



## Links to learn more!

[SPEAKING!](#)  
[COACHING!](#)  
[TEACHING!](#)  
[RETREATS!](#)

This is the perfect opportunity to call or email Marilyn

[612-202-8152](tel:612-202-8152)

[EMAIL](#)

[Join Our Mailing List](#)

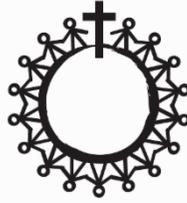
[Forward to a Friend](#)

### SOME THINGS TO DO IN YOUR FAMILY

\* Catch your child being good. Tell your child what specific behavior you appreciate. Be twice as vigilant to observe good behaviors and qualities as you are to catch them doing something wrong.

\* On a day when behavior has been challenging and difficult, wrap your arms around your child and say, "I love you." (This works for older children, teens, and adults, too!)

\* Catch your kids being kind, thoughtful, sharing, and caring. Say, "Now that's what I call God's kind of love!"



**Marilyn Sharpe**  
Ministries, LLC

(612) 202-8152

[Email Marilyn](#)

July 28, 2015

## LOVING CHILDREN UNIQUELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and you are acquainted with all my ways. -Psalm 139:1-3*

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, or height, or depth, or anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
-Romans 8:38-39*

*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. -John 15:12*

Three things are clear from these scriptures: God knows us uniquely, God loves us unconditionally, and God sends us into community - in our homes and in our congregations - to love every child of God uniquely and unconditionally. So how will we begin?

### KNOWING A CHILD UNIQUELY

So, how can you know a child uniquely? First, an adult needs to be fully present with the child or youth. **Observe.** What do you see with your eyes, hear

\* With a squirt bottle of syrup, write, "I love you" or make a heart on pancakes. Write the same message on a dessert with aerosol whipping cream.

\* For each child's birthday, write an annual love letter, expressing your love and describing the qualities you have most admired this year. Read it aloud and save it.

\* Say, "I love you," at every opportunity. You will never regret having said it once too often!

### **SOME THINGS TO DO IN YOUR CONGREGATION**

\* Share accomplishments and challenges faced by your children and youth in the prayers of the people, reminding all how much children are loved by God and by the congregation.

\* Use sermon illustrations of real kids in your midst.

\* Learn the names of your children and youth and call them by name.

\* Ask your children and youth to do real ministries, using their God-given gifts and thanking them for their service. Consider choral and instrumental music, greeting, ushering, reading lessons, working with younger children by teaming with teachers and childcare providers, collecting food for a food drive, visiting shut ins with an adult partner, praying.

\* Write up their accomplishments in your monthly newsletter.

\* Send notes to children and youth to celebrate what they have done or to express concern and sympathy for the challenges you know they are facing.

\* Vary teaching approaches to cover all learning styles.

with your ears, know with your heart and intuition? When you **listen** to a child, what are the words you hear? Do the words and tone and body language coincide, or is there a disconnect. Does the child say, "I'm fine," but the tone of voice and facial expression or stomping feet say something utterly different.

**Ask good questions** ... those questions that can never be answered with a grunt, a shrug, or a single word. Examples include, "What are the things you most enjoyed today?", "Tell me about why you came home, instead of going to your friend's house", "What are your favorite things about being this age?", "What are the challenges of being in your class?", "What disappointed you about the teacher's comments on your paper?" If you don't get much of a reply, ask, "Tell me more."

Knowing a child's **temperament** is crucial to understanding how this child views the world and gets what he or she needs. If your child is an **introvert**, they are not necessarily shy or quiet, but take more time to consider their answers. They recharge their batteries by being alone or with one trusted person. An **extrovert** will begin chatting as soon as you pause for breath, but won't necessarily get to their final conclusion until they have verbally explored a number of possibilities. They are not more socially skilled than their introverted counterpart, but get energy by being with others. Is your child high energy or more chill, positive in their interpretation of life or negative?

Make sure that you know about **normal growth and development** to appreciate the breadth of what is "normal" at each age and stage. Please don't pressure your child to master behaviors, understandings, or skills that are beyond their capacity.

**Learning styles** vary - visual, auditory, kinesthetic - and impact how receptive children are to different teaching styles, how quickly they learn, and how open they are to different learning opportunities. Try varying the ways you present things, in order to determine how they are wired to learn.

Adults can learn to appreciate **multiple intelligences**, knowing that each human is a unique blend of them, including musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential, and moral intelligence. Look for opportunity for every form of intelligence to be valued and exercised.

### NEED SOME HELP?

Do you need some help gaining perspective, evaluating your ministries, reestablishing your priorities, discerning where God is calling your congregation now, and engaging all to participate? This might be the time for coaching with Marilyn Sharpe, a ministry partner who will focus, inspire, and walk with you and your ministry team to follow where God is leading.

CALL OR EMAIL NOW!

---

**It is not too early to  
add to your  
calendar today!**

**The Living Room  
Summit**

**APRIL 26 - 28, 2016**



### SUPPORTING

When others **label** a child or youth negatively, can you supply a more positive alternative? For example, when a child, who is demonstrating leadership, is called "bossy" or "aggressive," can you suggest that these are the qualities that are assertive or show leadership? When another child is labeled "shy" or "reticent," can you point out that this child surveys the situation and decides how and when and with whom to engage?

Let's **find the good gifts** of every child and **name** them, seeking **activities** that fit their interests and gifts, **predicting the difference** they will make in God's world.

### LOVING

You already love the children and youth in your midst. What are some of the best things you can do to express that love and to make sure that the recipient really believes you?

\* Separate behavior from personhood - Love the person, no matter what they have done. Personhood cannot be changed. Correct or affirm the behavior. Behavior can be changed. Never conflate the two!

\* Forgive one another - One of God's best gifts to all of us is that we are simultaneously God's beloved and forgiven children. Let's model that by apologizing when we have wronged a child or youth and ask them for forgiveness. When the child or youth apologizes, let us be swift to forgive.

\* Love one another, no matter what - This is unconditional love. Tell the child or youth that your love is unconditional ... but only if it really, truly is. This is the love Christ calls us to lavish on others. Let's answer that call.

\* Love your child enough to correct behavior and say "No" - One of the ways in which we are shortchanging our children is to not teach them boundaries and enforce them. I realized when my firstborn was very young that part of my job was to shape her into a person others can love, too. The only way we can change overindulgence and a raging case of entitlement is to exercise a judicious use of "No" ... and to mean it.

\* Love the "otherness" - Those of us privileged to have children in our lives will quickly discover that they are not all just like us in gifts, intelligences, temperament, or preferences. Let us embrace God's creative genius and



abundance in the variety God lavished on the human family. It is one of the ways we say "thank you" to God.

\* Express love every day - No one has ever voiced a deathbed regret that they wish they had expressed love less often. Now is the time to begin.

\* Say, "I love you." Period. Never put a comma, where that period should be. It implies that "I love you, when ..." or "I love you, except" or "I love you, until ..." I love you. Period.