visit someone who is homebound and ask about their photos. Find God in your story and help others find God in their life story. Read to a child or an elder. Help clean up a patch of God's beautiful creation. Make supper or a batch of cookies for a family with a new baby. Take a neighbor who no longer drives grocery shopping. Bring a friend to worship. Watch a young child, while a frazzled parent takes a nap. There are countless ways to make a difference in God's world. Use the gifts God has given you ... and God has given gifts to all of us ... to bless others.

Teach your children to love God back by using their gifts and loving others. That is what Jesus calls us to do.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1. As a family, visit someone who cannot get out. Stay to talk and share stories.
2. Make a card or picture for someone you cannot go to visit.
3. Invite a friend over for dinner or for cookies and cocoa.
4. When you go on a walk, bring a trash bag and baggies or plastic gloves to cover hands and pick up trash you didn't drop.
5. Give a children's Bible to a family expecting a new child by birth, adoption, foster care, or marriage. Tuck inside your child's favorite table grace.