

TINKER BOYS: BUILDING AN EDUCATION BY TAKING THINGS APART

By Todd Carpenter

What is to be done with a one-child demolition crew bent on dismantling everything in sight?
ENCOURAGE HIM!

Let me introduce myself – it should make my perspective clearer. I am Todd Carpenter, a children's minister better known as “Professor Pockets” to children around the world via my Internet web site: www.ALBERTweb.com, and through children's camps and meetings around the eastern part of the United States. I am also a computer consultant and patented inventor.

What I do for work and ministry, has everything to do with how I was raised and how my parents encouraged my sense of curiosity. I use computers in my daily work, troubleshooting software and hardware for clients and teaching others how to understand how things work. In my ministry, I use science experiments and use common everyday objects to explain the seemingly complicated aspects of God's word. What prepared me for this as a child?

A insatiable curiosity, imagination, a screwdriver, and VERY patient parents!

As a child I took apart my share of gadgets and appliances. In my teen years I was able to fix washers, dryers, kitchen appliances, and more around the house. In college, I was able to make a little money on the side by repairing things for fellow students faculty. Later, I applied what I knew to teach myself computers (inside and out)– as my family shook their heads thinking it was a waste of time... As it turns out, I can now make more money from my “hobby” than most of my brothers and sisters can with their college degrees. This is how the apprentice system used to work. Book learning is GOOD, but hands-on is BETTER!

Homeschooling excels at educating the child, not the classroom. Sometimes the lesson happens in the kitchen, on vacation, or even in the bathroom... When a child is curious - it's the BEST time for learning to happen. If they happen to take apart an alarm clock and can't put it back together, chalk up the cost of the clock to your child's education. You can ask them what they learned, but don't expect much in the beginning – and try not to make it seem too much like a school assignment if you can. As they learn more, you can call on them to give a demonstration or incorporate what they've been learning into a science fair.

You should provide items for your tinkering child to “destroy”. Search yard sales, ask friends to donate broken things. Give your child a work space and storage for parts. For a child so inclined, this is as important as a piano in the corner and a music library. NOTE: Please watch items such as old television sets that can still store a strong electrical charge even after being unplugged from some time.

If a child LOVES music, don't hold him or her back!

If a child is fascinated by historical figures – feed that child with history.

If a child wants to know how things work, give him a screwdriver! He'll learn more than words on paper can ever teach him. And it will prepare him for a life of service and learning.

God bless all the kids with screwdrivers!

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"You know, for kids... and the whole family!"