

A small boy said, "Father's Day is just like Mother's Day, only you don't spend as much on the gift." Mark Twain said, "When I was a boy of 14 my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to the 21, I was astonished at how much the old man learned in 7 years."

Someone wrote these humorous words entitled, "The World According to Dad." These are words that most dads have said at some time or another to their children.

- This is going to hurt me more than it hurts you.
- Quiet. I'm watching the ball game.
- Bring back all the change.
- How should I know? Ask your mother.
- I'm not made out of money!
- If you break your leg don't come running to me.
- Get down before you kill yourself. On second thought, go ahead.
- Why? Because I said so!
- I was not asleep. I was just resting my eyes.

Any of those lines sound familiar?

Have no doubt, a father's love is just as important to a child's development as a mother's, and in some areas even more so. The love of mothers and fathers affects kids' behavior, self-esteem, emotional stability, and mental health. "But in some cases, the withdrawal of a father's love seems to play a bigger role in kids' problems with personality and psychological adjustment, delinquency, and substance abuse," says researcher Ronald P. Rohner, Ph.D. The presence of a father's love may do more to boost children's sense of well-being and improve their emotional and physical health.

Children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and, as they grow older, have better social connections with peers. These children also are less likely to get in trouble at home, school, or in the neighborhood. Children with involved, caring fathers have better educational outcomes. A number of studies suggest that fathers who are involved, nurturing, and playful with their infants have children with higher IQs, as well as better linguistic and cognitive capacities. Noted sociologist, Dr. David Popenoe, said: "Fathers are far more than just 'second adults' in the home. Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring."

All this should not surprise us, because God designed the role of the father in the family. The Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Mary could have been a single parent mother in raising Jesus. But God knows the importance of the father in the home. Joseph's role was necessary as the foster father of God's Son for the human and even the spiritual development of the Christ Child.

We ask God's blessings upon all our fathers. We thank our fathers for all the good they have done for us. And, I recommend to all fathers to rely on St. Joseph's intercession so you could continue to grow in your fatherhood, and be the fathers God wants you to be.