

# Peanut Butter Cheerios and Spreading Joy

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General Mills is celebrating an extremely successful marketing campaign for their new "Peanut Butter Cheerios." Capitalizing on a recent trend in advertising that focuses on lifestyles, they produced [a commercial](#) about an "Awesome Dad" who, as you may have guessed, gives his kids Peanut Butter Cheerios. Apparently, a lot of viewers also think this Dad was awesome, because the commercial immediately went viral.



In fact, the Dad in the commercial really does portray a lot of the family values we would love to see in more families. He is involved in the everyday life of his children, helping them get ready for school. He clearly loves them and his wife. He loves life, not fazed by having four children, which is several more than the average American family. Many wives shared this video, praising their husbands for being similarly "awesome" and a number of news outlets commented on the way in which this commercial flies in the face of the way dads are normally portrayed on television (immature, self-involved, etc.).

Certainly, this is a marketing campaign and the main point of the commercial's release is to make General Mills money. However, it cannot be denied that the traction it has gained among the general public signifies the effect cultural leaders can have on the rest of us. As the result of a video, families are feeling more gratitude for their dads, perhaps some men are thinking of how they could be better dads and quite a few people are thinking nostalgically of the hustle and bustle of their own childhoods. Above all, the video displays the joy this dad exhibits in being a father, in spending time with his family—and this joy is contagious.

The truth is, we all have the opportunity to be this sort of influence on our culture. Maybe we do not have the reach of General Mills, but our personal witness to the joy of life and families can have an even more profound effect on those who know us.

Perhaps you are a mother who has her hands full. At times, having a number of small children is overwhelming, but it also brings innumerable joys to your life. This happiness is evident to those who encounter your family at the park, at Church, or out and about on errands. Even though the house may never be perfectly clean with toddlers around, the energy of these little kids cannot help but draw some smiles.

Or maybe you are an uncle who takes pride in your nephews and nieces. No doubt, some of your coworkers may find it surprising that you are going to spend time with extended family members instead of going to Happy Hour sometimes, but they may reflect further and realize your priorities in life. By being involved in your nieces' and nephews' lives, they have another adult role model. And, as others observe your healthy relationship, society is given one more example of the importance of the ties of family.

Many of us work with children on a volunteer basis. What could be more of a witness to the value of life and family than this? You take time out of your busy schedule to watch children in the Church nursery, teach children religious education or help them participate in charitable activities. You see the gift that each one of these young people is to the world and you affirm it by ministering to them. You most certainly make an impact on the young people you serve, but also on their parents and the community. Others see, hopefully, that you freely choose to invest your time and talents in children. What a witness!

In some ways, each of us is in a commercial. How we spend our time and who we choose to spend it with is "broadcast" to all that know or encounter us. Christ tells us that "where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (Matthew 6:21). When we invest our time, talent and treasure in our families and children, we are sending a message that we love and value them above money, professional status or other material possessions.

What is even better is that our acquaintances realize that we are not paid actors on a commercial trying to promote Cheerios. We are just living our lives and this is a more effective witness than anything we could say in defense of the beauty of life and family. As silly as it may sound, the Peanut Butter Cheerios commercial is a reminder not to hide our light under the proverbial bushel basket. Let us keep on choosing family and choosing to dedicate ourselves to those we serve, and hope that others will choose to do the same.