

Thumbs Up

Lisa Mandere

There have been many times in my life where I have wondered if I was doing the right thing, or was in desperate need of just a little extra encouragement. God seems to know what I need, and when I need it. If I am paying attention, he sends the "thumbs up" sign in ways I never would have expected.

God gave me the thumbs up back in the spring of 2007. My husband Steve and I were wrapping up our first official year of home schooling, and while we felt pretty good about it, we needed a little encouragement about the issue of socialization. One windy afternoon we took our three children out to the convention center to fly a kite. I stood with the baby in a stroller while my husband Steve taught our 4 and 6 year olds how to get a kite into the air. As I was watching, there was a large crowd behind me, obviously celebrating something, though I did not know what.

After a few minutes, a young man about 15 years old walked by. I asked him what was going on, and he very politely explained that it was a graduation ceremony for some ministry students. His sister was one of the graduates. He did not seem to be in any type of rush, so we ended up talking for about 10 minutes or so. It turned out that he was a homeschooler, and had been homeschooled since kindergarten. He spoke intelligently, and looked me in the eye when we spoke.

Up until this point, my husband and I had known only a few homeschoolers, and those we knew did not have teens yet. We had heard that this socialization stuff was all just a myth, but we were taking it on faith since we had not seen the fruits of the teenaged home school crowd just yet. My jaw nearly dropped to the ground as the conversation continued. This young man showed wisdom beyond his years, and not the slightest hint of typical teen-aged self-centeredness. He pointed to several of his siblings playing on the grass, and told me that they've had their spats, but they are his best friends. He spoke with high esteem of his mother and how thankful he was that she was willing to homeschool him. He also mentioned that most of his friends appreciate being homeschooled as well. Then he dropped another bomb when he told me that he misses his parents when he is away from them. His voice got a bit serious as he expressed concerns about evolution being taught as fact, and his concerns about teens his age being led astray by this belief system. After a very eye opening conversation, I picked my jaw off the ground because it was time for me to go. He followed us to our car, where I gave him a piece of paper, and he gave me his mom's email address, in case I had any more questions about homeschooling.

Steve and I left the parking lot with big smiles on our faces. God had just given us the thumbs up, and he continues to do so through other situations from time to time. Socialization is one of Satan's biggest lies and attempts to make homeschooled children look like misfits who cannot function in society. This simply is not true. Children will either be socialized in healthy real life situations, or in a sterile classroom full of peer

pressure. The young man I met had obviously experienced the former, or he would have been unwilling to talk with a stranger so freely and politely. I feel sad for the families who buy into the socialization myth. They are missing out on a big blessing.

Biographical Information

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Lisa Mandere is married to the world's best husband, and has four boys, ages 8 to infant. She enjoys reading, gardening, photography, bargain hunting, and reading aloud to her children.