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HE SANG KARATE!

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"Mom," our precious, almost-four-year old grandson urgently announced on September 6, 2007, "a really sad thing happened today."

"What happened, Hayden?" our beloved daughter-in-law replied.

"Papa told me that the world's greatest singer died," he reported.

"Who was that?" his mom asked.

"I don't know. But he sang karate."

My husband, Les, and I just saw the movie "Pavarotti" and this precious memory came flooding back. Why is it a treasured memory rather than a simple misunderstanding that is faintly humorous? I cherish it because Les, the man who had never heard classical music until he was 18 and the Papa in this story, introduced his first grandson to an opera singer when he was not quite four.

How will your children learn your values, your interests, your passions?

How will you open God's big world to them? If you don't do it, who will?

Today, after swimming with our granddaughter who is seven, I told her that I am going to a vigil early tomorrow morning in support of immigrants. She is a tender-hearted girl who loves her family. The thought that children and their parents are being separated was devastating to her. I hope she always have this compassion and advocates for those being pushed to the edges.

How can you grow your values, interests, and passions in the next generation?

- Worship with the children you love. Talk about what you heard. How is God at work in the world? What is God calling you to do? Think about how you might do this together.
- Read and gift books to these children that tackle the big issues at their level.
- Give them experiences that reinforce what you believe and value.
- Talk with them about the things that really matter to you.
- Invest your time and attention in children. Both say and show them how beloved they are.
- Support their generous, compassionate hearts.
- Catch them doing the right thing for the creation, for those who have been marginalized, for those in need, for the kids who often aren't included. Affirm them and their actions. Let them know that you noticed.
- Be the role model they need. Let them see you living those values and beliefs and passions and interests.
- Speak words of encouragement to those who, against all odds, are parenting well. A young pastor, raised in my congregation and home for a visit, was in worship with his two very, very young children. He was patient, kind, and loving. It was a joy to see them and I couldn't resist telling him that children who worship with their parents are more likely to grow into adults of faith than those who go to Sunday school or nursery alone. Well done, good and faithful servant!

Links to learn more!

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