

Laying Down the Rails

"The effort of decision is the greatest effort of life."—Charlotte Mason

Good habits are like railroad tracks.

"The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days; while she who lets their habits take care of themselves has a weary life of endless friction with the children."—Charlotte Mason

Tips for Cultivating a Good Habit

1. Concentrate on forming one habit at a time, keeping watch over those habits already formed.

2. Repetition

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3. Motivation

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Charlotte Mason Habits

Decency and Propriety Habits

Cleanliness
Courtesy
Kindness
Manners
Modesty and Purity
Neatness
Order
Regularity

(Mentioned only)
Candor
Courage
Diligence
Fortitude
Generosity
Gentleness
Meekness
Patience
Respect
Temperance
Thrift

Mental Habits

Attention
Imagining
Meditation
Memorizing
Mental Effort
Observation
Perfect Execution
Reading for Instruction
Remembering
Thinking

(Mentioned only)
Accuracy
Concentration
Reflection

Thoroughness

Moral Habits

Integrity
 Priorities
 Finishing
 Use of Time
 Borrowed Property
Obedience
Personal Initiative
Reverence
Self-Control
Sweet, Even Temper
Truthfulness
Usefulness

Physical Habits

Alertness to Seize Opportunities
Fortitude
Health
Managing One's Own Body
Music
Outdoor Life
Quick Perception of Senses
Self-Control in Emergencies
Self-Discipline in Habits
Self-Restraint in Indulgences
Training the Ear and Voice

Religious Habits

Regularity in Devotions
 Prayer
 Reading the Bible
 Praise
Reverent Attitude
Sunday-Keeping
Thanksgiving
Thought of God

The Top Three

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1. Start with short lessons.
2. Vary the order of lessons.
3. Don't repeat yourself.
4. Set time limits that assume full attention.
5. Play games that foster attention.

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1. Expect obedience.
2. Never give a command that you don't intend to see fully carried out.
3. Don't pester your child with excessive or continual commands.
4. When possible, plan ahead for transition times.

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1. Require exact facts without omission or exaggeration.
2. Avoid qualifying statements with "I think" or "perhaps"; be sure!
3. Don't use excessive language for common situations.
4. If needed, have daily lessons in truthful reporting.

"Just as it is on the whole easier for the locomotive to pursue its way on the rails than to take a disastrous run off them, so it is easier for the child to follow lines of habit carefully laid down than to run off these lines at his peril. It follows that this business of laying down lines towards the unexplored country of the child's future is a very serious and responsible one for the parent. It rests with him to consider well the tracks over which the child should travel with profit and pleasure; and, along these tracks, to lay down lines so invitingly smooth and easy that the little traveller is going upon them at full speed without stopping to consider whether or no he chooses to go that way."— Charlotte Mason



Charlotte Mason encouraged parents to cultivate good habits in their children—habits that will serve the children well and give parents smooth and easy days.

Here, compiled into one volume, are all the habits Charlotte mentioned in her writings with her thoughts and suggestions for cultivating each one. This 240-page book, available exclusively from Simply Charlotte Mason, also includes Charlotte’s help for breaking bad habits, hundreds of inspiring quotes, and lots of practical tips.

Available now from SimplyCharlotteMason.com

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