

# St. Joe's Counselor's Corner-April 2016

--Jennifer Moyer-Taylor

\*\*HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN APRIL\*\*

K-Friendship Groups      1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> -Snack and Chat

4<sup>th</sup>-Put-Downs and Gossip

5<sup>th</sup>-Differences between normal conflicts and bullying

6<sup>th</sup>-Social Media

7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-Peer Mediation Program      Parenting Class-Monday Nights until April 18<sup>th</sup>

## *IT'S ELEMENTARY (K-4)-Gratitude Jar*

In a [study](#) done by Robert Emmons, at UC Davis, it was discovered that children who practice grateful thinking have more positive attitudes toward school and families. For something as simple as being grateful for what you have and saying thank you to others, this is powerful! Here is an idea to try in April. Fill up a mason jar of slips of paper to help prompt you and your family in grateful thinking. **Some of the slips of paper can say:** Name three things that make you happy, Think of something you used today that other people may take for granted, Name someone you know who makes your life better, What do you appreciate that you have that others don't?, What makes you happy?, Recall something today that made you smile.

## *IN THE MIDDLE (5-8)-Motivate the Middle Schooler*

Is your middle schooler lacking motivation? Not sure if he or she will actually get work done if you are not there to manage it? Here are some tips to tackle this issue. **1. Get Curious.** Is there a reason for the lack of motivation? Is something going on at school or with friends? Are they getting enough sleep? Approach your son or daughter with a natural curiosity. **2. Less is More.** More nagging will not necessarily solve the problem. This could place you in many power struggles as well. Do you like having your boss at work micromanaging you? Try encouraging them when you see them doing their work and take a step back to see if it increases. **3. Try To Talk About Feelings and Brainstorm Solutions.** Share your feelings. "I've been frustrated about nagging you about homework and I know that neither one of us wants this. What can we do to solve this problem?" **4. Avoid Labels.** Resist the urge to call him or her "lazy" or "a slacker". This isn't helpful nor encouraging. **5. Uncover Why.** There could be a deeper struggle or reason for the lack of motivation. Partner with your middle schooler and problem-solve together.

How do I help my daughter with making friends?

## **ASK THE COUNSELOR...**

**Q- My middle school daughter came home crying and devastated. Today, one of her best friends completely ignored her and did not say what is wrong. She did not have anyone to talk to and sit with at lunch. How can I help her?**

A-Cliques peak in middle school. This is a challenging time socially for girls. It is also important to not impose your own negative memories onto your child at this stage. As our kids move through adolescence, we remember some of the difficult parts of middle school and cringe. While we may have dealt with some awkward moments of our own, it is also important to remember that some developmental pains occur and are normal. However, that does not mean this is painful for your daughter. Kids need at least one good friend to help them get through the school day and feel connected. Is there a way to arrange a hangout time with her and a friend on the weekend-maybe go to a basketball or volleyball game or another fun event such as a movie that has some structure to it but is fun with room for flexibility for dinner after or lunch before. Also, a great book for her to read is called *How To Win Friends And Influence People For Teen Girls* by Donna Carnegie.

Thank you!

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