

PEACEMAKING AND *NEWBORNS*

- Seeking wisdom through prayer, study, and discussions
- Training your children before they are even cognitive/verbal (actually trains us by giving us opportunities to practice)
- Determining what is important in your household: what standards and goals you will pursue regarding relationships/peacemaking and your children
- (Careful! New motherhood is fraught with many opportunities to make wisdom decisions and then judge people who disagree with us. For example: breast/bottle, crib/family bed, schedule/attachment, spanking/not spanking. In our church, we prayerfully strive for, “*Not Jesus Plus Anything!*”)

“GET ‘EM BEFORE AGE 2—OR IT’S TOO LATE”

- Authority and submission
- Blessings in obedience and painful consequences in disobedience
- “*The way of the sinner is hard.*”

THREE YEAR OLDS ARE *TEENAGERS*?

- The power of peers/social relationships
- The respectful appeal
- Practicing with “hypotheticals”

WHEN—*NOT IF*—OUR KIDS FIGHT

- Setting clear expectations—*with the parents and the children*—as to what behaviors will be expected, tolerated, rewarded, or punished (and what the rewards and punishments will be)
- Teaching and encouraging “work it out” options; being available to help
- Pursuing peace *with the parents* when there are conflicts among the children
- (Be sure to catch them being sweet! Don’t only interact with them on these social issues when there are problems.)

KIDS & CONFLICT AS *EVANGELISM*? YOU BET!

- Sharing the gospel with our own children
- Meeting unbelievers at swim lessons, the park, gymnastics
- Encouraging and helping Christians too—what a clear reminder of how glorious the gospel is: *We are all desperately sinful. We fail and miss the mark. But God is rich in mercy and He has made a way for us to be forgiven and fully reconciled to God and neighbor.*

Tara Barthel (www.tarabarthe.com), a former director at Peacemaker Ministries and “recovering lawyer,” currently serves her husband, Fred, and toddler, Sophia Grace, as a homemaker while regularly mediating and speaking on peacemaking. In between chasing Sophie and her Golden Retriever, Tara coauthored her first book: *Peacemaking Women—Biblical Hope for Resolving Conflict* (Baker Book House Co., 2005).