

Growing Amidst the Challenges

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Strengthening character - Building resilience

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Who are you?

- ▶ What is your identity? What are your key values
- ▶ If your best friend was to describe you, what character strengths would they list?
- ▶ Which character strengths are your strongest, and which ones are you intentionally growing?
- ▶ Which of your character strengths do you wish were stronger?

Character Strengths are:

- ▶ Personal qualities that help us to flourish and grow.
- ▶ Qualities we can develop all through our lives.
- ▶ Positive ways of thinking, talking and doing that energise us and help us to enjoy better health, life and relationships.



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Character strengths are durable, fundamental qualities that describe us at our best.

Jennifer Fox Eades



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Character strengths enrich our lives by helping us to:

- ▶ Enjoy healthy relationships
- ▶ Live happier lives
- ▶ Be more resilient in life's challenges
- ▶ Be respected, and respect others
- ▶ Learn and work well
- ▶ Serve our communities
- ▶ Love God and love others better

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Tools in our toolbox

- ▶ The more character strengths we grow and develop, the more equipped we are for life.
- ▶ Each one is like an extra tool in our toolbox.
- ▶ And the more we develop, then the more effective those tools are.



Make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love...

2 Peter 1:5-8

...For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5-8, NIV.



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God's Character

Make a quick list of God's character qualities.

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What character strengths do people value in the different cultures around the world?



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- Appreciating beauty
- Bravery
- Caution
- Creativity
- Enthusiasm
- Fairness
- Forgiveness
- Gratitude
- Honesty
- Hope
- Humour

- Kindness
- Leadership
- Love
- Love of learning
- Modesty/humility
- Perseverance
- Self-control
- Sociability
- Spirituality
- Teamwork
- Wisdom



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What amazing thing do these 24 character strengths have in common?

Appreciating Beauty

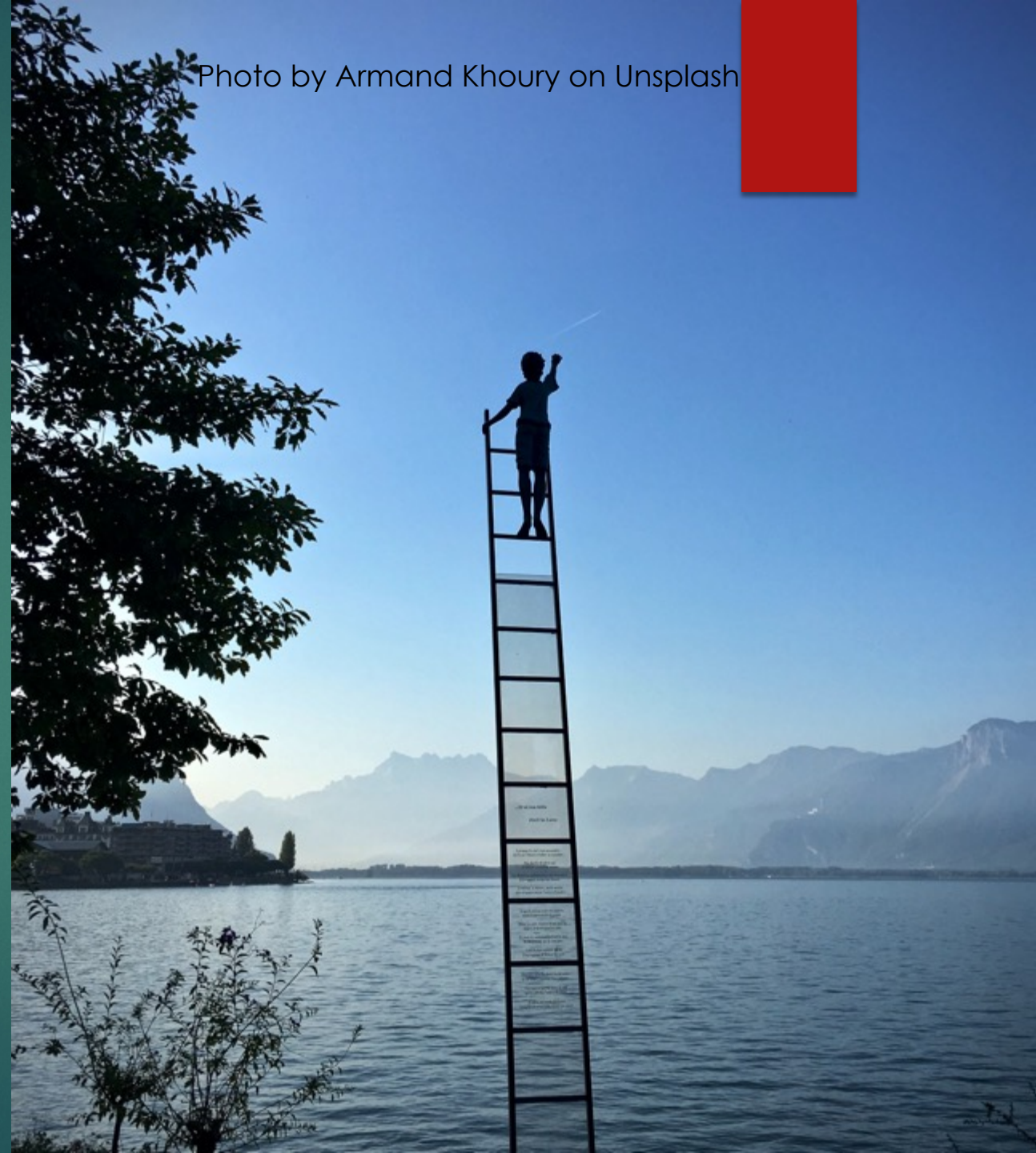
- ▶ Nature tables in classroom.
- ▶ Photography competitions.
- ▶ Using nature as inspiration for arts and crafts.
- ▶ Slow down and explore nature in detail – watch snails, grow plants, dissect flowers, etc.
- ▶ God, David



Photo by Chris Lawton on Unsplash

Bravery

- ▶ Courage to do hard things.
- ▶ Encourage safe and gradual exploration.
- ▶ Sports activities and public performances.
- ▶ Support children who are afraid. Don't push them too much or shame them.
- ▶ Daniel, Esther, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, etc.



Caution

- ▶ Teach principles of safety and risk assessment.
- ▶ Discuss possible outcomes of different decisions.
- ▶ Especially important for preteens and teens.
- ▶ Prophets...





Photo by Dragos Gontariu on Unsplash

Creativity

- ▶ Not just about art – about solving problems in fresh ways.
- ▶ Explore different uses of everyday objects.
- ▶ Encourage creative problem solving.
- ▶ Support students in looking for alternative and positive solutions.
- ▶ Creative recycling projects and competitions.
- ▶ David, Mary, Mary of Bethany



Photo by Robert Collins on Unsplash

Enthusiasm

- Joyfully and positively tackling tasks.
- Be enthusiastic – it's contagious.
- Reward enthusiasm.
- Role play enthusiasm.
- Teach and model the importance of approaching tasks with energy and positivity.
- Peter, Joshua,



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Fairness

- ▶ Teach the importance of fairness and treating others equitably.
- ▶ Discuss issues of social concern and invite class to do at least one small thing to rebalance the poverty in the world.
- ▶ Abraham, deacons to care for the Greek widows



Forgiveness

- ▶ Teach children the process of forgiving others – be forgiving too.
- ▶ Explore forgiveness stories in literature and news.
- ▶ Father of prodigal son, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and brothers
- ▶ (four places of forgiveness)

Photo by Towfiq Barbhuiyq on Unsplash



Gratitude

- ▶ Gratitude makes us happy and reduces conflicts!
- ▶ Create an alphabet of gratitude together.
- ▶ Give each student a gratitude journal to complete daily or weekly.
- ▶ Make and send thank you cards.
- ▶ Thank people in the community.
- ▶ The Samaritan leper, people Jesus healed, Paul...

Honesty

- ▶ Speaking the truth in love...
- ▶ Reward honesty. Be careful not to punish honesty and 'encourage' lying...
- ▶ Teach the skills of positive assertiveness so that they can speak the truth warmly and well.
- ▶ Teach importance of financial honesty.
- ▶ Discuss challenging honesty scenarios.
- ▶ Prophets



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Hope

- ▶ Ask students to list the things that give them hope so they can refer back to it.
- ▶ Plan experiences that the students can look forward to.
- ▶ Speak in ways that foster hope rather than discouragement.
- ▶ Simeon and Anna, Abraham, Noah, Moses...



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Humour

- ▶ Have a humour/laughter moment with your class each day.
- ▶ Humour actually helps brains to open up to new learning!
- ▶ Collect positive examples of good humour on a Smile Board.
- ▶ Ask students to write a funny story as homework.
- ▶ Watch funny animals or YouTube clips.
- ▶ Jesus, Solomon (proverbs)



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Kindness

- ▶ Encourage kindness in class – have recipients of kindness write the kindness on a sticky note and put it on a poster.
- ▶ Choose a kindness project that your class or school could do for the community.
- ▶ Button Jar kindness reward.
- ▶ Abigail, Rahab, Mary and Martha, Dorcas, Paul, Joseph of Arimathea
- ▶ (live:kind project TED website)



Leadership

- ▶ Provide opportunities for children and students to develop leadership skills.
- ▶ Set small group projects and rotate the leadership between group members.
- ▶ Learn about leaders and what makes a good leader.
- ▶ Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Paul, Peter, Deborah



Love

- ▶ Teach about 5 love languages
www.5lovelanguages.com
- ▶ Caring touch
- ▶ Helpful actions
- ▶ Focused time
- ▶ Thoughtful gifts
- ▶ Kind words
- ▶ Keeping others safe
- ▶ Showing respect, etc.
- ▶ Naomi and Ruth, John the beloved, Mary and Martha



Love of learning

- ▶ Help students to understand their learning styles and how they learn best.
- ▶ Teach for different learning styles so every student enjoys learning – visual, verbal and sensory/active.
- ▶ Help them to discover subjects that interest them.
- ▶ Solomon, Daniel and his friends, Mary of Bethany



Modesty/humility

- ▶ Read stories about humility versus pride.
- ▶ Quietly award/encourage the humblest student each week.
- ▶ Encourage students to praise each other rather than to boast about themselves.
- ▶ Abigail, Jesus, etc.


A photograph of a field of daisies at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The daisies are in focus, with some in the foreground and others in the background. The sky is a mix of orange and blue.

Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

Perseverance

- ▶ Set perseverance challenges – jigsaws, etc.
- ▶ Reward effort rather than achievement.
- ▶ Encourage students to learn new skills that require practice and perseverance.
- ▶ Read stories about those who persevered.
- ▶ Noah, Moses, Abraham, Job...



Photo by Pedro Sanz on Unsplash

Self-control

- ▶ Encourage students to delay gratification.
- ▶ Play games that need patience and fine-motor control, etc.
- ▶ Teach anger-management and self-calming skills.
- ▶ Encourage students to let others go first.
- ▶ John the Baptist, David when in the cave with Saul, Joseph when he first met his brothers in Egypt...



Sociability

- ▶ Encourage inclusion.
- ▶ Actively reduce bullying.
- ▶ Teach relational skills.
- ▶ Teach conflict resolution skills.
- ▶ Encourage looking out for each other and helping each other.
- ▶ Abigail, Naomi and Ruth, Paul, Abraham...



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Spirituality

- ▶ Spirituality is being aware of the presence of God, and growing in relationship with Him
- ▶ Prayer, faith, worship, learning
- ▶ Having beliefs that inspire values and purpose.
- ▶ Showing respect for others and valuing them as made in the image of God.
- ▶ David, Moses, Mary of Bethany, Paul, Peter, John, etc...



Teamwork

- ▶ Sports activities.
- ▶ Non-competitive games.
- ▶ Class projects – fund raising etc.
- ▶ Class to compete against clock rather than against each other.
- ▶ If we can all work together to tidy this up in next five minutes, we can do a fun activity!
- ▶ Disciples, Moses and Aaron, Noah's family, Mary and Martha, etc.



Wisdom

- ▶ Learn about wise people.
- ▶ Explore wise sayings in your culture.
- ▶ Discuss different problem scenarios and possible outcomes.
- ▶ Let children know when they have made wise choices.
- ▶ Solomon, Abigail, Deborah, Moses...



Why Character strengths are so important...

- Character strengths help us to cope with life's difficulties.
- They help us to be resilient and bounce back emotionally after a crisis, setback, distress, or challenge.



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What are your Character Strengths?

- ▶ List three of your character strengths.
- ▶ Next to each character strength write a specific example of a time when you used that strength.



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When someone noticed your character strength

- What difference did it make to you when someone noticed and nurtured one of your positive qualities?
- How did this encourage you and how has it shaped your life since then?



Photo by Adam Winger on Unsplash

How to nurture character strengths

- Be aware of the different character strengths.
- Help students to recognise character strengths in themselves and others.



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Teach about character strengths

- ▶ Use Bible characters and their stories to teach about character.
- ▶ Do a series of worships on the character strengths.
- ▶ Assign writing projects where students choose a character strength and research it, or tell stories about it, or create a Bible study about it.



How to nurture character strengths

- ▶ Inspire students by learning about historical and contemporary people who excelled in different character strengths.
- ▶ Point out the character strengths of people in stories and in the news.



How to nurture character strengths

- ▶ Work on your strengths together as a class.
- ▶ Design posters about the strength, and create other things that will be encouraging reminders.

make
people
feel
loved
today

How to nurture character strengths

- ▶ Invite students to choose which character strengths they would like to work on.
- ▶ Help them make a list of ways to practice those strengths.
- ▶ Whenever you see students using a character strength, tell them that they made a good choice.



Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash

How to nurture character strengths

- ▶ Encourage children and students to chart their character development.
- ▶ This helps them to be intentional about their character development.
- ▶ Ask them to log at least 5 examples of putting that character strength into practice so that they develop positive habits.
- ▶ 'Fruit of the Spirit' student report



How to nurture character strengths

- ▶ Have a character corner in the classroom or school.
- ▶ Fill it with positive books, posters and ideas.
- ▶ Find printable character posters at www.letitriipple.org and www.viacharacter.org, etc.
- ▶ Show video clips about character strengths and values in the classroom.
- ▶ Ask older students to make videos about different character strengths.



How to nurture character strengths

- ▶ Notice when people show character strengths in real life, in books, in the news, on TV or in the movies.
- ▶ At the end of each day invite students to list 1-3 character strengths they have used during the day/week. Tell them which strengths you have seen them use, too.



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Making today practical for tomorrow...

- ▶ One thing I want to do to nurture my character is...
- ▶ One thing I want to do to nurture my students' character strengths is...

Inspiration

Every act of life, however unimportant, has its influence in forming the character. A good character is more precious than worldly possessions, and the work of forming it is the noblest in which men can engage.

Ellen White



Photo by Anne Nygård
on Unsplash

Useful resources

- ▶ 'Celebrating Strengths' by Jennifer Fox Eades
- ▶ <http://www.momentsaday.com/100-kids-activities-to-build-character/>
- ▶ www.letitriipple.org
- ▶ www.viacharacter.org