



Family Matters



A Christ-center resource for families and teachers

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Helping Your Child to "C"

Discovering ways to impart critical skills and values in your child's life and family setting.

Character

We go to the store and purchase many things for our children. We buy clothes, toys, personal items and treats. We do this for them at each stage of life as they grow up, all in the hope of giving them everything they need (and more). We desire to see them one day as capable, strong, responsible adults. We feel this is our duty as parents.

With all that is available to buy for our children, one thing we cannot purchase for them is character. Character is earned. It cannot be given, bequeathed or bestowed upon a child. It must develop from within.

Character is the ethic of humility, fidelity, courage, a sense of fairness, patience and personal industry. These are just a few of the qualities that make up a person of character. Character creates our reputation. Character is what is on the inside — that surfaces on the outside at just the right time, in just the right place, in just the right way. Character is integrity with skin on.

All parents want their children to succeed, and the first step to true success is the building of character. While it must come from within, the resources are all around us. Three key items stand out as foundational for character building:

God's Word

The Bible is our resource for every rule and norm of faith, as it gives us the truth of God and examples of how to live faithful lives. This is our textbook for living! There are stories of how God's people lived by faith and showed character. There are also stories of how people did not follow God's direction. Our children need to hear these stories and digest the personal meaning of them. What is great is that these stories can be repeated as children

grow up, and new meanings and insights can be gained each time they are heard. Themes of forgiveness and unconditional love are paramount.

The Word of Parents

The things we say as parents are heard by our children even if we think they are not listening. Our words do not fall on deaf ears. Children learn from what they see and hear, so we must be careful in what we say and in what we do (as our actions speak louder than words). Character is perhaps more caught than taught. We are being watched! The things we say and the way we say it can make an impact in shaping and molding the attitude and actions of our children.

The Word of the Child

Young child learn by repetition. They learn words by hearing them and repeating them. Eventually they learn that their words have an impact. As parents, we need to be good listeners, not just to hear the words our children speak but also the meaning and intentions behind those words. We are in position to guide their words, correct their words, and help them develop the vocabulary of character.

Character is not something that comes overnight, but is developed through trial and error, living truthful lives and doing the right thing even if nobody is looking.

FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Sit down as a family and follow the outline below.

Opening Prayer: Have a parent open with prayer.

Opening Question: If you could have anything in the world, what would you want?

Bible Story: Have a family member read 2 Chronicles 1:7–12

Discussion Questions

1. What did Solomon ask God to give him? (Wisdom.)
2. Why is wisdom important? (It helps us make good decisions.)

3. What does God also promise to Solomon? (Wealth, riches and honor.)
4. What does this story tell us about what is important in life? (That honor and integrity are more important than wealth or power.)
5. From whom did Solomon get every good gift? (God)
6. What is our best gift from God? (Jesus and eternal life with Him.)

Closing Prayer: Have a family member pray for the gift of wisdom and understanding.

TIPS FOR PARENTS: Here are a few suggestions to follow to help in developing character within your child.

1. Hold your children accountable for the things for which they are responsible.
2. Be an example of character yourself — follow through on your word. Let your behavior be a good example.
3. Surround your child with good examples of character in real life. Connect them with extended family members, church members and friends in the community.
4. Read the great character stories of the Bible to them on a regular basis.
5. Read other stories (or have them read stories) of good examples of character, both fictional and especially real life stories.
6. Make use of those teachable moments where you can clearly distinguish right from wrong, helping them understand the better way to act, talk or do something.
7. Find ways for them to experience service and sacrifice for the good of others.
8. Bring them to God's house regularly.



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