

Tattling is widely considered a sin. Here is an account of when I first realized that. I was in a car with a mommy and her three little children. The older two were not getting along. The boy was being a pest, and the sister tattled. Guess who got yelled at? The sister! The boy never got one word of reprimand.

Then later, I found a series of children's books, each dealing with a problem area and how to improve; like lying, complaining, etc, and one was on tattling!

Probably the reason tattling is frowned upon is because mommies are so tired of dealing with their children's quarrels. And they often put them in a day care or pre-school so they can go to work ~ and escape.

Our story

When our older boy was four, we were considering various pre-schools. We assumed that this was best because everyone seemed to think so. But that year I attended a women's Bible study group that met on Thursday mornings. One day in that summer, we met at a park so the children could play while we studied, and then we ate lunch together on the grass.

While eating, I overheard a conversation where a gal was telling about a book called *Home Grown Kids*. (This is not in print

now.) I eagerly listened as she told how kids learn bad things from the other children. Peer pressure is a bad thing and unavoidable if one is locked into the age-segregated system of public schooling. She then told how parents can teach their own at home and therefore be the first to influence them instead of having to straighten out what they have learned at school.

I went that very day and got a copy of that book. I read it quickly and then told my husband about it. We agreed that this was the best for our little boy. We firmly believed that our children are precious gifts from God and that our responsibility should be taken seriously to raise them as God would have them raised.

An interesting fact that I learned is this: The sooner you institutionalize your children, the sooner they will institutionalize you.

The reason I told about our decision to home-school is to show you why I was at home and involved with my children's play nearly all the time. If I wasn't playing directly with them, I was listening. Of course there were the times I let them help me fold clothes or dust, or wash dishes.

The Priority of our Kids

The Bible is strong about the priority of our children. Psa. 127:3, "Children are a heritage of the Lord." Mal. 3:13-16, God says He wants godly children! Deut. 6:5-7, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk, and when you lie down and when you get up." That's pretty much all the time, don't you think?

Good Social Skills

These aren't learned at school! The social skills learned there are negative as they pick up bad traits from other children. Bible Schools can teach some, but on-the-job training for good sociability is learned at home from mom and dad. If you are determined to teach good social skills while they are little and while you still can, tattling can help! Tattling shines the light on the problems in their social development.

Maybe you're not determined. Think of this. I don't know how true this is, but it makes sense: Most people who get fired from a job get fired not because they don't know the skills for the job, but because

they don't know how to get along with people! They are missing the early training that I am talking about here.

What kind of Socialization?

We have already said some about the negative socialization that happens in school and the destructive and hurtful behavior that is learned there. But what about in our homes where we desire to shield them from that? Are we making the most of every opportunity to teach positive social skills? Eph. 4:32 says to be kind and tender hearted. I taught our little ones that being tender hearted means to be sensitive to the feelings of the other person. These qualities don't come naturally, even in our own children. They too are born with selfish natures, and being mean to each other is what comes naturally.

In every conflict between siblings, great or small, we have the opportunity to teach valuable skills: Kindness, asking nicely, ("will you please...?") not interrupting, listening to each other when they talk, how to communicate respectfully, how to negotiate, and the importance of asking forgiveness for the sin of unkindness, and asking God's help to be kind, or whatever.

Parents are missing valuable teaching opportunities when they discourage tattling. Tattling makes the parent aware that the children need help in getting along.

This is the highest and best socializing, and very much worth the time it takes. They'll need these positive social skills on the job, in marriage, and in every human relationship! And where else are they going to learn them? Consider eavesdropping on your children's play, and ask God to show you what qualities need work. I have seen kids be very mean to each other and their parents didn't even notice!

Is Tattling in the Bible?

Yes, it is! I will only name them, and you can read the entire passages if you want to. In Lev. 5:1 and 20:1-5 we see examples of how God was training His people to be pure and sin-free. Tattling was encouraged for this to work! Another example is in I Sam. 14:31-34. In Lev. 20 is a list of sins and the proper punishment for each, and again, tattling had to happen for this to work. In the New Testament, in I Cor. 5:1, we read of a case where a man was sleeping with his father's wife (probably second wife). Paul was told of it (somebody tattled), and so he writes at length what should be done about it. Again showing that God wants His people to be pure and holy. This story wouldn't even be in the Bible if somebody hadn't tattled!

Now, gossiping is a different issue. Lev. 19:16 and James 4:11 both tell us not to be a "tale-bearer." You may want to look at my brochure on judging for more on that.

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A mini Bible study
And testimonies
By Cheryl Boone