Charlotte Mason Habit Training

A Guide to Thoughtful Habit Formation

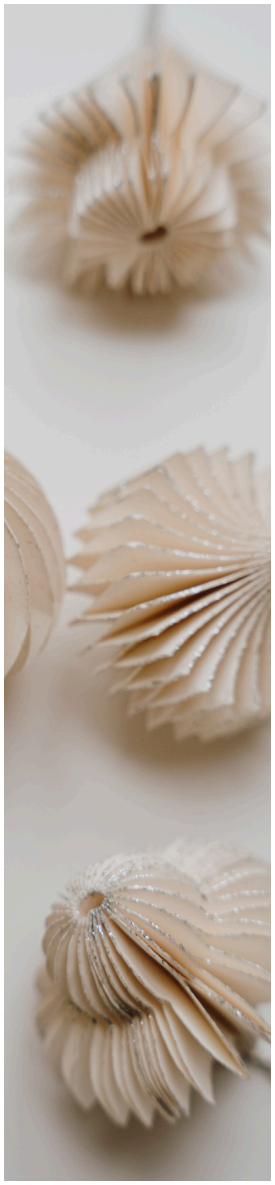
A Resource from CharlotteMasonEducation.org
For the Children's Sake

A Foundational Work

Habit training is a cornerstone of effective parenting and education, shaping a child’s character, conduct, and capacity for self-discipline. Drawing from Charlotte Mason's philosophy, this guide is designed to help you cultivate habits in your children that foster order and ease in daily life, shape their character, free their minds for higher pursuits, support their education, and reinforce moral and physical growth.

Once established, habits operate almost unconsciously, enabling right actions without the burden of constant decision-making. As parents, you hold the responsibility of laying down these "lines of habit," intentionally guiding children to develop patterns that promote virtue and well-being. This foundational work profoundly impacts every aspect of a child’s moral, intellectual, and physical development.

BRAIN SCIENCE: WHERE 19TH-CENTURY INSIGHT MEETS MODERN NEUROSCIENCE



Laying Down the Rails

In her 20 principles, which concisely encapsulate her philosophy, Principle 5 presents Charlotte Mason's school motto: "*Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life.*" One-third of this motto, "a discipline," refers to the intentional formation of habits. She elaborates in Principle 7, describing it as "*the discipline of habits, formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or body.*"

Charlotte Mason's approach to habit training was deeply informed by both the science and the philosophy of her time. She understood habit not just as a tool for shaping behavior, but as a physical process that alters the very structure of the brain. She explained that repeated actions, thoughts, or feelings create physical "grooves" or "tracks" in the brain, making future repetitions easier and more automatic. She wrote:

Brain Science Continued...

“Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structure to habitual lines of thought—i.e. to our habits”

"We think, as we are accustomed to think; ideas come and go and carry on a ceaseless traffic in the rut—let us call it—you have made for them in the very nerve substance of the brain."

~Charlotte Mason

This 19th-century understanding of neuroplasticity—the brain’s ability to reorganize itself through repeated actions—is still the foundation of today’s neuroscience. Studies now confirm that repeated behaviors strengthen neural pathways, making them more efficient, while unused pathways weaken over time.

Charlotte Mason’s metaphor of “laying down the rails” is as relevant today as ever: habits guide behavior, just as tracks guide a train, and intentional habit formation can set children on a path toward flourishing.

What makes Mason’s approach unique is her balance of scientific insight with a deep respect for the child as a person. She believed parents are not merely shaping behavior; they are co-working with God in the formation of character, ensuring that habit serves as an “exceedingly good servant,” rather than a tyrannical master.

Habit training, when done thoughtfully, can transform the rhythms of family life—not by erasing challenges, but by providing a framework for growth and harmony. It’s an invitation to create a home environment where discipline and grace work together, laying the rails for a life of purpose and freedom.

CHARLOTTE MASON'S THOUGHTS ON THE WILL AND HABIT TRAINING

Charlotte Mason defined the will as the faculty that empowers a person to act deliberately, aligning their actions with principles and reason rather than being ruled by impulses, desires, or whims. The will, according to Mason, is not about stubborn determination but about the capacity for thoughtful, purposeful choice. This distinction is crucial for understanding how the will interacts with habit training and child development.

'Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.'

- CHARLOTTE MASON

The Will: Governing Deliberate Action

1. **Self-Direction:** The will allows a person to prioritize what they ought to do over what they merely want to do. It is the engine of self-discipline, enabling individuals to choose virtue over convenience or impulse.

The Will Continued...

2. ***Partnership with Reason:*** *The will works alongside reason, but they are not the same. While reason provides a foundation for decisions, the will is the faculty that enables a person to carry out those decisions, even when faced with obstacles or distractions.*

3. ***Purposeful Action:*** *A well-functioning will enables purposeful, consistent effort. It governs the ability to persevere in meaningful tasks and supports the cultivation of good habits.*

The Will and Habit Training

For Charlotte Mason, the will and habit training are deeply interconnected. Good habits create an environment in which the will can operate more freely and effectively. By reducing the number of daily decisions required, habits relieve the will of constant effort, allowing it to focus on higher challenges.

Distinguishing 'I Will' from 'I Want': Children should be taught to recognize the difference between these two. While "I want" expresses a desire, "I will" represents a deliberate choice to act.

The Role of Diversion: When a child's will is struggling against impulses or desires, Mason advised using diversion—shifting their focus to something engaging and unrelated. This practice provides the will with a rest, allowing it to return to the task with renewed strength.

Failure as Growth: Experiencing both success and failure helps children develop a resilient will. Charlotte Mason emphasized that natural consequences, including the discipline of failure, are valuable for a child's growth. She believed these experiences are essential for building the character and judgment needed to consistently make right choices.

A “Strong-Willed Child” in Charlotte Mason’s Perspective

Modern understandings of a “strong-willed child” often describe a child who resists authority, is highly determined, or refuses to comply. Charlotte Mason would see such behaviors not as evidence of a strong will but of an untrained or misdirected will. In her view:

- **A Strong Will is Controlled and Purposeful:** A true strong will enables a child to direct themselves toward right action, not merely assert their desires or preferences.
- **Misguided Strength:** What we call "strong-willed" might reflect a child whose impulses dominate, showing not strength of will but a lack of control over it.
- **Enslaved**: Charlotte Mason believed that a weak will can leave a person subject to their impulses and desires, essentially enslaving them to their emotions and circumstances rather than allowing them to act with reason and intention. Without proper training, the child becomes "a slave" to external forces or inner whims, unable to act with true freedom.

Step-by-Step Process for Cultivating Habits in Children

1. Choose the Habit Thoughtfully

Begin by selecting one specific and meaningful habit to focus on, such as "shut the door after you" or "put your toys away." Choose a habit that will positively shape the child's character and make fulfilling their duties a source of joy. Ensure the habit is clear and actionable so both you and the child understand what is expected.

2. Model the Desired Habit

Recognize that children learn best through observation. Demonstrate the habit consistently in your own behavior. For example, if the habit is neatness, let the child see you maintaining a tidy space. Remember, "example is more powerful than precept."

3. Foster an Atmosphere for Growth

Cultivate an environment of calm, order, and goodwill. The home should serve as fertile ground for the habit to take root. This means parents must embody the attitudes and behaviors they want to see in their children. A natural, supportive atmosphere reinforces good habits.

4. Explain the Habit and Its Importance

Appeal to the child's innate sense of order by presenting the idea simply and clearly, allowing the child to grasp its value and necessity. For instance, when teaching a child to shut doors, the instruction should be direct: 'Shut the door behind you.' The habit grows by repetition, guided by the parent's gentle and consistent oversight, until the action becomes a natural response.

5. Demonstrate and Guide Practice

Show the child exactly what is required. Walk with them through the process step by step, ensuring they know how to perform the action. For instance, if the habit is to "shut the door after you," accompany the child each time they walk through a doorway to help them practice.

6. Reinforce Through Daily Repetition

Repetition is key to habit formation. Integrate the habit into the child's daily routine, ensuring consistent practice. Charlotte Mason noted that repeated actions create neural pathways, making the habit automatic over time.

7. Provide Gentle and Consistent Reminders

In the beginning stages, gently remind the child to practice the habit. Use calm persistence to encourage them without nagging, as this can lead to resistance. Cheerful and steady reminders help the child internalize the behavior.

8. Maintain Vigilance During the Critical Stage

As the habit begins to take root, there will be a stage where the child starts to practice it naturally, but lapses may occur if attention wanes. Parents must stay diligent and ensure consistency during this phase. Avoid growing weary in reinforcing the habit.

9. Help the Child Find Joy in the Habit

A well-formed habit becomes its own reward. When the child performs the habit well, they experience a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. This intrinsic delight strengthens their motivation and reinforces the behavior.

10. Prevent Interruptions and Backsliding

During the habit-forming period, maintain consistency. Avoid disruptions or laxity that could delay progress. Even after the habit is established, continue to observe and gently guide to prevent backsliding.

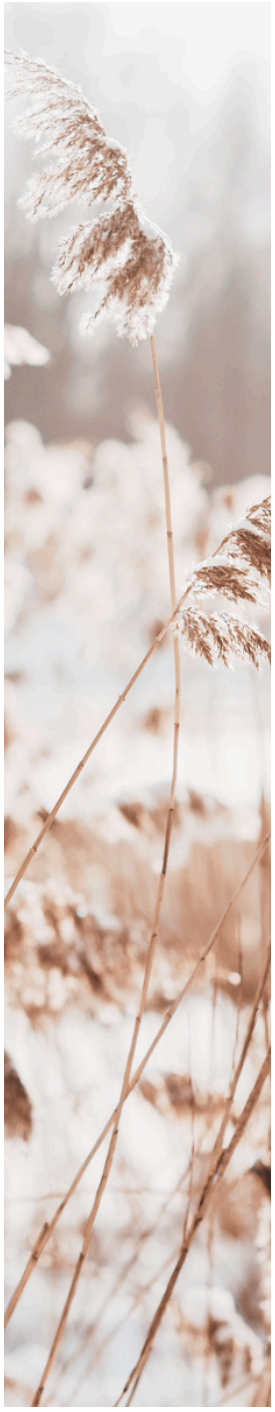
11. Transition to Self-Regulation

Gradually reduce reminders as the child becomes more independent in practicing the habit. The ultimate goal is for the habit to become second nature, requiring no external prompting.

12. Continue Nurturing Established Habits

Even when the habit is firmly established, maintain light oversight to ensure it remains strong. At the same time, allow the child to feel the freedom and ease that come with living within the bounds of good habits. They should experience these habits as liberating rather than restrictive.

EXAMPLE: “SHUT THE DOOR AFTER YOU”



“‘Lose this day loitering, and 'twill be the same story
To-morrow; and the next, more dilatory:
The indecision brings its own delays,
And days are lost, lamenting o'er lost days,’
...says Marlowe.”
~Charlotte Mason

In Home Education, Charlotte Mason gives us an example of a mother teaching her son the habit of shutting the door. The mother gently instructs Johnny, saying, “I want you to remember something with all your might: never go into or out of a room in which anybody is sitting without shutting the door.” Johnny, concerned about forgetting or being in a hurry, is reassured by his mother that she will remind him and that politeness requires him to take the time to shut the door. This friendly and tactful engagement sets the foundation for habit formation. When Johnny forgets and runs off without shutting the door, instead of shouting, the mother calmly calls him back. She patiently reinforces the importance of the habit without scolding, maintaining a cheerful and supportive tone. Over time, Johnny begins to remember consistently, and with persistence, the habit becomes second nature.

Example: The Habit of Attention

Parent: [Handing the child a small handful of buttons] "Here are ten buttons. Let’s play a little game. I want you to divide these buttons into two equal groups. Take your time and think carefully."

The child begins to work with the buttons, arranging them into two groups of five.

Parent: "Good. Now tell me what you did."

Child: "I made two groups with five buttons in each."

Parent: "Exactly. If we have ten buttons and split them into two equal groups, each group has five buttons. Now, here’s a challenge: What happens if we make three groups? Can you figure out how many buttons will be in each group? Take your time; I’m here if you need help."

The child tries to divide the buttons again, this time into three groups, discovering they cannot split the ten buttons equally.

Child: "It doesn’t work! One group has more."

Parent: [Smiling] "You’re right. Ten cannot be divided evenly into three groups. That’s an important thing to notice. You paid close attention, and you saw something very important. Well done!"

Key Charlotte Mason Elements in The Attention Example:

Short, Focused Task: The activity is simple and limited in scope to suit the child's attention span.

Hands-On Engagement: Buttons provide a tangible, visual way to understand division, making the concept come alive for the child.

Narration: The child is asked to describe their process, reinforcing attention and understanding.

Encouragement Without Nagging: The parent praises the child's effort and observations, even when the task cannot be completed as expected (a discovery in itself).

Patience and Time: The child is allowed to work through the problem independently, fostering thoughtful attention rather than rushing to a solution.

Developing attention as a habit is simplified and natural within the context of a living education.

Types of Habits

Simple Routine Habits (Practical & Physical)

- **Personal Cleanliness:** Washing hands, brushing teeth, and bathing regularly.
- **Orderliness:** Putting away toys, keeping rooms tidy.
- **Punctuality:** Being on time for meals, lessons, or outings.
- **Care for Belongings:** Taking care of books, clothes, and tools.
- **Physical Exercise:** Engaging in daily outdoor activity or physical tasks.

Social and Relational Habits

- **Politeness:** Saying "please," "thank you," and speaking kindly to others.
- **Obedience:** Willing compliance with instructions without argument.
- **Respect for Others:** Listening attentively and treating everyone with courtesy.
- **Generosity:** Sharing toys, food, and other resources.
- **Neighborliness:** Engaging with others in a friendly and helpful way.

Intellectual Habits

- **Attention:** Training the mind to focus wholly on one thing at a time, cultivating the habit of sustained concentration.
- **Observation:** Cultivating a habit of noticing details leading to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the world.
- **Thinking:** Reasoning to weigh ideas carefully and judge their truth or falsehood.
- **Remembering:** Strengthening memory to retain and recall information.
- **Imagination:** Forming vivid mental pictures and exploring new ideas through stories and meaningful observations.
- **Perfect Execution:** Completing tasks with care and accuracy, avoiding sloppy work.
- **Perseverance:** Encouraging the resolve to see tasks through, even when challenges arise.

Types of Habits

Moral Habits

- **Truthfulness:** Speaking honestly and avoiding exaggeration or deceit.
- **Self-Control:** Managing temper, impulses, and desires.
- **Kindness:** Showing empathy and consideration to others.
- **Fairness:** Treating others justly and sharing responsibility.
- **Modesty and Purity:** Maintaining appropriate behavior and thought.

Spiritual and Life-Long Character Habits

- **Reverence:** Developing awe and respect for God, creation, and the sacredness of life.
- **Gratitude:** Cultivating a thankful heart, recognizing blessings in all circumstances.
- **Duty and Responsibility:** Carrying out obligations faithfully.
- **Service:** Helping others willingly and seeing service as a privilege.
- **Faithfulness:** Staying true to commitments and beliefs.

A Word of Caution to Parents on Habit Training

As Charlotte Mason reminds us, every child is a person with innate dignity and individuality. Habit formation, while a vital tool for shaping a child's character, must be guided by right intentions and thoughtful application. When driven by a desire for outward appearances or control, it risks producing children who display external compliance but lack genuine inner virtue.

She emphasizes the distinction between conduct and character, urging parents not to settle for external compliance at the cost of genuine moral development. Habit training must also remain integrated as part of her broader educational philosophy which nurtures and inspires the whole person. As you read, consider how your efforts to instill habits can foster not just behavior but integrity and wisdom in your child.

THE PARENT'S ROLE IN FORMING HABITS

Charlotte Mason emphasized the parent's crucial role in forming their children's habits, describing it as one of the most significant and natural means of education. She believed that habit is "ten natures" and that the habits children develop shape their character and future. Following are a few key aspects of the parent's role in habit formation:

1. PARENT'S ROLE IN FORMING INDIVIDUAL HABITS

OBSERVATION AND AWARENESS

- **Understand the Child:** Observe natural tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses to identify which habits need attention.
- **Be Specific:** Focus on one habit at a time to avoid overwhelming the child or yourself.

MODELING AND ENVIRONMENT

- **Model by Example:** Parents must embody the habits they wish to cultivate in their children. Example is more powerful than precept.
- **Home Environment:** Provide an environment where the child can practice the habit meaningfully—for example, ensuring a child has a set place for their belongings. Help your child succeed.

GUIDANCE AND PRACTICE

- **Set Clear Expectations:** Explain what the habit looks like and why it’s important.
- **Assist in Practice:** Walk alongside the child as they practice the habit. For instance, if you are teaching obedience, ensure you give clear instructions and follow up.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONSISTENCY

- **Encourage Progress**: Notice small efforts verbally. Be consistent, avoiding nagging or frustration.
- **Correct Lovingly:** Mistakes are inevitable. Use them as teaching moments, not occasions for punishment.

2. PARENT'S ROLE IN SHAPING LONG-TERM CHARACTER

As children grow, parents hold the crucial responsibility of transitioning from habit trainers to character cultivators. Charlotte Mason emphasized that character is not simply the accumulation of habits but the sum of a child's moral, spiritual, and intellectual formation over time. Parents must approach this role with intentionality, respect for the child's individuality, and a reliance on Divine grace.

CULTIVATING MORAL VIRTUES

- **Anchor in Principles:** Parents should consistently point children to universal truths and moral principles, such as kindness, justice, and honesty, making them the bedrock of character development.
- **Foster Reverence:** Encourage a deep respect for God, other people, and life itself. This reverence becomes a cornerstone of a child's ability to grow into a person of integrity.

ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENT MORAL ACTION

- Teach Self-Responsibility: As children mature, parents guide them to take ownership of their choices. Provide opportunities for them to exercise their will in ways that align with principles of right and wrong.
- Highlight Consequences: Gently help children see the natural consequences of their actions, fostering an understanding of accountability and ethical decision-making.

MAINTAINING RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALITY

- Recognize the Personhood of the Child: Every child is a unique individual. Parents must approach character shaping not as a process of molding the child into a specific image but as fostering the flourishing of the child's God-given personality and potential.
- Balance Authority and Freedom: While parental authority remains crucial, it should be exercised in a way that empowers children to grow in autonomy and wisdom.

PROVIDING LIVING IDEAS AND EXEMPLARS

- **Inspire Through Ideas:** Surround children with rich, noble ideas found in great literature, history, and scripture. These “living ideas” feed their minds and inspire virtuous aspirations.
- **Introduce Role Models:** Share the stories of heroes, saints, and everyday people who exhibit character traits worth emulating.

OFFERING A FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION-MAKING

- **Teach the Way of the Will:** Help children distinguish between fleeting desires and deliberate, principled choices. Show them how to redirect their will toward what is good and true, even when it is difficult.
- **Equip with Reasoning Skills:** Guide children in evaluating ideas and situations thoughtfully, teaching them to weigh evidence and discern truth from error.
- **Beware of Reason:** Instill the understanding that reason is a tool, not an infallible guide, and that its conclusions depend on the soundness of the ideas or principles it is employed to support. Therefore, guide children in choosing worthy principles to anchor their reasoning.

PARTNERING WITH THE DIVINE

- **Rely on Grace:** Parents must acknowledge that character formation ultimately requires divine intervention. Prayer, trust in God, and nurturing the child’s relationship with Him are vital components of this process.
- **Model Faith:** Demonstrate a living faith in everyday actions, showing children how to integrate spiritual and moral convictions into daily life.

By faithfully applying these principles, parents can inspire children to grow into adults of strong character, equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to live lives of purpose and virtue.

FOCUS BY FORM

While Charlotte Mason did not explicitly structure habit training into specific "forms," the following is a framework offering a practical interpretation of her ideas.

FORM I (AGES 6–9): FOUNDATIONAL OBEDIENCE
Focus: *Willing and Cheerful Compliance*

At this stage, children are naturally dependent on external authority. This is the time to lay a solid foundation of obedience as a joyful and habitual response.

Model Authority with Love:
Parents should act as firm, loving guides, representing Divine authority. Authority that is consistent fosters trust and respect.
Set Clear Expectations:
Instructions should be simple, reasonable, and firm. Charlotte Mason encouraged parents to expect "first-time obedience" without nagging. Let your words stand like iron.
Practice Cheerful Obedience:
Frame obedience positively, teaching children that their cooperation brings joy to the home. Correct disobedience calmly and consistently.
Teach Obedience Through Habit:
Encourage habits through repetition and gentle persistence. Whether it's completing chores or practicing table manners, habits established now will become second nature.

FORM II (AGES 9–12): RESPONSIBILITY IN OBEDIENCE
Focus: Obedience with Understanding

As children mature, they develop reasoning skills. Obedience at this stage involves understanding the reasons behind rules.

Explain Authority and Consequences:
Help children see that obedience is rooted in respect for rightful authority, such as parents, teachers, and societal laws. Discuss natural consequences in ways they can comprehend.
Balance Freedom and Authority:
Provide choices within boundaries to teach decision-making. For example, allow them to choose between tasks or activities, guiding them gently toward responsibility.
Encourage Self-Control:
Reinforce how obedience benefits both themselves and others. For instance, emphasize respect for others' time by coming promptly to activities.

FORM III (AGES 12–15): SELF-REGULATION IN OBEDIENCE
Focus: *Internalizing Authority*

Adolescence marks a shift from external compliance to internal self-regulation.

Foster a Sense of Duty:
Encourage teens to view obedience as a responsibility to themselves, their family, and society, rooted in moral and ethical principles.

Engage in Reasoned Discussions:
Acknowledge their growing capacity for abstract thought. Discuss the rationale behind decisions and rules, fostering mutual respect while maintaining parental authority.
Guide Through Influence:
Transition from issuing commands to guiding by example, discussion, and mentorship. Offer trust and listen to their perspectives.

FORM IV AND BEYOND (AGES 15–18+): AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Focus: *Obedience to Principles*

At this stage, obedience becomes aligned with internalized values and principles, guiding independent action.

Encourage Ethical Decision-Making:
Teach young adults to evaluate choices based on integrity, compassion, and justice. Encourage them to take responsibility for their actions and their impact on others.
Promote Independence Within a Framework:
Provide increasing freedom while setting clear expectations about responsibilities. Discussions should guide rather than dictate their choices.
Support Lifelong Growth:
Emphasize that true obedience is to the highest principles of faith, truth, and service. Model how living by these principles creates a meaningful life.

AUTHORITY & DOCILITY

Parenting is a profound journey, yet many of us step into it without fully understanding the nature of the authority we hold. Much is asked of us as parents, and obedience from children is not always immediate or straightforward. Adding to this challenge is the shift in the parent-child relationship over the generations. These factors make Charlotte Mason's insights on Authority and Docility particularly timely and essential.

Charlotte Mason taught that authority and docility are fundamental principles instituted by God. As parents, our authority is not a personal possession but a sacred trust, a delegated responsibility given to us by God. It is not derived from our own strength or character but vested in the role we fulfill. This distinction is crucial. When we treat authority as a personal attribute—governing based on our own whims, moods, or desires—we forfeit its true power and risk becoming arbitrary or autocratic.

Authority Vested in the Role, Not the Person

Charlotte Mason emphasized that authority must never be confused with autocracy. She wrote:
"We know now that authority is vested in the office and not in the person; that the moment it is treated as a personal attribute it is forfeited."

The person in authority is also under authority—accountable to God, to principles, and to the trust they have been given. This understanding not only shapes how we lead but also keeps us humble, recognizing that our authority exists for the benefit and well-being of those we serve. The distinction between authority and autocracy is not mere semantics; it shapes how we interact with our children. Autocracy, as Charlotte Mason described, is "self-derived" and depends on enforcement through fear, "love", manipulation, or personal power. True authority, by contrast, is calm, consistent, and rooted in principle. It does not seek control for its own sake but creates an environment where obedience becomes a natural and joyful response.

Docility: The Fitting Counterpart to Authority

Authority cannot function properly without its complement: docility. Mason described this relationship as a ball fitting into a socket, creating a working joint. Docility is the teachable spirit in children that responds to the calm assurance of true authority. Together, these principles allow for law, order, progress, and peace within the home and society.

Authority as a Gift and a Grace

Charlotte Mason reminds us that authority is not only a gift but also a grace. It reflects an aspect of love that parents offer their children. For parents, it requires continual self-denial, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice. For children, it provides "quiet rest and gaiety of heart."

Charlotte Mason wrote:

"Authority is that aspect of love which parents present to their children; parents know it is love, because to them it means continual self-denial... children recognise it as love, because to them it means quiet rest and gaiety of heart."

This perspective challenges us to approach our daily interactions with humility and thoughtfulness, asking ourselves the question she so powerfully posed:

"Who gave Thee this authority?"

By grounding our parenting in this divine understanding, we align ourselves with a greater purpose, bringing peace and order to our homes and nurturing the growth of both our children and ourselves.

To learn more about Charlotte Mason's theological views, visit www.charlottemasoneducation.org/theology-of-charlotte-mason/

A Final Note of Encouragement

Take heart, dear parents, in the noble work entrusted to you. Though it is no light task to guide a child's habits and shape their character, know that this labor is one of the highest callings given to mankind. You are partners with God, raising persons made in His image, entrusted to your care for the good of society and His glory. Remember, habits are the tools, and ideas are the nourishment by which children grow into their fullest selves. Let the atmosphere of your home, the discipline you model, and the living ideas you share serve as the means to awaken their minds and hearts. Each small act of diligence and love is a seed planted, though its fruit may not be seen immediately.

Do not lose courage in moments of trial, for the shaping of a soul is neither quick nor easy. The work you do daily, even in what seems mundane, bears eternal significance. Trust that the divine Spirit is at work in your labors, inspiring and sustaining you and your children. Let this inspire you: 'Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life,' and in nurturing these, you are cultivating not just knowledge but wisdom and virtue. Rest in the assurance that as you faithfully give your efforts, God multiplies them far beyond what you can see.

Habit Is Part of a Larger Whole

Habit training is one part of Charlotte Mason's philosophy of education. It makes fuller sense when understood alongside her ideas about the child as a person, authority, atmosphere, living ideas, narration, nature study, and the relationships education is meant to form.

If you would like to see how these principles fit together, *First Steps into Charlotte Mason Education* is an eight-week online course that works through the foundations one idea at a time, grounded in Mason's own writings.

Explore First Steps →
www.charlottemasoneducation.org/first-steps

FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAKE

This resource is brought to you by CharlotteMasonEducation.org
Visit us to explore our collection of educational materials rooted in Charlotte Mason's philosophy to enrich your teaching journey.

"Our crying need to-day is less for a better method of education than for an adequate conception of children,—children, merely as human beings."

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