

CHARACTER STRENGTH ACTIVITIES

The following ideas are some simple and fun family activities that can be set up on tables around the room. Each activity is designed to help nurture a character strength. Adapt the ideas to your own needs and context.

Love - My Love Heart

Items needed:

Paper, pens, colored markers

Instructions:

- Take a sheet of paper and draw a big heart on it.
- Inside the heart write ten things that other people have done which made you feel especially loved.
- Now think about all the different ways you felt loved.
 - Draw a red circle around the times someone said or wrote something that helped you to feel loved.
 - Draw a green circle around the times when someone was particularly helpful.
 - Draw a blue circle around the times when someone hugged or touched you in a loving way.
 - Draw a yellow circle around the times someone gave you a thoughtful gift (even just a piece of chocolate!)
 - Draw a purple circle around the times someone just spent time with you, doing something you enjoyed.
- Look at the colors on your heart and wonder what you have discovered about how you like to be loved.
- Most of all, what have you discovered about how other people like to be loved?

Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34, NIV.

Appreciation of Beauty - Take a closer look

Items needed:

A variety of beautiful natural objects such as fresh flowers, interesting fruit and vegetables, feathers, shells, stones, bark, etc.

Instructions:

- Choose one object each and spend three minutes focusing only on your object and exploring it as closely as you can by touching it, looking at it, smelling it, etc.
- After 3 minutes tell each other at least 5 beautiful things you noticed about your object.
- Talk about what you discovered by experiencing this activity.
- How does appreciating the beautiful things God made help to build your character?

God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. Genesis 1:31 NIV

Caution - Speaking of Noah...

Items needed:

Jars, buttons

Instructions:

- Give each person 5 buttons.
- Then talk about the story of Noah without using the following words, or their plurals: boat, ark, ship, water, rain, rainbow, animals, mammals, creatures, pairs, wood, dove, flood, mountain, people
- Every time you say a 'forbidden' word, you must put one of your counters back into the jar.
- The person with the most counters after 5 minutes wins.

Talk about how challenging it is when you have to be careful what you say!

Why is caution, and especially caution in our speech, an important character strength for Christians?

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Colossians 4:6 NIV

Creativity - Not just a load of old junk

Items needed:

A dice, a boot, a jar, a brick/stone, a small branch, a large square of fabric, a large empty plastic bottle (or similar items that can be creatively reused), numbers to number the items from 1-6

Instructions:

- Take it turns to roll the dice.
- The number you throw matches an object on the table.
- Describe an unusual way to use the object you have 'rolled'. You are not allowed to give a any common or normal use of the object. Eg. A boot can be used as a bucket to carry water; a stone can become a doorstop, or a can crusher; a jar can be used to hold individual desserts for a picnic.
- Each time a number is rolled, you must describe different uses - you can't repeat an idea that has been used before! So you will need to work harder at being creative!
- Why do you think it's important for humans to develop creativity as a character strength?
- How did you feel whenever you thought of a creative idea?
- Whenever we're being creative we are reflecting a little bit of God's amazing creativity!

He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills - to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze. Exodus 35:31-32 NIV

Gratitude - Top Twenty Thankful Things

Items needed:

Plain paper and pens or pencils

Instructions:

- Working on your own first, write or draw a list of 20 things for which you are truly thankful.
- Number them in order, with 1 being the thing you are most grateful for.
- Once you have finished writing your list read your 'Top Twenty' gratitude lists to each other.
- Help younger children to make or draw a list of 5-10 things.
- Talk about the things you listed that were the same as each other, the things that were different, how you prioritized your lists, and the different feelings you had while you were being grateful.

Give thanks in all circumstances. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV

Perseverance - The Toothpick Challenges!

Items needed:

A tall, stable, glass bottle, a glass jar with a mouth about 2" or 3cm wide, several packets of wooden toothpicks/cocktail sticks.

Instructions:

- **Toothpick stack:** Stand the bottle on the table. Use a jar with a wider mouth if you have younger children. Give each person 12 toothpicks. Take it in turns to lay a toothpick in a balanced pile on the mouth of the bottle. If you knock any down you have to add them to your pile. See who can place all their toothpicks safely on the bottle/jar mouth first.
- **Toothpick drop:** Stand the bottle on the table about 40 cm from the edge. Give each person 12 toothpicks. Take it in turns to sit down at the table in front of the bottle. Hold a toothpick about 8-10 cm above the mouth of the bottle and try to drop the toothpick into the bottle. If it falls on the table add it to your hand. Use the jar for younger children.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 1 Corinthians 9:24, NIV

Kindness - Let's be kind!

Items needed:

Slips of paper and pens

Instructions:

- Give each person in the family 2 slips of paper.
- Ask them to write or draw on the paper a person they would like to show kindness to.
- Shuffle and stack the papers in a pile.
- Turn over one at a time and then think of three things your family could do to be kind to that person.
- At the end of your discussion decide which kind acts you will do together. Notice how happy you feel when you have been kind.
- Being kind to others is actually one of the best ways to feel happy!

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32, NIV

Team work - The Cup Tower Challenge

Items needed:

At least 24 sturdy plastic cups. Several strong elastic bands that can stretch to fit the wider section of the cup, ball of string, scissors

Instructions:

- See how high you can build a cup tower in 5 minutes without touching the cups.
- Tie 4-5 pieces of string, about 50cm long, to the elastic band.
- Hold one string each – you will need at least 4 people so find an extra friend if you need more people.
- Use the string to expand and contract the elastic band so you can pick up one cup at a time, and then expand the band to release the cup where you need it.
- You will all have to work together!

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:16 NIV