

Parents should be role models

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Last week's Enterprise featured an interesting article on teen ethics. The study cited by the story found that teens are confused about what constitutes ethical behavior. A majority of teens, according to this article, believe that lying and rule-breaking are acceptable—in some cases, even necessary—for success. That's disturbing but not surprising.

Most disturbing, however, was the finding that teens, in great numbers, say they have no adult role models.

The article went on to say that Junior Achievement (which sponsored the study) has the solution to the ethics problem. Junior Achievement has developed a program of business leaders who will mentor teens and become their role models.

As admirable as this sounds, it is not the solution to the lack of ethics in children. No program is.

As a Christian, I believe that teaching and demonstrating the principles found in the Bible provides a great foundation for our youth. But even that will fail without parental involvement.

That's right. Parents. Mom and Dad. The people who should be a kid's role models. If Mom and Dad teach their children to be responsible adults—if they show by their actions—how to be accountable to one another and to society, they become the mentors; not some organization, or worse yet, a gang. If, on the other hand, they teach uninvolvedness, self-absorption and disregard for authority, parents leave their children without a foundation to build character on.

All these highfalutin words teach to the praise of a particular group: parents who spend a great deal of their time sitting. They sit in the bleachers, watching their kids wrestle or play football or baseball. They sit in the auditorium listening to the squeaks and squeals of a beginners' band concert. It doesn't seem to matter if their children are great at a thing. It matters that they are great kids.

A couple of the mothers I'm talking about can be heard for blocks screaming encouragement at

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ball games.

“It’s my kid,” Melissa Mayden explained.

“Yeah, right,” countered her husband Schad. “She screams like that for all the kids.”

She does, too.

Parents this involved raise involved kids. They raise kids who have a basic understanding of right and wrong. Kids who respect them because they are, well, they’re role models.

Caryl Harvey