

## BEING A MOM

I am a mother of three children. 10, 5, and 10 months. I realize together with my husband that we are our children's future! Being aware of what we encounter with our children, how we respect them, how we want them to respect themselves, is our duty. Our goal is to raise our children to be adults with all the proper equipment that is required in today's and the future's environment. My fear is the things I can not control, such as illnesses. The naiveté that goes along with youth has been shadowed with my age and the various fears of what could happen, the unknown.

My 5-year-old son recently has come down with alopecia areata or sudden spotted baldness. This has taken my breath away. I have been told also that this is an autoimmune problem, which is the basis to many devastating diseases. I ask what encouragement they can give me that this hair loss may not be the beginning of something bigger. As a mother I have been in the deepest prayer. I pray that God gives me wisdom and ears to listen to what information I need to have in order to put this puzzle together. I pray that I have the energy every day to give love, smiles and memories of encouragement to all of my children while dealing with my own emotions on this.

I pray that I teach my children how to have a lasting healthy marriage without misconceptions. To understand that marriage as well as life, can be successful with the right compromises. I pray that I lead in my friendships with a manner of grace and discernment that through me they may be aware of their own responsibilities to themselves, their marriages and their children with God at the helm. I think that I am helping raise my boys to respect women by talking to them about our many differences. I discuss with my oldest son about his body and how it will be changing in the years to come. I take my sons out on dates once or twice a year, alone and enjoy our focused banter that hopefully will be the footprint to future experiences that they may have with special women in their lives.

My time with them is a gift from God and I try very hard to realize that I do not own them; they are on loan to me. Time is fleeting and we focus on what we can prepare them for and let them know we will be here to bounce things off of. I try to lead them by having them understand that there should always be a "Me" a "You" and an "Us" to have an appropriate balance. That sometimes Mommy and Daddy's needs are outside of our kids or family. That even Mommy goes to "Mommy camp" to enjoy outside interests or indulge in self-satisfying challenges. I have worked on and off with my own business and they share in the moments of accomplishments I have for doing a job well done. We attempt to evolve as our lives contract in and out with each breath and find gratitude in even our biggest challenges or simplest moments. This is being a "MOM".

S. Clark