

C O M M O N G R O U N D

by Joseph Tkach

Two hundred years ago, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the English poet and philosopher, was involved in a discussion with a man who believed that children should not be given formal religious instruction.

The man reasoned that they would then be free to choose their own religious faith when they reached maturity. It sounds very “enlightened,” doesn’t it? Well, Coleridge said nothing in reply, but later invited the man out into his garden. Coleridge was quite a poet, but he was a disaster as a gardener! The garden was a mess. “You call this a garden?” his friend exclaimed. “There are nothing but weeds here!”

“Well, you see,” Coleridge calmly explained, “I did not wish to infringe upon the liberty of the garden in any way. I was giving the garden a chance to express itself.”

If we want our children to have good, solid, godly values in this amoral world, we can’t leave it to chance! No one automatically develops virtues like self-discipline, hard work, courage, compassion, honesty, friendship, perseverance and loyalty. If children aren’t taught the values that will make them responsible and successful adults—if they aren’t taught about the love, power and mercy of God—chances are they won’t be interested when they’re grown up.

We must communicate moral and spiritual values to our children. Buy a children’s Bible. Read and discuss it with your kids. Pray with them. Teach them God’s principles for living. It will be the best investment you ever make! □

