

Charlotte Mason had much to say on the subject of habit. Habits as a discipline of the child's will and behavior. Habits of thinking and doing.

“The formation of habits is education, and Education is the formation of habits.”

“The nature of the child— his human nature— being the sum of what he is as a human being, and what he is in right of the stock he comes of, and what he is as the result of his own physical and mental constitution—this nature is incalculably strong. The problem before the educator is to give the child control over his own nature, to enable him to hold himself in hand as much in regard to the traits we call good, as to those we call evil: —many a man makes shipwreck on the rock of what he grew up to think his characteristic virtue—his open-handedness, for instance.”

“Divine Grace works on the Lines of Human Effort.—In looking for a solution of this problem, I do not undervalue the Divine grace—far otherwise; but we do not always make enough of the fact that Divine grace is exerted on the lines of enlightened human effort; that the parent, for instance, who takes the trouble to understand what he is about in educating his child, deserves, and assuredly gets, support from above; and that Rebecca, let us say, had no right to bring up her son to be ‘thou worm, Jacob,’ in the trust that Divine grace would, speaking reverently, pull him through. Being a pious man, the son of pious parents, he was pulled through, but his days, he complains at the end, were ‘few and evil.’”
(HE pg. 104)

The following is a sample outline of the virtues and vices parents would do well to instruct their children in.

List of reference for training in habits of virtue:

Cleanliness & Neatness

*Body, hands, face, nails, hair, etc.
Clothing, shoes, rubbers, cps, etc.
Books, slates, desks, pen, pencil, etc.
Everything used or done.*

Kindness to Others

*To parents
To brothers and sisters.
To other members of family & friends
To the aged and infirm
To the unfortunate
To the helpless and needy*

Fidelity to Duty

*To parents—to assist, comfort, etc
To brothers and sisters- older assist younger
To the poor and unfortunate
To the wrong and oppressed
Duty to God*

Respect & Reverence

*For parents
For teachers
For the elderly
For those in authority*

Politeness

*At home
At the table
To guests or visitors
On the street.
In company*

Love

*For God
For parents
For brothers and sisters
For other members of family.
For friends
For teachers and benefactors
For one's neighbor*

Obedience

*To parents
To teachers and others in authority
To law
To conscience
To God*

Gratitude & Thankfulness

*To parents
To all benefactors
To God, the Giver of all good*

Gentleness

*In speech
In manner
Avoid rude and boisterous conduct
Patience, when misjudged
Docility, when instructed.*

Truthfulness

*In words and actions
Keeping one's word
Distinction between a lie and untruth
Prevarication and exaggeration
Giving a wrong impression
Telling falsehoods for fun*

Nobility

*Manliness
Magnanimity & generosity
Self-denial and self-sacrifice for others
Bravery in helping or saving others
Confession of injury done another*

Forgiveness

*Of those who confess their fault.
Of those who have wronged us.
Of our enemies
Generosity in dealing with faults of others*

Nature/Attitude

Prompt
Cheerful
Implicit
Faithful

Courage

True courage-daring to do and defend right
Bearing unjust censure or unpopularity
In danger of misfortune
Heroism

Honor

Act to be worthy of honor
(but don't seek it)
To honor one's family
To honor one's friends
To honor one's home
To honor one's country

Honesty

In keeping one's word
In little things
Cheating, ignoble & base
"Honesty is best policy"
Confession of wrongs done to others
Frankness & candor

Humility

True greatness-not blind to one's own faults
Modesty
Avoidance of pride and vanity
Self-conceit-a sign of self-deception
True humility, not servility or time serving

Self-Respect

Not self-conceit but conscious moral worth
Not self-admiration
Resulting in personal dignity
Distinction between self-love and selfishness

Prudence

In speech and action
When one may be misunderstood
Respect for the opinions of others
"Judge not, that ye be not judged"

Health

Duty to preserve healthy
Habits that impair health-foolish and sinful
An observance of the laws of health, a duty

Good Manners

At home
In company
In public assemblies
Salutations on the street
Politeness to strangers

Good Name

Gaining a good name when young
Keeping a good name
Keeping good company
Reputation and character

Temperance

Moderation in the indulgence of appetite in things not harmful
Total abstinence from that which is injurious
Dangers of the use of alcohol
Injurious effects of tobacco

Evil Habits

Those that injure health
That destroy reputation
That dishonor one's self and family
That waste money
That take away self-control
That incur needless risks, as gambling
That are offensive to others

Evil Speaking

Slander a serious offense
Tale bearing to injure another
Repeating evil which one has heard
"Thou shalt not bear false witness"

Bad Language

Profanity, foolish and wicked
Obscenity, base and offensive
Defiling books or other things with obscene words and characters
The use of slang, vulgar and impolite

Industry

Labor a duty and a privilege
Right use of time
Manual labor honorable
Self-support gives independence
Avoidance of unnecessary debt

Patriotism

Love of country
Reverence for its flag
Respect for its rulers
Its defense when necessary
Regard for its honor and good name

Economy

Saving in early life means competency/comfort in old age
Duty to save part of one's earnings
Duty to support Church
Extravagance is wrong
Charity

Civil Duties

Obedience to law
Fidelity in office
Honor in taking an oath
Duty involved in voting
Dignity and honor of citizenship

Suggestions for implementing the outline: Each week select one of the virtue topics for discussion . Ask the child to be looking for the virtue in the material they are reading that week. Look for news clippings and short stories that pertain to the subject. Allow the child freedom in asking questions, and make it a point to answer as simply and clearly as possible. Endeavor to have the child cull examples from the life of Christ, His Blessed Mother, the Saints, or some well-know characters of our own country. After the initial discussion about the virtue, frequently discuss it with the child throughout the week, commenting when they practice it and encouraging them when they don't. Some virtues will need to be focused on for longer then one week. Older children often benefit from gentle reminders during the day and an examine at noon and in the evening.

Caution: Never allow the use of the name of anyone in the family or community as an example of a vice or a virtue.