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Laying Down
the
Rails

for *Children*

A Habit-Training Companion
by Lanaya Gore

Good habits shape good character.

Just as a train's direction is established by its track, good habits set the direction of our children's lives for smooth running, now and into adulthood.

We all know that changing thoughts and actions can be hard work. But forming a good habit is easier when we are motivated and connected to the result.

As Charlotte Mason said, " 'Sow a habit, reap a character.' But we must go a step further back, we must sow the idea or notion which makes the act worth while."

You see, great ideas are powerful motivators! And that's where *Laying Down the Rails for Children* comes in.

This companion to the award-winning book, *Laying Down the Rails*, expands on the principles of good habits with a practical how-to guide and action plan to use with your children. It is filled with classic stories and Bible passages, beautiful poems, life activities, inspiring quotations—living ideas that will nestle into your children's minds and motivate them toward the habits of good character.

With *Laying Down the Rails for Children*, you will

- **Feed minds**—Share classic stories, poems, Bible passages, and powerful quotations that feed the mind with wonderful ideas centered around each habit.
- **Inspire hearts**—Discuss and practice practical ways to apply those motivating ideas in everyday life.
- **Encourage action**—Outline a personal plan for your family in the Parent Prep section of each habit.
- **Build habits**—Give focus and motivation to the whole family as you work on your selected habit.

Start laying down the rails of good habits in your home today and see what a difference it can make!



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Laying Down the Rails for Children

A Habit-Training Companion

by Lanaya Gore

Excerpts from Charlotte Mason's books are surrounded by quotation marks and accompanied by a reference to which book in the series they came from.

Vol. 1: Home Education

Vol. 2: Parents and Children

Vol. 3: School Education

Vol. 4: Ourselves

Vol. 5: Formation of Character

Vol. 6: A Philosophy of Education

Laying Down the Rails for Children: A Habit-Training Companion

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For Grandma Emilie whose life was a light for the young girl
who became my dedicated mother
and
For Grandma Phoebe who raised three preacher-sons
and three faithful daughters

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Foreword

I vividly remember one summer day when I was a child. I was helping my mother weed the garden. It was hot, and I was sweating. My hands ached from pulling those stubborn weeds, and my knees hurt from kneeling on the rough clods of dirt. I knew I should be diligent, but I was tired and I just wanted to quit.

Then into my mind popped a scene from a Laura Ingalls Wilder book. Maybe you can picture it too. Laura was trampling hay for Pa as he pitched it up onto the hay wagon. It was hot. Her braids had come undone, and she was sweating. Her legs ached from trampling back and forth, and they were scratched from all the hay. But she kept going.

And as I was kneeling there in the garden, thinking about Laura, I made a decision: I would keep going too.

Examples like Laura, who live in our memories, can be powerful motivators! Forming good habits takes work, and often the deciding factor in whether we succeed in a new habit is whether we are sufficiently motivated. Repetition is a big key, but equally so is motivation.

Lanaya Gore has given parents around the world a valuable gift by compiling this wonderful collection of encouraging stories, living examples, and inspiring thoughts. She has handed us motivation at our fingertips. Even more, she has arranged it according to habit and has been careful to include all the aspects that Charlotte Mason considered vital for intentional habit training and character development.

Charlotte Mason wanted parents to instruct their children in good habits and character traits, “not at haphazard, but regularly and progressively.” She envisioned the parent focusing on one habit or trait at a time: first by having a short talk with the children about what it means, then discussing practical ways to put it into action, inspiring the children with living examples, and showing them how God’s Word addresses the subject. “Give the children one thought at a time, and every time some lovely example . . . that will fire their hearts with the desire to do likewise,” Charlotte explained. “Always tell them of beautiful ‘Golden Deeds,’ small and great, that shall stir them as trumpet-calls to the battle of life” (Vol. 1, pp. 339, 340).

You hold in your hands a treasure that will do just that. *Laying Down the Rails for Children* will provide many precious opportunities to feed your children’s minds, inspire their hearts, and encourage them to action. By sharing what is in this book, you will grow together as a family, even as you each grow in good habits and character—for character is formed by habits.

Who knows which inspiring examples or tidbits of truth from the pages of this book will nestle into your children’s hearts, live in their memories, and encourage them to lay down the rails of good habits in their lives for years to come!

Sonya Shafer

Introduction

Our family had tried habit training for about six weeks when the children were young. I felt discouraged and adrift without a firm plan. So I decided to give it up and just trust the children to pick up good habits from their parents. (We were wonderful examples, right?) If there happened to be a noticeable bad habit taking root, I would just work on that one with the child.

This plan (or lack thereof) worked okay, mostly because I had given myself permission not to think about habit training. But it was so easy to ignore bad habits and pretend they would go away on their own. About five years after our family's first attempt, a group of homeschool moms started meeting to discuss habit training and go through *Laying Down the Rails* step by step. The group reinvigorated my wish to instill good habits in our children. It also provided accountability that caused me to come up with a habit training plan using *Laying Down the Rails*.

Several weeks after concentrating on Truthfulness, there was an incident in our home where I noticed a small cut in my husband's new shirt. It was a perfect slice that had to have happened with scissors. I knew we parents were not to blame, but I did not want to announce the situation to the children with an angry, accusing demeanor, which tends to encourage a fear-based cover-up instead of a confession. I first approached my oldest daughter, showing her the cut and wondering how it could have happened. She stood still for a moment and then slowly told me how she had accidentally cut the shirt. I told her I was proud of her for telling the truth, and she responded with, "Good thing we've been doing *Laying Down the Rails!*" And I knew that it was a good thing too.

Laying Down the Rails for Children is the result of our family's system for habit training. My hope is that it will provide enjoyment and ease for your family while you work together to build that priceless structure of good character which will make life easier for yourselves and be the cause of service for others.

How to Use Laying Down the Rails for Children

We want our children to live lives of virtue. We want them to be citizens of character, always making the right choice. And we also realize that we cannot make their choices for them. One of our best courses of action as parents is to help our children get in the habit of making the right choice for themselves. What habit training is *not* is a guarantee of turning out perfect adults or a road to salvation. But habits, including good ones, are hard to break; so this training is a wonderful tool, indeed, to help our children choose integrity.

Laying Down the Rails for Children is a springboard for habit training. Lessons and stories will inspire and give substantive thought for your children, but the habit training will take place *all* day for weeks and months at a time while you focus on a habit. As a parent, you will get the most out of this resource when you thoroughly immerse your thoughts in your chosen habit and help your children practice throughout each day.

This book is a great companion to *Laying Down the Rails* by Sonya Shafer, which is directed more toward the parent and contains great wisdom on the subject of habit training and most of the 60-plus habits themselves. *Laying Down the Rails for Children* will follow the outline of *Laying Down the Rails* and also use its teaching points. It may be of great benefit for you to read the explanation of each teaching point from *Laying Down the Rails* for yourself before summarizing the point for your children. There will be promptings when *Laying Down the Rails* specifically addresses parents.

1. Learn how habits are formed.

A good starting place for you as the parent would be to read chapters 1 and 2 in *Laying Down the Rails* to understand the importance of habit training and how to go about it. Take several weeks to read short sections at a time in order to absorb the instruction. Immerse yourself in these thoughts, so you can provide ready guidance for your children. You might even use the information in a First Lesson with your children, explaining why and how the family will be training in good habits.

2. Select one habit to work on.

There are several ways your family can decide which habit you want to work on. It is a good idea for everyone to work on the same habit together so that you can focus and encourage one another. Charlotte Mason had her top three that she suggested were foundational: obedience, attention, and truthfulness. You could

- ◆ Do the three foundational habits first.
- ◆ Pick and choose which habit to do based on needs in your family.
- ◆ Rotate the categories (decency and propriety, mental, moral, physical, and religious), choosing one habit from each category to work on in turn.
- ◆ Or just go in the order listed in this book.

If you spend six to eight weeks on each habit, you can get through about six habits in a year. That means you could finish all of the 60-plus habits listed in this book in ten years or less! Remember that, however many you finish, any good habit will be a great benefit to your children.

3. Gather your thoughts in the Parent Prep section.

Turn to your selected habit in this book and skim the lessons. Decide what time of day will work best for the sit-down portion of habit training. It could be a part of school, family devotions, or bedtime. The sit-down portion could be done once or twice a week for six to eight weeks per habit. Do some prep work by reading up on the habit for yourself from *Laying Down the Rails*. Take time to observe your family; identify specific goals

you have for this habit or bad habits that need to be replaced. For example, if you are working on Cleanliness, you may notice that the children need to improve their hand-washing or hair-care skills. Customize your plan by incorporating any ideas your family might enjoy, such as celebrations for victories, visual charts, Scripture cards, or a scrapbook for completed habits. Make a note of your ideas.

4. Once or twice a week, read a lesson together.

In lesson 1, you will start out by talking about the habit and defining what it means. Then you will read and talk about a Biblical command or principle that corresponds to the habit. From there, the lessons will go through different points, examining various aspects and delving deeper into the habit. For example, for Cleanliness you will talk about the importance of keeping bedrooms aired out, our bodies clean, and food preparation areas sanitized, among other things. You will also be directed to read and discuss the various components (stories, poems, quotations, etc.) given as lovely examples and inspiring thoughts to fire your children's hearts to "do likewise."

The different components included with each habit are

- ◆ Bible Command, Principle, or Story—Choose your preferred version of the Bible from which to read. You could also read the passage for yourself and do a delightful retelling. Or for younger children, you could use a Bible storybook such as *Egermeier's Bible Story Book* or Catherine Vos' *The Child's Story Bible* for some of the suggested Bible stories.
- ◆ Stories, Poems, Quotations—Enjoy reading these together. You can take turns reading or just let the children listen while you read aloud. Periodically ask for narrations from children older than six. Let the children give their thoughts on a quotation or have older children explain it to the younger ones. You could also choose one poem or quotation to be used for copywork during school time.
- ◆ Parent Share—This component provides a time for the parents to tell stories from their own lives or talk about people they have known who exemplify the habit. Children love to hear stories about their parents' past.
- ◆ Activities—These ideas provide opportunities to practice different aspects of the habit you are focusing on in a fun, family way. Some suggested activities may work better for older children and some for younger. Adjust them as desired or use them as a springboard for your own ideas.
- ◆ Discussion—There will be much opportunity for discussion. Be careful not to talk too much as the parent. Ask questions and listen to your children's thoughts. Don't provoke your child into echoing the little girl who said, "Mother, I think I could understand if you did not explain *quite* so much" (Vol. 3, p. 179).

5. Every day help your children apply what they learn by practicing the new habit.

Be watchful throughout each day to help your children apply the concepts they have learned. Lesson time is not the embodiment of habit training; it gives the family inspiration and thoughts to ponder as you practice your habit throughout the day. Isolated activities in themselves will not instill the habit. The suggested activities can be helpful and fun, but they do not replace the daily focus of implementing the trait in everyday situations.

As you go about life, "catch" each other displaying your current habit and encourage each other to continue. When you notice the habit *not* being followed, take time to stop and instruct the child on the right way to handle the habit, reminding him or her of specific points you have discussed.

Simply stated: Feed minds. Inspire hearts. Encourage action.

Decency and Propriety Habits

Cleanliness

Careful to keep clean

Parent Prep

Read detailed thoughts about Cleanliness on pages 28 and 29 of *Laying Down the Rails* and skim the lessons below.

◆ Goals for this Habit (and steps to get there)

◆ A Person or Story from My Life that Demonstrates this Habit

◆ Additional Stories, Poems, Quotations, Bible Verses I Want to Use


◆ Other Activities We Could Do to Practice this Habit

◆ Celebration Ideas

Notes

Choose the best way for your family to work through the habits in this book: 1) Pick and choose what seems most needed; 2) First do the top three recommended by Charlotte Mason—obedience, attention, and truthfulness; 3) Go through them in the order presented here in the book; 4) Rotate through the five categories—decency and propriety, mental, moral, physical, and religious—selecting one from each category in its turn.

Remember to allow six to eight weeks to work on this habit. Gather for a lesson from this book once or twice a week, but work on implementing the habit every day throughout regular activities and routines.

 Habit points from *Laying Down the Rails*

Lesson 1

Read the definition and discuss Cleanliness. Share with the children any goals you've identified for this habit (for instance, "We will wash our hands when preparing to cook."). Also get their input on changes they think need to be made.

Read the Biblical principle found in Ecclesiastes 10:18 from your preferred version of the Bible. Keeping our home, other areas we inhabit, and our bodies clean creates a peaceful, inviting environment. It shows diligence and concern for ourselves, our property, and for others.

Lesson 2

Talk over the first point. Let the children evaluate how well they feel they accomplish a clean room. Come up with ideas on how to improve. Then read "Dust Under the Rug."



1. Keep your room clean, aired, and odor-free.

Dust Under the Rug from *Mother Stories* by Maud Lindsay

There was once a mother, who had two little daughters; and, as her husband was dead and she was very poor, she worked diligently all the time that they might be well fed and clothed. She was a skilled worker, and found work to do away from home, but her two little girls were so good and so helpful that they kept her house as neat and as bright as a new pin.

One of the little girls was lame, and could not run about the house; so she sat still in her chair and sewed, while Minnie, the sister, washed the dishes, swept the floor, and made the home beautiful.

Their home was on the edge of a great forest; and after their tasks were finished the little girls would sit at the window and watch the tall trees as they bent in the wind, until it would seem as though the trees were real persons, nodding and bending and bowing to each other.

In the Spring there were the birds, in the Summer the wild flowers, in Autumn the bright leaves, and in Winter the great drifts of white snow; so that the whole year was a round of delight to the two happy children. But one day the dear mother came home sick; and then they were very sad. It was Winter, and there were many things to buy. Minnie and her little sister sat by the fire and talked it over, and at last Minnie said:—

"Dear sister, I must go out to find work, before the food gives out." So she kissed her mother, and, wrapping herself up, started from home. There was a narrow path leading through the forest, and she determined to follow it until she reached some place where she might find the work she wanted.

As she hurried on, the shadows grew deeper. The night was coming fast when she saw before her a very small house, which was a welcome sight. She made haste to reach it, and to knock at the door.

Nobody came in answer to her knock. When she had tried again and again, she thought that nobody lived there; and she opened the door and walked in, thinking that she would stay all night.

As soon as she stepped into the house, she started back in surprise; for there before her she saw twelve little beds with the bedclothes all tumbled, twelve little dirty plates

on a very dusty table, and the floor of the room so dusty that I am sure you could have drawn a picture on it.

“Dear me!” said the little girl, “this will never do!” And as soon as she had warmed her hands, she set to work to make the room tidy.

She washed the plates, she made up the beds, she swept the floor, she straightened the great rug in front of the fireplace, and set the twelve little chairs in a half circle around the fire; and, just as she finished, the door opened and in walked twelve of the queerest little people she had ever seen. They were just about as tall as a carpenter’s rule, and all wore yellow clothes; and when Minnie saw this, she knew that they must be the dwarfs who kept the gold in the heart of the mountain.

“Well!” said the dwarfs all together, for they always spoke together and in rhyme,

“Now isn’t this a sweet surprise?

We really can’t believe our eyes!”

Then they spied Minnie, and cried in great astonishment:—

“Who can this be, so fair and mild?

Our helper is a stranger child.”

Now when Minnie saw the dwarfs, she came to meet them. “If you please,” she said, “I’m little Minnie Grey; and I’m looking for work because my dear mother is sick. I came in here when the night drew near, and—” here all the dwarfs laughed, and called out merrily:—

“You found our room a sorry sight,

But you have made it clean and bright.”

They were such dear funny little dwarfs! After they had thanked Minnie for her trouble, they took white bread and honey from the closet and asked her to sup with them.

While they sat at supper, they told her that their fairy housekeeper had taken a holiday, and their house was not well kept, because she was away.

They sighed when they said this; and after supper, when Minnie washed the dishes and set them carefully away, they looked at her often and talked among themselves. When the last plate was in its place they called Minnie to them and said:—

“Dear mortal maiden will you stay

All through our fairy’s holiday?

And if you faithful prove, and good,

We will reward you as we should.”

Now Minnie was much pleased, for she liked the kind dwarfs, and wanted to help them, so she thanked them, and went to bed to dream happy dreams.

Next morning she was awake with the chickens, and cooked a nice breakfast; and after the dwarfs left, she cleaned up the room and mended the dwarfs’ clothes. In the evening when the dwarfs came home, they found a bright fire and a warm supper waiting for them; and every day Minnie worked faithfully until the last day of the fairy housekeeper’s holiday.

That morning, as Minnie looked out of the window to watch the dwarfs go to their work, she saw on one of the window panes the most beautiful picture she had ever seen.

A picture of fairy palaces with towers of silver and frosted pinnacles, so wonderful and beautiful that as she looked at it she forgot that there was work to be done, until the cuckoo clock on the mantel struck twelve.

Then she ran in haste to make up the beds, and wash the dishes; but because she was in a hurry she could not work quickly, and when she took the broom to sweep the floor it was almost time for the dwarfs to come home.

“I believe,” said Minnie aloud, “that I will not sweep under the rug to-day. After all,

Notes

it is nothing for dust to be where it can't be seen!" So she hurried to her supper and left the rug unturned.

Before long the dwarfs came home. As the rooms looked just as usual, nothing was said; and Minnie thought no more of the dust until she went to bed and the stars peeped through the window.

Then she thought of it, for it seemed to her that she could hear the stars saying:—

"There is the little girl who is so faithful and good"; and Minnie turned her face to the wall, for a little voice, right in her own heart, said:—

"Dust under the rug! dust under the rug!"

"There is the little girl," cried the stars, "who keeps home as bright as star-shine."

"Dust under the rug! dust under the rug!" said the little voice in Minnie's heart.

"We see her! we see her!" called all the stars joyfully.

"Dust under the rug! dust under the rug!" said the little voice in Minnie's heart, and she could bear it no longer. So she sprang out of bed, and, taking her broom in her hand, she swept the dust away; and lo! under the dust lay twelve shining gold pieces, as round and as bright as the moon.

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried Minnie, in great surprise; and all the little dwarfs came running to see what was the matter.

Minnie told them all about it; and when she had ended her story, the dwarfs gathered lovingly around her and said:—

"Dear child, the gold is all for you,
For faithful you have proved and true;
But had you left the rug unturned,
A groat was all you would have earned.
Our love goes with the gold we give,
And oh! forget not while you live,
That in the smallest duty done
Lies wealth of joy for every one."

Minnie thanked the dwarfs for their kindness to her; and early next morning she hastened home with her golden treasure, which bought many good things for the dear mother and little sister.

She never saw the dwarfs again; but she never forgot their lesson, to do her work faithfully; and she always swept under the rug.

Lesson 3

Read and discuss the second point with consideration for why such things would need to be aired out. Then read "Rain in the Night." Encourage the children to draw pictures of the poem if they want to.



2. Air out any clothing or bedding that will be used again before washing.

Rain in the Night

by Amelia Josephine Burr

Raining, raining,
All night long;
Sometimes loud, sometimes soft,
Just like a song.

Poems in this book can be assigned as copywork or memorization and recitation exercises if desired.

There'll be rivers in the gutters
 And lakes along the street.
 It will make our lazy kitty
 Wash his little dirty feet.

The roses will wear diamonds
 Like kings and queens at court;
 But the pansies all get muddy
 Because they are so short.

I'll sail my boat tomorrow
 In wonderful new places,
 But first I'll take my watering-pot
 And wash the pansies' faces.

Lesson 4

Read and discuss point three, reminiscing about times when the children have had fun with a messy activity. Then read and discuss the quotation by Francis Bacon.



3. It's fun to get dirty, but learn how to clean yourself up when finished.

“Cleanness of body was ever deemed to proceed from a due reverence to God, to society, and to ourselves.” — Francis Bacon

Lesson 5

Discuss the first part of point four.



4a. Learn to groom yourself adequately.

Activity: Choose one or two Cleanliness areas of your children's lives that need extra help and take 5–10 minutes to go through the process and show them exactly what you expect from them in this area. For instance, demonstrate and practice washing hands or brushing teeth and flossing for younger children; discuss personal hygiene expectations and specifics for older children. As needed, go through the step-by-step process showing how you want these accomplished.

Lesson 6

Read and discuss the second part of point four. Make sure children understand why they should wash their hands before they eat with them.



4b. Learn to wash hands before meals.

If you want to elaborate on the topic of germs and bacteria, you could find a book on that topic at your library.

As you end each lesson, be mindful throughout the day that everyone in the family is working on the Cleanliness habit. Post reminders around the house if helpful.

Lesson 7

Take stock of point five and see if any changes need to be made in that area.



5. By the age of five or six, your child should be able to bathe himself properly.

Read “The Three Pigs,” in which a dirty and greedy disposition does not serve two little pigs very well.

The Three Pigs

from *Fairy Stories and Fables* by James Baldwin

In a fine old barnyard on the other side of the sea there once lived a good mother pig with her three children. Now in those days pigs lived just as they liked. They had a very good time, and learned many curious, cunning ways.

The name of the eldest of the three little pigs was Brownny. He was not a very nice pig, for his face was always dirty, and he was never so happy as when playing in the mud. His mother tried hard to teach him to be clean and neat, but it was of no use; he would run away from her while she was talking, find the muddiest place in the yard, and roll about in it till he was the ugliest fellow you ever saw. “Ah, Brownny,” his mother would say, “some day you’ll be sorry for your naughty ways; and then it will be too late for me to help you.”

The name of the second little pig was Whitey. He was a clever fellow, and if he had not had one very bad habit he would have been as nice as any other pig. But he was greedy. He spent all of his time either in eating or in looking through the fence and wishing it was dinner time. When the dairy maid came down the lane with food for the pigs, he would stand on his hind legs and squeal; and when she poured the food into the trough, he would jostle and push his two brothers out of the way, and try his best to get every mouthful for himself. His mother often scolded him for being so greedy and selfish, and he sometimes promised to do better; but as soon as he began to think of the dairy maid, he was as bad as ever.

The name of the youngest of the three little pigs was Blacky, and he was the best and prettiest of them all. He kept his face washed and his hair combed seven days in the week; and, for a pig, he had many cunning ways. His mother was very proud of him; and the farmer was fond of petting him and telling his friends that Blacky would be sure to take the prize at the next fair.

Now, late in the fall when the nuts could be heard dropping from the trees, the mother of these little pigs began to feel very uneasy in the barnyard.

“My children,” she said, “I think that I must leave you for a time and go on a long journey over the hills through the oak woods. There are so many dangers in the woods, so many savage beasts and cruel men, that I cannot think of taking you with me. But I will build a nice new house for each of you to live in while I am gone.”

“Dear mother, you are very kind, and we thank you,” said all the pigs at once.

“Well, Brownny,” said the mother, “what kind of a house shall I build for you?”

“Oh, a mud house, mother! Build me a mud house!”

“And what kind of a house do you want, Whitey?”

“A house of cabbage,” mumbled Whitey, his mouth being so full that he could hardly speak.

“And you, Blacky?”

“Oh, I should like a house of brick that will be warm in winter and cool in

summer, and safe all the year round," answered Blacky.

"All right," said the mother. "Each shall have the kind of house that he wants. But listen to me. When I am gone, the fox will try his best to get you. He is very sly, and he will make believe that he is your friend, so that he can get into your houses. You must be very careful and keep him out; for if he once gets hold of you, he will carry you off and eat you up."

"Oh yes, mother, we'll watch out for the fox," said they all.

Not long after that, the old pig started on her journey, and the three little pigs went to live in their new houses.

Brownny was very happy, and he would lie all day in his new home, rolling about on the cool mud floor and looking up now and then at the damp mud walls around him. He was about as pretty as a mud pig in the middle of a big mud pie. But one day there came a gentle knock on the door, and some one said:—

"Dear Brownny, may I come in? I want to look at your nice new house."

"Who are you?" asked Brownny, in great fright; for although the voice was soft and low, he felt sure that his strange visitor was the fox.

"I am a friend of your mother's," was the answer.

"No, you're not," said Brownny. "You are the wicked fox, and you want to eat me up. But you shall not come in."

"Is that the way you talk?" said the fox; and he changed his tone very quickly. "Well, we'll see about that."

Then he set to work with his paws and soon dug a hole through the soft mud wall. A minute later he leaped through into the house and seized the poor pig by the neck. It was of no use for Brownny to squeal. The fox threw him over his shoulder and trotted away with him to his den in the edge of the wood.

The next day the fox came back and knocked at the door of the cabbage house. Whitey was inside, eating the softest leaves in the walls, and peeping out through a crack so as to see the dairy maid as soon as she came with the soured milk. But when he heard the knock he was scared almost to death, for he felt sure that it was the fox.

"Who knocks?" he asked.

"A friend of your mother's," was the answer; "and I have come to have a taste of your nice cabbage."

"Oh, you must not eat the cabbage," said Whitey. "The walls of my house are made of it; and if you eat any of it, they will tumble down. Please go away." And he began to cry and wish that his house had been made of something that could not be eaten up.

But in a few minutes the fox had torn a hole through the wall, and, just as the dairy maid was seen coming over the hill, he leaped inside and seized the pig by the neck. It was of no use for the dairy maid to scream. The fox threw poor Whitey over his shoulder and ran away through brush and briar, to his den in the edge of the wood.

On the third day the fox came again. For he had made up his mind to get all three of the pigs penned up in his den, and then to invite his friends to come in and have some fun and a feast. But Blacky, in his strong brick house, was ready for him.

The fox knocked at the door: Toc, toc, toc!

"Who knocks?" asked Blacky.

"A friend of your mother's," was the answer. "I have brought you a nice basket of eggs for your dinner. Open the door, and let me in."

"No, I will not," said Blacky. "I know who you are. You are the fox that carried off my two brothers. But you will not get me."

"We'll see about that," answered the fox, trying his best to open the door.

When he saw how strong the house was built and how well all the doors and

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windows were fastened, he knew that it was of no use trying to break in. So, after he had looked all around, he turned about and started back to his den.

“Never mind, friend Blacky,” he said, shaking his fist in the air. “I’ll get you yet in spite of your brick house, and then won’t I make short work of you?”

The next day Blacky went to town to buy a new dinner kettle. As he was coming home with the kettle on his back he heard a noise in the thicket behind him; and then he heard some one walking among the leaves. He knew it was the fox, and his heart beat very fast; but he did not stop.

When he got to the top of the hill, he saw his own little red house at the foot of it on the other side. How he wished he was safe in doors! But the fox could run very fast—much faster than he. Then a bright thought came into his head. He lifted the lid off the kettle and crept into it. He curled himself up snugly at the bottom. Then he pulled the lid down again and held it on very tight. When everything was ready he squirmed about in the kettle until it fell over and began to roll down the hill.

When the fox came up, all that he saw was the big kettle rolling along at a great rate straight towards the little red house in the barnyard. He wondered what had become of the pig, for he had felt sure of getting him this time. But while he was looking around, the big kettle stopped in front of the house, the lid flew up, and Blacky jumped out.

“Oho! that’s your game, is it?” cried the fox; and he ran down the hill so fast that he turned heels over head two or three times before he got to the bottom.

But Blacky had carried his kettle into the house and bolted the door behind him.

The fox now began to try some other way to get the pig. If he could only climb upon the roof!

But Blacky was not afraid now. As soon as he had rested a minute he built a fine fire on the hearth and then hung the kettle, full of water, above it. As soon as the water was boiling hot he would have his supper.

While he stood watching the fire he heard a noise on the roof above him—pitter, patter, patter, patter! The fox had climbed up and was on top of the house. But what harm could he do there?

Just then the water in the big kettle began to simmer and sing and the hot bubbles danced about at a great rate. Blacky heard a noise in the chimney. He looked up, and there was the fox coming down. Who would have thought of his getting into the house in that way?

But the fox was so sure of the pig that he did not see the kettle with the hot water in it; and before he knew it he had fallen right into it. Then, quick as thought, Blacky slipped the lid upon the kettle, and the fox was scalded to death.

The next day Blacky started out to find the fox’s den. If his brothers were still alive he wanted to set them free. It was no trouble to find the den; and, as for Browny and Whitey, there they were, tied fast to the root of a tree, and grunting and squealing in great fear.

“O Blacky, how glad we are that you have come!” they cried.

Blacky quickly set them free; and soon all three of them trotted back to the little brick house in the barnyard. And there they lived happily until their mother came home again.

Lesson 8

Discuss Cleanliness regarding food preparation and share the quotation that follows. You could get into such depth as talking about clean (no visible dirt or grime) versus sanitized (none of the invisible germs; usually done using bleach or high heat) when using

cutting boards and utensils. Washing hands before cooking, pulling long hair back into a ponytail, using a separate surface for meat preparation, washing fruits and vegetables, cleaning up the kitchen when finished—all of these are good topics for discussion.

“Certainly this is a duty, not a sin. ‘Cleanliness is indeed next to godliness.’” — John Wesley

Lesson 9

Discuss how Cleanliness is a service to others. Reminisce about a time when you’ve been in a clean hotel room or a clean home and how welcoming it felt. Presenting ourselves with clean teeth, combed hair, and neat clothing is appreciated by others. A person doesn’t have to be obsessive about cleanliness; but just the right amount of effort makes life pleasant for those around us.

Read “The Sanitary Commission” and discuss how important cleanliness was in that account. Define “sanitary” or “sanitation” as needed.

The Sanitary Commission

from *An American Book of Golden Deeds* by James Baldwin

On the 13th of April, 1861, Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor was fired upon by the soldiers of the South.

This was the beginning of the great struggle known in history as the Civil War in America.

Two days before this, Abraham Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand men to defend the government and maintain its laws in the South.

The call was answered at once and with great enthusiasm. Not only did seventy-five thousand men offer themselves, but thousands more who could not be accepted. Business was at a standstill. The plow was left in the furrow. The factory doors were closed. The thoughts of all men were upon the crisis which the country was facing. In every village of the North the tap of the drum and the shrill music of the fife were heard.

On the very day that Lincoln issued his call, some women of Bridgeport, Connecticut, met together to consider what they could do.

“We cannot go to war,” they said, “but our husbands and sons can go—yes, they will go. Shall we who remain at home be idle?”

“There will be bloodshed,” said some.

“And there will be much suffering in camp and on the march,” said others. “Men will be wounded in battle, they will be sick from exposure, they will need better attention than the army surgeons alone can give them. Can we not do something to help?”

And so these earnest, sympathetic women of Bridgeport organized themselves into what they called a Soldiers’ Aid Society, and resolved to do all that they could for the relief and comfort of the men who were at that moment hurrying forward to answer the President’s call.

“We cannot fight,” they said, “but we can help the fighters.”

Miss Almena Bates, a young lady of Charlestown, Massachusetts, did not know what the ladies of Bridgeport were doing, but she started out that same day to do something herself. She went with pencil and paper to her friends and acquaintances, and asked each one to volunteer as a helper.

“The boys are answering the President’s call,” she said. “To-morrow they will be on

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If a particular lesson doesn't seem like it would be a good fit for your children, skip it. Your children will still benefit from the lessons you do use. Make these lessons your servant, not your master.

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their way to the front. There will be war. Nurses will be needed on the battlefields and in the hospitals. Medicines, food, little comforts for the sick and wounded—all these ought to be ready at the first need. What will you do?”

In a few days women in every part of the North were forming aid societies. But as yet it was hard for them to accomplish very much. So long as each little society was working alone, there was no certainty that the intended help would ever reach the right place.

At length, two months after the fall of Fort Sumter, a great organization was formed that would extend all over the North and would include the aid societies. The president of this organization was Rev. Henry W. Bellows of New York, and many well-known men and women were among its members.

Some people shook their heads and hung back.

“The government will provide for the relief and comfort of the soldiers in the field,” they said. “What is the use of these aid societies and this great organization?”

Even President Lincoln at first said that he thought the association would prove to be like a fifth wheel to a coach—very much in the way.

But the war had now begun in terrible earnest. In the camps and on the battlefield, the soldiers were learning what was meant by privation and suffering. The plans for the work of the association were carefully made out by Dr. Bellows and his assistants, and were submitted to the government. The president approved them. And thus the United States Sanitary Commission, as it was called, was given the authority to go forward with its great work of caring for the health and comfort of the soldiers.

From the aid societies and from the people at large, help was freely sent. Fairs were held all over the country for the purpose of raising money. Men, women, and children joined in working. Each town and city tried to do more than its neighbor had done. At one fair in Chicago more than seventy-five thousand dollars was raised. The people of the state of New York gave nearly a million dollars for the cause.

President Lincoln wrote: “Amongst the extraordinary manifestations of this war, none has been more remarkable than these fairs. And their chief agents are the women of America. I am not accustomed to the use of the language of eulogy; but I must say, that if all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women were applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war. God bless the women of America!”

Not only did these women form societies, hold fairs, and give of their means for this cause, but many of them were active in the work itself. Women of culture and education, accustomed to all the comforts that wealth can give, went to the front as nurses and as directors of relief in the hospitals and on the battlefield. First among these was Dorothea Dix, who, within two weeks after the president’s call for volunteers, received the public thanks of the surgeon general and was placed in charge of all the women nurses at the front.

Among those who likewise gave their time and energies to this noble work were Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, Clara Barton, Dr. Mary Walker, and many others scarcely less distinguished. Of the golden deeds done by these self-sacrificing women, there is no adequate record save in the book of that angel who writes the names of those who love mankind.

There were hundreds, also, of humble workers who were no less earnest in their efforts to do good. These were the nurses in the hospitals and in the field, besides numberless others who labored at home for the support of the Commission.

The direct caring for the sick and wounded was only a small portion of the duties performed under the direction of the commission. To prevent disease was one of the first

objects, for disease alone might cause the defeat, if not the destruction, of our armies.

Hence, the managers were on the watch for whatever was likely to guard or improve the health of the soldiers at the front. They saw that the food was wholesome and that it was properly cooked.

They started truck gardens for supplying vegetables to the men. They had charge of the ice and other luxuries for the sick. They looked after the wounded who were sent to the rear. They collected bedding, clothing, and all sorts of delicacies for the use of the sick. They wrote letters for the disabled, and gave them stationery, stamps, and envelopes. They gathered up books and newspapers for the men to read while sick or off duty. They furnished lodging for the mothers and wives who had come to the hospital or the camp on errands of mercy to their wounded sons or husbands. Lastly, they helped the men who for any reason had been discharged and lacked the means or the ability to reach their homes.

The war continued four years.

During that time more than fifteen million dollars in supplies of various kinds, besides nearly five million dollars in money, was freely given for the cause by the generous-hearted people of the North. Of those who were engaged in doing the work of the Commission, many served without pay and without desire of reward. Others, however, performed their duties from more selfish motives—some for the wages which they received, some for the profits which they hoped to derive through less honorable channels. These last deserve no commendation, although they may have done some valuable service. Their deeds were not golden.

But think of the truly golden deeds that were done in connection with this cause. Think of the men whose lives were saved. Think of the mothers and wives who were made happy by the care bestowed upon their loved ones, enabling them finally to return to their homes. Think of the thousands of benefits that were performed through this one agency. Who is there so lacking in noble impulses as to deny that it is more heroic to save life than to destroy it?

Lesson 10

Look back over your habit training time on Cleanliness and encourage one another with the changes you've seen. Renew your daily efforts as you near the end of this six-to-eight-week focus on this habit.

Activity: If children need a reminder of what Cleanliness habits need to be done each day, make a chart or let your children make a chart with pictures to post in their bedroom or in the bathroom. For instance, if you want them to make their bed, brush their teeth, comb their hair, and get dressed neatly each morning, then include these four items on their chart. This can be a visual reminder for younger children, so you don't have to pester them every day with constant reminders of "Did you . . . yet?" Older children might need a chart for daily chores.

*Feed minds. Inspire hearts.
Encourage action.*

Lesson 11

Discuss other aspects of Cleanliness that are important to your family such as keeping vehicles clean or leaving an area/building as clean or cleaner than when you arrived.

Have a Parent Share moment to share a Cleanliness story from your life or tell about a person who exemplifies this habit.

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Lesson 12

Finish up with any other discussion, ideas, or celebration your family enjoys. Keep up this habit while going forth to concentrate on a new one.

Courtesy

Behavior marked by respect for and consideration of others

Parent Prep

Read detailed thoughts about Courtesy on pages 30 and 31 of *Laying Down the Rails* and skim the lessons below.

- ◆ Goals for this Habit (and steps to get there)

- ◆ A Person or Story from My Life that Demonstrates this Habit

- ◆ Additional Stories, Poems, Quotations, Bible Verses I Want to Use

- ◆ Other Activities We Could Do to Practice this Habit

- ◆ Celebration Ideas

“ . . . the child’s most fixed and dominant habits are those which the mother takes no pains about, but which the child picks up for himself through his close observation of all that is said and done, felt and thought, in his home” (Vol. 1, pp. 136, 137).

Lesson 1

Read the definition and discuss Courtesy. Share with the children any goals you’ve identified for this habit (for instance, “We will acknowledge each person with whom we come into contact with a smile and a ‘hello.’”). Also get their input on changes they think need to be made.

Read the Biblical principle found in Titus 3:1 and 2 from your preferred version of the Bible. Consideration for others allows us to put other people before ourselves. True humility is hard. It goes against our fleshly nature; but it is one of the hallmarks of godly character.

Lesson 2

Talk over the first point and the quotation that follows. Focus on how well family members treat each other in your household.



1. Do not neglect to show courtesy just because a person is familiar to you. Familiarity should not breed disrespect.

“Life is not so short but that there is always time for courtesy.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Lesson 3

Read and discuss the second point, talking about how children can make adults feel respected and toddlers feel special with a simple acknowledgment.



2. Learn to give and return courteous gestures, such as shaking hands and waving.

Activity: Play a game of “Mother May I.” The “mother” stands with her back to the “children,” who are across the room. One child asks, “Mother, may I . . .” and gives a suggestion such as

- ◆ Take 2 giant steps forward
- ◆ Run 3 seconds forward
- ◆ Take 7 baby steps forward
- ◆ Take 4 scissor hops forward
- ◆ Take 6 frog leaps forward
- ◆ Take 5 spins, tumbles, etc.

The “mother” can say, “Yes, you may” or “No, you may not, but you may . . . instead” and give a different suggestion. She may suggest that the child take fewer of the same moves forward or that he take the moves backward. The goal is for a child to reach the “mother” and tag her; then he becomes the “mother” for the next round. The “mother’s” goal is to keep the children back as long as she can without peeking to see how close a child is to tagging her.

Lesson 4

Discuss showing Courtesy to honored folk, such as leaders in our country and in our church. Read the story of “Sir Walter Raleigh” for an example.

Sir Walter Raleigh

adapted from *Fifty Famous Stories Retold* by James Baldwin

There once lived in England a brave and noble man whose name was Walter Raleigh. He was not only brave and noble, but he was also handsome and polite; and for that reason the queen made him a knight, and called him Sir Walter Raleigh.

I will tell you about it.

When Raleigh was a young man, he was one day walking along a street in London. At that time the streets were not paved, and there were no sidewalks. Raleigh was dressed in very fine style, and he wore a beautiful scarlet cloak thrown over his shoulders.

As he passed along, he found it hard work to keep from stepping in the mud, and soiling his handsome new shoes. Soon he came to a puddle of muddy water which reached from one side of the street to the other. He could not step across. Perhaps he could jump over it.

As he was thinking what he should do, he happened to look up. Who was it coming down the street, on the other side of the puddle?

It was Elizabeth, the Queen of England, with her train of gentle-women and waiting maids. She saw the dirty puddle in the street. She saw the handsome young man with the scarlet cloak, standing by the side of it. How was she to get across?

Young Raleigh, when he saw who was coming, forgot about himself. He thought only of helping the queen. There was only one thing that he could do, and no other man would have thought of that.

He took off his scarlet cloak, and spread it across the puddle. The queen could step on it now, as on a beautiful carpet.

She walked across. She was safely over the ugly puddle, and her feet had not touched the mud. She paused a moment, and thanked the young man.

As she walked onward with her train, she asked one of the gentle-women, "Who is that brave gentleman who helped us so handsomely?"

"His name is Walter Raleigh," said the gentle-woman.

"He shall have his reward," said the queen.

Not long after that, she sent for Raleigh to come to her palace.

The young man went, but he had no scarlet cloak to wear. Then, while all the great men and fine ladies of England stood around, the queen made him a knight. And from that time he was known as Sir Walter Raleigh, the queen's favorite.

Lesson 5

Talk with your children about wisely being courteous toward strangers.

Read Genesis 24:1–28. A traveling stranger relied on an extraordinary offer of kindness as a sign from God.

Lesson 6

It is natural to find things to complain about. Consider together what it would be like if we looked for things that went right and thanked those around us for their part.

The poem, "Guess People Are Funny" by Phoebe Law, was published in a small town newspaper in 1963, considering that very point.

Guess People Are Funny by Phoebe Law

There used to be talk around this town,
Of the terrible water we had.
Folks said it was ruining our progress,
And for business it was bad.

We griped about the plumbing,
And how it rusted out so fast.
Always buying new water heaters,
Cause the old ones wouldn't last.

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We carried water from cistern wells,
For making our coffee and tea.
Some hadn't been cleaned in thirty years,
And unhealthy as could be.

Now that we have this good, clean water,
Don't hear much about it anymore.
I wonder if folks have forgotten
Just what it was like before?

We just neglect to express our thanks,
When things are bright and sunny.
But when things are wrong, then we complain.
Guess people sure are funny.

Lesson 7

Discuss how a little friendly complying with those it is hardest to defer to can make for smoother living. Think of those in life to whom it is most difficult to yield, such as siblings or angry neighbors. Then read "The Two Goats."

The Two Goats by Aesop

Two Goats, frisking gayly on the rocky steeps of a mountain valley, chanced to meet, one on each side of a deep chasm through which poured a mighty mountain torrent. The trunk of a fallen tree formed the only means of crossing the chasm, and on this not even two squirrels could have passed each other in safety. The narrow path would have made the bravest tremble. Not so our Goats. Their pride would not permit either to stand aside for the other.

One set her foot on the log. The other did likewise. In the middle they met horn to horn. Neither would give way, and so they both fell, to be swept away by the roaring torrent below.

It is better to yield than to come to misfortune through stubbornness.

Lesson 8

Read the Proverbs listed below to discover more ways to be considerate of others. If desired, discuss what "considerate" means: considering how my actions affect others.

Proverbs 3:27, 28 —Do not withhold good.

Proverbs 25:17—Do not be a nuisance.

Proverbs 25:20—Do not sing to a heavy heart.

Proverbs 26:18, 19—Be careful of pranks and deception.

Proverbs 27:14—Do not be loud during normal quiet times.

Lesson 9

There are many areas of life where one will need to practice Courtesy.

Activity: Do some role-playing and act out various scenes in which one needs to be courteous. Here are some possibilities to get you started. You could include simple

props, such as a shovel or ball, a hat or pretend groceries.

- ◆ Meeting a familiar person at the store
- ◆ Being introduced to someone new
- ◆ Politely introducing yourself to a new person at a park (even before a parent does it for you)
- ◆ Running up to your mother with something to say while she is talking to someone else

Lesson 10

Discuss the quotations below and continue concentrating on Courtesy throughout each day.

“Politeness is the art of choosing among one’s real thoughts.” — Abel Stevens

“If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world.” — Francis Bacon

Lesson 11

It generally isn’t a good idea to play tricks on people. Pranks and tricks usually end up making someone upset, as this Aesop fable shows.

The Fox and the Stork

by Aesop

The Fox one day thought of a plan to amuse himself at the expense of the Stork, at whose odd appearance he was always laughing.

“You must come and dine with me today,” he said to the Stork, smiling to himself at the trick he was going to play. The Stork gladly accepted the invitation and arrived in good time and with a very good appetite.

For dinner the Fox served soup. But it was set out in a very shallow dish, and all the Stork could do was to wet the very tip of his bill. Not a drop of soup could he get. But the Fox lapped it up easily, and, to increase the disappointment of the Stork, made a great show of enjoyment.

The hungry Stork was much displeased at the trick, but he was a calm, even-tempered fellow and saw no good in flying into a rage. Instead, not long afterward, he invited the Fox to dine with him in turn. The Fox arrived promptly at the time that had been set, and the Stork served a fish dinner that had a very appetizing smell. But it was served in a tall jar with a very narrow neck. The Stork could easily get at the food with his long bill, but all the Fox could do was to lick the outside of the jar, and sniff at the delicious odor. And when the Fox lost his temper, the Stork said calmly:

Do not play tricks on your neighbors unless you can stand the same treatment yourself.

Lesson 12

James Baldwin shared a story of a judge who did not deem himself above menial tasks but was kind and obliging.

Why He Carried the Turkey
from *Fifty Famous People* by James Baldwin

In Richmond, Virginia, one Saturday morning, an old man went into the market to buy something. He was dressed plainly, his coat was worn, and his hat was dingy. On his arm he carried a small basket.

“I wish to get a fowl for tomorrow’s dinner,” he said.

The market man showed him a fat turkey, plump and white and ready for roasting.

“Ah! that is just what I want,” said the old man. “My wife will be delighted with it.”

He asked the price and paid for it. The market man wrapped a paper round it and put it in the basket.

Just then a young man stepped up. “I will take one of those turkeys,” he said. He was dressed in fine style and carried a small cane.

“Shall I wrap it up for you?” asked the market man.

“Yes, here is your money,” answered the young gentleman; “and send it to my house at once.”

“I cannot do that,” said the market man. “My errand boy is sick today, and there is no one else to send. Besides, it is not our custom to deliver goods.”

“Then how am I to get it home?” asked the young gentleman.

“I suppose you will have to carry it yourself,” said the market man. “It is not heavy.”

“Carry it myself! Who do you think I am? Fancy me carrying a turkey along the street!” said the young gentleman; and he began to grow very angry. The old man who had bought the first turkey was standing quite near. He had heard all that was said.

“Excuse me, sir,” he said; “but may I ask where you live?”

“I live at Number 39, Blank Street,” answered the young gentleman; “and my name is Johnson.”

“Well, that is lucky,” said the old man, smiling. “I happen to be going that way, and I will carry your turkey, if you will allow me.”

“Oh, certainly!” said Mr. Johnson. “Here it is. You may follow me.”

When they reached Mr. Johnson’s house, the old man politely handed him the turkey and turned to go.

“Here, my friend, what shall I pay you?” said the young gentleman.

“Oh, nothing, sir, nothing,” answered the old man. “It was no trouble to me, and you are welcome.”

He bowed and went on. Young Mr. Johnson looked after him and wondered. Then he turned and walked briskly back to the market.

“Who is that polite old gentleman who carried my turkey for me?” he asked of the market man.

“That is John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States. He is one of the greatest men in our country,” was the answer.

The young gentleman was surprised and ashamed. “Why did he offer to carry my turkey?” he asked.

“He wished to teach you a lesson,” answered the market man.

“What sort of lesson?”

“He wished to teach you that no man should feel himself too fine to carry his own packages.”

“Oh, no!” said another man who had seen and heard it all. “Judge Marshall carried the turkey simply because he wished to be kind and obliging. That is his way.”

Lesson 13

Have a Parent Share moment to share a story from your life or tell about a person who exemplifies Courtesy. Finish up with any other discussion, ideas, or celebration your family enjoys. Keep up this habit while going forth to concentrate on a new one.

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Kindness

Friendly regard shown toward another

Parent Prep

Read detailed thoughts about Kindness on pages 31–34 of *Laying Down the Rails* and skim the lessons below.

- ◆ Goals for this Habit (and steps to get there)

- ◆ A Person or Story from My Life that Demonstrates this Habit

- ◆ Additional Stories, Poems, Quotations, Bible Verses I Want to Use

- ◆ Other Activities We Could Do to Practice this Habit

- ◆ Celebration Ideas

Be careful not to take one habit to an extreme at the expense of another; for instance, neglecting to show kindness when the need presents itself because you are too busy being diligent with a project.

Lesson 1

Read the definition and discuss Kindness. Share with the children any goals you’ve identified for this habit (for instance, “We will respond to each other’s bad attitudes with kindness.”). Also get their input on changes they think need to be made.

Read the Biblical principle found in Ephesians 4:32 and 1 Thessalonians 5:15 from your preferred version of the Bible. Kindness is especially needed when we feel someone has wronged us. Think of how an undeserving kindness shown to you changed your attitude

and made you sorry. It's a powerful thing to be able to change someone's attitude, and you hold that power in your hands.

Lesson 2

Talk over the first point and the quotation that follows. We appreciate it when others assume the best about our motives; they also appreciate our positive thoughts toward them. Finish by reading the poem, "Alice Fell."



1. Think the best of other people.

*"I always prefer to believe the best of everybody—it saves so much trouble." —
Rudyard Kipling*

Alice Fell by William Wordsworth

The post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drowned;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound, —and more and more;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
"Whence comes," said I, "this piteous moan?"
And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

"My cloak!" no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

"What ails you, child?"—she sobbed "Look here!"
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er

Habit points from
Laying Down the Rails

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From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

“And whither are you going, child,
To-night alone these lonesome ways?”
“To Durham,” answered she, half wild—
“Then come with me into the chaise.”

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

“My child, in Durham do you dwell?”
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, “My name is Alice Fell;
I’m fatherless and motherless.

“And I to Durham, Sir, belong.”
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey’s end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

“And let it be of duffil grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!”
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell!

Lesson 3

Read and discuss the second point, praising good efforts that counter peer conformity. Also acknowledge point one: we may be presuming negative attitudes from our peers. Discuss the quotation as you present the activity below.



2. Do not assume that others will laugh at you for being kind.

“A warm smile is the universal language of kindness.” — William Arthur Ward

Activity: Make it a point to smile at everyone you meet today instead of avoiding eye contact. A smile lets even strangers know that they are important.

Lesson 4

Discuss point three, remembering that we should always assume the best in others and to judge as we would want to be judged.



3. Defend another’s character, even in that person’s absence, rather than malign him behind his back.

Read 1 Samuel 19:1–7. Saul tried to get Jonathan to malign David, but Jonathan only spoke well of his friend. First Samuel 20 continues their story of friendship and kindness to one another.

Lesson 5

Talk about point four together. Right now our siblings are our nearest neighbor, and the way we treat them shows our depth of love.



4. Respond kindly to each of your siblings, even when faced with a brother’s temper or personal injury.

Activity: Encourage your children to think of a way they can show a kindness to one person that day and then do it as best they can. It could be

- ◆ writing an anonymous note of encouragement
- ◆ fixing a sibling’s bed
- ◆ doing someone else’s chore for them
- ◆ preparing a snack and serving it
- ◆ letting someone else choose the bedtime story, or TV show, or snack, etc.
- ◆ making a gift or toy for someone
- ◆ allowing someone to play with a prized toy that you don’t like to share

At the end of the day, ask the children how it went and let them discuss their experiences for a few minutes. Encourage the children to point out how they noticed each other being kind, so any boasting can be avoided.

Lesson 6

Motivate your children with point five and the quotation that follows. One who gives happiness to the most wretched of our society is deserving of praise. Read “The Tombs Angel.”



5. Think of how you might hold the happiness of others in your very hands.

“There is no beautifier of complexion, or form, or behavior, like the wish to scatter joy and not pain around us. ’Tis good to give a stranger a meal, or a night’s lodging. ’Tis better to be hospitable to his good meaning and thought, and give courage to a companion. We

must be as courteous to a man as we are to a picture, which we are willing to give the advantage of good light.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Tombs Angel

from *An American Book of Golden Deeds* by James Baldwin

Early in the morning of the 22d of February, 1902, a fire occurred in one of the large hotels of New York. The flames broke out so suddenly, and spread so swiftly, that many of the guests were unable to escape. Among those who perished was a woman whose life for many years had been given to the doing of golden deeds.

Men knew this woman as the Tombs Angel. The name was a title of honor which queens might well covet. It was a strange epithet, but it described in two words the work and character of her to whom it was applied. It was in itself, as one of her friends most aptly said, a patent of nobility.

How had she earned that title?

By her good works.

There is in the city of New York a famous prison known the world over as The Tombs. Massive, gloomy, and strong, it is a place of sorrow and tears and dread forebodings.

Men and women who have been accused of crime are confined there to await their trial by due process of law. The most of them will go out to suffer in the penitentiaries and workhouses the punishment that is due for their wrongdoings. A few may be found innocent of crime and permitted to return to freedom, disgraced, perhaps, for life by the fact of having been confined within prison walls.

Here many of the world's most famous criminals have spent days and months behind the bars. Here also have been confined hundreds of unfortunates, men and women, whom want or evil companionship or momentary weakness has driven into crime. If you have never visited a prison, you cannot imagine the woe, the misery, the hopelessness of such a place.

It was here that Rebecca Salome Foster labored unselfishly and unceasingly for many years, cheering the downhearted, comforting the distressed, and sowing good seeds even in the hearts of the most depraved. Her bright face, her comforting words, her cheerful manner, carried sunshine into the gloomiest cells, gave hope to the despairing, and uplifted the most unfortunate.

Is it any wonder that these poor creatures gave her the noble title of the Tombs Angel?

“For many years,” said District Attorney Jerome, “she came and went among us with but a single purpose—

“That men might rise on stepping stones

Of their dead selves to higher things!”

“There is a word which is seldom used. It is the word ‘holy.’ To us who are daily brought into contact with the misfortunes and sins of humanity, it seems almost a lost word. Yet in all that that word means to English-speaking peoples, it seems to me that it could be applied to her. She was, indeed, a ‘holy woman.’”

In winter and in summer, on stormy days as well as on fair, Mrs. Foster was always at her post of duty. She served without the hope of reward, and solely for the good that she could do.

Numberless were the hearts which she cheered; numberless were the weary ones whose burdens she lightened; and numberless, too, were the erring men and women whom her sweet influences brought back to paths of virtue and right doing.

Not only was she loved by the prisoners, but she was esteemed and venerated by the

keepers of the jail and especially by the judges and officers of the city courts. And many kind-hearted people, hearing of her good works, lent her a helping hand. Every year a certain charitable society placed in her hands several thousand dollars to be expended in her work in such ways as she thought best.

Often the money which she received from others was not enough, and then she drew freely from her own means, never expecting any return. To help a poor outcast to a fresh start in life, to give relief to the innocent family of some convicted criminal, to put in the way of some unfortunate man or woman the means of earning an honest living—to do these and a thousand other services she was always ready.

Many are the stories that are told of her golden deeds. Perhaps none show more clearly her self-sacrificing spirit than the following: —

One day a poor woman, the wretchedest of the wretched, was brought to the prison guilty of a crime to which her weakness and her extreme want had driven her. She was cold, she was starving, she was in tatters and rags.

Here surely was work for a ministering angel.

Mrs. Foster hastened to give her such immediate comfort as she could. She removed the poor wretch's bedraggled dress, and gave her her own warm overskirt, instead.

Was there ever a nobler example of Christian charity?

We are reminded of Sir Philip Sidney on the field of Zutphen and his gift to the dying soldier, "Thy necessity is greater than mine."

And so, untiringly and without a thought of self, the Tombs Angel went on with her work, little thinking what men would say, dreaming nothing of honor or fame, caring only to lighten the burdens of the heavy-laden. Then, suddenly and with but little warning, she was called to pass out through fire into the kingdom prepared for those who love their Lord.

Who would not sorrow for such a woman?

Even the officers whose duty it was to prosecute the prisoners in the Tombs wept when her death was announced. The eyes of the judges were filled with tears. The city courts adjourned for the day in honor of the memory of the Tombs Angel. And on the following Sunday, in more than one church, a well-known parable was read with a meaning that was new and strangely forcible to those who listened:—

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me.'

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?'

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' "

Lesson 7

Talk over point six together. Discuss how movies or books or friends might turn our thoughts toward being selfish instead of being kind. Other possible examples: When you look through a catalog that comes in the mail or watch a commercial, do you think about how the items in it might be used to help others, or do you automatically think about what you want? What about when a friend says not to play with a younger sibling or shows you his newest electronic toy?



6. Be careful what messages you receive from outside influences that will encourage selfishness.

Read 2 Samuel 4:4 and chapter 9. David went above and beyond to show kindness to the house of Jonathan even though it was Jonathan's father (Saul) who tried for so many years to kill David.

Lesson 8

Have a Parent Share moment to share a story from your life or tell about a person who exemplifies Kindness and discuss the quotation below.

"Always try to be a little kinder than is necessary." — James M. Barrie

Lesson 9

Discuss how one kindness often begets another. Then read "The Elves and the Shoemaker."

The Elves and the Shoemaker

from *The Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales* by the Brothers Grimm

There was once a shoemaker, who worked very hard and was very honest: but still he could not earn enough to live upon; and at last all he had in the world was gone, save just leather enough to make one pair of shoes.

Then he cut his leather out, all ready to make up the next day, meaning to rise early in the morning to his work. His conscience was clear and his heart light amidst all his troubles; so he went peaceably to bed, left all his cares to Heaven, and soon fell asleep. In the morning after he had said his prayers, he sat himself down to his work; when, to his great wonder, there stood the shoes all ready made, upon the table. The good man knew not what to say or think at such an odd thing happening. He looked at the workmanship; there was not one false stitch in the whole job; all was so neat and true, that it was quite a masterpiece.

The same day a customer came in, and the shoes suited him so well that he willingly paid a price higher than usual for them; and the poor shoemaker, with the money, bought leather enough to make two pairs more. In the evening he cut out the work, and went to bed early, that he might get up and begin betimes next day; but he saved all the trouble, for when he got up in the morning the work was done ready to his hand. Soon in came buyers, who paid him handsomely for his goods, so that he bought leather enough for four pair more. He cut out the work again overnight and found it done in the morning, as before; and so it went on for some time: what was got ready in the evening was always done by daybreak, and the good man soon became thriving and well off again.

One evening, about Christmas-time, as he and his wife were sitting over the fire chatting together, he said to her, 'I should like to sit up and watch tonight, that we may see who it is that comes and does my work for me.' The wife liked the thought; so they left a light burning, and hid themselves in a corner of the room, behind a curtain that was hung up there, and watched what would happen.

As soon as it was midnight, there came in two little naked dwarfs; and they sat themselves upon the shoemaker's bench, took up all the work that was cut out, and began to ply with their little fingers, stitching and rapping and tapping away at such a

rate, that the shoemaker was all wonder, and could not take his eyes off them. And on they went, till the job was quite done, and the shoes stood ready for use upon the table. This was long before daybreak; and then they bustled away as quick as lightning.

The next day the wife said to the shoemaker. 'These little wights have made us rich, and we ought to be thankful to them, and do them a good turn if we can. I am quite sorry to see them run about as they do; and indeed it is not very decent, for they have nothing upon their backs to keep off the cold. I'll tell you what, I will make each of them a shirt, and a coat and waistcoat, and a pair of pantaloons into the bargain; and do you make each of them a little pair of shoes.'

The thought pleased the good cobbler very much; and one evening, when all the things were ready, they laid them on the table, instead of the work that they used to cut out, and then went and hid themselves, to watch what the little elves would do.

About midnight in they came, dancing and skipping, hopped round the room, and then went to sit down to their work as usual; but when they saw the clothes lying for them, they laughed and chuckled, and seemed mightily delighted.

Then they dressed themselves in the twinkling of an eye, and danced and capered and sprang about, as merry as could be; till at last they danced out at the door, and away over the green.

The good couple saw them no more; but everything went well with them from that time forward, as long as they lived.

Lesson 10

Read Romans 5:6–8 and talk about how God shows kindness toward us even while we are yet sinners. Read and discuss the poem, "On Another's Sorrow."

On Another's Sorrow by William Blake

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow filled?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can He who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care,
Hear the woes that infants bear—

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast,

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And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear?

And not sit both night and day,
Wiping all our tears away?
Oh no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

He doth give his joy to all:
He becomes an infant small,
He becomes a man of woe,
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by:
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

Oh He gives to us his joy,
That our grief He may destroy:
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

Lesson 11

Discuss Kindness in speech as well as action and the quotation below. There will be large kindnesses in life, such as when someone gives his life to work for others with little return; and there will be small kindnesses, such as saying a kind word along the way. All of them are important.

*"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless." —
Mother Teresa*

Activity: Prepare a family activity of kindness to meet a need in your neighborhood or for someone you know. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- ◆ Pick up litter on your street or at a park.
- ◆ Bake brownies for some neighbors with whom you're familiar, but maybe don't know very well. Let the children make friendly cards to include.
- ◆ Visit a nursing home or an elderly person from your church. Give your children conversation topics they can talk about or questions they can ask to get a conversation started. Remind them that they may need to show kindness by speaking loudly to make it easier for older ears to hear them.
- ◆ Keep your ears open for any needs that arise among your acquaintances and meet those needs if you can: take a baby gift to a new mother, do yard work or child care, make a meal for a sick family, etc.

Lesson 12

Talk about kind ways to treat foreigners or people who are different from us.

Ruth showed kindness to her mother-in-law by sticking with her and trying to provide

for her; Boaz was impressed. He, in turn, showed kindness to Ruth by allowing her to stay and glean in his fields and rest in safety. Read Ruth chapter 2.

Lesson 13

Read the poem, “Butterfly,” and discuss how God cares for lowly creatures. We should show kindness also to the animals. Then read “Another Bird Story.”

Butterfly from *The Infant's Delight*

A yellow Butterfly one day,
Grown tired of play and tired of flying,
Upon a thistle blossom grey
With outspread wings was idly lying.

The sturdy bees went humming by,
Drawing sweet honey from the clover,
Nor stirred the yellow Butterfly,
For he was but an idle rover.

Two little girls, named Anne and May,
Came by with mirth and laughter ringing,
Anne ran to seize the insect gay—
May followed fast and ceased her singing.

“Oh! darling Annie, let it be,
Your touch will rob its plumes of beauty;
And God, who made both you and me,
Has taught us kindness is a duty.”

Another Bird Story from *Fifty Famous People* by James Baldwin

A great battle had begun. Cannon were booming, some far away, some near at hand. Soldiers were marching through the fields. Men on horseback were riding in haste toward the front.

“Whiz!” A cannon ball struck the ground quite near to a company of soldiers. But they marched straight onward. The drums were beating, the fifes were playing.

“Whiz!” Another cannon ball flew through the air and struck a tree near by. A brave general was riding across the field. One ball after another came whizzing near him.

“General, you are in danger here,” said an officer who was riding with him. “You had better fall back to a place of safety.”

But the general rode on.

Suddenly he stopped at the foot of a tree. “Halt!” he cried to the men who were with him. He leaped from his horse. He stooped and picked up a bird’s nest that had fallen upon the ground. In the nest were some tiny, half-fledged birds. Their mouths were open for the food they were expecting their mother to give them.

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“I cannot think of leaving these little things here to be trampled upon,” said the general.

He lifted the nest gently and put it in a safe place in the forks of the tree.

“Whiz!” Another cannon ball.

He leaped into the saddle, and away he dashed with his officers close behind him.

“Whiz! whiz! whiz!”

He had done one good deed. He would do many more before the war was over.

“Boom! boom! boom!”

The cannon were roaring, the balls were flying, the battle was raging. But amid all the turmoil and danger, the little birds chirped happily in the safe shelter where the great general, Robert E. Lee, had placed them.

“He prayeth best, who loveth best

All things both great and small;

For the dear God who loveth us,

He made and loveth all.”

Lesson 14

Read the Proverbs listed below to discover more aspects of Kindness.

Proverbs 11:16, 17—Kindness benefits the giver.

Proverbs 25:21, 22—It shames the wicked, and the Lord rewards the giver.

Proverbs 19:19—Have wisdom; sometimes people need to bear their consequences.

We need discernment to know the difference between kindness and enabling.

Lesson 15

If you feel you want more time with Kindness (and it is a very important habit to instill), use the following stories to inspire. Then finish up with any other discussion, ideas, or celebration your family enjoys. Keep up this habit while going forth to concentrate on a new one.

Feel free to spread the stories out, reading one every few days rather than all in one sitting. Also be sure to pick and choose which stories will best fit your family.

The Lion and the Mouse

from *The Aesop for Children* by Milo Winter

A Lion lay asleep in the forest, his great head resting on his paws. A timid little Mouse came upon him unexpectedly, and in her fright and haste to get away, ran across the Lion's nose. Roused from his nap, the Lion laid his huge paw angrily on the tiny creature to kill her.

“Spare me!” begged the poor Mouse. “Please let me go and some day I will surely repay you.”

The Lion was much amused to think that a Mouse could ever help him. But he was generous and finally let the Mouse go.

Some days later, while stalking his prey in the forest, the Lion was caught in the toils of a hunter's net. Unable to free himself, he filled the forest with his angry roaring. The Mouse knew the voice and quickly found the Lion struggling in the net. Running to one of the great ropes that bound him, she gnawed it until it parted, and soon the Lion was free.

“You laughed when I said I would repay you,” said the Mouse. “Now you see that even a Mouse can help a Lion.”

A kindness is never wasted.

The Soldiers in the Snow

adapted from *A Book of Golden Deeds* by Charlotte M. Yonge

Few generals had ever been more loved by their soldiers than the great Viscount de Turenne, who was Marshal of France in the time of Louis XIV. Troops are always proud of a leader who wins victories; but Turenne was far more loved for his generous kindness than for his successes. If he gained a battle, he always wrote in his despatches, 'We succeeded,' so as to give the credit to the rest of the army; but if he were defeated, he wrote, 'I lost,' so as to take all the blame upon himself. He always shared as much as possible in every hardship suffered by his men, and they trusted him entirely. In the year 1672, Turenne and his army were sent to make war upon the Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg, in Northern Germany. It was in the depth of winter, and the marches through the heavy roads were very trying and wearisome; but the soldiers endured all cheerfully for his sake. Once when they were wading through a deep morass, some of the younger soldiers complained; but the elder ones answered, 'Depend upon it, Turenne is more concerned than we are. At this moment he is thinking how to deliver us. He watches for us while we sleep. He is our father. It is plain that you are but young.'

Another night, when he was going the round of the camp, he overheard some of the younger men murmuring at the discomforts of the march; when an old soldier, newly recovered from a severe wound, said: 'You do not know our father. He would not have made us go through such fatigue, unless he had some great end in view, which we cannot yet make out.' Turenne always declared that nothing had ever given him more pleasure than this conversation.

There was a severe sickness among the troops, and he went about among the sufferers, comforting them, and seeing that their wants were supplied. When he passed by, the soldiers came out of their tents to look at him, and say, 'Our father is in good health: we have nothing to fear.'

The army had to enter the principality of Halberstadt, the way to which lay over ridges of high hills with narrow defiles between them. Considerable time was required for the whole of the troops to march through a single narrow outlet; and one very cold day, when such a passage was taking place, the Marshal quite spent with fatigue, sat down under a bush to wait till all had marched by, and fell asleep. When he awoke, it was snowing fast; but he found himself under a sort of tent made of soldiers' cloaks, hung up upon the branches of trees planted in the ground, and round it were standing, in the cold and snow, all unsheltered, a party of soldiers. Turenne called out to them, to ask what they were doing there. 'We are taking care of our father,' they said; 'that is our chief concern.' The general, to keep up discipline, seems to have scolded them a little for straggling from their regiment; but he was much affected and gratified by this sight of their hearty love for him.

Heroes of the Plague

adapted from *A Book of Golden Deeds* by Charlotte M. Yonge

When our Litany entreats that we may be delivered from 'plague, pestilence, and famine', the first of these words bears a special meaning, which came home with strong and painful force to European minds at the time the Prayer Book was translated, and for the whole following century.

It refers to the deadly sickness emphatically called 'the plague', a typhoid fever exceedingly violent and rapid, and accompanied with a frightful swelling either under the arm or on the corresponding part of the thigh. The East is the usual haunt of this fatal complaint, which some suppose to be bred by the marshy, unwholesome state

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of Egypt after the subsidence of the waters of the Nile, and which generally prevails in Egypt and Syria until its course is checked either by the cold of winter or the heat in summer. At times this disease has become unusually malignant and infectious, and then has come beyond its usual boundaries and made its way over all the West. These dreadful visitations were rendered more frequent by total disregard of all precautions, and ignorance of laws for preserving health. People crowded together in towns without means of obtaining sufficient air or cleanliness, and thus were sure to be unhealthy; and whenever war or famine had occasioned more than usual poverty, some frightful epidemic was sure to follow in its train, and sweep away the poor creatures whose frames were already weakened by previous privation. And often this 'sore judgment' was that emphatically called the plague; and especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a time when war had become far more cruel and mischievous in the hands of hired regiments than ever it had been with a feudal army, and when at the same time increasing trade was filling the cities with more closely packed inhabitants, within fortifications that would not allow the city to expand in proportion to its needs. It has been only the establishment of the system of quarantine which has succeeded in cutting off the course of infection by which the plague was wont to set out on its frightful travels from land to land, from city to city.

The desolation of a plague-stricken city was a sort of horrible dream. Every infected house was marked with a red cross, and carefully closed against all persons, except those who were charged to drive carts through the streets to collect the corpses, ringing a bell as they went. These men were generally wretched beings, the lowest and most reckless of the people, who undertook their frightful task for the sake of the plunder of the desolate houses, and wound themselves up by intoxicating drinks to endure the horrors. The bodies were thrown into large trenches, without prayer or funeral rites, and these were hastily closed up. Whole families died together, untended save by one another, with no aid of a friendly hand to give drink or food; and, in the Roman Catholic cities, the perishing without a priest to administer the last rites of the Church was viewed as more dreadful than death itself.

Such visitations as these did indeed prove whether the pastors of the afflicted flock were shepherds or hirelings. So felt, in 1576, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, the worthiest of all the successors of St. Ambrose, when he learnt at Lodi that the plague had made its appearance in his city, where, remarkably enough, there had lately been such licentious revelry that he had solemnly warned the people that, unless they repented, they would certainly bring on themselves the wrath of heaven. His council of clergy advised him to remain in some healthy part of his diocese till the sickness should have spent itself, but he replied that a Bishop, whose duty it is to give his life for his sheep, could not rightly abandon them in time of peril. They owned that to stand by them was the higher course. 'Well,' he said, 'is it not a Bishop's duty to choose the higher course?'

So back into the town of deadly sickness he went, leading the people to repent, and watching over them in their sufferings, visiting the hospitals, and, by his own example, encouraging his clergy in carrying spiritual consolation to the dying. All the time the plague lasted, which was four months, his exertions were fearless and unwearied, and what was remarkable was, that of his whole household only two died, and they were persons who had not been called to go about among the sick. Indeed, some of the rich who had repaired to a villa, where they spent their time in feasting and amusement in the luxurious Italian fashion, were there followed by the pestilence, and all perished; their dainty fare and the excess in which they indulged having no doubt been as bad a preparation as the poverty of the starving people in the city.

The strict and regular life of the Cardinal and his clergy, and their home in the spacious palace, were, no doubt, under Providence, a preservative; but, in the opinions of the time, there was little short of a miracle in the safety of one who daily preached in the cathedral,—bent over the beds of the sick, giving them food and medicine, hearing their confessions, and administering the last rites of the Church,—and then braving the contagion after death, rather than let the corpses go forth unblest to their common grave. Nay, so far was he from seeking to save his own life, that, kneeling before the altar in the cathedral, he solemnly offered himself, like Moses, as a sacrifice for his people. But, like Moses, the sacrifice was passed by—‘it cost more to redeem their souls’—and Borromeo remained untouched, as did the twenty-eight priests who voluntarily offered themselves to join in his labors.

No wonder that the chief memories that haunt the glorious white marble cathedral of Milan are those of St. Ambrose, who taught mercy to an emperor, and of St. Carlo Borromeo, who practiced mercy on a people.