

Metro Lutheran
Positive Parenting
October 2008

AAA ADULTS

So, what is a AAA Adult*? These are the adults who transform the lives of children and youth. They pass on faith in Jesus Christ, not because they are seminary trained or work in a congregation, but because they are adults who are

- Authentic: They tell their faith stories, warts and all, and live their faith, even with those who are difficult to love.
- Available: Making children and youth a priority, they are fully present in their listening and caring.
- Affirming: Although they don't always approve of every behavior, they affirm what they see in every person – one made in the image of God, beloved and forgiven.

While I was waiting for a ride at the Super 8 Motel in Verona, WI, I met two employees. Ted's badge read "Maintenance." Elisha worked at the front desk, with the occasional foray into the breakfast area. Each shared a story with me, and I met two AAA Adults!

Ted is the father of six adults, but his story wasn't about them. A decade ago, he taught confirmation as a volunteer in his congregation. Jeff was one of the boys in his class – quiet, not very engaged, rarely participating. One day at work, Ted got a call from the local principal. Jeff was in trouble for fighting in the parking lot. He was angry and violent ... and would speak to no one but Ted. Surprised, Ted went directly to the school. Alone with Jeff, Ted had an impassioned conversation about anger - separating feelings from actions and the importance of controlling anger. Ted reminded Jeff that God is always there, a resource to control and channel anger. Ted was a AAA Adult. Ten years later, Jeff is a grounded, centered adult, who works as a security guard. Jeff has learned Ted's lessons in life, because his confirmation teacher, mentor, and friend modeled the love of Christ for him during a particularly unlovable passage in his life.

As I was eating breakfast, two young brothers were selecting their food. Juggling a too full glass of juice, the youngest one, a boy of 6, lost his balance and the juice spilled. One look at the wide-eyed, startled, and concerned face of the child told me to act. "I'll get some help," I offered. "We'll just clean that up." Through the doorway, we heard, "I'm right here. This is no problem. I'll just clean it up." And in came Elisha, a warm, kind, caring young woman, with a smile and a towel. In one smooth movement, she cleaned up the juice and reassured a very concerned little boy. "Look," she announced, with twinkling eyes, "Now there's a clean spot on the floor!"

I thanked Elisha for both her compassion and her cleaning. "Well," she said, "I had a lot of accidents and spills when I was young, and my dad was always kind." Now, Elisha is a AAA Adult, a living legacy of a AAA dad.

Who were the AAA Adults for you, who helped you see Jesus? Thank God for them and tell their stories.

Now, who needs you to be a AAA Adult? All God's children. Not a single child or youth in your family, congregation, or community has one too many adults who are authentic, available, and affirming. This is your chance to pass on faith!

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1. Ask the children you care about, "Who are the adults who help you experience the love of Jesus Christ?" Invite the children to tell a story about their AAA Adults.
2. Tell the story of a AAA Adult in your life. If that person is still alive, write, email, or call and thank them. Thank God for them.
3. Catch others being AAA Adults ... and tell them how important they are.
4. Which of the A's are you really good at and which one would you like to grow in and practice?
5. Find one child or youth who needs you to be that AAA Adult ... then, be it!