



## Helping Children Develop Their Gifts from the Lord

Picture the Lord looking at your children and seeing their potential. As they grow and develop, we should also be trying to see our children this way, envisioning their potential. If we help our children develop their unique gifts from the Lord and recognize the importance of useful service, they will find happiness in helping others here on earth and in heaven. Here are some suggestions for helping children appreciate the importance of being useful:

- Talk about the various uses performed by people they know. What do their parents, grandparents, and other relatives do? (Look beyond occupations to other ways that people are useful.)
- Use rewards or other motivations to encourage children to do good things and then call their attention to how good it feels to help others. It is interesting to note that children being raised in heaven are given gold and silver coins as tokens of virtue or industry (see *Spiritual Experiences* 5666).
- Discuss the importance of *how* people perform their uses.
- Give your children verbal praise when they do a job well, praising how they do a job rather than praising them in a general way (avoid blanket phrases like “What a good girl!”). Try to be very specific about what was good about *how* they did their job, saying things like: “look how those dishes shine” or “these cookies are delicious.”
- Children may get the impression (from us or from the media) that success is defined in terms of honor, reputation, and gain. How can we help them develop a spiritual perspective? The heavenly perspective looks to the good of the neighbor, the common good (of society), the Lord's kingdom (heaven and the Church on earth), and especially the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1909). How might this teaching help us discuss the variety of ways that we can be useful and the true meaning of success?