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|  | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>GENERAL ASSEMBLY</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2024 ASSEMBLY</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>COUNSELS FOR PARENTS</u></p> | <p>31/March/2024</p>  <p>Circular nº 190/2024</p> |
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Dear brethren,

The Peace of God.

Children today are exposed to evil that is constantly evolving in all of its forms. The good customs they learn at home and in church are vulnerable to contamination, which is a grave concern to the servants of God. From an early age, our children absorb knowledge from what they are taught in school as well through interaction with other children.

Parents should closely monitor their children's education. We have a solemn responsibility to teach them the scriptural lessons and commandments that lead to a firm foundation and belief in God's word and salvation through Jesus Christ. We should encourage them to fear God, pray often, and avoid evil, explaining that we are only pilgrims in this world and our true home is in heaven. They should be taught to regularly attend the Children & Youth services as well as the "Children's Space" if one is available in their local, where they are exposed to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Doing this, will help develop their faith and love for the Lord, as the Bible teaches us:

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:15)



Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

In many families, due to a lack of space in their homes or the heavy workload of the parents, the children are left to entertain themselves with a few traditional toys and electronic devices such as cell phones and computers. Today, evil is so prevalent that even these toys and devices can bring evil with them. This is the case with many electronic games and apps, where the child assumes the role of a fighter, engaging in violent battles. A child who is constantly exposed to this behavior loses his sensitivity to love and kindness, and becomes impatient, aggressive and reckless.

Parents must be aware of what their children are absorbing, whether through games, apps, videos or cartoons, and eliminate anything that is contrary to Christian values.

Adolescents, both in and out of school, are constant targets for misinformation that creates conflict or confusion, and distorts the good teachings they learn at home and in church.

As a result, they become isolated, they distance themselves from their parents and find it hard to communicate and to be understood. Due to the transition their bodies are undergoing, they have trouble concentrating and their studies often suffer. With the ease of virtual communication, they eagerly exchange messages and access social media until late at night, disrupting healthy sleep

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patterns. Unsupervised, easy communication through the internet exposes them to potential dangers.

Parents should make an effort to create an atmosphere that promotes daily casual or deep conversations, so their children don't seek outsiders to express their desires and feelings. This will protect them from sinful influences and from the attraction of the world that comes from interactions with immoral people. The Word of God says:

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.
(Proverbs 13:20)

The Bible warns us:

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” (1 Co 15:33)

We advise parents to live in marital harmony, since the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace by those who practice it.

Also, don't argue in front of the children, because even at an early age, memories of friction can harm the emotional development of children and adolescents.



When parents are in constant contention and verbal aggression, they are shaping their children's character with examples of aggression that may later appear during adolescence. But if they live peacefully, they will transmit to their children the true Christian character. Through their example of love, patience and kindness, they will impart knowledge of the scriptures. Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph 6:4)

Living in unity and peace depends on small efforts that the Bible teaches. If a couple has humility, brotherly love, patience and the fear of God, they will overcome their differences and have a healthy spiritual and material life.

Parents should be their children's best friends. For this to happen, they need to establish a relationship of mutual confidence and respect, demonstrating the true love of Christ through their patience and kindness. Because of the physical transition their bodies are undergoing, it is hard for adolescents to recognize the wisdom their parents have.

Wisdom is a gift of God, and all counsel should be given under the guidance of the Word, as it is written:

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“The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.” (Ecclesiastes 12:11)

Parents must be vigilant, watching for even the smallest signs of worrisome or concerning behavior of their children, since it is very easy to be entrapped by evil today. Aside from their natural curiosity and pre-disposition for independence, adolescents are prime targets of the emissaries of evil who seek to distort their knowledge of the grace of God and lead them to commit sinful acts. We must teach our children about moral corruption and other unholy actions, such as fornication which are great sins before God. It is written:

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” (Ephesians 5:5)

Whenever possible, parents should pray with their children, for this prevents many evils and keeps their home in peace.

Even as adults, children remember the good counsels of their parents and the teachings they received in the Youth and Children’s services where they learned to praise God, pray and understand the truth of the Gospel.

Loving our children under the guidance of the Gospel of Christ will preserve them from corruption and prepare them for a peaceful future in the grace of the Son of God.

Your brothers in Christ

Council of Senior Elders