



# Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

## Workbench Parenting: Envisioning How Common Household Tools Can Remind Us to Be Stronger Parents

### SANDPAPER

*Life is rough.*

There are times when all of us could use some help in getting things smoothed out.



If we are doing a chore around the house or working on a project, we can go to the workbench and find any number of items that can help us smooth things out. One of the most common resources we use is sandpaper. This wonderful invention is very user friendly, and we can find it in a variety of grit sizes to fit the task at hand. If we want to create a very smooth finish on a surface, we might choose 150 or 220. If we need a more coarse approach to our task, we might use 60.

In addition to these various levels, we can cut it to fit into a tight workspace. We can put it on a block of wood for consistent pressure. We can even attach it to an electric sander to more efficiently complete our task.

In the 1800s, this product was known as “glasspaper,” but today it contains neither glass nor sand. Other tools on a workbench that serve a similar purpose are files, wood rasps, sanding sponges and sanding pads. Whatever your tool of choice may be, the end goal is the same: a smooth finish.

When life gets rough around the edges, what tool do you reach for? How do you smooth things out in your life, in the life of a child or within your family? Here are three tools we can reach for depending on the situation at hand.

**TOOL 1: COMPASSION.** This is the expression of a gentle spirit. It is a caring persona. It is a non-threatening tone. It can lift us up, get us back on track and keep things calm.

**TOOL 2: CONFESSION.** There is power in the words “I’m sorry.” When life hits a rough patch, turning to someone we have wronged and sincerely expressing these three words can be a great step in smoothing things out. As parents, we also can instruct our children to develop this practice with one another and with friends.

**TOOL 3: INTENTIONAL PROBLEM-SOLVING.** When an issue gets very tough, we need to take time to create a plan that addresses the situation, acknowledges the severity of things and creates action steps to bring resolution. This can take time and a great deal of effort; but if done with care and in an effective manner, it is well worth the investment of time and emotional energy.

As people in this world, we will face problems. As parents, we will experience challenges. As Christians, it is comforting to know that the biggest problem facing us — our sinful condition — has been more than smoothed over, it has been completely erased! “As far as the east is from the west, so far does [God] remove our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12). This is the ultimate tool that we possess — the assurance of God’s love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

“When life gets rough around the edges, what tool do you reach for?”

## FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

*Gather the family together for a time of Bible study and discussion following the outline below.*

**OPENING PRAYER:** Given by the one who everyone thinks is the most “gritty.”

### FAMILY FUN TIME WITH TOOLS

Have a parent or sibling locate several samples of sandpaper with differing grit sizes, as well as various metal files or other “smoothing” tools. Pass them around to every family member. Find some pieces of wood, and allow family members to use the sandpaper on them. Likewise, find some metal, and let family members use a file on them..

### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Which item was the easiest to work with? Why?
- 2) Which item was the hardest to use? Why?
- 3) How have you seen these items used in our home?

### FAMILY FUN TIME: SAND PLAY SCULPTURES

#### ITEMS NEEDED:

- Clean play sand from a toy store, hardware store or your yard
- Small plastic cups or old butter tubs
- A spray bottle filled with water
- A large plastic tray or cake pan for each person (if indoors)
- Various carving items: plastic knives, forks, spoons, jar lids, old cookie cutters, etc.

#### PROCEDURE:

Pour sand and water into a plastic cup or old butter tub to get a consistency that will hold together when turned over. Do this for each person so they have a “sand stone” in front of them. Distribute carving items, and let each person make a creative carving of an animal or other common object. Use the spray bottle as needed to keep your sculpture from drying out and falling apart. For younger children, spread

sand in a shallow tray, spray with water and allow them to create a design or play in the sand with old cookie cutters.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What did you make?
- 2) Why did you make that object?
- 3) Did it come out like you wanted it to?
- 4) Did you get it as smooth as you wanted?
- 5) What was most fun about doing this activity?

### FAMILY BIBLE TIME:

Look up 1 Peter 5:7, and have someone read it out loud.

- 1) What does “anxiety” mean?  
*(Have an adult or older sibling explain the meaning.)*
- 2) On whom are we to put all our troubles and anxieties?  
*(Our Lord Jesus)*
- 3) Why do we do this? *(Because He cares for us and loves us.)*
- 4) How has God cared for you recently? *(Answers will vary.)*

**CLOSING ECHO PRAYER:** Have an adult read the prayer below, with the others repeating it phrase by phrase.

*Dear Jesus, Thank You for going to the cross to die for our sins. Thank You for caring for us every day. Help us to care for others and share Your love with them. In Your name, we pray. Amen.*

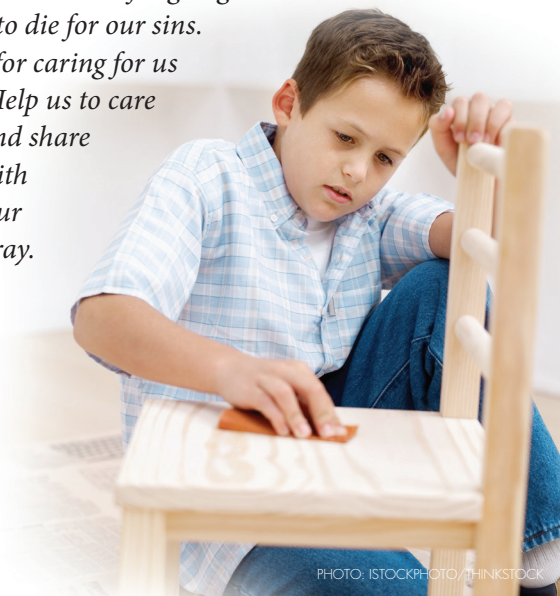


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Vol. 20 • No. 7 • March 2016

**Family Matters** is an LCMS School Ministry newsletter Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295  
314-965-9000 • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)  
Writer: Dr. Steve Christopher Designer: Lisa Moeller

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