

# Laying Down the Rails

*"The effort of decision is the greatest effort of life."—Charlotte Mason*

Good habits are like railroad tracks.

*"The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days; while she who lets their habits take care of themselves has a weary life of endless friction with the children."—Charlotte Mason*

## *Tips for Cultivating a Good Habit*

1. Concentrate on forming one habit at a time, keeping watch over those habits already formed.

2. Repetition

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3. Motivation

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## *Charlotte Mason Habits*

### **Decency and Propriety Habits**

Cleanliness  
Courtesy  
Kindness  
Manners  
Modesty and Purity  
Neatness  
Order  
Regularity

(Mentioned only)

Candor  
Courage  
Diligence  
Fortitude  
Generosity  
Gentleness  
Meekness  
Patience  
Respect  
Temperance  
Thrift

### **Mental Habits**

Attention  
Imagining  
Meditation  
Memorizing  
Mental Effort  
Observation  
Perfect Execution  
Reading for Instruction  
Remembering  
Thinking

(Mentioned only)

Accuracy  
Concentration  
Reflection

Thoroughness

### **Moral Habits**

Integrity  
    Priorities  
    Finishing  
    Use of Time  
    Borrowed Property  
Obedience  
Personal Initiative  
Reverence  
Self-Control  
Sweet, Even Temper  
Truthfulness  
Usefulness

### **Physical Habits**

Alertness to Seize Opportunities  
Fortitude  
Health  
Managing One's Own Body  
Music  
Outdoor Life  
Quick Perception of Senses  
Self-Control in Emergencies  
Self-Discipline in Habits  
Self-Restraint in Indulgences  
Training the Ear and Voice

### **Religious Habits**

Regularity in Devotions  
    Prayer  
    Reading the Bible  
    Praise  
Reverent Attitude  
Sunday-Keeping  
Thanksgiving  
Thought of God

## *The Top Three*

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1. Start with short lessons.
2. Vary the order of lessons.
3. Don't repeat yourself.
4. Set time limits that assume full attention.
5. Play games that foster attention.

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1. Expect obedience.
2. Never give a command that you don't intend to see fully carried out.
3. Don't pester your child with excessive or continual commands.
4. When possible, plan ahead for transition times.

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1. Require exact facts without omission or exaggeration.
2. Avoid qualifying statements with "I think" or "perhaps"; be sure!
3. Don't use excessive language for common situations.
4. If needed, have daily lessons in truthful reporting.

*"Just as it is on the whole easier for the locomotive to pursue its way on the rails than to take a disastrous run off them, so it is easier for the child to follow lines of habit carefully laid down than to run off these lines at his peril. It follows that this business of laying down lines towards the unexplored country of the child's future is a very serious and responsible one for the parent. It rests with him to consider well the tracks over which the child should travel with profit and pleasure; and, along these tracks, to lay down lines so invitingly smooth and easy that the little traveller is going upon them at full speed without stopping to consider whether or no he chooses to go that way."— Charlotte Mason*