

# “Conversation Starters”

*Valuable information for parents intentional about raising godly and responsible children.*

## Talking to Your Children about...Politics

**Age Level** – Upper School

**Bible Verse** – Isaiah 33:22

*For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us.*

I love this verse – I think it lays out the foundation for the importance of “federalism” – the idea that power should not be concentrated in the hands of one or a few, but spread out so that there are competing interests who have to agree before something is accomplished. The Biblical truth is that ONLY a benevolent, all-knowing and all-powerful God can and should hold the office of judge, lawgiver and king – man, in his fallen condition, should not serve in this capacity because as Lord Acton famously quipped power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolute.

**Question 1:** If you are concerned that leaders could abuse their power, what could people (the electorate) do to protect themselves from potential abuse?

**Conversation:** There are several things that the electorate can do to help battle against the abuse of power of elected officials. First, an informed electorate is crucial – if people don’t know how their elected officials are voting, it is far easier for those in power to abuse their position. Also, if people don’t vote, elected officials lack true accountability. Some have proposed that elected officials should be subject to term limits – meaning that regardless of how poorly or well an elected official is doing in office, there is a limit to the number of “terms” or years that they can serve. The office of the President is constitutionally limited to two terms, but other elected offices on the federal level are not at this time.

**Question 2:** If you are looking for leaders who are least likely to abuse their power, what attributes and characteristics do you think are most important?

**Conversation:** Obviously one of the primary attributes to consider is a person’s moral character, but even in saying that it begs a question: how do you really know the morality of another person? So often we are disappointed by people who “say” all the right things and then live differently. In addition to what a person says, what else could you look for to learn more about their moral character? You’ll often hear the comment – show me a person’s calendar and check book and I’ll tell you about their character. What do you think about that comment regarding selecting candidates for office – should we know more about their personal lives or just be relegated to examining their professional lives as qualification for office?

**Question 3:** The other part of this verse, I believe, reminds us that politics won’t “save” us or heal our land – that’s something that only God can do. Although politics is important, how can we keep things in perspective as we engage in political activity and promote our candidates and ideals?

**Conversation:** Things to work could be some of the following: learning to disagree agreeably (not arguing with personal attacks, but arguing with the understanding that others have valuable opinions as well), learning to see the world from another’s perspective, learning to admit when you’re wrong and learning to think that it might be possible that you are wrong! These are all ways we can learn to discuss politics civilly!