

FAMILY FAITH BUILDER

Character Lessons for Practical Application of Faith **Flexibility v. Stubbornness** Character Council

Adjusting to change with a good attitude.

Our faith requires us to be flexible and react the way God wants us to react. Many times we get comfortable in where we are with our faith and then God calls us to love a little bit more or a little bit deeper. Sometimes we get stubborn and want to stay where we are comfortable. God calls us to think and act creatively and flexibly to accomplish our mission. Changes in life are inevitable and we need to stay flexible but focused on the mission of the Church. We need to embrace change knowing we have a firm foundation in our faith. Each time we resist change, we miss an opportunity to grow our faith.

This month, identify something from God you have resisted and give flexibility a try.

To Practice Flexibility I Will:

- not get upset when plans change
- respect the decisions of my authorities
- not be stubborn
- look for the good in changes
- not compromise what is right

Any others appropriate to your family?

God's Word on Flexibility

"You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."

Acts 7:51

*"A man who hardens his neck after much reproof
Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy."*

Proverbs 29:1

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."

Ecclesiastes 3:1

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7

Jesus said, "For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

Luke 11:10

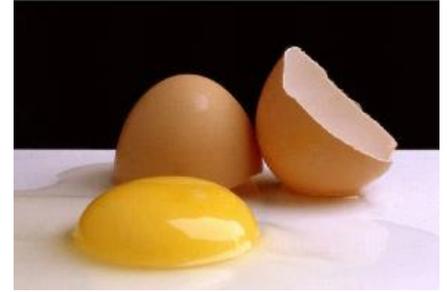
Mary Teaches Us about Flexibility

Jesus mother, Mary, was an amazing woman who throughout her life exhibited great flexibility in following God's instructions. She believed Gabriel, God's angel, when he told her she would be the mother of God's Son, even as a virgin. Toward the end of her pregnancy with Jesus, she had to travel with her new husband, Joseph, to Bethlehem to register for a census. The **second**-to-the-last thing a woman wants to do before giving birth is to take up stakes and move, especially when the travel is by donkey back. But she did. When she got to Bethlehem with Joseph, there was no decent place for them to stay. They ended up staying the night in a stable. The **very**-last-thing a woman wants to do is give birth in an uncomfortable and dirty place. But she did. Mary was flexible in other ways too. She allowed Gabriel to name her new son. When King Herod threatened Jesus' young life, she relocated to the foreign land of Egypt, to return some time later when it was safe. Years later, at a wedding feast in Cana, she persuaded Jesus to intervene in a miraculous way, and then stepped back, flexible to how He would respond. She gave firm instructions to the wait staff to be flexible too, and obedient to His instructions. And at the end of Jesus' life, Mary allowed Jesus to place her needs and her future care in the hands of the apostle John.



The Egg Vs. The Tennis Ball

Cover part of the floor with newspaper or do this outside where you can hose down afterwards. Have one family member drop a raw egg onto the newspaper. Have everyone observe its reaction when it hits an obstacle (the floor). Now have one of them drop a Tennis ball (but not in the egg mess!) and observe its reaction to the obstacle. Discuss with your family how these two reactions demonstrate how to react when something gets in your way that changes your plans. If you are like the egg, you crumble and stop when your plan hits a snag. If you are like the Tennis ball, you bounce and get right back in the game. God expects us to be able to think on our feet and not be blocked when the devil sets up obstacles for us.



POSTER IDEA:

Flexibility

Adjusting to change
with a good attitude.



**“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord,
implore you to walk in a manner
worthy of the calling with which you
have been called.”**

Ephesians 4:1

**Are you stubborn or
flexible when the Lord
calls upon you?**

Dear Jesus,

We praise you for your goodness and mercy and thank you for the example of Flexibility in your life. You tailored your message so Your Truth could be understood by who you were teaching. Guide us to be patient and flexible when plans change and not be stubborn. Remind us to respect the decisions of our authorities and to look for the good when changes happen. Teach us to not compromise concerning the right thing to do. Help us to act in all things in harmony with the will of the Father. 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=flexibility