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**First Rights  
approx 451 wds.**

## **Building Positive Bonds Within The Family**

**By**

**Sharon Beth Brani**

**When I returned from Russia with my little two year old daughter, my ten year old daughter experienced conflicting emotions. Although on the one hand she was excited at finally having a little sister, on the other hand she felt threatened and insecure. Being an only child for ten years was a place she loved in my life. And to begin to learn to share me with another was not something she wanted to attempt. Quickly our home changed from a place of love and laughter to a battlefield filled with angry word and loud cries.**

**I was torn between the needs of each child. Turning to God for wisdom I asked Him to help me to understand each one so that I could help them to build a forever sister bond. I focused on the strengths I saw in their personalities and took the opportunity to speak of them to each other. ‘She’s such a good big sister.’ I’d say to my youngest encouraging her to listen to and appreciate her big sister. ‘She’s so sweet.’ I’d mention to my oldest daughter. ‘She wants to be just like you.’**

**Slowly they began to see each other not as one to compete with but as a fellow team member. Our family is still a work in process but the impact of speaking positively to each other is lasting and noticeable. I’m now seeing the results of weeks and months of talking up each others strengths. What a joy it is to see!**

**Yesterday I stopped at the local market for coffee before going in to work. Both girls were with me. I looked down at my youngest daughter whom I’d soon be leaving with my parents. I knew that she’s enjoy this time but I’d miss being with her.**

**“Honey, you can choose one candy bar today,” I said as we walked.**

**That was something I rarely ever do but something seemed to prompt me. She looked up at me and grinned. Then her eyes went to her big sister.**

**“Can she get one too,” she asked. “I don’t want one if she can’t have one too.” I could feel the tug of her request.**

**My heart leaped with joy. Thank you, God, I whispered in seeing their closeness.**

**“Sure, you can each pick one” I said with a big grin.**

**“Yeah” I heard as they scampered ahead of me into the store.**

**“Well, Lord,” I whispered. “You are so good.” I think I’ll buy one today too. What joy it is to celebrate special parenting moments!**