

SOCIAL WELL-BEING

LESSON NINETEEN

Follow up *(As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Mental Well-being.)*

1. What are some of the things we've learned which improve our mental well-being?
2. Are our dinner conversations more enjoyable? If not, what can we do to improve?

Concept

One of the roads to happiness is social well-being. When we are socially involved with others we're usually happier and feel a part of a larger group. Supportive friends, extended family, and our neighbors can give us help and encouragement when needed. We all like to know that people care about us.

Also, families are happier when they reach out in acts of kindness and service to meet the needs of others. Albert Pipe wrote, "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us. What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal."

What is social well-being? It is:

- feeling accepted in a group.
- helping others feel appreciated and accepted.
- spending quality time with others.
- communicating openly and listening well.
- helping people deal with conflict and crises in constructive ways.
- committing time and energy to causes that benefit others.

There is a song called "No Man Is An Island" which tells how man doesn't go through life alone. We are dependent on one another for our happiness and well-being. A few of the words are:

No man is an island
No man stands alone
Each man's joy is joy to me
Each man's grief is my own

To enjoy social well-being in our families we need to interact with other people, be involved with those who can help and strengthen us when needed, and reach beyond our own concerns to be part of a support system for others. As we share our lives we'll experience the joys of social well-



being.

Family Survey Review

Statement # 19. **Our family enjoys being with other people.**

- How can our family be more friendly and social?
- What can we do to be of service to our extended family and to our friends?

Story

Sam Foss liked to walk. He had wandered a little too far in the blazing sun, while lost in his thoughts, and now suddenly he realized how hot and tired he was. The big tree at the side of the road looked tempting, and he stopped for a moment to rest in its shade.

There was a little sign on the tree, which he read with surprise and pleasure. “There is a good spring inside the fence. Come and drink if you are thirsty.”

Foss climbed over the fence, found the spring, and gratefully drank his fill of the cool water. Then he noticed a bench near the spring on which was tacked another sign. He went over to it and read, “Sit down and rest awhile if you are tired.”

Now thoroughly delighted, he went to a barrel of apples nearby, and saw that here, too, was a sign, “If you like apples, just help yourself,” he read. He accepted the invitation, picked out a plump red apple and looked up to discover an elderly man watching him with interest.

“Hello, there!” he called. “Is this your place?”

“Yes,” the old man answered. “I’m glad you stopped by.” He explained the reason for the signs. The water was going to waste; the bench was gathering dust in the attic; the apples were more than they could use. He and his wife thought it would be neighborly to offer tired, thirsty passers-by a place to rest and refresh themselves. So they had brought down the bench and put up the signs, and thereby made themselves a host of fine new friends.

“You must like people,” Foss said.

“Of course!” the old man answered simply. “Don’t you?”

Discussion

1. Did the sharing man help make other people happy?
2. Can we share something we have to make another family happy? What?
3. Is life more enjoyable with friends? How can we be better friends?

Activity

The activity for this lesson is to do something as a family that will improve our social well-



being. Here are some ideas:

1. Meet our neighbors.
2. Volunteer our time in service to the community.
3. Visit a nursing home or hospital.
4. Invite friends to dinner, or to play games with our family.
5. Do something kind for a neighbor.
6. Call a friend or relative we haven't spoken to for a long time.

Assignment

Choose one or both of the following assignments:

1. Do the activity: Family Fun.
2. Read the Additional Solution For Success: Being Part of an Extended Family.

ACTIVITY

FAMILY FUN

Most families agree that it's important to spend "quality" time together. But the realities of busy lives often prevent family members from enjoying family fun. This activity is designed to help us make definite plans that include our entire family, and to turn those plans into reality.

1. Let's take a sheet of paper and fold it in half. On one side, we'll write our ideas for things our family can do together at no cost (playing games, taking a hike, etc.) On the other side, we'll write ideas for things our family can do that cost money. (movies, dinner in a restaurant, vacations, etc.)
2. Now let's read all of the ideas and cross out activities that we're not really interested in.
3. Let's talk about all of the activities that don't cost money. Next, we'll copy the good suggestions onto small slips of paper and put them into a jar or box, and label it "FREE FUN."
4. Let's discuss the ideas that do cost money. We'll put the list of activities that cost money into a jar or box we label "FUN FUNDS." Now let's decide how our family can save money to put in the box. Here are some ideas to consider:
 - Everyone agrees to "pledge" an amount from paychecks or allowances each week.
 - Everyone agrees to give 10% of all gift money received for birthdays, holidays and special occasions.
 - At the end of each day, everyone tosses in all of their loose change.
 - All loose change left in pockets from the laundry goes in the box.
 - Family members can donate the money received from recycling aluminum cans, or another fund-raising project.
 - Parents might agree to "match" whatever amount has been saved during a time period.
5. Let's schedule at least one time each week for our family to do something together from the "FREE FUN" box.
6. Now we need to decide what our family wants to do first from the "FUN FUNDS"



box. As soon as there is enough money, we'll schedule a time for the activity and start saving for the next one on the list.

7. When our family has used all the ideas in the boxes, we can start over again.

ACTIVITY

BEING PART OF AN EXTENDED FAMILY

A sense of belonging and increased social well-being comes from being part of an extended family. This includes feeling a part of our family's history and knowing the stories about our Grandpa and Grandma, and the way life was for our ancestors. It also involves feeling an interest and concern for the younger members of the extended family.

People with a strong sense of family pass on the stories of deceased family members so that younger members can learn about their roots. Alex Haley, author of the book *Roots*, tells about the outpouring of interest American families had in the history he uncovered regarding African-Americans. Mr. Haley believes that many people feel a little empty because they don't know about their ancestors. Preserving and passing on family history is important for a family's sense of continuity. The feeling a family has about who they are, because of an ancestor's example, or learning about how ancestors coped with adversities, can be a source of strength. Looking at our ancestors' lives and history can also help us put our problems in perspective. The struggles they endured and the joys they felt give us a better understanding of ourselves.

In addition to learning from their family history, families can also learn much from their living relatives. Grandparents and other relatives who give their time and love to children strengthen them. Relatives can tell the children what their parents were like as children. From their experience, they can teach and share valuable advice. Quite often grandparents are the nucleus of extended family activities.

An appreciation for the past also demonstrates to older relatives a respect for their values and accomplishments. The life of a grandparent can be given renewed meaning by a grandchild's interest in their past.

Strong families keep in touch with their extended family. They pass news back and forth, they exchange pictures, or they call each other for no particular reason. Families who live far apart may do things such as circulate a letter to which each family adds their own news before mailing it on. They may make tape-recordings for family members far away. Some families devote a whole wall to pictures of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The key is having enough contact with each other so that relatives feel like relatives, not strangers.

To strengthen your family's ties to your extended family, conduct a little quiz about your relatives. Add as many questions as you would like.

For children:

- Who is our oldest relative?
- Who is our youngest relative?
- How many cousins do we have?
- How are we related to all our aunts and uncles?
- Where did our ancestors come from? Where did they live? What were their names? What did they do?
- Where were our grandparents (or some other relative) born?
- How old are they?
- What did they do for a living?

For parents:

- What do you remember most about your grandparents?
- As a little child?
- As a teenager?
- As an adult?
- What other relative was a favorite of yours? Why?
- What things did you do with relatives when you were growing up?

For everyone:

- What is the importance of our extended family?
- What things do we not know about our family's history that we would like to know?
- Are there relatives with whom we would like to spend more time?
- What can we do to strengthen our extended family relationships?