

FAMILY FAITH BUILDER

Character Lessons for Practical Application of Faith

Initiative v. Idleness

Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it

Love is at the core of the Christian life: "love God and love your neighbor as yourself" are God's two great commandments and priorities for our life (Mark 12:29-31). Initiative prompts us to watch for opportunities to love and help others.

Are you an 'energy giver' or an 'energy taker'? Do you work to be part of a solution or are you part of the problem? A person who takes initiative often gives, encourages and serves before others even realize there is a need, problem or opportunity.

Take initiative. In just seconds you can significantly encourage others through a smile or affirming word or kind deed. Initiative is being attentive to opportunities to show Christ's love through acts of kindness and love.

This month, take the Initiative and show God's love every day.

God's Word on Initiative

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-16

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

James 4:17

And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

Acts 10:42

Jesus said : " In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16



To Practice Initiative I Will:

- Do what is right before being told
- Not put off until tomorrow the things I can do today
- Contribute to the success of the whole team
- Be a part of the solution rather than the problem
- Look for ways to help others

Any others appropriate to your family?

King David Teaches Us About Initiative

In Old Testament times, King David demonstrated initiative as he engaged Goliath in battle (I Samuel 17:45-51). As a young shepherd, David saw the need (kill this giant of the enemy Philistine army which no one else dares to try, so that Israel will not become their captive), took appropriate steps to accomplish his objective (selected the right stones for his sling) and saw it through to completion (hurled the lethal stone at the giant). Had he lacked initiative the outcome would have been decisively different. Because he showed initiative before and during the battle the entire nation of Israel benefited. Our initiative may never be recorded in history, but doing our part to take initiative will bring benefits to the Lord, those we impact, and us.



The Domino Game

For this activity you can use dominos or any toy that can be set up like a domino chain. You can even use boxes of pudding or other food products. Set up the chain of items. The family can help. Once all of the items have been arranged, just sit and look at it. Do nothing. If no one starts the first item to fall, nothing will happen to the rest of the chain. Ask if anyone knows what the word Initiative means. The first person to get the answer correct is the one to start the chain. Discuss how all it took was one push to knock down all of the items. Explain that we all have the responsibility to take the Initiative to complete our jobs. It could be a job outside the home, it could be caring for the home or just your own room. Your job could be paying attention in school and doing homework. Ask each person to think about their areas of responsibility and to think of three things that they could do right now. It could be cleaning, homework or finishing a project. Suggest that these things be small tasks or perhaps it is the first task of a larger project. Set a timer for 15 minutes and send everyone off to do one of the items they thought about. When the timer rings, gather everyone together. Did anyone finish a task completely? Did anyone do more than one or think of another task as they worked? Was getting started easier than you thought? Is anyone going to go finish another task now that they are thinking of it? How do use Initiative in our Faith? In the same way that we tackled our chores we can tackle the work of the Church. By volunteering in our church and helping our neighbors in our community before we are asked we can show initiative. Staying alert to the needs of those around us and jumping in to help is another way to show initiative.



POSTER IDEA:

Initiative

Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it



“But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

James 2:18

How fast do you respond?

Dear Jesus,

We praise you for your goodness and mercy and thank you for the example of Initiative in your life. We remember how you constantly reached out to those you met. Remind us to do what is right before being told and not put off until tomorrow the things I can do today. Help us to contribute to the success of the whole team and to be a part of the solution rather than the problem. Guide us to look for ways to help others.

Amen.

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.
- 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.

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For more activities that can be adapted for family use, visit
www.charactercincinnati.org/quality_resource.php?q=initiative