

Determination

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY FAITH BUILDER BULLETIN

APRIL 2012

Vs. Faintheartedness

I WILL:

- Set goals.
- Make sure your goals are right.
- Ignore distractions.
- Do not be discouraged by others.
- Face problems head on.

FEATURES

Find it in the Bible	2
Character Model ; Heart of Moses	3
Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego in the Fiery Furnace ; TeamBuilding Activity	4
Aim High; Cold Cash	5
Domino Determination	6
A Tale of Two Frogs	7
Croskey's Corner	8
For the Family	9
In April	10
Poster	11
Prayer	12

Looking at insurmountable obstacles as opportunities to cry out for God's supernatural intervention

One way the Hebrews translated the word determined is *amar* which means "to say in one's heart". Determination deals with a mind-set or having your heart-set on a goal before you begin it. When you encounter a challenge, it doesn't discourage you from your goal,

rather, it is an opportunity to ask for God's help. It's an opportunity to look at the talents and skills He has given you so that you can use them to overcome the obstacle. Perhaps His intervention requires learning a new skill or applying something you already know in a

new way. Determination requires lion-hearted courage when obstacles get in the way. There's nothing half-hearted about Determination!

This month let Determination motivate you to achieve something you have your heart-set on.



"For the person of faith, practicing good character is a matter of loving God, self, and others."

John Pierce, founding member of the Character Council

Find Determination in the Bible

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13

"Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'"

Luke 9:62

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:12-14

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

James 1:8

"When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it

was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?"

Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for thee, O God"

Psalm 42:1

"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart."

Psalm 119:2

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown."

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me."

1 Thessalonians 4:11

"Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people,

but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant."

Galatians 1:10

"So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him."

2 Corinthians 5:9

"You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."

Hebrews 10:36

"Balak again sent princes, who were more numerous and more distinguished than the others. On coming to Balaam they told him, 'This is what Balak, son of Zippor, has to say: Please do not refuse to come to me. I will reward you very handsomely and will do anything you ask of me. Please come and lay a curse on this people for me.' But Balaam replied to Balak's officials, 'Even if Balak gave me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD, my God.'"

Numbers 22:15 -18

Moses - Model of Determination

Moses was Determined to lead the Israelite slaves out of Egypt and into the promised land but Pharaoh was a difficult man to convince. When Moses needed help, he used the Pharaoh's stubbornness as an opportunity to call upon God for assistance. God responded by sending the plagues. Moses had to repeatedly call upon God for help and each time God sent help in the form of another plague - 10 times! Even after Pharaoh let the people go he changed his

mind and sent his chariots and charioteers after them. What did Moses do? He called upon God and the Red Sea was parted. While in the desert the Israelites grew restless and hungry. Again, what did Moses do? He called upon God and He sent manna to the desert and water from rocks.

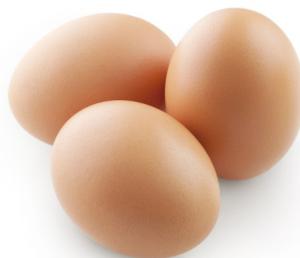
In all of these cases, Moses had to have faith that God would answer his call. He had to have faith that the goal he had set was a Godly goal, worthy of his

time and effort. Moses last lesson for us on Determination is you can't lose the faith. Moses' disobedience kept him from the ultimate fulfillment of his goal of seeing the Promised Land.



The Heart of Moses

Moses had his heart set on getting the Israelites out of Egypt. It is important that your goals be aligned with what God had put in your heart. In order for God to be in our hearts we must not harden our hearts. To demonstrate this, you will use 2 eggs. Hard boil one egg. Mark the raw egg with a cross. If we have hardened our heart to God's will, then the devil will be able to manipulate us to do his work. Spin the hard-boiled egg. The devil can spin us however he chooses. If we have kept our hearts open to doing God's will, then the devil can't make us do his work. Try to spin the raw egg. No matter how hard you try, the raw egg will not spin.



Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego in the Fiery Furnace

Read Chapter 3 of Daniel, The Fiery Furnace or tell the story of Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego in your own words. The acts of these 3 administrators of the province of Babylon show just how deeply they loved God and were determined to worship only him.

Illustrate how love can motivate you to do things you didn't think you could do with the following activity. You will need a volunteer from the group to come up to the front. Set the stage by describing that this person is on the roof of a very tall skyscraper. There is another skyscraper next door with a narrow plank across the top of both buildings. Now, on the other roof place a premium candy treat. Ask the volunteer if they would be willing to cross the plank to get the candy. The answer will probably be no. Now tell them that there is some money on the other roof. Ask them again if they would attempt a dangerous crossing for the money. Probably not. Now place their infant child on the top of the other roof - would they cross now to save their child? Yep! If your volunteer is too young to have a child, or too young to understand that motivation then switch up the last offering and tell them that their parent is on the other roof. Do they think that their parent would cross the plank to save them? Yep!

To close the lesson, take the verse that closes that chapter and write out each word on index cards and see if the group can arrange the cards to match the verse.

"How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures through all generations." Daniel 3:100



Team-Building Activity

Building a culture of good character requires building the group into a community. Here is this month's teambuilding activity:

Ace High



Divide the group into smaller groups no larger than 13 in each group. Give each group member a playing card and instruct them to hold it face side out against their forehead without looking at it. Make sure that they do not tell each other what cards they have. All of the cards for one group should be the same suit. Instruct each group to arrange themselves to stand in a line in order of the rank of the cards with the Ace being the highest card. For younger groups, you may only want to use the number cards. Time each group. Ask them how they approached the problem of ordering the cards. Give them time in their group to review how they did. Now give them time to discuss how they might do it faster next time and then give them a chance to shuffle the cards and try again. See if they did it faster the second time. Use this exercise to demonstrate that as a community of believers we need to depend on each other to reach the goal of eternal life.



"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1)

Aim High

For this activity you will need 4 paper plates. Mark one number on each plate: 5, 10, 15, 20. Each person will receive 2-3 pennies, buttons, or some small object. Mark a line on the floor with masking tape. Place the first plate (marked 5) close enough to the line so that when standing behind the line, most of them can throw the penny and have it land on the plate. Place the three remaining plates in order farther away from the first plate so that the higher the value the farther the plate. The 20 point plate still needs to be within a reasonable distance for the age and skills of your group. Use only 3 plates if 4 plates make the distance too far. The last plate needs to be a challenge for them; they should not be able to throw to that plate easily. Start by asking them to stand in a line behind the tape line. They will take turns throwing their pennies onto the first plate. Once everyone has had a chance to do that, let them collect the pennies and try again, this time aiming for the second plate. When they master the second plate, they can move onto the third and so on. When they have completed all of the plates you can ask them how difficult it would have been to start with the last plate. Help them to see that in order to achieve larger goals, you need to break it down into smaller goals and work up to accomplishing large tasks. With the numbers on the plates, you can have them keep score based on how many plates they hit. You can also number the plates 1, 2, 3, 4 if you don't wish to keep score. For much younger participants you may want to use hoola hoops or box lids to provide larger targets.

“Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.”

Proverbs 24:27

Cold Cash

This activity requires that you prepare special ice cubes ahead of time. Fill the tray half full and freeze. Place a dime, nickel or penny on the ice cube half and fill with water. Return to the freezer. Try to get the coin in the middle of the ice cube. Divide the class into small groups of 2 or 3. Each group gets an ice cube which they must melt in order to get to the coin. Use different valued coins so that they are not all the same. The rules for melting are that they may not touch their tongue or mouth to the ice cube and they may not hit it with anything or throw it at anything. (Be sure to give each group paper towels to avoid puddles in the room or do this activity outside.) When all of the groups have melted their cube enough to remove the coin discuss how this activity relates to be determined to reach a goal. Ask if they would do it differently if they had a second chance. Did they watch what other groups were doing and copy? If you had a lower value coin did you work as hard as groups that had higher value coins? Did you work harder when you first started or when you got closer? How does determination help you reach your goals?



Domino Determination

You will need dominos or any object that can be set up like a domino drop chain. You will need to set up 3 chains. The first chain should have some of the dominos too far apart for the chain to continue to fall. The second chain should have the middle of the chain off-set so that the second half of the chain does not fall. The third chain should have all of the dominos aligned so that they all fall consecutively. Before tripping the domino chains, discuss goals and how determination plays a part in achievement. You may want to find an age appropriate story or just a few facts about Thomas Edison's determination in inventing the light bulb. He had an unbelievable number of failures before hitting on the right combination. Talk about how losing interest in a project makes it hard to complete. Demonstrate this with the first domino chain. Next, you can talk about how distraction or losing your focus on a goal makes it hard to achieve. Demonstrate this with the second domino chain. Staying determined helps achieve goals. Demonstrate this with the third domino chain.

Keeping with the theme of dominos, create a hand-out for the participants that has space for writing a goal at the top. The main body of the page should be 3 large dominos drawn sideways. The first one has just one dot on the left side and blank on the right. The second domino has two dots on the left, blank on the right. The third should have 3 dots on the left and blank on the right. They should identify a goal at the top of the page and write steps or activities that will help reach the goal on each of the right sides of the dominos. Encourage the goals to be small enough that they can be achieved this month. Instruct them to post them someplace that they can see their progress and be reminded of their goal.



“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.” Proverbs 6:6-8

A TALE OF TWO FROGS



Two frogs fell into a can of cream,
Or so I've heard it told:
The sides of the can were shiny - steep,
The cream was deep and cold.

"O, what's the use?" croaked Number 1.
"Tis fate; no help's around.
Good-bye, my friends Good-bye, sad world"
And weeping still, he drowned.

But Number 2, of sterner stuff,
Dog-paddled in surprise,
The while he wiped his creamy face
And dried his creamy eyes.

"I'll swim awhile, at least," he said-
Or so I've heard he said:
"It really wouldn't help the world
If one more frog were dead."

An hour or two he kicked and swam,
Not once he stopped to mutter.
He kicked and kicked and swam and kicked.
Then hopped out, via BUTTER!

Author Unknown

Use this poem to illustrate the need for Determination. After reading it, you can demonstrate the making of butter. Label a mason jar or old mayo jar Determination and fill it half-full with room temperature heavy whipping cream. You can make this go faster by adding a marble or culturing the cream first by adding a few teaspoons of cultured yogurt or sour cream. Tighten the lid and pass the jar around and let each person shake it. It will take anywhere from 10 - 30 minutes to form butter. Don't stop when it looks like whip cream. The butter will form and separate from the buttermilk that remains, if any. Drain the buttermilk off, stir in a pinch of salt and enjoy on crackers. You will make half as much butter as the cream with which you started. It should taste delicious, slightly sour, with no aftertaste. If it is bubbly, or smells yeasty or gassy, discard. You may need more than 1 jar depending on your group size.

“Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil,
and choose the good.” Isaiah 7:15

In 1978, a book came out called *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (ISBN 1-4000-3472-8). Written by a Rabbi, Harold Kushner, it was a bestseller and attempted to explain the question of why a good and loving God could allow pain and suffering in the world. This dilemma is sometimes referred to as theodicy. A somewhat different question of the Faithful is, "Why, if I do good things, does God let me suffer?"

I will say at the outset that I do not claim to know why pain and suffering exist. No surprise, that, I am sure. But the idea of what keeps a person going when things get tough is pretty connected to the Character Quality of the Month for April, Determination. It involves setting worthwhile goals, working through distractions, coping with discouragement, and facing problems head on. The part that many struggle with is what keeps a person going when they are apt to be distracted or discouraged. I think of that force to persevere as Faith.

Since the beginning, the Christian Church has argued over the relationship of whether having a strong Faith in God is sufficient, or whether Good Works done for others are the more important way for a believer. In the New Testament's Letter of James, the writer explains this relationship between Faith and Good Works. He says, explaining Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, "You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works... You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone... For as a body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead (James:2, 22-23; 24-26)." I take that to mean that Faith

Bill Croskey is a school psychologist from the Loveland City Schools

and Good Works complement each other and work hand in hand.

In 1976, Robert Altman directed his film tribute to America's Bicentennial, *Nashville*. The film is a hodgepodge of characters and storylines, but one aspect is the story of a veteran country singer, played by Henry Gibson. Gibson is known to the Baby Boomer Generation for his appearances on the sketch comedy show, *Laugh-In*. Gibson had previously had a guest appearance on what was, in my opinion, one of the 2 greatest situation comedies in TV history, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. (The other is *The Andy Griffith Show*. Just sayin'.) On *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, called "DVD" by my brother and me, Gibson played one of the many suitors for Sally Rogers. He recited a poem, *Keep A-Goin'*. Later, it became a song in *Nashville*. (Various resources credit this poem to Frank L. Stanton, Henry Gibson, and/or Richard Baskin.) Here it is:

*Well, if you strike a thorn or rose,
Keep a-goin'!
And if it hails or if it snows,
Keep a-goin'!
Ain't no use to sit an' whine
'Cause the fish ain't on your line
Bait your hook and keep a-tryin'--
Keep a-goin'!
When the weather kills your crop,
Keep a-goin'!
Why, it takes work to reach the top,
Keep a-goin'!
If the skies look dark and gray
Tell the world you'll be OK
And don't forget to pray!
Keep a-goin'!
If you're up against the wall,
Keep a-goin'!
Swallow hard and just stand tall,
Keep a-goin'!
S'pose you're out of any dime,
Bein' broke ain't any crime!
It'll all work out in time,
Keep a-goin'!
And if the doctor says you're
through,*

Croskey's Corner

*Keep a-goin'!
Why he's a human
just like you,
Keep a-goin'!
Ain't no law says you
must die,
Wipe them tears from off your eye,
Give ol' life another try --
Keep a-goin'!*

*Ain't no law says you must die,
Wipe them tears from off your eye,
Trust the Good Lord up on high --
He'll help!*

*Keep a-goin'!
Keep a-goin'!*

As we used to say in my youth, "Corn, corn, let's pop it!" But you know, it helped my Faith and my Good Works one time. My Mom was dying of pancreatic cancer. I wanted to believe she could survive and I wanted to act in a way that she would feel supported. So, I remembered this song from *Nashville*. I chose it with some irony; I knew it wasn't great poetry. I knew that Altman had used it with Henry Gibson's character as his "old standard." Kind of like Paul Simon singing *Sounds of Silence*. The poetry was kitsch— so bad it was good. Heck, my Mom didn't even like country music! But, I found a recording of it, and bought my Mom a portable tape player and the tape and gave them to her to play when she got "down." If you knew my Mom, you'd ask, "And when, if ever, was that!?" Anyway, I don't know if she even played it once. But it helped me through acts and beliefs, to get through a hard time. It helped me be Determined. And, I guess it helped me to make my Faith active along with my Works. Good Works to you, too, Faithful!

For the Family



We are studying the character quality of **Determination**: Looking at insurmountable obstacles as opportunities to cry out for God's supernatural intervention

To practice Determination I will:

- Set goals.
- Make sure your goals are right.
- Ignore distractions.
- Do not be discouraged by others.
- Face problems head on.

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.”

Proverbs 16:9

Family Activity:

Mapping the future: Find an old road map that you don't mind if the kids write on. If you are planning a road trip in the near future, you can use that as a destination for planning or you may solicit input on a pretend destination. Have the kids map the route that you would follow to reach your destination. Have them calculate how many miles it is and determine how long it will take to get there. Did they remember to allow time for eating, rest breaks (overnights necessary?) and gas fill ups? Would they like to stop and visit anything along the way? How will this affect arriving at their final destination? What types of things will you do once you arrive and what do you have to pack to be prepared when you get there? Do you need anything to entertain you in the car? How much money is needed for gas, food, lodging while on the road? Is the time/money it takes to get there worth what you will do at the destination? What happens if things don't go according to plan? Can you plan and prepare for some problems? Once you have completed the planning for this journey ask if they could have a successful journey if they didn't plan? How can the journey to accomplishing a goal be just as enjoyable as the final outcome? How does one plan a trip to Heaven? Is it something you have to think about and plan for everyday? Do you see how everything you do will get you closer to or farther from heaven?



Other ways to teach character in the home:

- Display the character quality and definition in a prominent place such as on the refrigerator or let each child decorate it for their bedroom door.
- At the dinner table ask if anyone noticed anyone (not just family members) demonstrating the character quality (or not demonstrating it).
- Point out news stories where character was or was not involved.
- Review the “I wills” and see if there are specific actions you can add to this list.
- During car trips, challenge the kids by describing scenarios and having them identify if it describes being the quality or being the opposite.
- Praise with character by recognizing the character quality involved rather than the achievement.
- For more ideas visit www.charactercincinnati.org/faith.html

Character
Education
Opportunities

In April



One Day Without Shoes, April 10

One Day Without Shoes is an International movement started by Tom's Shoe Company. For every pair of shoes Tom's sells, a needy child is given shoes for life. On this day, people around the world pledge to go barefoot for one day to raise awareness about the number of children in third world countries who never own shoes. How different would life be if you had no shoes? Getting around dress codes to go barefoot maybe difficult but there are things that you could do to participate in the challenge. You can suggest they go barefoot after school; you can have a shoe drive and donate them to needy children in your neighborhood; you can find a safe place to walk outside and let everyone take a lap barefoot; take pictures of group member's feet and see if everyone can guess whose they are; or learn the word for shoes in several foreign languages. The links below contain more information on One Day Without Shoes, past and present.

<http://www.onedaywithoutshoes.com/>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4VN34iCi2Q
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJysKem88XI>

Other Days You Can Use To Teach Character This Month

1 April Fool's Day
 2 Reconciliation Day
 6 Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints Day
 6-14 Passover
 7 Tangible Karma Day
 8 Easter
 10 National Sibling Day
 10 Salvation Army Founder's Day
 14 Reach as High as You Can Day
 14-15 Just Pray No Worldwide Weekend of Prayer and Fasting
 19 High Five Day
 19 Yom HoShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)
 22 Earth Day
 22 "In God We Trust" Day
 25 Yom HoZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day)
 26 Take your Daughter to Work Day
 27 Arbor Day
 30 National Honesty Day (*we started the month being foolish and end being honest!*)

Week 1 Library Week, Golden Rule Week
 Week 1 Read a Road Map Week
 Week 3 National Volunteer Week
 Week 4 Administrative Assistants Week, National Playground Safety Week

The Month of April is National Humor Month and Keep America Beautiful Month

For more information on these and other holidays visit: <http://holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/april.htm>
 or <http://www.brownielocks.com/april.html>

Determination

Looking at insurmountable obstacles as opportunities to cry out for God's supernatural intervention



**“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13**

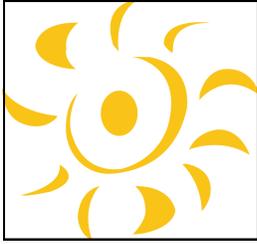
Do you see value in hardships?

Prayer for Determination

Dear Jesus,

We praise you for your goodness and mercy and thank you for the example of Determination in your life. You drug that heavy cross all the way to Calvary. You got up after every fall even through you knew it would end in your death. Give us the strength to face our problems with the same courage and conviction. Guide us in the selection of our goals so that we are mindful of the ultimate goal of eternal life. Help us to avoid distractions and to not be discouraged if others do not have faith in us.

Amen.



The Character Council of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky

P.O. Box 33144
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

Mary Andres Russell, Executive Director

Phone: 513.467.0170

Fax 513.941.2755

E-mail: mrussell@charactercincinnati.org

www.charactercincinnati.org

Written by

Jill Tomey, Faith Committee

The 49 Character Qualities are adapted from Character First! materials and are used with permission.

Use of external website links in our articles does not imply endorsement of the site, its content or the views and opinions of the external Web site's sponsoring organization. Please use your own discretion when using material from these links.

Character...It Starts With Me!

How to Use this Bulletin

This bulletin contains ideas that can be used for youth groups, bible study groups, Sunday school classes, families or anyone who wants to build their faith with character. Pick those activities that are appropriate for your group or can be modified to be appropriate for your group.

Combine bible stories or verses with an activity to further the lesson.

Join older and younger groups, allowing the older group to lead an activity that they have already done for a younger group.

More resources can be found at www.charactercincinnati.org/faith.html

We would Love to hear from YOU!

Let us know what you think. What adjustments or additions did you make so that the activity was appropriate for your group? What other activities or stories did you use to teach this month's quality? Send your questions or comments to jtomey@charactercincinnati.org and you just may be featured in a future edition.