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Why Character Train?

Parents, our task is not easy… in fact, it's the biggest most difficult task we'll ever tackle. We've been given these children, as a direct blessing from God. But with that huge blessing, we are responsible to invest in them. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

This training task is also something that we need to be proactive with. We can't train our children well when we only teach them in a heated reactionary moment. Training must be proactive and not reactive. The best lessons are intentionally taught with an eye toward building life-long habits. These heart lessons, rooted and grounded in a solid Biblical foundation and brought to fruition with a personal faith are what give our children the strength of character in the tough times. Which is an example of just how important reaching the heart of our child is – Proverbs 4:23 says to "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life."

The Importance of Character Training

Instead of merely focusing on character development, we like to incorporate elements of dedicated character training. As with any other skill, good character must be taught and developed with practice and opportunities. How then, do you work on character training in a homeschool environment? Thankfully, homeschooling lends itself perfectly to including character development. Consider the flexibility of your homeschool schedule. Personally, we love including read-alouds with good values and monthly themes of solid character traits to work on. Additionally, positive reinforcement and praise is always the best motivation!

Character development is a slow process. However, the journey, while both challenging and beautiful, is worthwhile. To that end, we are dedicating a monthly series of resources and encouragement to help homeschooling parents with character training their children. This is the first installment, and our printables this month focuses on both honesty and humility. We believe honesty and humility are foundational character traits and essential to our life of following Christ. Consequently, they are a great starting line for a character development study!

If you need further convincing, here are a few top reasons why it's essential to include an element of character training in your homeschool!

- **You are your child's superhero.** They will repeat your behaviors, good or bad.
- Honesty and selfless acts are not necessarily second nature. These are actions and virtues all of us must learn to appreciate and respect.

- Planted seeds must be tended. Metaphorically, you are planting seeds of character development by your own actions. However, those seeds won't flourish without care. Character training will continue the work — the seeds — you've already begun.

How Does Character Training Make a Difference?

I hate to be Captain Obvious, but character training builds good character in our children. The second part of Proverbs 22:6 gives us hope. It says, "when he is old he will not depart from it." Now, don't get me wrong… this isn't a guarantee, but a principle of investment. Whether or not our children do "stick with it" when they are old is on them, but whether or not we teach and train them is on us. We must be intentional in our efforts because half-hearted attempts just won't cut it. Parents must be the ones who in their child training efforts, teach consistency by example. And I completely get that it's tough. I have six kids and consistency means getting up off the couch or out from under that comfy blanket where you've been reading and go deal with a situation with a calm and patient attitude ready to teach and train them! Shew… definitely not easy.

Yet, we have to look beyond the momentary inconvenience and realize that this training is building good habits for life… it's an eternal investment! Not to mention the fact that character training, if done intentionally, gives you a game plan for guiding your child's character. It can actually relieve frustration with your child's wrong behavior. Why? Because you can address the undesirable behavior with a positive lesson on the right character trait he/she should be having. We can begin dealing with life lessons instead of referees correcting problems.

How to Start Character Training?

I think I've said this several times already, but intentional consistency is the key! I guess I just can't say that enough! If we try to teach a lesson and then the next time they act out and we don't reinforce that lesson, we've lost a teachable moment and have actually reinforced the wrong character trait. So, yes, that inconvenient aspect of staying consistent is VITAL.

When you get down to the nitty-gritty and are ready to create a game plan for your character training method, you'll want to work through a few steps. Trust me, doing this will really help you be intentional and consistent.

1. Assess Your Situation

Just like we've learned in homeschooling, we need to know "about" our children before we can teach them well. The same in this situation. Take some time to do some recon. Watch and take notes on your child's behavior for at least a week. When you do this

you'll track the good and the bad and also details about when, where, and who are involved in the behavior moments you record.

2. Create a Game Plan

Grab your notes and a cup of coffee and go somewhere quiet. I remember taking some time to pray before I started on this. Why? Because what you are doing isn't something trivial, it's so important to raising children that can go on to be a blessing. Pray, review your notes and ask God to help you look for root causes and connections between your child's behavior and the root character trait needs work. Make a 3 columned list detailing the negative behaviors that need to be corrected, the non-existent character traits that need to be taught, and the good behaviors that need to be built.

Then I like to brainstorm ways or lessons that will reach the heart of the child and motivate them to change. Focus on the positive when teaching the lesson and correcting the negative behavior. Remember this – a negative behavior is often a misused positive character trait. Just like a very honest person can tend to be brutal or harsh, remember that at the heart of it is a good character but children need to be taught how to keep that character in check.

I also take time to name and define each character that I feel needs addressed. I usually do this on the 3 columned chart. So, if I have time I'll create a quick guide for character lessons customized for each child. That tool really helps when you are in the middle of a heated situation. You can grab your chart and use it to bring objectivity to a touchy moment.

3. Implement Your Training

Remember again, the source of the issue is the heart. Pray and seek to train them using God's word. Proverbs 16:23 says, "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." It starts in the heart.

Focus on one at a time. It really is a good idea to keep things simple. Don't try to cover your entire game plan in a week. Building good habits with character training takes time. Focus on one character until you see fruit. That may take a week or maybe two!

Create daily lessons. Yes, this is so beneficial. Use that chart you created as a guideline for working systematically through the character qualities that you want to work on. This is perfect for a morning quiet time or morning basket. Remember to use positive examples and stories to illustrate your point as well as negative examples and the natural consequences that follow.

Build Your Lessons.

1. Introduce the character and give the meaning. Proverbs 14:6b "Knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth" Always be sure to give the meaning when teaching a concept.
2. Involve the senses. It is a proven fact that humans learn best when additional senses are used.

3. Use pictures, stories, dramatized audio, or acting lessons out. Again using a variety of methods to teach your lessons can make a huge difference.
4. Be observant. Look for the good. Catch your child doing something great and praise and encourage them to continue that behavior.
5. Keep on! Don't give up when you have a difficult day. Because I can promise you will see tough times before you see a good character take root.

Remember, this is something that as parents, we are in for the long haul. Character training isn't something that is "one and done." Parents continue teaching and training both through lessons and by example throughout their child's life. It's something amazing that you've determined you'll do. You're investing in the future, one character lesson at a time!



Character Training: Honesty

Merriam-Webster defines honesty as: “adherence to the facts, sincerity,” as well as, “fairness and straightforwardness of conduct.” Honesty speaks more to who we are as a person than to anyone else. Our dedication to honest speech and behavior reveals our integrity. Depending on the situation, while it occasionally may not seem like another person deserves our honesty or related kindness, the choice is not about other people. Rather, it is entirely about the type of person we choose to be.

When you focus on character training with your homeschooler, it is important to address the reason behind our actions or preferences. Even if it is not immediately apparent, there is always a reason for our lessons. For example, one of the reasons honesty is important is because dishonesty breaks a person’s trust.

Character Training: Humility

Just as with honesty, it is important to begin any study with a definition. We cannot learn about a topic without first knowing what it is and how it applies to our lives. Humility is defined as “freedom from pride or arrogance.” This is an intriguing definition, as many of us probably don’t associate humility with the thought of freedom. If freedom is involved, it’s implied that pride and arrogance are traits from which we need liberation. Does that mean we are naturally inclined toward prideful actions or arrogant thoughts? Is humility something we need to consistently work towards until it becomes a greater habit or inclination than pride?

These are all discussion points to touch on with your child according to your own preferences and views. Regardless of exact answers, humility is integral to polite and considerate communication among society, and an important aspect of Christ’s followers.

Dig Deeper with a Bible Study

You might want to incorporate an extension activity for your older children. You can encourage them to do a daily Bible study on all the mentions of Honesty and Humility that are found in the Bible. We’ve enjoyed seeing all the various ways the Scripture addresses these particular character traits.

Honesty Scripture References

- I John 3:18
- Proverbs 11:3
- I John 1:6

- Romans 13:7
- Matthew 5:8
- Proverbs 16:28
- II Timothy 2:15
- Psalm 37:7
- James 3:17
- Proverbs 3:27

Humility Scripture References

- Ephesians 4:2
- Philippians 2:3
- Proverbs 11:2
- Romans 12:16
- James 4:10
- I Peter 3:3-4
- Colossians 3:12
- Proverbs 29:23
- Proverbs 22:4
- II Chronicles 7:14
- I Peter 5:6
- James 3:13

Honesty

What is it...

Most often we think of the commandment that tells us not to "lie" or "bear false witness." Exodus 20:16 But, the Bible also tells us that, "...they that deal truly are his delight." Proverbs 12:22 (Also verses Ps 19:14 and Col. 3:9)

Honesty in Practice

Honest	Not Honest
Speaking the truth	Telling a lie
Being open and transparent	Hiding something
Being yourself	Pretending you're something you're not

What would you do...

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

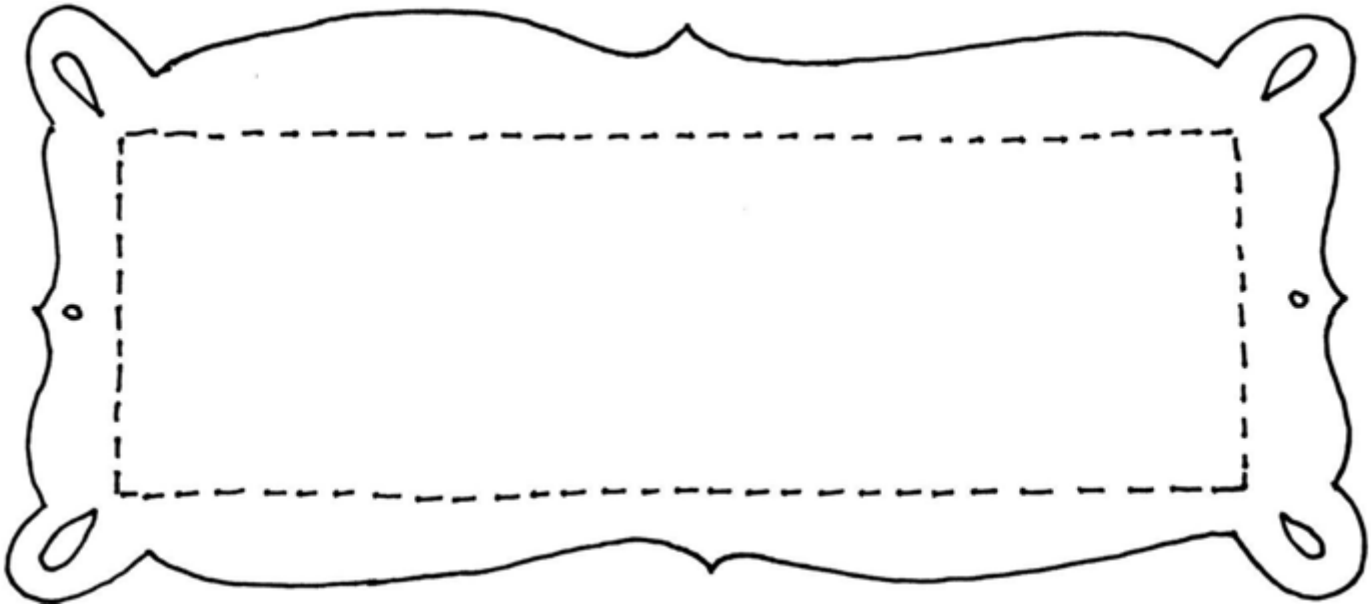
- You broke a glass, tried to clean it up, and then hid the broken glass. Mom asks everyone who broke the glass. You decide to:
  Let her know it was you. OR Act like you don't know anything.
- You went to the park to play with your big brother. But on the way home you stopped at Susan's house without permission. When you got home dad asked what you did today. You decide to:
  Tell him you went to the park and Susan's house OR
  Just tell him you went to the park.
- A friend of your older brother who you think is cool asked you how old you are. You decide to tell him:
  You're older so he'll think you're cool too! OR Your true age.

Honesty Sort

List actions that you know are honest or dishonest

HONEST	DISHONEST

What is Honesty



Draw a picture of what you think honesty looks like. Then write a few sentence about honesty in action.

Humility

What is it...

The official definition of humility is "freedom from pride or arrogance." This character trait can often cause confusion but it's important to note that you can have pride in a job well done, but when we forget how others feel or think we are better, show off, or even brag we are not being humble. Phil 2:3 says, "...let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

Humility in Practice

What could you do today that would demonstrate a humble attitude toward your family? Your brothers or sisters?

_____

_____

_____

What would you do...

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

- You won the baseball game against a really tough team. You're so happy what's the first thing you do?
  Shout 'We're so awesome!" **OR** Tell the other team they did a good job.
- You drew a beautiful picture in art. You friend said she has a hard time drawing. You then
  Brag about how great you draw **OR**
  Ask your friend if they want to practice drawing with you
- You were chosen to sing at church, and your friend had been wanting to for quite a while. You decide to:
  Talk all day about how you were chosen **OR** Ask her to sing with you for church.

Humility

The synonyms of humility are gentle, courteous, modest, unpretentious, and soft-spoken. What does the Bible say about humility in Proverbs 18:12? Write a 3 paragraph essay on what you think humility is and why it's important.

Humility

Draw a picture of what you think humility looks like in action.



Write two sentences about what you drew.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____



Teaching Our Children Wisdom

Wisdom is a foundational character trait that is the basis for so many other traits that we would love to instill in our children. Wisdom isn't simply intelligence or knowledge, but the ability to use God's Word along with both of those to make choices that are beneficial and productive, not just now but for the future. Living out wisdom also requires us to stop and think before we act. The best way to teach our children wisdom is to live it out before them!

Teaching Our Children Compassion

Compassion is a concern for the misfortunes of others along with a desire to help them. Compassion is usually shown through these synonyms of the word: care, concern, tenderness, empathy, kindness, consideration, sympathy, and charity. Encouraging a heart of compassion in our children is vital to teaching them how to make a difference in their neighborhood and community.

Teaching Our Children Contentment

Contentment is a character trait that has a twin, gratitude. Contentment and gratitude go hand in hand. When we are grateful we are usually content. Both of these character traits represent a state of satisfaction and happiness with the blessings that one has been given.

Dig Deeper with a Bible Study

You might want to incorporate an extension activity for your older children. You can encourage them to do a daily Bible study on all the mentions of Honesty and Humility that are found in the Bible. We've enjoyed seeing all the various ways the Scripture addresses these particular character traits.

Scripture verses that demonstrate Wisdom:

- Psalm 37:30
- Proverbs 1:7

- Proverbs 3:7
- Ecclesiastes 2:26
- I Corinthians 1:25
- Colossians 2:2-3
- James 3:17

Scripture verses that demonstrate Compassion:

- Exodus 33:19
- Isaiah 30:18
- Isaiah 49:10
- Isaiah 54:10
- Colossians 3:12
- James 5:11

Scripture verses that demonstrate Contentment:

- Philippians 4:12-13
- I Timothy 6:6-7
- Hebrews 13:5
- Luke 12:15
- Psalm 37:3-4
- Proverbs 28:6

Wisdom

What is it...

Wisdom isn't simply intelligence or knowledge, but the ability to use God's Word and both of these to make choices that are beneficial and productive, not just now but for the future. Proverbs 9:10

Wisdom in Practice

Living out wisdom requires us to stop and think before we act. The book of Proverbs is full of wisdom words to live by. So, before we act, it's so important to stop, think, and apply God's words of wisdom. Write these verses on the lines below, Proverbs 15:1 and Proverbs 16:32.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would you do...

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

- You really want a new bicycle, but you've also been saving your money to help a friend whose dad lost his job. When you see your bicycle on sale what do you do? Proverbs 8:11

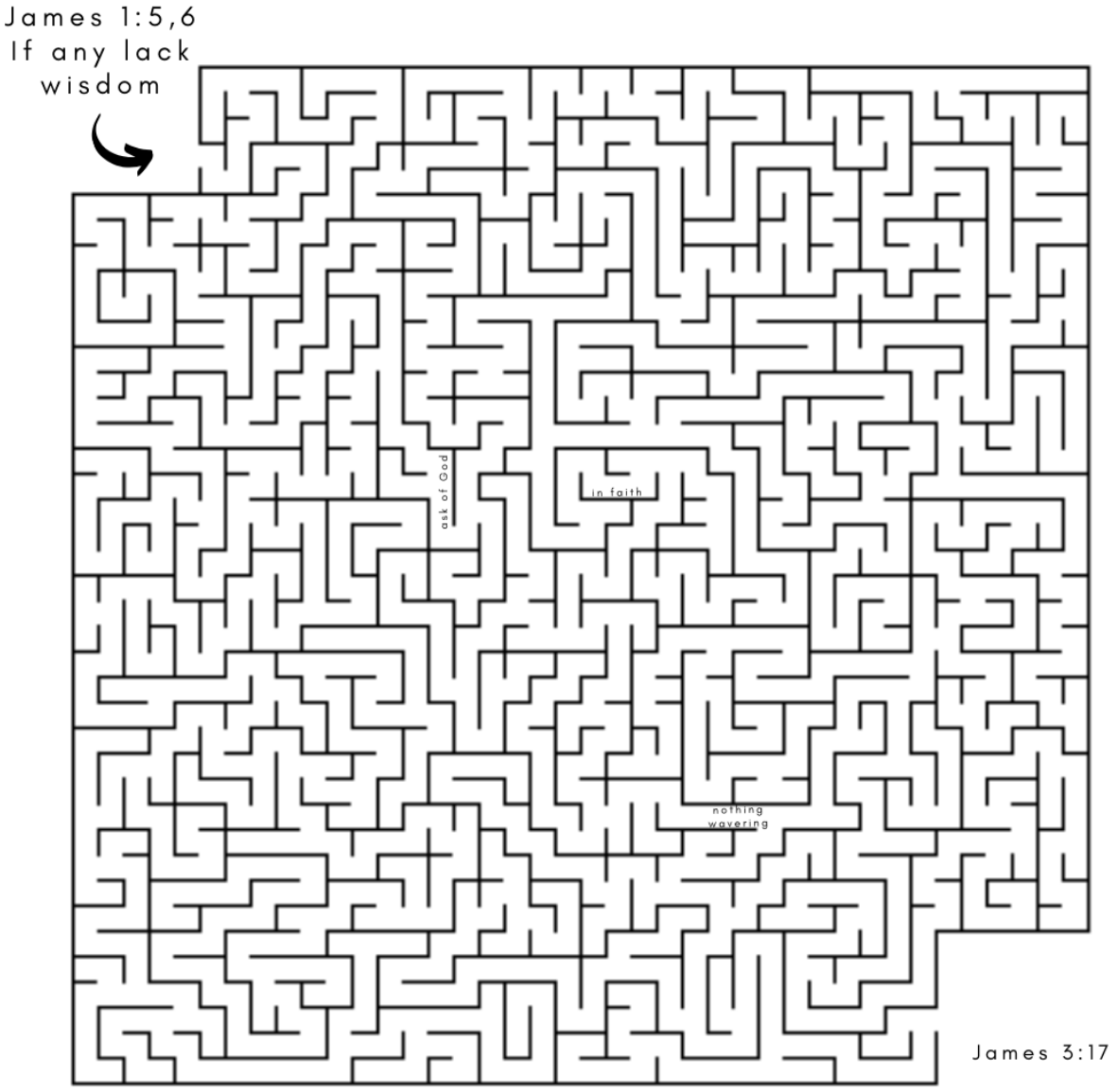
  Forget about your friend and buy the bicycle OR Think about it, and determine that you'll keep on with the good purpose to help your friend.

- Your grandma got you the bicycle that you dreamed of, and you want to ride it now! But, the bicycle needs assembled, you can make a decision to:

  Start putting it together quickly and carelessly without reading the directions OR Take the time to read the directions, and assemble your bicycle correctly and safely

Wisdom

Instructions: Follow the path to wisdom from James 1:5,6 and discover what true wisdom is.



Wise or Unwise Cards!

Cut out the cards and categorize them as either wise or unwise.

John took his friend's favorite toy, but felt bad and returned it.

Jordan was angry because Susan kept teasing her about her drawing. Jordan told her it hurt her feelings and Susan apologized.

Tom knows he shouldn't talk about his friends behind their back, but he likes feeling important.

Ella likes playing with Anthony but he keeps lying. Ella told him that lying isn't wise and asked him to stop. Anthony said he didn't care.

John told his friend Tom not to talk to the new kid on their team. Tom didn't agree but he did what John said anyway.

Emma saw a girl at the playground all by herself. Even though Emma is shy she asked the girl to play with her.

Jodi was so proud of her painting even when her friend messed hers up and cried, Jodi kept talking about how wonderful hers was.

John was upset that Tim beat him in soccer. Even though he told him it bothered him, he still kept rubbing it in.

Caitlyn had several friends who didn't always do good things. After thinking about it Caitlyn decided to hang out with her other friends instead.

A new neighbor moved in across the street. Chloe and her siste go visit and ask her to go ride bikes with them.

Contentment

What is it...

contentment is being satisfied and happy. It is the extraordinary ability to find happiness even if life is difficult. Philippians 4:11.

Contentment in Practice

Being content in whatever state you are in is not an easy task. By nature, we tend to complain or grumble. I Timothy 6:8 tells us that we should be content with food and clothing. So often we look at what is going on around us, what our friends might have and what they might be doing and we envy them. But, Hebrews 13:5 encourages us to be content with such things as ye have. Write out this verse and think about it today.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would you do...

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

- Susie's mom lost her job and now they have to move in with grandma. She is very unhappy and complaining. What should she do? What did Heb 13:5 tell us to do?

  _____

  _____

  Your brother was able to go with friends to the roller coaster park but you weren't invited. This bothers you and you want to say something to your brother but what should you do? _____

  _____

  _____

Name: _____

Contentment

P Y A A F N V Z M M Y D Z P L N M
T M R J H I E A I D E E R D U Z S
N H K X O C E P J I A L U U J J S
E R A V A R J Q F O Y L L V B V U
T P Z E D W D S S M W I U R E B O
N E P W U D I N F N V F F V L O L
O R Y F U T X O Z T S L E C O T A
C C U E A G Y B T W V U T H N H E
Q E G S C O M F O R T F A I G A J
Z I D T T E S D N I M B R P I N T
H V E N J Z J T M Y S X G R N K O
T E C E K F J X D G H C A O G F N
M L I L P T L E A R N A E P S U V
R U D A N F J D B I X P R E P L A
Y Y E T T F F I K A R Y Y R R F H
K E L Z P Y P P A H B O D T H E I
P R O U D B U T S T X P H Y F N G

Fulfilled
Decide
Property
Not Jealous
Grateful
Peace
Thankful
Belongings
Mindset
Happy
Comfort
Proud
Learn
Dream
Satisfied
Talents
Perceive
Content

Compassion

What is it...

compassion is being sympathetic for the suffering or misfortune of others. The Bible tells us that God is compassionate in Psalm 86:15.

Compassion in Practice

Being compassionate is something that each of us needs to work on. Compassion doesn't come easy, so it is important that we learn to look for people that are in need and show compassion on them. Write Jude 1:22 below.

_____
_____
_____
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What would you do...

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

- You know a family whose dad passed away last month, they are having trouble paying their bills and getting groceries. What could you do to show compassion?

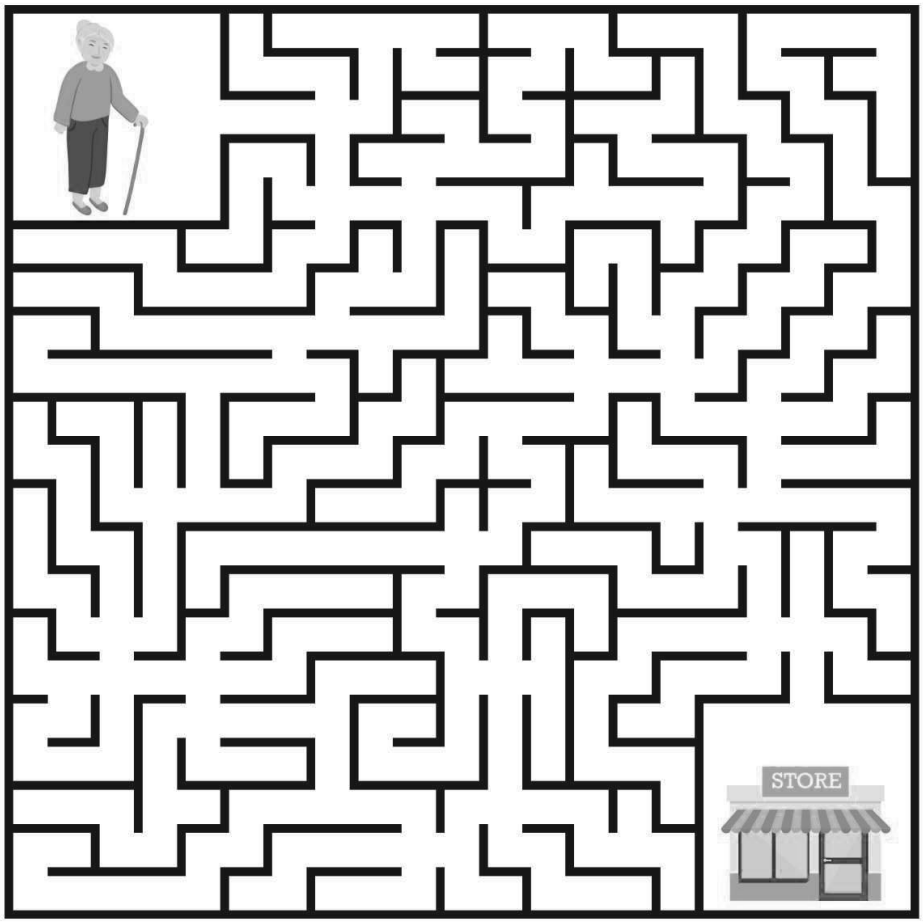
  _____
  _____

- Yesterday, Chloe failed her math test, and today at co-op she had been crying. What could you do to encourage your friend?

  _____
  _____
  _____

COMPASSION

Show compassion and help Grandma cross the street so she can go to the store.





Teaching Our Children Determination

Determination is a term often thrown around. It is used with success ranging from athletics, academics, disabilities, and the career field. With a word that has multiple uses and connotations, how can we apply it to our homeschool character training? Determination is one of those qualities that manifests itself when a person encounters a challenge. Dependent on how far a person overcomes those obstacles, or how well they solve them entirely, equals how much determination a person is said to demonstrate.

Determination is a type of inner strength. It means not giving up despite challenges, and being brave despite fear. It means riding out the storm. However, it doesn't apply to merely situations in which people come out triumphant. Sometimes, people fail at their attempts but they are considered determined because they gave it their best shot despite difficulties.

When considering examples of what are character traits, determination can be seen in the fable, *The Tortoise and the Hare*, as well as in real-life success stories like with Simone Biles. However, when looking for lesson plans on character traits, you'll want to keep in mind that determination is also found in examples of people with special needs, like Temple Grandin, or with disabilities. The quiet strength of determination takes on many shades, perspectives, and applications.

Help teach your children determination by encouraging them to take on challenges and praising them for their efforts when they've done their best whether they have succeeded or not. Teach your children determination by modeling it yourself when you encounter obstacles in life. Finally, teach your children determination by showing them examples in the Bible, whether you choose the stories of Esther, Job, Noah, or even Jesus himself.

Teaching Our Children Diligence

Oftentimes, it's easiest to approach teaching a topic by first bringing it back to its dictionary definition. Merriam-Webster defines diligence as: "steady, earnest, and energetic effort." Diligence is perhaps best seen when children follow through completely with chores or their schoolwork. Diligence does not require a happy attitude, but it does mean that despite how a person may feel about a task, they follow through with doing their best anyway.

In learning diligence, people recognize that the end goal and the big picture are both dependent on the task itself and therefore good efforts are necessary. However, being diligent may also apply to situations when we don't know the big picture but do our best with the task anyway. We recognize that our good efforts matter, even if the job is menial. It says more about ourselves than anything else when we practice diligence.

As you look for lesson plans on character traits for teaching diligence, books that teach character traits will be helpful. Among a list of character traits, it can help to discuss diligence as one of the most essential for steady employment. Employers look for people they know will see through a task regardless.

To teach your children diligence, you'll need to model it with your own actions. Children learn more from their parents than anything else, so set an example of diligence, especially in disagreeable moments. Further, encourage your children in their efforts as a reminder that their choice to do their best work is important. Finally, as Christians, remind them of Luke 16:10: *"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."*

Teaching Our Children Dependability

Good character counts, especially for a trait like dependability. If a person is dependable, it means they are trustworthy and reliable. A person needs to be dependable for anyone to count on them. The more dependable a person is, the more other people will feel they can trust them when needed. If you are working through a list of character traits, dependability is one of the most positive and necessary! Lesson plans on character traits often touch on being dependable since trust and social relationships are such an impactful part of how we communicate as people.

We all want a good job, a fulfilling career, and the income needed to cover at least our basic needs. However, a solid career does not come without dependability. Both employers and colleagues need to know they can count on their teammates to follow through on projects and tasks. If your manager or coworkers don't believe you're dependable, you may even become a liability to the company. Dependability marks the difference between being trustworthy or being unreliable.

Even with family relationships, parents and children form bridges of trust with each other. Children will learn to trust that their parents will provide for them, and parents learn that their children can be trusted with bigger opportunities.

Dig Deeper with a Bible Study

You might want to incorporate an extension activity for your older children. You can encourage them to do a daily Bible study on all the mentions of Honesty and Humility that are found in the Bible. We've enjoyed seeing all the various ways the Scripture addresses these particular character traits.

Scriptures that demonstrate determination:

- 2 Chronicles 20:17
- I Corinthians 16:13
- 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
- 2 Corinthians 12;10
- 2 Timothy 4:7

Scriptures that demonstrate diligence:

- James 1:12
- Proverbs 6:6-8
- Galatians 6:9
- Proverbs 21:5
- Proverbs 12:24

Scriptures that demonstrate dependability:

- Philippians 1:27
- I Corinthians 16:13
- Hebrews 3:14
- Luke 16:10
- 2 Timothy 3:14

Determination

What is it... Determination is a positive character trait that involves sticking with something that is difficult in spite of the hardships. This is sometimes referred to as having "grit" or "stick with-it-ness!" Daniel 1:8-16

Determination in Practice

Have you ever determined to do something because it meant a lot to you? Share your story.

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_____
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_____
_____
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What would you do...

Building grit and resilience are important aspects of "growing up." What goals do you have for your future? How will you attain those goals?

GRIT CHALLENGE:

Take some time to interview people in your life that have accomplished great things. Ask them how they found the strength to complete their goals and how they found the resilience to keep going. Who will you interview?-

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Determination

Instructions: Read a story of determination like "The Little Engine that Could" or about the life of Thomas Edison. Take a minute to draw a picture that shows the great determination portrayed and write out what you thought was the hardest part.

Sometimes You Must Solve a Problem First!

Determination doesn't always come easy, it takes real strength. But, learning how to solve problems and think logically through a situation is a great place to start!

What is the problem you are facing?

Can you think of ways you could solve that problem?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

For each solution think all the way through to the end of what would happen if you chose that solution.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Determine which solution had the most positive outcome!

Diligence

What is it... Diligence is careful and persistent work or effort. A diligent person will work till the job is done, and will do the task to the best of their ability. Diligence is a good work ethic. Proverbs 22:29 tells us that a diligent man is put before kings!

Diligence in Practice

Diligence is doing all the little things well so that the end product is great! Can you think of a time that you were LESS than diligent in doing a task? Explain

_____
_____
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What would you do...

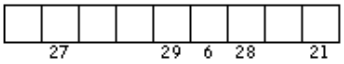
If mom wasn't diligent at cooking dinner and left the meat frozen and the veggies uncooked what would you think? Why is diligence so important?

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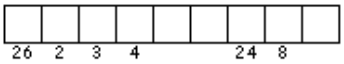
Diligence in a Quote!

Take a minute to unscramble these words about diligence!

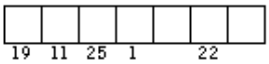
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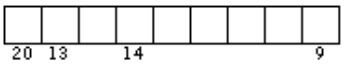
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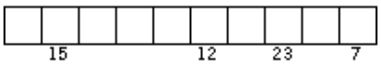
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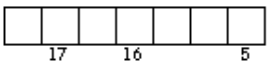
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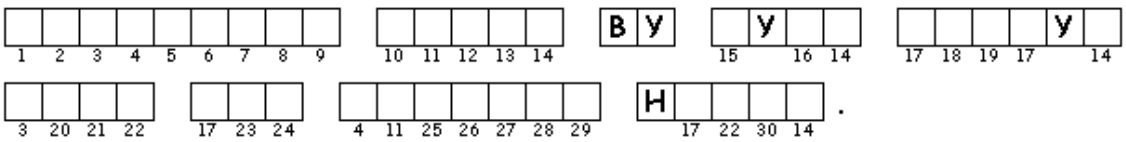


FULRACE



DFICLUTIF





Unscramble each of the clue words.
Copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number.

Find the Words That Are Similar to Diligent!

V E D I L I G E N T V A A E P

G F V L U F E R A C V T G X H

M G P I P Q A Y U U T S S E M

Z V F I T U A I P E R S D R A

F C F N Y N N C N B E E X T D

L D H D J D E T T N W N U I M

F Z M U U R I T T I R K J O W

M B C S D O O R T K V C J N L

Q J T T N I E G E A A I Y S Y

X R W R M L E Z I M A U T P U

Y B X I A P D K U V G Q K Y B

N E S O I M D J U I K R Y U R

C E W U B F D F R O W V S F V

S Z T S Y C N A T S N O C P K

E S G Z Z Z T Y Z N P A B O X

ACTIVITY
ATTENTIVE
DILIGENT
INDUSTRY

ALERTNESS
CAREFUL
EXERTION
QUICKNESS

ATTENTION
CONSTANCY
INDUSTRIOUS
VIGOR

Dependability

What is it...

When someone is dependable it means that they are trustworthy and reliable. When they say they will do something, they will do it. Being dependable means that people can count on you.

Dependability in Practice

Being dependable is an important character trait. Can you recall a time when you were dependable and helped another person? Share your story.

_____
_____
_____
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_____

What would you do...

If someone asked you to clean out their barn and you agreed to be there to do the job on a certain day but then didn't show, what would that person think? Would that be demonstrating dependability or not? Explain.

_____
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Dependability

Dependability takes work and lots of effort, but it's worth it in the long run! Can you answer these questions to see where you might need to work on dependability?

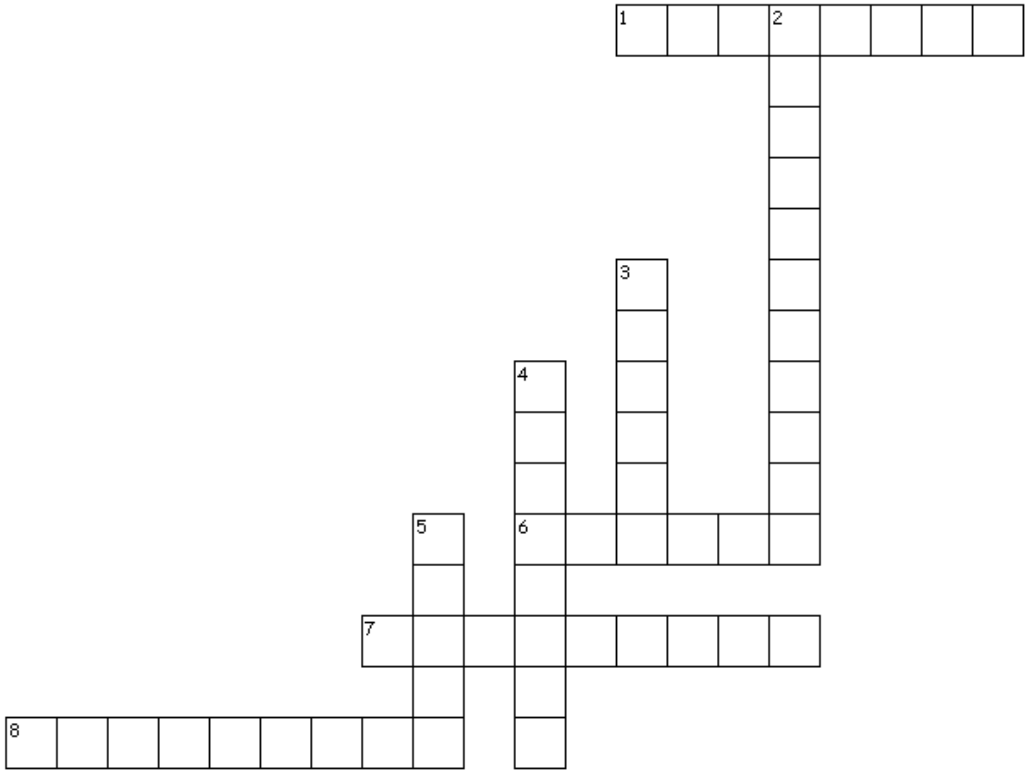
1. Do you typically finish a job to the end doing your best at each opportunity? Luke 16:10

2. Do you show up and complete a task when you've given your word that you would?

Can you read Ruth 1:16? What is it about Ruth that made her dependable?

Can you describe or draw one way that you can be dependable today?

Dependability Crossword Puzzle



Across
1. loyal constant or steadfast
6. firmly fixed or balanced
7. without error or fault
8. strength in a person's nature

Down
2. able to be relied on as honest
3. firmly fixed not likely to give way
4. remaining the same
5. high respect or esteem



Teaching Our Children Gentleness

Gentleness refers to being kind, good-mannered, and aware of propriety. Synonyms of gentleness include carefulness, cautious, and pliability. These words refer to a character development trait that exhibits an open mind to teaching, hesitation to jump to negativity or conclusions, and awareness of fragility, whether in people, inanimate objects, or animals.

Gentleness is all about filtering our actions and speech to ensure they are considerate, helpful, and thoughtful.

Learning about gentleness is an important aspect of building character. Children need to know to be careful toward smaller, younger, or weaker people and animals. We learn to control what we say in consideration of others.

WHY is gentleness important?

- **Gentle people can help defuse stressful situations.**
- **Gentleness is a balm to hurting people.**
- **Gentle people show reactions matter**
- **Gentleness demonstrates care for intentional actions, like kindness.**
- **Gentleness is the opposite of egotism and bullying.**

HOW can your children learn gentleness?

- **For Christian homeschoolers, read about gentleness in the Bible.**
- **Demonstrate gentleness in your actions.**
    - I wonder if we could reduce our irritable knee-jerk reactions or loud voices in stressful situations. Maybe we could take a breath instead and walk away before we decide how to react.
    - Show the importance of a gentle spirit toward animals.
- **Talk about practical examples of gentleness.**
    - Not hurting siblings, physically and emotionally.
    - Talking through emotions instead of yelling.
    - Remembering life is not a competition.
- **Emphasize that gentleness is NOT weakness.**
    - In fact, gentleness shows strength of spirit to practice control and kindness.
- **Encourage them to think of weekly opportunities for practicing gentleness.**
    - Closing doors quietly.
    - Keeping inside voices.
    - Being considerate of when others are sleeping, tired, or sick.

- Helping the elderly.
- Caring for animals.

Teaching Our Children Gratefulness

Gratefulness is one of the most wonderful character traits for both children and adults. Gratitude is unique because it not only positively affects the people around us, but it also influences our mindsets. Gratitude helps shift our perspective in life to see the good in moments and people--the "silver lining."

Practicing gratitude spreads cheer to those around us. At the same time, gratefulness begets gratefulness, which becomes a cycle of genuine positivity. Gratitude boosts our brain health and resiliency.

WHY is gratefulness important?

- **Focusing on gratitude helps us push past difficult or even tragic life situations.**
- **A heart of gratitude will encourage happiness and joy organically.**
- **When someone expresses gratitude to others, the feeling is contagious.**
- **Practicing gratitude shifts our mindsets from feelings of lack to feelings of thankfulness.**
  - It can be easy to focus on hard things and forget about the wonderful aspects of our life.
- **Mindfulness is the practice of a daily centering our thoughts on gratitude.**
  - This is called positive psychology, and it can make a *massive* difference for people feeling overwhelmed by discouragement. Start small. Every baby step counts!

HOW can your children learn gratefulness?

- **Look into Scripture about gratitude.**
- **Start gratitude journals.**
  - Every day, they should write down five things for which they are grateful. Nothing is insignificant. Even if it's just a new TV show or a comfortable pair of shoes. Gratitude is gratitude, regardless!
- **Discuss practical examples of gratefulness.**
  - It goes beyond saying "thank you." Gratitude is about truly feeling touched by the thoughtful actions of others and noticing the positives of our situation in life.
    - However, avoid "toxic positivity." This is an extreme that dismisses anything difficult or painful by comparing to others having it worse or saying "you shouldn't be upset." **There is no hierarchy of pain.** It's not a competition. *Someone else's immensely difficult life situation does not make yours any less real.*
      - Sometimes, positive psychology simply cannot fix the pain. At that point, it's important to acknowledge it for what it is. Give it time. (You can't heal a broken leg by refusing to use crutches.) Repressing pain is not the same as working through it.

- **As always, demonstrate gratefulness yourself.**
    - Thank your kids when they've completed something as asked. Even with regular chores. After all, don't you appreciate that they checked it off?
    - Show gratefulness to others around you. Your spouse, parents, siblings, in-laws, co-op friends, church attendees, etc. Make sure you are "caught" expressing thank yous and talking about how much you appreciate various things.

Teaching Our Children Generosity

Also known as altruism, selflessness, benevolence, philanthropy, and charity, generosity encompasses many aspects of kindness. When working on character development, generosity is a foundational trait to emulate.

Generosity leads to recognizing the value in other people, our equality, and understanding good morals. Building character with generosity is about more than merely teaching kids to share, it's also about a generosity of spirit--which includes helping the less fortunate, playing fair, paying it forward, and expressing kindness or justice regardless of unappreciation. A generosity of spirit is an aspect of integrity: who we are when we're alone.

WHY is generosity important?

- Sharing with others in need shows kindness
- Generosity acknowledges the value of other people, especially when they are in less fortunate circumstances.
- Generosity prioritizes people above possessions.
- A generous spirit is vital to building relationships.
    - All relationships require give-and-take. If a person only takes, they will drain the other person and leave them to solely support a one-way friendship.

HOW can your children learn generosity?

- Consider Biblical examples together.
- Demonstrate generosity to your children.
    - Let them "catch you" offering larger portions of dinner to the other family members.
    - Discuss that everyone's voice matters and when some people are hurt, helping them is the right thing to do.
    - Bring them along when you serve at a soup kitchen, discuss why you donate instead of selling/trashing items, and involve them in contributing to a Go Fund Me.
    - Generosity can be as simple as letting someone onto the freeway ahead of you, taking an extra second to hold open a door, picking up an item someone dropped, and so on.
- Have them think of practical ways they can show generosity.
    - Letting their sibling have a turn at their new toy.
    - Looking ahead and writing out gift ideas for birthdays and Christmas.
    - Offering their free time to help a sibling or friend study.

Scriptures that Demonstrate Gentleness:

- Philipians 4:5
- Colossians 3:12
- Proverbs 15:1
- Proverbs 16:24
- Galatians 5:22-23
- Romans 14:13
- Hebrews 13:1-2

Scriptures that Demonstrate Gratefulness:

- Ezra 3:11
- Psalm 7:17
- Psalm 9:1
- Psalm 35:18
- Psalm 100:4-5
- Psalm 106:1

Scriptures that Demonstrate Generosity:

- Leviticus 25:35-37
- Psalm 41:1-3
- Luke 6:37-38
- Galatians 6:2
- Psalm 119:36
- Proverbs 21:13

Gentleness

What is it...

gentleness is the act of being kind, good-mannered, and aware of propriety. A gentle person is typically easy to teach, and hesitates to jump to negativity or harsh conclusions, and typically tries to be considerate, helpful, and thoughtful.

Gentleness in Practice

Being gentle is an important character trait that demonstrates care and kindness. Gentleness is not weakness but shows strength of character. Can you explain what gentleness means to you?

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_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you do...

If someone was rude to you or your sister, and you had a chance to say something to them. You would say...

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_____
_____

Gentleness

Being a gentle person takes work and lots of effort, but it's worth it in the long run! Can you answer these questions to see where you might need to work on gentleness in your life?

3. Are you able to keep a normal voice even when someone makes you angry? If not, why?

4. When you see an elderly person struggling to open a door, do you help them out? Should you?

5. When you see an injured animal do you want to help? (always be careful with injured animals)

6. Do you try to be quiet when you know someone is sleeping or sick in your house? If not, why?

Gentleness Crossword Puzzle

C U S W K A R W A E R G C C P

T O Q S D I Q W C W R A I O Q

H T N C E A N N E A B L V U Q

Q X N S T N E D C L D Z I R G

M O K H I G E I N A R J L T S

V L M U L D O L X E H V I E S

N U J U K U E F T M S I T O E

W H D L S E G R I N T S Y U N

K N P N R E C W A E E X K S R

I X E K C F H W C T G G I N E

Q S O B O B Z R K C I O B E D

S S E N L U F E R A C O Y S N

D E F E R E N C E K D K N S E

G Z K Z O A O W B A Y N V C T

F S S L J T A I O B Z B N Q T

Gratefulness

What is it... gratitude is unique because it not only affects the people around us, but it also affects our own minds, attitudes, and actions. Gratitude is an appreciation of the blessings in life. Gratitude is also directly connected to thankfulness, and a positive perspective in life that appreciates the good and kind.

Gratefulness in Practice

Being grateful is a character trait that keeps giving. It's a positive outlook that affects our mindset and encourages thankfulness. In fact gratitude, boosts our brain health and resiliency. What can you be grateful for today?

_____
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_____
_____
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_____

What would you do...

Encouraging a heart of gratitude will typically encourage happiness and joy. When someone expresses gratitude to others, the feeling is contagious. Give an example of how gratitude can be contagious.

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Gratitude Thougts...

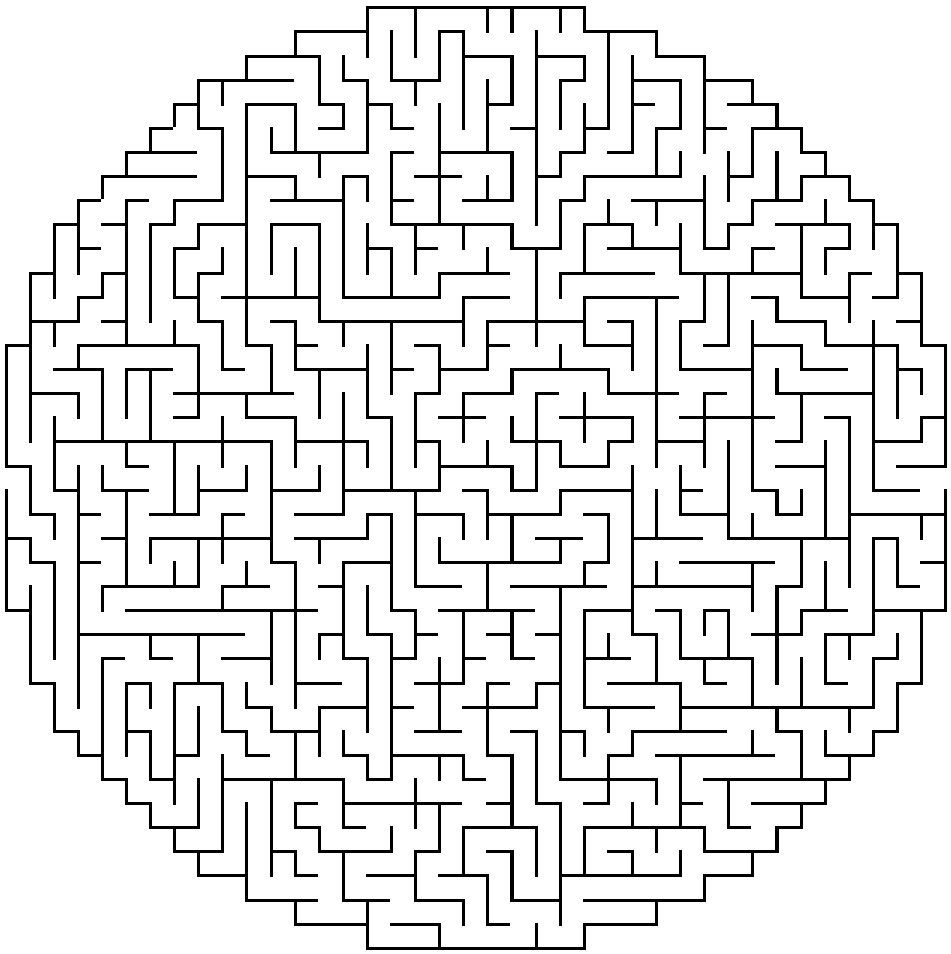
Being a grateful person is not always easy. Because of that it is important to be mindful. Creating a habit of thinking about how we think is important for encouraging a heart of gratitude and discouraging other habits like fear.

7. Gratitude goes beyond saying "thank you!" Gratitude is feeling deeply touched by the kind acts or intentions of another. Has anyone shown you kindness lately? How could you express your gratitude? Explain.

8. Have you started a gratitude journal? If not, it's a great way to think about gratitude in your life. Let's start now, by writing down five things for which you are grateful.

9. Sometimes people can create a false attitude of gratitude. We often call this "toxic positivity." This is when someone refuses to realize that there are difficult and painful things in life. Instead they live in a pretend world. If you had a chance to talk to them about their mindset, what would you say?

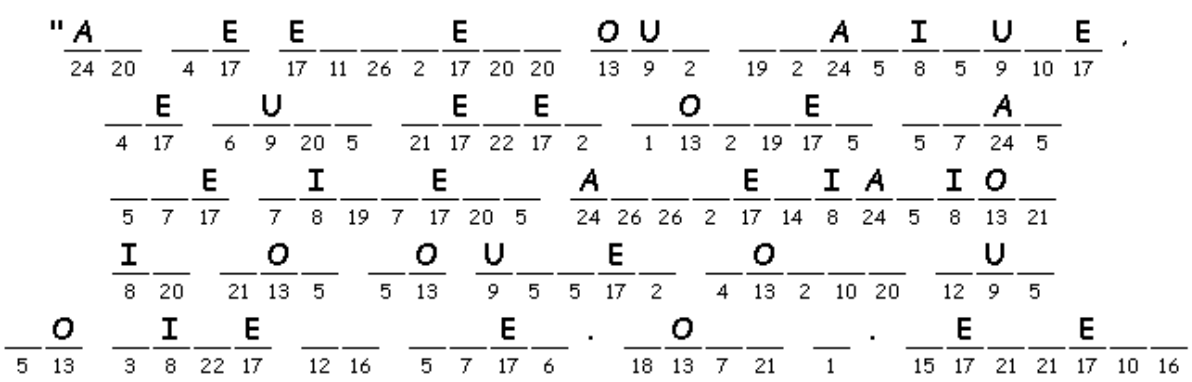
Gratitude Maze



Gratitude Puzzle

Solve the cryptogram to discover the quote from President John F Kennedy.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
24				17				8						13						9					



Generosity

What is it...

generosity is also known as charity, selflessness, or even benevolence. It is a character trait that opens the door to using other character traits, and it is key to helping others.

Generosity in Practice

Being generous is a character trait that leads to recognizing value in others. Look at a member of your family and write down all the things that you value in them.

_____

_____

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What would you do...

Encouraging generosity can be done in many ways. Think about your community, what are some of the greatest needs of people within your community? How could you be a part of addressing those needs?

_____

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_____

Generosity

Generosity of spirit helps those that are less fortunate, and also includes playing fair, paying it forward, and expressing kindness regardless of appreciation.

10. Generosity prioritizes people above possessions. Explain.

11. A generous spirit is important in friendships. "To have friends one must show himself friendly." How does this connect to generosity?

12. List 5 ways that you can show generosity every day to those in your family.

Generosity Puzzle

Solve to discover the famous quote below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
4				25				20						8				6		14					

_ E	_ A _ E	A	_ I _ I _ _	_ _	_ _ A _	_ E
15 25	22 4 19 25	4	13 20 26 20 11 1	16 2	15 3 4 18	15 25

_ E _ ,	_ U _	_ E	_ A _ E	A	_ I _ E	_ _
1 25 18	16 14 18	15 25	22 4 19 25	4	13 20 23 25	16 2

_ _ A _	_ E	_ I _ E .	_ I _ S _ O _	_ _ U _ _ _ I _ _
15 3 4 18	15 25	1 20 26 25	15 20 11 6 18 8 11	9 3 14 17 9 3 20 13 13

Unscramble the tiles to reveal a quote about generosity.

AN'	JUS	T F	DRE	THE	LE,	MO	YO
U C	R T	ERE	ON	"IF	E.	D P	HUN
A	TH	EOP	T F	EED	SA	EED	EN



Teaching Our Children Joyfulness.

A joyful person is one that most of us have always found to be pleasant. Yet, teaching joyfulness must start with us, the parents. A joyful character isn't one that randomly happens, but intentionally cultivated and encouraged. Joyfulness is a positive outlook that is unmovable by circumstance.

It's very important to realize that with teaching character more is caught than taught and the character training begins with us and our ability to be an example. Of course, no one is perfect, but if we desire to teach a character quality to our child, we must first desire it for ourselves and intend to live it out. Such is true with this quality of joyfulness. Our children will most likely pick up on a joyful attitude in our lives, and inversely they will notice a negative perspective.

WHY is joyfulness important?

- Positivity matters
- Joyfulness is contagious
- People who practice joyfulness overall have happier lives
- A habit of joyfulness will begin shifting perspectives from negativity and obligations to opportunities and possibilities.

HOW can you teach your children joyfulness?

- Practice joyfulness yourself.
    - You are your child's biggest role model, so the first step to teaching them anything is to reflect the concepts yourself.
- Read about joyfulness in the Scriptures.
    - Discuss why God calls for a joyful heart.
    - What difference does it make?
- Collaborate to discover practical ways of expressing joyfulness.
    - Gratitude
    - Look for a silver lining
    - Encouragement
    - Mindfulness
    - Positivity
    - Enjoyment
    - Rethink reactions to stress
    - Rethink obligations as opportunities
    - Put yourself in people's shoes

Teaching Our Children Justice.

Justice is probably not something that many of us first think of when we consider character traits. However, a sense of justice is an important quality to encourage in our children. To become kind, considerate adults, empathy and a sense of justice for right and wrong are required.

Justice means recognizing when people are treated badly or unfairly, and why it's wrong. Justice includes kindness toward animals and a sense of defending them from people's cruelty. It means protecting innocence and pursuing honesty and fairness.

WHY is justice important?

- Builds morals
- Defends the innocent
- Protects the truth
- Strengthens principles
- Impacts work ethic
- Influences social relationships
- Factors into successful higher education

HOW can you teach your children justice?

- Reflect justice yourself
    - Let your children "catch" you demonstrating justice.
    - Protect family pets from mistreatment.
- Explain why certain actions are fair and right
- Discuss the importance of honesty for a person's reputation of reliability
- Teach the root of justice from Scripture.
- Explain how morals can affect future jobs, education, and relationships.
- Together, list practical ideas to work on justice in action.
    - Volunteer at an animal shelter
    - Serve at a soup kitchen
    - Offer to help a younger sibling
    - Memorize Micah 6:8.

Teaching Our Children Love.

The Bible tells us that love is the most important character trait of all (1 Corinthians 13:13). Love shows more about our character than anything else. When we are kind to those around us, animals, and anyone less fortunate, we show that we value them just as we value ourselves. Love is truly the core of character training. Every character trait stems from a love for others and expecting the best of ourselves because we love ourselves, too. Without love, it's impossible to extend kindness, empathy, or sincerity long-term.

WHY is love important?

- Love is the foundation for all other character traits
- Love shows our humanity

- Love embraces the humanity of others
- Love acknowledges unconditional values
- Love acknowledges that everyone has something to offer
- Love is important for mental health

HOW can you teach your children love?

- Make cards for nursing homes
- Volunteer at an animal shelter
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter
- Reflect love in your actions by practicing being slow to anger, expressing patience, and ample forgiveness
- Show your kids that they are more important than mistakes
    - Try to curb any knee-jerk reactions
- Look for a way to serve in the church, but give your children the choice. You want it to be something they desire, not just an obligation.

Scripture Verses For Teaching Joyfulness, Justice and Love

Joyfulness

- Psalm 21:6
- Proverbs 15:30
- Isaiah 12:3
- John 16:24
- Galatians 5:22-23

Justice

- Isaiah 1:17
- Proverbs 21:15
- Micah 6:8
- Isaiah 61:8
- Psalm 106:3

Love

- I Corinthians 13:4-8
- I Peter 4:8
- I John 4:18-19
- I Corinthians 16:14
- I John 4:8

Joyfulness

What is it... joyfulness is the act of being happy with delight and a sense of "enoughness." A joyful person is typically grateful, content, and loving.

Joyfulness in Practice

Being joyful is an important character trait that demonstrates a deep unreasonable happiness. Joyfulness doesn't come and go and we most often feel the presence of joy when we stop chasing pleasures and personal satisfaction. Can you explain what joyfulness means to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you do...

If someone was continually talking about the negative things that happen, a joyful response would be to be kind and point out the positive, what would you say...

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Joyfulness

Being a joyful person requires us to be intentional. Can you answer these questions to see where you might need to work on letting joy flow freely in your life?

13. When your day is difficult and things are sour can you still be a joyful person? Where does joy come from?

14. Are you grateful for the good things that happen each day? Can you name 3 good things that happened today?

15. Do you find it easy to give or care for someone in need? Can you think of someone that you could help this week? Find joy in giving.

16. What is important to you? Think about how you spend your free time. Do these things promote good character? What could you include that would promote good character?

Discovering Joyfulness

Let's take just a minute to look at what the Bible says about joy!

1. Psalm 21:6 and 118:24

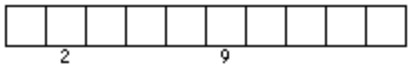
2. Proverbs 15:30

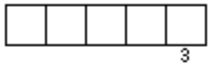
3. Isaiah 12:3, and 51:11

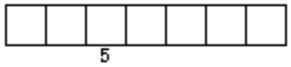
4. John 16:24

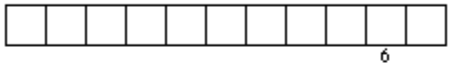
5. Galatians 5:22-23

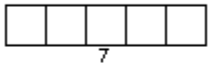
Joyfulness Word Puzzle

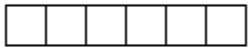
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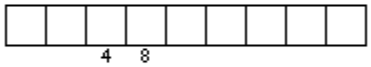
PYPHA 

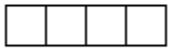
TEDHIGL 

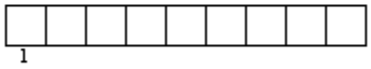
TTTCNOMNENE 

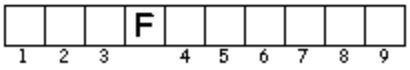
RECHE 

WORNED 

NAESUMMET 

GEEL 

CEJNAULIB 



Unscramble each of the clue words.
Copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number.

Justice

What is it... justice is the quality of being just; righteousness, equitable, or morally rightness. Simply put, to have **justice** as a person's character trait means that they are just and treat everyone the same, or how they would like to be treated.

Justice in Practice

Being just is an important character trait that demonstrates the idea of fairness. Giving what other deserve and treating them equally and fairly. How would you describe justice.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you do...

If your friend was accusing another friend of something that they didn't do, what would you say...

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Justice

1. Justice carries with it the idea of "fair." However, this concept could be different from person to person. Why is it important to have a standard of justice? What are two examples of a "standard" of what is just.

2. Another aspect of justice is deservedness. This is the idea that people should get what they deserve. If you work 5 hours and your friend works 3 hours then is it just that you deserve more pay?

3. Another aspect of justice is need. If there are two children and one has food while the other is starving is it just to allow one to starve? Or is it a basic human responsibility to find empathy and justice and give to the starving child?

Discovering Justice

Let's take just a minute to look at what the Bible says about justice!

6. Isaiah 1:17

7. Proverbs 21:15

8. Micah 6:8

9. Isaiah 61:8

10. Psalm 106:3

Justice Word Search

S E Z C Q W H W R L Y W Q Z O

N U Q N C C P J Y A S Q N P Y

I H O U X N U T O I E Q F U R

Z A J E A S I L M T K R B X K

N O D A T L F A I R N E S S I

E O M I I H I C F A E P X G N

R P C M X N G T J P C V Z M D

K E U C U S H I Y M D U J M N

G H P U W J Q V R I R K L T E

Z Q O F N M C T Q H F C S S S

F K L E I W S J Q K U K E C S

F Z G Z Q S D E M Z B H X X E

Y T I U Q E U C I B B X M H I

Y T I L A I T R A P M I I R L

A X C C L P E I M R Z H R C X

EQUALITY
HUMILITY
JUSTICE

EQUITY
IMPARTIAL
KINDNESS

FAIRNESS
IMPARTIALITY
RIGHTEOUS

Love

What is it...

love is one of the foundations of life. Many other character qualities hinge on this trait. John 13:34: "As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Love in Practice

It's important that we show love. And this involves being aware of other's needs by acting, doing, and asking. How can you show someone love today?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you do...

If your friend was sick this week and couldn't leave the house, what is one way that you could show your love for them?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Love Lessons

4. We have heard often that "Love does." Why is it important that we not just talk about helping others, but actually take action and do something?

5. What do you think God meant when he said the greatest commandment was, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind"? Why is the greatest?

6. He then said the second was like it, "love your neighbor as yourself." Matt.22:37,39 Why is this commandment important?

Discovering More About Love

Let's take just a minute to look at what the Bible says about justice!

11. I Corinthians 13:4-8

12. I Peter 4:8

13. I John 4:18-19

14. I Corinthians 16:14

15. I John 4:8

Inspiration to Love!

Use the letter hints to find the following famous quotes about love.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
6				2										4						22					

	O		E							E			E							,		O	U	
10	4	3	2		11	1		10	11	12	2		20	15	2		8	11	14	24			9	4	22	
	A		'			E	E					U			O	U			A				E	E	
26	6	14		20		1	2	2		11	20		23	22	20		9	4	22		26	6	14		13	2	2	10

11	20																								

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
17				15										23						13					

	O		E		A			,			U			A		E		,		O			O		
1	23	10	15		17	1	1		7	18	13	8	7		17		24	15	22		26	23		22	18	23	4	2
			O			O		E	.	-			A		E			E	A		E				
7	23			4	23	4	15				8	21	17	5	15	8	14	15	17	18	15					