

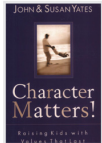
Developing Character and Faith That Lasts

Research shows that a significant percentage of youth leave the church during high school and college years. Parents need to understand the pressures and challenges facing these youth and provide comfortable opportunities to deepen their children's faith in a way that will allow them to persevere during the challenging years of early adulthood. The following resources describe the problems and offer practical solutions to help. Follow the suggested Seven-Step Plan as you work through these resources and apply them with your children.

→ [Article: Developing Character and a Faith That Lasts](#)

→ [Bible Study: Developing Character and a Faith That Lasts](#)

Resources



Character Matters! Raising Kids with Character That Lasts - John Yates and Susan Alexander Yates

This book helps families learn eight essential character traits that matter: integrity, faith, a teachable spirit, a servant's heart, self-discipline, joy, compassion, and courage. Parents and children together can learn how to develop these essential character traits through reading and discussion, then implementing them through normal, daily events. Includes focus questions and a leader's guide for use in group study as well. (This book has also been published under the title *Raising Kids with Character That Lasts*.)

**This book includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter.*



Building Character: A Study Guide for Adolescents and Teens - Developed by Mona Lindeman and Susan Ward

This nine-week Study Guide is designed for preteens and teenagers to explore what it means to be a person of character. The study is designed to be led by preteens or teens in a group on their own, but would work equally well with an adult leading or as a family. During the study, participants find out what God has to say about certain character traits and think about how they might build those traits into their own character. The study is based on the book *Character Matters! Raising Kids with Character That Lasts*, by John Yates and Susan Alexander Yates, and explores the following character qualities: integrity, self-discipline, a servant's heart, faith, a teachable spirit, compassion, courage, and joy. The studies use a variety of methods to teach the traits, ranging from children creating artwork to participating in role plays.

**This free resource may be downloaded*



Sticky Faith- Dr. Kara E. Powell and Dr. Chap Clark

Why are children raised in the church walking away from their faith? The most important finding in the authors’ research is that children are shaped by how their parents model and live out their faith. This book explores the findings in their years of research, then focuses on practical application. The authors help parents understand what it means for their children to truly trust Jesus and not simply adopt a “gospel of sin management.” The practical advice focuses on three areas: “teach kids that obedience is our response to trusting God, frame all family discussions and activities as opportunities to know and trust Christ, and respond with grace when your child misbehaves.” The book covers shepherding children from elementary years through college.

**This book includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter.*



Faith Begins at Home - Mark Holmen

This book shows how to become a vibrant, healthy family through the concept of a “makeover” in family relationships. The focus on heart change is essential in order to avoid simple moralism. The author shares practical ideas for activities to do as a family and suggested discussion questions for parents to engage children at key moments in their day.

**This book includes a section at the end of each chapter with questions for small-group discussion.*

OR



The Power of Teachable Moments - Jim Weidmann and Marianne Hering

This Focus on the Family book teaches parents how to use teachable moments to connect their children’s life to Godly truth. Teachable moments require three ingredients: (1) a good relationship between parent and child; (2) an event that can serve as a catalyst to conversation; and (3) a biblical truth with which to connect. The key requirement is time—time for parents to spend with their child to allow such moments to happen. The book gives practical advice on how to make such time available and to make the most of the opportunities.



Issues to Ponder for Developing Character and Faith That Lasts

- Think of the key people in your life who have influenced your character the most. Have you ever told your children about these people and how they made an impact on you? If not, why not do so?

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- Think of your children's closest friends. How would you describe the character of those friends?

- Would you describe your child as mostly influencing his or her friends or being influenced by them? Are you taking any steps to help your child be a better influence?

- How has your parenting approach focused on character building so far? Are there other areas that are taking time away from opportunities to build character? If so, what are they?

- Based on your estimate of your child's faith, is it likely or unlikely that their faith will stand up to the pressures of high school or college? Think of situations or experiences that might give you insight into the depth of your child's faith.

- How would you describe your child's youth group at church? Is the group helping to equip children with a deep faith, or does it seem to be more focused on entertaining them? Have you ever discussed this with your church's youth director?
