

# Toilet Training/Wisdom

**Robyn:** Don't we love watching our children grow? The first smile, the first tooth... trying to crawl and then to stand up... their first words. Seeing them become independent and reaching the next stage of their development. We think they're so clever and we get excited and want to tell everyone around us what our baby can do.

I specially remember how proud I felt when my children could go to the toilet by themselves!

## Music

**Tammy:** Hi, I'm Tammy, and this is Women of Hope. Welcome!

**Carol:** And I'm Carol. Welcome to you too Robyn- I laughed to hear you being so proud that your children could use the toilet! This brought back many memories for me. Friend, we are glad you are with us today. Robyn's a mother, like we are, and she's lived and worked in different countries.

**Robyn:** Yes, and I've noticed that mothers teach their children about toileting in many different ways. I thought we could talk about that today, because I know it's something all mothers and carers have to think about.

**Tammy:** I think this is a good idea. But first I think we have to decide what words to use because sometimes using these words makes people feel uncomfortable. There are so many ways to describe what we do in the toilet. The liquid comes from the bladder and it's called urine, but children often call it wee. And the solid waste from our bowels is called faeces, but children often call it poo. There are so many different names depending upon the country and even the location in that country that you might come from.

**Carol:** Well, let's make it easy. Since we're talking about training children, let's use the children's words today. But remember they need to learn the proper words too.

**Tammy:** Ok, Robyn, how do our children manage to move onto this next step of development? Do we need to help them or does it happen by itself?

**Robyn:** Sometimes our children do need a bit of help to understand *when* they need to go to the toilet and then *how* to use the toilet. Some parents and carers think that they can make children ready more quickly. They often put the child onto the toilet, or a little pot, especially after eating or drinking. This helps children understand the connection between what they feel in their bladder (for wee) or bowel (for poo), and the right place to do it. Some people turn the tap on to make the child's brain think of doing wee when they hear the water flowing; others make "sh, sh" noises thinking that will help too. Children will all manage their bodies at different ages and be ready to use the toilet at different ages. Be patient!

I have seen many parents, especially in Asia, hold their babies out over the street, by the edge of the street or on the floor of the market, to encourage them to wee or even do poo there. They take their babies' pants off anywhere outside. Do you think that's a good idea?... I don't think this is a good habit; it teaches the children that they can do it anywhere they like, in the street, next to a tree, on a wall or in the park and then when they're adults they still do it there. Nobody likes to see people using the street as their toilet. It's not a public thing to do and needs to be done into a proper toilet! It also makes the streets and walls smell.

**Tammy:** And it gets into the water supply and makes the paths dirty. Our urine and our faeces are not clean; they carry lots of germs that spread easily and can make us sick.

**Robyn:** So we shouldn't tell children to do wee or poo in the street, or hold them over the gutter when they're learning- it's very unhealthy and will spoil the environment too. It attracts animals like

dogs and pigs that come and eat unclean things; rats and cockroaches will also come where there is human waste lying around.

**Carol:** This can be difficult; some places away from home don't have toilets nearby or they're very dirty, so parents need to find a private place, dig a little hole then cover it over when it has been used. But choose a place away from where other people walk. And then be sure to wash your hands as soon as you can, especially before you eat or prepare food.

**Robyn:** Train your children from when they are young to use the toilet so they will always try to find one when they're older and can go by themselves. Give them a good example by using a toilet yourself whenever it's possible, at home and away from home. Show them how to bury it in the soft ground if there's no toilet. Then wash your hands and their hands. Washing hands with soap after going to the toilet is very important if you want to stay healthy.

**Carol:** Children will realise that it's important if they see you do it, and they'll copy you. But you might need to remind them to wash their hands after the toilet and before touching food!

**Robyn:** I noticed that more countries are following the habits of Western countries; instead of holding babies over the gutter, some people now put nappies, or diapers, on their babies. This means that babies don't wet or dirty so many clothes, and parents are not so worried about toilet training. This may be a good thing but again, there are some things to think about. The nappies that many people use for their babies are "disposable" which means that they are only used once and then thrown away. That can be expensive. Cloth nappies can be washed and used again, but disposable ones can't be washed and have a lot of plastic in them, and that makes a lot of rubbish.

What should we do with these wet or dirty disposable nappies? Most people take them off their babies when they're full, and put them into a rubbish bin or sometimes even just into the street for the rubbish-collector to pick up. This is a problem, because dogs walk around all day on the street, they see or smell the nappies and take them away to eat. Sometimes the poo is spread all around the street and this is as bad as using the gutter in the first place!

So what should we do? I think it's good to use nappies or diapers of some sort on your baby, even if it's a soft cloth to lie on that can get wee on it.

**Tammy:** If you're able to wash and dry cloth nappies, they make less rubbish than disposable ones and usually they are cheaper in the long run. But you might need to change cloth nappies more often- you don't want your baby to lie in a wet or dirty nappy for a long time, and get a sore bottom. Wash the baby's bottom carefully after a dirty nappy.

**Robyn:** If you can afford to use disposable ones and you can buy them easily, you might prefer to use those. If you do, when you take them off, wrap them up tightly so that nothing falls out. Put them into a plastic bag, then into a rubbish bin. Make sure there's a lid on the bin that a dog cannot get off. Make sure that the rubbish is collected often.

**Carol:** OK, this is all good advice. But what about training our toddlers to use a toilet? I know many parents worry about doing this right.

**Robyn:** And if the parent is worried, that will make the child feel tense, and toilet training can become a battleground between parent and child. Try to relax, show them what to do but realise they will learn in their own time. There's no point in trying to train them before they're able to control the urge to go. Wait till they can feel a wee or a poo coming and they can tell you. That's probably not till they're about 18 months to two years old, but it may be earlier or later. Don't worry, it will happen!

Children love to copy their parents and older brothers and sisters; they feel very grown up. It's not hard to get them into good habits and once they have a toilet habit, it will stay with them and they will be healthier. Praise them for doing the right thing and remember, it may take time for our little

people to become completely independent. Don't punish them if they make a mess; just clean up and don't make a fuss. As they get bigger, show them how men and women use the toilet differently.

**Tammy:** Thanks Robyn for all of this good advice. We'll all be more healthy if we keep our wee and poo away from our streets and wash it down the toilet or bury it in the ground. And we won't get sick if we wash our hands with soap afterwards. I guess you could say: good toilet habits make healthier children and healthier communities!

**Carol:** It's often very difficult to be a wise mother, isn't it? We have to decide what are the important things to say and do, and when it's a good time to say or do them. Some things are quite clear: we all need to teach our children to use the toilet, to wash their hands or to tell the truth. So we begin teaching and showing *these* things when our children are very small. But there are some things that are not so clear: Like, how do I explain to my children about war? Or when should I teach them not to trust everybody?

My mother and several older women in my church gave me such good advice. Do you have some people to talk to about how to bring up your children? Maybe you learned to be wise from your own parents?

**Tammy:** I think that often we just do what we think is best and hope it will be good enough. It's hard to always be wise and know what's the right thing to do, especially when we see so many bad things happening around us. We want our children to grow up as good people, but there are many other things that influence them. I'm encouraged when I remember some words from the Bible; 'Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life'. (Prov 22:6, TEV)

**Robyn:** A time long ago, there was a very wise king who knew how to rule his country well. He knew how to give good advice to his people. Many people came from faraway places to ask him to solve their problems. That king's name was Solomon, the son of King David of Israel. He trusted God to make him wise.

**Carol:** When Solomon first became king, he prayed to God and said 'You have made me king over so many people... So please make me wise and understanding to rule over them.' God was pleased with this prayer, because Solomon didn't ask for gold... or to live a long life... or to defeat his enemies. No, he asked to be *wise* and so God answered his prayer- and he *also* became powerful and rich. (2Chronicles 1:7-12)

**Robyn:** Some of Solomon's wise sayings are written for us in the Bible, especially in the part called the book of Proverbs. It's there for us to learn from today.

To become a wise person you must take time and think about what you say and do, but it's worth the effort. The Bible tells us that being wise brings us rewards:

**Tammy:** I know several verses from the Bible about being wise:

'If you listen to wisdom you will understand what is right and just and fair.' (Proverbs 2:9)

**Robyn:** King Solomon tells us that searching for wisdom is better than looking for gold, silver or precious stones.

**Tammy:** He says, "Becoming wise is the most important thing you can do; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding." (Proverbs 2:4, 4:7)

**Robyn:** Wisdom will never lose its value and will be useful all of our lives. It will help us make good, fair decisions, and help us teach our children.

Would you like to have a wise heart and mind? How can we get this sort of wisdom?

The place to begin is to ask God. Solomon said:

**Tammy:** ‘Respect for the Lord is the beginning of wisdom... It is the Lord who makes us wise, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.’ (Proverbs 1:7, 2:6)

**Robyn:** If you respect God you want to *obey* his words. You spend time with him, worshipping him, meditating and praying. You might read in the Bible about who he is and how he wants you to live.

**Carol:** We can talk with God about all those things that we’re not sure about – like, how do I teach my children to be obedient? When should I scold them and when should I be more understanding of the things they do? What should I do when I don’t have money for the things I need? If we respect, love and trust God, he will be glad to show us how to live.

**Tammy:** That’s true. Often I’ve wondered what I should do as a mother, or how I should act as a friend. When I asked God to show me, he seemed to show me the right thing to do that would help the situation.

**Robyn:** I found that the book of Proverbs, in the Bible, is full of wise sayings for us to live by. It helped me to be a wise parent to my children. It tells us how to discipline our children with love. It has advice about how to manage our money, how to be faithful to our husbands and how to be good servants of God. It warns us not to tell lies, or steal, or quarrel. It warns us about gossiping, and being lazy, and spending our time with bad people.,. If you can, get a copy of Proverbs in the Old Testament in the Bible and read it for yourself. Or ask someone to read it to you.

**Carol:** In Proverbs, wisdom is described as a person – as a *woman* in fact, calling out in the marketplace, giving good advice. I like that!

**Tammy:** I wonder if Solomon thought that wisdom and women went together! Now I don’t often feel wise but I know that I can be wiser if I do what God tells me.

**Carol:** At the end of the book of Proverbs, there is some advice from a queen mother to her son about what a wise woman is like. Perhaps this young king was looking for a wife, and I suppose many beautiful, noble young women would have been happy to marry the king. But his mother was wise and she told him to look at a woman’s *character*. She warned him, ‘A charming woman can deceive you, and a beautiful woman won’t stay beautiful for very long. The ideal woman is one who honours the Lord above all.’ (Prov 31:30) This ideal wife works hard, she’s skilled at cooking, needlework, business and house-keeping. She looks after money carefully, but she’s generous, and thoughtful of other people. She speaks wise words in a gentle way. She doesn’t give people any scandal to gossip about, and above all she loves God. I don’t think any one woman can do all these things perfectly- I know I can’t! But it helps us get a good picture of a wise woman who honours the Lord. (Proverbs 31:10-31)

A woman like this can have great influence on her family and her community. We can be like this if we do what Solomon advised: “Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise and apply our heart to what they teach.”

**Robyn:** So it seems to me that we can *let God train us* to be wise when we follow his words. We also learn to be wise when we look at the life of our Lord Jesus, that we read about in God’s word the Bible. Jesus is our example and our teacher about how to live. And then we can *train our children* to be wise and understanding. We need to start by teaching them the stories and the truths from God’s word the Bible, and we need to show them by our example how a wise person should live.

**Tammy:** Let’s ask God to help us to be wise. He loves us and wants to give us wisdom. Will you pray with me now?

Dear God our Father in Heaven, all wisdom comes from you. I ask you to help me, and help my sister, to be wise women. Help us to understand your teaching and live in your ways, and show

others to be wise in the ordinary things of life. May we bring praise to you in all that we do. We pray this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen

**Carol:** It's really time for us to go. We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week and God bless you and make you truly wise.

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