

Alamance Reads 2011 Writing Contest

Category: Middle School – Ages 11 - 13

Winning submission by: Mary Brennan

My Dad, My Self

“The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” This famous Asian proverb wisely illustrates the great influence a father has on the life of his son, good or bad. He plays a major part in his son’s life. It is very important for a father and son to have a close, loving relationship. Fathers are responsible for showing their sons, through their example, what it is to be a man. A boy needs a father to train him and give him encouragement, love, and the knowledge that he needs to become an adult. Boys also need fathers to correct them and help them learn from their mistakes, so that in this way, they lead them to form a realistic sense of their strengths and weaknesses.

Could a mother ever raise her son without the knowledge of a father to assist her? Yes, it can be done; but she has to overcome serious limitations and obstacles. Boys need someone who is like them to look up to, who possesses the same mind that they do. Boys cannot function properly in life without both parents there. Boys feel confident knowing that they have a man leading them into adulthood.

Unfortunately, fathers can also provide a bad example for their sons if they are not careful. For instance, if a boy always hears his father speaking unkindly and disrespectfully about or to those who have authority over him, such as managers or police officers, what kind of an influence will this have on the boy? Many little boys have said, “I want to be just like Daddy.” But is this a good idea for a boy to have if all his father does is show his son how to be disrespectful and uncivil? If a boy is to look up to his father for example, then the father must not lead his son into error. The parent’s example is a much more powerful teacher than scolding or punishing.

A father also has the important task of teaching his son important life skills such as carpentry and auto repair. By doing this, the father forms in his son lifelong healthy attitudes toward work which is an important preparation for earning a living. Without his father’s leadership, a son’s life could just go “downhill” not knowing how to sufficiently provide for his own family someday. A father’s mission is to form in his son the skills that he will need to succeed in his future adult life.

How wonderful it is for a father and son to have a healthy relationship in love that lasts forever! A boy needs a father to help him through life. In a boy’s eyes, a great father is a lifelong leader and teacher. He lives on in the hearts of his children. If a father’s lessons to his son are truly for the sake of this boy’s successful manhood, they will live on in his heart long after he has left home. As Friedrich von Schiller, the famous German poet said, “It is not flesh and blood, but heart which makes us fathers and sons.”