

Christian Parenting Checklist

Lots of the material in this document is practical advice on how to apply biblical principles in child training and the advice itself is not necessarily biblical. You may not agree with all of it. Some of it may not fit your situation. Use wisdom to determine if and how this checklist may help you be a better parent.

Love them (Titus 2:4)

Be the kind of person you want them to become⁸

Focus on making them relationship-rich versus experience-rich¹

Know your child by asking questions, listening to them, and looking in their eyes³

Love them through their primary love languages

Lead them to Christ

Chasten them when they do wrong. This shows love. (Heb 12)

Spend lots of time with them now (The end does not justify the means. The means determines the end. Your attention (or lack thereof) *now* is shaping the course of the future.)¹²

Be there for them (talking, taking walks, work, sports events, etc)

Show them respect for their abilities and interests

Get interested in what they are interested in

Learn their personality and discover their bent and honor and support them--sooner is better than later, but it's never too late¹¹

Don't wound them¹¹

As they become adults, ask what you can do for them rather than what they can do for you

Never develop an entitlement attitude that manipulates and guilt trips your grown children to do things for you. Attract them to you by your inward strength and winsomeness.

Be kind and courteous to them

Sympathize with them when they are emotionally burdened without encouraging oversensitivity (Rom 12:15). Appreciate their burdens in light of their age, not yours. (What is a little thing to you may be a big thing to them). Help them to cast their burdens on the Lord, because He cares for them (Psalm 55:22; 1Pet 5:7).

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Use positive encouraging words when you can (without feeling the need to criticize, yet being careful not to brag on them for everything they do—If it's not good work, encourage them to do it better)

Love your mate—the greatest gift you can give your children¹¹

Let them see Mom and Dad loving each other, Mom and Dad's character, and Mom and Dad's heart. Let them hear “I love you”, “I'm proud of you”, and “You're good at...” Give them affirming encouragement, life instruction, and the gospel. Let them experience one-on-one times and perhaps special manhood/womanhood ceremonies¹¹

Make some great memories together¹¹

Listen to what other credible people say about them without being defensive (our love for our children can blind us to their faults)

Treat them like they have a brain (give challenging assignments, expect success, don't demand perfection, reinforce the positive with praise, use the negative for more training, as they mature include them in the circle of counsel for major decisions, value their vision for their lives)¹²

Chasten them when they do wrong (Prov 13:24; 19:18; 22:6,15; 23:13,14; 26:3; 29:15,17; Heb 12:6-11)

When they sin, teach them the fear and love of God through chastening (Prov 13:24; 19:18; 22:6,15; 23:13,14; 26:3; 29:15,17; Heb 12:6-11)

Show mercy for transgressions done ignorantly (1Tim 1:13)

If they repent on their own, not because they were caught, chastening may not be necessary (1Cor 11:31,32)

Discipline them with 10 years later (not now) in mind¹⁰

Teach small children to obey your voice, preteens responsibility, and teens discipline regarding their choices (writing up consequences with them)¹⁰

Have a few clear responsibilities/rules, develop written contracts, negotiate consequences, be consistent, reduce the number of rules as they get older, and train them to be on their own¹⁰

Parent them the way God parents us

Get to know God intimately

Understand the way God parents us, His children

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Practice what you preach¹⁰

Adapt, grow, and constantly repair and maintain your relationship. Important words: “I repent of _____. Will you forgive me?”¹⁰

Constantly upgrade your parenting skills¹¹

Make your target for your children holiness versus happiness, character versus career, God’s dream versus the American dream¹⁰

Build a strong bond through biblical love that is gentle and firm (tough at times as needed) through unconditional love, scheduled time, focused attention, eye contact, meaningful touch, ongoing communication, having fun, and praying with and for them¹⁰

Train them up in the way they should go (Prov 22:6)

Focus heavily on *training* in the early years, as soon as they are born. *Example* will be the emphasis in later years⁴

Never “give into” or ignore bad behavior. Instead, always make bad behavior counter-productive.⁴ Make bad behavior backfire on them and result in the opposite consequences they were lusting for.

Teach them to be happy for others, especially their siblings (Matthew 20:15)

Develop a strong family identity (consider a mission statement or family charter) to minimize the influence of peer pressure⁵

Allow privileges based on proven responsibility⁵

Take away privileges based on irresponsibility⁵

Use incentives for amoral accomplishments (schoolwork, etc.), but never bribe them to obey⁵

Adjust your leadership style as they grow (age 0-13 coach directing, 13-18 cheerleader/counselor listening and supporting, 18 up consultant and friend (listening and supporting)¹¹

Set spiritual goals, training exercises, and periodic assessments¹²

- a. My child will be sure of his or her salvation
- b. My child will love and understand God’s word
- c. My child will know and willingly obey God’s rules of right and wrong
- d. My child will know his or her individual spiritual gift(s) and call from God
- e. My child will be able to teach spiritual truths to others

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- f. My child will be an effective witness
- g. My child will spend daily time with God
- h. My child will do acts of service for the good of others
- i. My child will exercise self-discipline
- j. My child will be in fellowship and under the authority of the local church
- k. My child will understand the power of prayer
- l. My child will be maturely walking with God

Train boys to be strong men. Dads, train them and model it by your life; Moms, praise and encourage manly qualities in your son. Praise your husband's manly strengths in the presence of your son.

Train girls to be strong women. Moms, train them and model it by your life. Dads, praise and encourage womanly qualities in your daughter. Praise your wife's womanly strengths in the presence your daughter.

Guide them toward positive friendships

Influence their relationship with God, their parents, and those outside the home based on who you want them to become¹

Help them dial out their friends who negatively influence them and dial in their friends who positively influence them¹

Know their friends (Early in the friendship, invite the friend over for dinner, drive them to the game, have a kid-friendly home for slumber parties)¹²

Set standards of behavior for your children's friends (while they are at your home)(i.e., no bad language)¹²

After age 11 or 12, strongly encourage him or her to include a spiritual dimension in their friendships (sharing prayer requests, having a Bible study together, witnessing to an unbelieving friend)¹²

Be constructive and gentle when criticizing their friends¹²

Strongly encourage friendship among your own children (homeschool, recreational times together, family vacations and outings, don't let the youngest child be left out)¹²

Teach them friendship skills that will last forever (find close friendships from those who share their moral and spiritual commitments and will help them grow in faith)¹²

Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4)

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Stand in awe of the greatness of God³

Help them to understand the greatness of God³

Teach them that God blesses those who obey Him³

Teach them how to follow the Lord when you are not there

Teach them by word and example to love and be in close fellowship with a Bible-believing church where elders and deacons lead, the ordinances are observed, spiritual gifts are exercised, the truth is loved, spiritual growth is emphasized, whole-hearted worship is a lifestyle, sinners are evangelized, fellowship (knowing and being known by other believers) is enjoyed, and the needy are helped.

Bring fresh spiritual food to them in family devotions¹²

Sing praises and pray in family devotions

Give them opportunities to make age-appropriate choices so they become mature²

Allow them to face the consequences of their choices²

Later teach them to be able to predict the consequences of their choices²

Teach them that decisions made as children can have consequences that will last for the rest of their lives

Make them aware of the danger of sin, and the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and how to overcome⁷

When they sin, use scripture to address the issues of their heart³

Set clear-cut objectives such as determination, honesty, responsibility, thoughtfulness, confidentiality, punctuality, self control, patience, purity, compassion, and diligence¹⁰

Stress character qualities rather than their occupation¹⁰

Teach them the importance of desiring, discovering, and developing their spiritual gifts in the church (Rom 12; 1Cor 12; 1Pet 4), not forsaking the assembling of themselves with a local church (Heb 10:25).

Fathers, don't provoke them to anger, lest they be discouraged (Col 3:21)

Be calm (self-controlled) and firm⁴

Give them hope that their God-given dreams can be fulfilled with your blessing and help⁶

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Help them find healthy environments to meet other children their age (including of the opposite sex) as they mature⁶

Be joyful and fun so they will not desire to get away from you when they get the first chance⁶

Transition, in time, from parenting by control to parenting by influence¹

Do not yield to selfish anger which will provoke them to anger (anger is a relationship destroyer)

Make sure selfish pride (what others will think) or insecurity does not cause you to take your children's transgressions personally

Train them to obey (Eph 6:2)

Gain control early with infants and toddlers by insisting on obedience before a child understands why^{4,5}

Gain control early by physical enforcement (e.g., putting their coat on them, putting them in the car seat)^{4,5}

Decide what they are to obey, maintaining high expectations regarding things that are really important⁴

Require obedience early before there is an understanding why by popping their hand to reinforce your command "no"^{4,5}

Resolve to require obedience that is immediate, complete, and with a good attitude^{4,5}

Make them respect your words. Don't be a threatening and repeating parent.⁵ (James 5:12)

Be consistent^{2,5,4} Be consistent yourself and among each other as parents.

Pray with them, and for them

Teach them to respect others, especially their elders

Teach them early to look adults in the eyes and speak when spoken to

Teach them to respect others by respecting their property⁵ ("Other people's stuff may not mean much to you, but it probably does to them.")

When they damage another's property (intentionally or accidentally), see that they repay the damage⁵

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Don't allow them to play with tools (Tools are not toys)⁵

Teach them not to interrupt adults who are talking (Teach them to gently tug or tap you to let you know they are waiting to tell you something)⁵

Make relationships and identify for them other trustworthy adults with whom your children can seek counsel

Teach them to allow God to control their tongue and be good stewards of information. Teach them...

...to speak the truth in love

...to use speech that edifies

...not to speak evil of others

...that there are certain things to tell and certain things they should never tell

Teach them to be humble

Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think (Rom 12:3)

Don't be a "know-it-all" for you know nothing as you ought to know (1Cor 8:2)

Don't be a respecter of persons based on money, beauty, age, race, or health

Never make fun of or look down on others less fortunate

Do not boast or glory in yourself since you have received it all from God (1Cor 4:7)

Teach them to be honest, to...

...Do right

...Never lie

...Never steal

...Never cheat

Teach them to be thankful, to

...thank God for all things since every good and perfect gift come from Him (James 1:17)

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...never think you're entitled (Luke 17:10)

...never take advantage of, or take for granted, another's generosity (including their parents)

...say "thank you" and encourage those who help or serve you

...be content with what God has given you

...bless with material things those who bless you with spiritual things (1Cor 9:11)

Teach them to serve others joyfully

Serve others as serving Christ, no matter if you are the boss, employee, customer, or client (John 13:15)

Teach them sexual purity

Protect their innocence¹³

Teach sex education progressively¹³

Parents, be sexually pure

Teach them of God's plan for oneness in the marriage covenant

Teach them not to act like they are married when they are not

Teach them, while unmarried, to never touch or look at another person's nakedness

Teach them, while unmarried, to never allow another person to touch or look at their nakedness

Warn them of God's judgment on sexual sins

Encourage them not to become emotionally involved with the opposite sex too early.¹²

Have them commit to:

- a. I will not engage in a romantic relationship until both of us are in the season of life when we are ready to be married
- b. I will investigate someone only if he/she appears to meet spiritual and character qualifications my parents and I agree are suitable for a spouse
- c. I will investigate a person only if I find him/her to be personally interesting and attractive

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Rethink the dating game and don't be conformed to the world's ways that can cause them to stumble

Agree to have suitors interested in your daughter(s) get approval from you (Dad) first.
(After talking with your daughter, you can reject those who don't meet her qualifications)

Warn them of becoming emotionally attached to the wrong type of person

Remind them that marriage is not necessary to have a complete and fulfilled life (1Cor 7)

Teach them *how* to work

Do it while they watch, let them do it while you watch, let them do it by themselves

Give them plenty of meaningful work to do

Teach them the Bible

Teach small children who God is and what He is like, preteens what is right and wrong, and teens discernment skills¹⁰

Teach them fundamental Bible doctrine (God loves us, God hates sin, God's attributes, the Trinity, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, fall of man, sin, salvation, Christian living, afterlife, angels, devils, the family, the church, second coming of Christ, the end of the world, etc.)

Teach them to love the Bible

Incentivize them to read the Bible daily¹²

Teach them to do their best for God's glory

Teach them to be financially faithful

Teach them, by God's power, to faithfully give, spend, save, and invest money by being content, diligent, honest, generous, and wise

...to pay their share, no matter how little it is, no matter how *little* they have, and no matter how *much abundance* the other person/corporation has

...to pay what they owe, no matter the amount

Teach them to care for the needy

Teach them repentance and forgiveness

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Teach them repentance is necessary for forgiveness and restored fellowship with God and a brother in Christ

Teach them to forgive others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven them

Teach them biblical steps of conflict resolution (Matt 18; Luke 17; Gal 6)

Teach them to be discerning without condemning others or being overly critical

Teach them to love the praise of God more than the praise of men (Jn 12:43)

Train them to dress modestly (especially daughters)¹²

Be consistent among children, be firm, don't let them dress to overstate their age, let them pick their own style, use constructive criticism versus sarcasm for input/direction

Teach them to be good citizens

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- 1 *Parental Guidance Required*, Andy Stanley and Reggie Joiner
- 2 *Raise up a Child*, Phil Tuttle
- 3 *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Ted Tripp
- 4 *To Train up a Child*, Mike Pearl
- 5 *Growing Kids God's Way*, Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo
- 6 *Jumping Ship*, Mike Pearl
- 7 *Everyday Talk*, John Younts
- 8 *House or Home*, Chip Ingram
- 9 *The Five Love Languages*, Gary Chapman
- 10 *House or Home*, Chip Ingram
- 11 *Winning at Work and Home*, Robert Lewis
- 12 *What a Daughter needs from her Dad*, Michael Farris
- 13 *Along the innocent way*, Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo