

“Cool School Rules”

Luke 2:41-52

Preached by Dr. Robert F. Browning, Pastor
Smoke Rise Baptist Church
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How many magnets do you have on your refrigerator? I am embarrassed to tell you how many I have. Thirty-five. You can only imagine how many pictures and lists they are holding in place.

Have you seen the cartoon of the repair man that is standing over a refrigerator that has fallen and is lying face down on the floor? He looks at the anxious couple and says, “Don’t worry. I see this all the time. It is called magnet overload.”

At the risk of having your refrigerator fall over, I want to encourage you to put one more thing under one of those magnets, especially if you have children or grandchildren. I call it **“Cool School Rules.”**

I wrote and put my version of **“Cool School Rules”** on our refrigerator twenty years ago. I don’t think my kids minded the rules as much as they did the title. They would roll their eyes when their friends mentioned it.

My **“Cool School Rules”** served as guidelines for the school year that promoted good study habits. I’ll share some of the items on the list with you.

Check in immediately after school.

Homework assignments need to be discussed with mom when you check in.

Returned homework or tests need to be shown to mom at this time, also.

You can play outside after school until dinner time.

Meals will be prepared each evening. Eat at home.

Transportation to and from events need to be scheduled.

Homework is to be completed before television time.

Bedtime is 9:30 for Josh and Amy and 10:30 for Jason.

Certainly your rules will be different from mine as you work around your busy schedules. However, the intent and ideas will be similar, I suspect.

Establishing boundaries is the first step in helping your children and grandchildren become good students. You must provide a learning environment that promotes good study habits.

The second thing you must do is take an interest in what your children are learning. In our house, Jackie was the math and science parent and I was the social studies and writing person. I proofed a lot of papers while she worked on geometric proofs. In some ways, it was like going back to school for both of us. I can still tell you quite a bit about WWI because of a paper I helped one of my kids research and write.

I believe children will take a greater interest in their work when parents show an interest in what they are learning. One reason I learned Latin was because my mother wanted to hear me conjugate verbs and translate sentences, or at least I thought she did.

Thirdly, in order to help your children have a good school year, provide help in areas where they are struggling. Spend money on tutors if necessary. If you have to make a choice between more clothes, toys, gadgets or a tutor, spend the money on education.

In order to help children learn, parents need to model good learning habits. Do you realize the only story we have of Jesus as a child is the time he was so absorbed with learning while in the temple that he missed his bus ride home. Well, he didn’t actually miss the bus, but he did miss the caravan heading north to Nazareth.

I’m sure you recall the story of Jesus at age twelve attending what was perhaps his first Passover. When Mary and Joseph realized that he was not in the caravan heading home, they

returned to Jerusalem to find him. Where was he and what was he doing? According to Luke, he was in the temple “sitting among the teachers listening to them and asking questions.”

This phrase, “listening to teachers and asking questions” was used of students in a classroom setting. The common method of teaching was for students to listen to their instructors and ask questions about what they heard. Clearly Jesus was the student here searching for knowledge and understanding like any conscientious twelve-year-old. Evidently he took learning seriously and was a good student, because the elders marveled at his insight and understanding. This led Luke to write that Jesus “**grew** in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men.” I don’t think he quit studying and learning, and neither should we. Parents and grandparents need to be life-long learners that inspire children to follow in their steps.

In many ways, my father-in-law was a Renaissance man. My vocabulary increased when I entered the family because of something he did every day. Each day he learned a new word and shared it with his family. Why else would I know the meaning of the word balderdash? Without a doubt, he was a good role model for all his family members.

I am most grateful that Luke preserved this story for us. In it Jesus also serves as a good role model for all our children as he assumed the role of an inquisitive and humble student seeking truth and understanding. The one who would call disciples was first a disciple.

Parents need to make sure their children are getting a balanced education. Certainly children need to learn math, science, history, geography and languages, but they also need to learn how to formulate values, arrange priorities, relate to others, handle problems, frustrations, challenges and temptations. They need to construct a strong faith that is Christ-centered and biblically based, one that will equip them to live with integrity and courage. They need to be taught the relationship between decisions and consequences, short and long term.

Not all that your children need to learn will occur in a school classroom. Church and home need to be places of instruction, too.

I am excited about the new church year that begins this month. At Smoke Rise, we take the religious training of your children seriously, and encourage you to take advantage of all that is offered to achieve this educational balance.

Finally, I encourage every parent to pray for his or her children during the school year. Ask God to instill in them the same love for learning that He gave His son, and then to grant them the discipline, confidence and patience they will need to do their best.

I also challenge our church members to pray for the children of our church during this school year and we have made this possible for you again this year. In a few moments, we are going to call our children to the altar and have the blessing of the students. Their names are on slips of paper that will be available to you as you leave the service today. Take one of these slips and place it in your Bible. Each day when you have your devotion, remember to pray for the student whose name is on that slip. What a beautiful gift you will give some child this school year.

I appreciate the words of Erasmus, the Sixteenth Century Dutch Renaissance theologian who wrote, “**The best hope of a nation lies in the proper education of its youth.**” I would like to think that this story about Jesus in the temple at twelve years of age inspired him. I also hope it inspires us to take the education of our children seriously so that we’ll do all we can to help them have a good school year. I believe Jesus will be pleased and honored as we do.

So, go home this afternoon and write your own “Cool School Rules.” Bring me a copy and we’ll post them in the youth and children’s area for all to see.

“The best hope of a nation lies in the proper education of its youth.” Let’s do our part at Smoke Rise to make this happen.