



Metro Lutheran
Positive Parenting
April 2012

CELEBRATING A LIFE, PASSING ON A LEGACY

[W]e will tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might
and the wonders that he has done ...
that the next generation might know them ...
Psalm 78:4,7

On Valentine's Day, my husband's beloved stepdad, Carl Martin, died. His funeral was held in the same church in which he was baptized 96 years ago. Carl lived a life of following Jesus and passed on faith to family, faith family, and friends. It was a long life, but, as with anyone you love, it is never long enough. His legacy is still alive and well. Here, in the words of our adult children, are the life lessons he passed on to them:

"You were always a man who made time for storytelling, who could recall memories from 40 years earlier as if they were yesterday. Your stories revealed a man with deep principles, a strong sense of justice, and the courage of your convictions to stand up for others and to speak the truth. You would give others the shirt off your back ... and then insist that you'd never really liked that shirt anyway, and were already planning to get rid of it. Of course, we all saw right through that tough-guy act, and loved you that much more. For a man who never had the opportunity to raise children of your own, you leave behind a crowd of people who consider themselves lucky to call you father, grandfather, uncle, or dear friend. Safe travels home, Grampa."

"As a young, curious, and very impressionable boy, you opened my eyes to a whole different world. Your stories were like a window to the past ... the many jobs you had held, machines you had built, problems you had solved, battles you had won, people you had known. But most of all, you inspired me, gave me the keys to my future. Today, when I walk into my shop, surrounded by the tools and equipment of my trade, in the middle is my most prized possession, the beautiful oak tool chest that you bought as an apprentice so many years ago. Like a time capsule, it is filled with finely hand crafted tools, bearing the mark C. Martin. I can open a drawer and hear your deep, gentle voice, telling me the story behind each piece in uncanny detail."

"You constructed your life just as you built your first home, with your own hands: carefully, measured, built it step by step. You saved carefully and spent judiciously. You and Gramma taught me so much about what it means to live simply so you can shower generosity on all those you love. You thrived within that life of industriousness and honor, but what gave it all meaning was the love. And oh, how you loved children! Every child at church adored you. You treated everyone with respect. You told us how important it was to have true friends, and your life was a living testament to that,

embracing lifelong friends and new ones that you cherished like family. Godspeed on your journey. May your homecoming be joyous.”

This month, we celebrate Easter, Jesus’ triumph of life over death, paving the way for Carl and for all of us to follow His way, His truth, and His life, so that we, who were baptized into a death like His may be reunited with Him in a resurrection like His. This Easter, we will tell to Carl’s grandchildren and great grandchildren the stories he told us, witnessing to his life in Christ ... “so that the next generation might know them.”

May you tell the stories this Easter to your next generations of those faithful ones who have shaped your life of faith.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1. This Easter, frame pictures of those you’ve loved who now know Jesus face-to-face. Light a special candle and tell children or friends or those who didn’t know your loved one stories of this treasured person, who showed you the way to Jesus.
2. Think about the stories you hope your beloved family members and friends will tell about you after you have died. Tell those stories to the living right now.
3. Read a children’s Bible about Jesus’ Last Supper, death, and resurrection. Remind children about the Words of Institution in Holy Communion that link us to Jesus’ story. “This is my body given for you ... This is my blood shed for you.” In Jesus, we have hope.
4. Point out traits that your kids have - interests, skills, character traits, appearance - that reminds you of the loved person who has died. If your child knew this person, let them know how much they meant to him or to her.
5. After Easter worship, remind your children that this is our story, too. Today we claim it especially for a beloved family member or friend who is no longer with us, that we will meet in Heaven someday. In prayer, thank God for this incredible gift.