

RAISING KIDS WHO TURN OUT RIGHT: A WEEKEND PLANNER

As we have seen, good families don't occur by accident. They are the result of careful planning and deliberate effort. "Parenting on purpose" requires concentrated time in an undistracted setting. One of the best ways to make this happen is for parents to isolate themselves for a weekend in order to work on a strategy. This plan can then be used to develop character traits in their children that will withstand the tests of time.

By getting away at least once a year, a mother and father can evaluate each child's progress, focus on essential character issues, and tailor a strategy that will maximize each child's development over the next year. Weekend planning sessions make "raising kids who turn out right" an easier goal to attain. They provide opportunity to establish goals that can in turn be broken into manageable moments.

To make this process a little easier, I've put together a schedule, some checklists, a few projects, and worksheets to help you get the most out of your weekend. These are designed to help you crystallize your strategy for bringing your children to maturity.

Yes, I realize we all have a built-in aversion to things called "projects" or "worksheets." There's no doubt that a weekend like this will require genuine effort. I'd be lying if I said it would be painless. When we honestly discuss where our children are—and where we are as their parents—it can get frustrating. But your conscientious efforts to develop your

family's destiny will put you light-years ahead of most parents, and give you more confidence in where you're going.

This will take an investment of time and money. It will take a commitment to be inconvenienced. But both you and your children will enjoy the reward.

What you have in the pages of this appendix is a suggestion of how you can spend your time. You, of course, know your children's needs better than anyone else. You may need to adapt these projects, or develop some that more particularly meet your needs. What is most important is that you have a plan.

God bless you as you build the legacy.

A CHECKLIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL WEEKEND

MONTHS IN ADVANCE . . .

- Pick a weekend and clear the schedule on your calendars.
- Choose an affordable retreat location that provides the comfort, atmosphere, and convenience for a productive weekend.
- Arrange for child care.
- Look over the projects in order to be better prepared to maximize them as a tool for discussion.
- Enlist friends to pray for you during the weekend.
- Pray for a constructive weekend every day for thirty days prior to your retreat.

JUST BEFORE YOU GO . . .

- Pack your Bible.
- Pack family albums, photos of the children, and anything that might help you analyze your children's accomplishments and needs better (report cards, awards, medical reports, counselor's reviews, etc.).
- Pack stationery and notebooks.
- Tell your kids that you are going off to work on next year's strategy for the family.
- Pack your calendars and datebooks. Bring schedules of events that will need to be on the calendar in the following year (work projects, church events, summer camp dates, school calendars, team schedules, etc.).
- Make copies of the projects (you have permission to copy enough to have one to fill in for each child in your family). You may want to use a copier with the capability to enlarge the forms so that you will have more room to write.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEKEND

Friday Evening

The Past:

- Fill in the spaces on Project #1 for each child.
- Spend some time looking at the family album and photos of your children before you go to bed.

Saturday Morning

Quiet Time: See the following suggested Scripture and questions.

The Future:

- Reread Chapter Two: "A Blueprint For Your Child's Character."
- Respond to the information in Project #2.

The Present:

- Begin discussing and filling out the information in Project #3.

Saturday Afternoon

- Complete Project #3.
- Fill in the responses to Project #4.

The Models:

- Work on Project #5 individually.

Saturday Evening

- Put discussions of the kids aside for the evening and enjoy some undistracted time together.

Sunday Morning

Quiet Time: See the following suggested Scripture and questions.

The Plan:

- Work on the suggestions for Project #6.

SATURDAY MORNING'S QUIET TIME

Scripture:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:1-7, NIV).

1. What advice within this passage stands out in your mind as you consider your role as a parent?
2. What is one promise that you can embrace from this passage to help you through your day?

Pray: For each other, for your children, and for your planning time.

SUNDAY MORNING'S QUIET TIME

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39, NIV).

1. What principles within this passage comfort you as you consider your responsibilities as a married couple and as parents?
2. What is a promise that you can claim as you finish up your weekend planning session?

Pray: For your marriage, your children, and your future.

TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE PROJECTS . . .

- Don't let yourself get bogged down in them. They aren't the final word on your children, nor are they meant to provide an in-depth psychological profile. They are simply intended as guidelines to help stimulate thought and discussion.
- Feel free to adapt the projects to meet the unique needs of your family and your weekend.
- Notice that some of the projects have a space to list an Action Point for your child. These are specific things that can be done by the child to help develop character, skills, etc. Let me offer a word of caution: When deciding an Action Point for your children, it's essential that you keep in mind that they are just children. Their emotions, intellect, bodies, and spirits are young and undeveloped. We parents have an unfortunate tendency to expect levels of maturity and accomplishment from our children that they are incapable of delivering. For instance: In order to build confidence in their faith, you might put down as an Action Point that they memorize five chapters from the book of Romans! A far more realistic, enjoyable, and profitable Action Point might be that they memorize five verses from Romans. Keep in mind that you have to be prepared to help them through their Action Points.
- Make sure that you complete the Parent's Action Points. These will have more influence on your children than anything you would have them do themselves.
- During your calendar session (Project #6) make sure to schedule three times over the next nine months to review the information on the projects so that you can monitor progress.

PROJECT #1: REVIEWING THE PAST

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----|
| Child's Name | Today's Date | Age |
| This child's... | This child's... | |
| ...greatest strengths: | ...greatest frustrations | |
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ | |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ | |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ | |
| 4. _____ | 4. _____ | |
| 5. _____ | 5. _____ | |
| ...greatest areas of interest | ...greatest fears | |
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ | |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ | |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ | |
| 4. _____ | 4. _____ | |
| 5. _____ | 5. _____ | |
| ...greatest accomplishments | ...greatest disappointments | |
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ | |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ | |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ | |
| 4. _____ | 4. _____ | |
| 5. _____ | 5. _____ | |
| This child's most significant event this past year: | | |
| | | |

PROJECT #2: FOCUSING ON THE FINISHED PRODUCT

When our children move out from under our authority they need . . .

Decision-Making Skills:

- In physical issues (exercise, nutrition, rest, etc.).
- In personal issues (finances, career, home life, etc.).
- In social issues (dating relationships, love, friendships, dealing with enemies, etc.).
- In spiritual issues (dealing with sin, faith, prayer, fellowship, etc.).

Character Traits:

- Faith, Integrity, Poise, Discipline, Endurance, and Courage.
- Commitment to Life Goals:
- To love and obey God.
- To love their spouse.
- To love their children.
- To be a good friend.
- To work hard.
- To invest their lives in others.

Ability to Execute Survival Skills:

- In the physical: manage a schedule, cook, swim, learn safety skills, drive a car, etc.
- In the personal: live on a budget, manage a checkbook, know how to finish projects, keep belongings maintained, etc.
- In the social: get along with others, confront, resolve, employ good manners, learn to stand alone on an issue if necessary, etc.
- In the emotional: to laugh, to cry.
- In the spiritual: share their faith, repent, be a friend of God, etc.

Sustained Relationships:

- Ability to resolve conflict, serve others, communicate, listen, forgive, etc.

1. Of the skills and character traits mentioned above, which ones do we transfer the most effectively?

2. Of the skills and character traits mentioned above, which ones do we have the most difficult time transferring? Why?

3. What are some of the resources that we can utilize to develop these skills and character traits more effectively in our children?

PROJECT #3: A CHECKLIST FOR MY CHILD'S FUTURE

(Refer to the list in Project #2)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>DECISION-MAKING SKILLS: Which skills does he/she use most effectively?</p> <hr/> <p>Which ones need improvement?</p> <hr/> <p>Child's Action Point</p> <hr/> <p>Parent's Action Point</p> <hr/> | <p>SURVIVAL SKILLS: Which skills does he/she use most effectively?</p> <hr/> <p>Which ones need improvement?</p> <hr/> <p>Child's Action Point</p> <hr/> <p>Parent's Action Point</p> <hr/> |
| <p>COMMITMENT TO LIFE GOALS: Which goals are being reached most effectively?</p> <hr/> <p>Which goals need more concentration?</p> <hr/> <p>Child's Action Point</p> <hr/> <p>Parent's Action Point</p> <hr/> | <p>SUSTAINED RELATIONSHIPS: Which abilities does he/she demonstrate most often?</p> <hr/> <p>Which abilities need improvement?</p> <hr/> <p>Child's Action Point</p> <hr/> <p>Parent's Action Point</p> <hr/> |

PROJECT #4: A REVIEW OF MY CHILD'S CHARACTER

| | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| FAITH | <p>How is his/her faith developing?</p> <hr/> <p>What can we do to help it develop more effectively?</p> <hr/> <p>He/she deserves a compliment for...</p> | <p>Faith Action Point</p> |
| | <p>How is his/her integrity developing?</p> <hr/> <p>What can we do to help it develop more effectively?</p> <hr/> <p>He/she deserves a compliment for...</p> | <p>Integrity Action Point</p> |
| | <p>How is his/her poise developing?</p> <hr/> <p>What can we do to help it develop more effectively?</p> <hr/> <p>He/she deserves a compliment for...</p> | <p>Poise Action Point</p> |

PROJECT #4: A REVIEW OF MY CHILD'S CHARACTER

| | | |
|-------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| DISCIPLINE | <p>How is his/her discipline developing?</p> <p>What can we do to help it develop more effectively?</p> <p>He/she deserves a compliment for...</p> | <p>Discipline Action Point</p> |
| ENDURANCE | <p>How is his/her endurance developing?</p> <p>What can we do to help it develop more effectively?</p> <p>He/she deserves a compliment for...</p> | <p>Endurance Action Point</p> |
| COURAGE | <p>How is his/her courage developing?</p> <p>What can we do to help it develop more effectively?</p> <p>He/she deserves a compliment for...</p> | <p>Courage Action Point</p> |

PROJECT #5: THE LEGACY OF OUR MARRIAGE

Husband's Worksheet

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more faith through my marriage are...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>One way that I can model faith to the children is...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate discipline before my wife are...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>One way that I can model discipline before my kids is...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |
| <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more integrity before my wife are...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>One way that I can model integrity to the children is...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more endurance through my marriage are...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>One way that I can model endurance to the children is...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |
| <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more poise through my marriage are...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>One way that I can model poise to the children is...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more courage before my wife are...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>One way that I can model courage before my kids is...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |

PROJECT #5: THE LEGACY OF OUR MARRIAGE

Wife's Worksheet

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more faith through my marriage are...</p> <hr/> <p>One way that I can model faith to the children is...</p> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate discipline before my wife are...</p> <hr/> <p>One way that I can model discipline before my kids is...</p> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more integrity before my wife are...</p> <hr/> <p>One way that I can model integrity to the children is...</p> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more endurance through my marriage are...</p> <hr/> <p>One way that I can model endurance to the children is...</p> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more poise through my marriage are...</p> <hr/> <p>One way that I can model poise to the children is...</p> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>Three ways that I could demonstrate more courage before my wife are...</p> <hr/> <p>One way that I can model courage before my kids is...</p> <hr/> <hr/> |

PROJECT #6: PLANNING THE NEXT YEAR

1. Fill in your central family calendar. Mark all birthdays, scheduled trips, school events, summer camps, team events, church events, etc. Remember to mark down three dates within the next nine months when you will review the worksheets in order to monitor progress.
2. Discuss vacation options and set aside possible dates. Save final decisions until you've sounded out the kids' wishes.
3. Write your children letters on the stationery you brought. You might want to express the reasons why you value them, why you are delighted to be their parents. A few anecdotes from this past year could lend opportunities to tell how you are working to develop their character. You can give the letters to them when you get home, or you may want to save them until the children are older (graduating from college, getting married, when they have their first child, etc.), allowing them to treasure the letters as a gift from their childhood.
4. Review your parent's action points and discuss how and when you will implement them.
5. Put all of the worksheets and projects in files for safekeeping.
6. Pray for your children and each other.