

If I Like It, It's Mine

The Association of Christian Schools International believes that one of the essential elements of an effective Christian school is that every learning experience aims at enabling students to reach their full potential in Christ. This is a crucial component of the Christian school you have chosen.

Effective Christian schools provide programs and services that are appropriate for the students they serve. Such schools focus on helping students develop an awareness of their relationship and responsibility to society. Schools accomplish this task by developing students intellectually, spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically through every curricular and cocurricular (often described as extracurricular) activity. The intent, of course, is to develop disciples—young men and women who are preparing for works of service—while helping them develop an eternal view of life.

Children begin life from a totally self-centered perspective. It is their natural bent. An anonymous writer offers the following humorous perspective:

Toddler Rules of Property

If I like it, it's mine.

If it's in my hand, it's mine.

If I can take it from you, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.

If it looks just like mine, it's mine.

If I saw it first, it's mine.

If I am doing or building something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.

If it is mine, it must never appear to be yours in any way.

If it is broken, it's yours.

If it's broken, where's mine?

—Anonymous, *Caring spaces, learning places: Children's environments that work* (Jim Greenman [Redmond, WA: Exchange Press, 2005], 138)

We view this attitude in a toddler as somewhat cute, but in an adolescent it is frightening, and sadly we sometimes see it extended even to adulthood. Your Christian school strives to help its students develop both an appropriate biblical perspective of the self and a right relationship to society, a relationship that includes responsibility. Forming this Christ-centered perspective and relationship gives the school and you as parents one of the great opportunities to work together to strengthen your students in such development. During this development in the student, the

“I” becomes less, and the perception that everything should be “mine” diminishes as the student better understands and increasingly implements a Christ-centered relationship with and responsibility to others.

Reading and conversing with your children about great men and women who have reflected selfless character can be a great step in showing your children new kinds of heroes who appear at great odds with most of the “heroes” of the popular media. One of the true heroes, William Wilberforce, lived in Great Britain during the late 1700s and early 1800s. He spent much time in friendship and conversation with men such as hymn writer and former slave trader John Newton. Through the influence of such friends, Wilberforce made a deep commitment to Jesus Christ. And as a statesman and parliamentarian, he had a powerful impact on the world. This hero for humanity fought for decades for the abolition of the British slave trade and then of slavery in Great Britain. Parliament finally passed a law that abolished slavery there in 1833, when Wilberforce was on his deathbed.

The story of his life and challenges is wonderfully told in the new movie *Amazing Grace*. This story of a selfless William Wilberforce is about a man of courage, faith, and deep commitment to be “salt and light” in a dark world. Viewers across North America can watch this movie in theaters even as this edition of *Christian School Comment* is going out to schools. Why not take the opportunity to take your children to see *Amazing Grace* and then spend some time discussing how God's impact on a single individual can not only change him or her but also have a great impact on others. Talk about traits of dedication, commitment, perseverance, and tenacity. Watching and then discussing the movie would provide a wonderful way to engage in the nurture and development of your children. At the same time, doing so would further strengthen and support the impact of Christian schooling in the life of your children.



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