

INDONESIAN A.C.E. Newsletter



Southern Cross
EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISES

Character Building is a Huge Task that requires Time, Commitment and Discipline.



“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

Proverbs 23:7a

“Sow a thought and you reap an action;

Sow an act and you reap a habit;

Sow a habit and you reap a character;

Sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

(by Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Building character begins with sowing a thought, then an action, then a habit, then a character. Finally, character determines the destiny of a person.

Building character is a process, a journey and there is no short cut. It requires time, commitment and discipline.

But it is a worthwhile journey and a noble journey.

Character needs Investing

Many parents and schools take up the challenge of investing in building Godly character in their children. This is not only a noble task, but it is a task that rightfully belongs to parents with support from schools.

Building character is a big task. It is a process. It requires doing it right from the start. Changing character is not the same. It requires correcting the old character and planting the new.

Character building is a challenge that requires one to know how to raise children, knowledge of child's psychology and the different stages of growth, and how to handle the child in these different stages.

Partnering of Schools and Parents

Many parents put hope in the school to build and change their child's character. While school may have this noble intention, it is a novelty to think that school alone can perform this task.

Parents and school need to work in partnership to build the life of the child. There is no short-cut, nor is there a secret formula. It requires hard work, cooperation, similar philosophy in the training, disciplining and raising of the child.



"Sow a thought, reap an ACTION

Sow a deed, reap a HABIT

Sow a habit, reap a CHARACTER

Sow a character, reap a DESTINY"

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Building Character

Building character is a process. It takes time, commitment and discipline. There is no short-cut.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7a

Sow a thought, reap an action

Sowing godly values early in a child’s life is the first step to building character. These values will influence how he should act; what he can and cannot do. These values will drive what he does.

Sow an action, reap a habit

It is critical that a child act or behave correctly. Any incorrect or undesirable action or behavior should be corrected immediately. The reason for this is that by allowing a certain action to continue, parents implicitly nurture this action and the value behind that action. Ultimately, these actions will develop into habits.

Sow a habit, reap a character

If we permit a habit to grow, or if we nurture a habit, implicitly or explicitly, that habit will eventually become part of the person’s character.

As a child grows, he is what his actions are. If he has habits, his habit is what he is and who he is. And so he becomes the character that is being displayed by his habits or actions.

Sow a character, reap a destiny

A person is not only made up of his personality, but he is also made up of his character. His character is shown through how he acts and behaves. This in turn will influence his decisions. Subsequently, his character will determine his destiny.



Habits
change into
character.

- Ovid

The Best Time to Sow

Under 8 years of age

The best time to sow values is when a child is under eight years. This is the best time to teach and demand correct action and behavior. Gary Ezzo refers to this as 'moral behavior'. This is the time when a child is taught how to behave while he is at the phase where he is more open and teachable.



"I correct and discipline everyone I love." Rev 3:19a

Correct actions from young

When a child is young, say under 5 years old, there are limitations to what he can understand. Values are taught through teaching him to act and behave correctly. Younger children tend to imitate or mimic. What they see, they do. Therefore, it is critical that correction is made immediately to any undesired actions and behaviors before they become entrenched and become a habit.



Middle Years (8 years to 12 years)

According to Gary Ezzo in his book Middle Years, this is the time when 'moral principles' should be taught. Starting with moral behaviors, **knowing how** to behave, when they are younger, this is the time for them to understand the reasons behind their moral behaviors, **knowing why to behave**. Children at this phase seek to understand what are the rules of life. It is this period when a child begins to take responsibility of his personal values and belief. That is why it is necessary that parents and schools teach the child moral principles during this phase. The thoughts implanted in the child, intentionally or accidentally, will lay the foundations to how he thinks and behaves in the years ahead.

Teens live up to what they have learnt

When a child is thirteen years and up, he will be living his life according to what he has learnt in his formative years (first twelve years). His actions and behaviors are driven by the thoughts and understanding of life, rightly or wrongly.



Changing Character is hard work!

Change habits to change character

When we said that one is an irresponsible child, or having the character of being not responsible, we are in effect saying that his habits display irresponsible actions. Therefore, to change his character will require his habits to be changed.

Change actions to change habits

Habits are repetitive actions of similar nature. If we are to change a habit, we will need to start by changing or removing the action(s). It is only in the removal or changing of the action(s) that habit is changed or removed.

Change thinking to change actions

For a child to want to be responsible, the child needs to be trained to act or behave correctly or responsibly. This is achieved when they know the importance of being responsible.

Why changing character is hard work?

In order to change character, one has therefore to change habits before character can be changed. To change habits, one has to change actions. To change actions, one has to change one's thinking. One has to work backward and start from the beginning.

There are many schools today claiming to be an institution that teaches character. In effect, these institutions are saying that they have a program that teaches values, and this program will monitor systematically the actions or behaviors of students, and the program will encourage the right actions and correct the wrong ones.

In reality, very few schools have such a program, and unfortunately, many parents know no better.



It is not enough to teach your children to act morally; they must learn to think morally.

This Newsletter refers to 'Growing Kids God's Way', 'Middle Years' and 'Teen Wise' by Gary Ezzo of Growing Families International (USA).

Knowing how to do right and why it should be done are two distinctly different things. The first represents the action; the second represents the principle. Without principles stirring the heart, a child is limited in just how intrinsically motivated he will become.

How to Raise a Moral Child in the book Growing Kids God's Way by Gary Ezzo.



Implications to School Programs

This Newsletter suggests two principles:

1. Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny . . .
2. The stages of a child's growth; Under 8 years, Middle Years, and Teens years . . .

Based on these principles, school and home need to equip itself or its teachers in how to relate to children with respect to (i) when and what is to be taught to children, and (ii) when and what is expected of them.

Kindergarten

Many Kindergarten programs tend to focus on developing motoric skills, writing and academic skills. Principle No.2 above suggests that Kindy is the time to teach values, correct behaviors and actions, and good manners.

At this young age, children may not understand the reasons for the behavior required of them, but they learn by doing, so it is imperative that what they do is correct.



Primary School

Primary school is the phase in a child's life when the child is eager to learn the reasons about what they can and cannot do. These thoughts will then influence their actions. Insistence on proper behavior is therefore critical during Kindy and primary school. Teaching the moral principles, or the reason behind correct behavior, is crucial at the Primary School phase. Both determine the kind of children they will be in High School.

High School

When a child is 13 years of age, he will begin to live out what he has learnt in his younger days. What he learns become 'truths' regardless of whether they are right or otherwise, and regardless of whether they are taught by his parents or teachers, or by his peer groups or through TV and magazines. He will act and behave according to these thinking, and these actions will become habits and subsequently molding his character. Thus, High School will need to have programs to correct and discipline any misbehavior and negative actions. School needs to promptly identify and immediately correct these actions before they become habits.

Changing Character requires Time, Commitment & Discipline

Some people do not think much about correction and discipline. Others think that children need to be smart and that school does not need to go too much into correcting and disciplining them.

This thinking is far from the truth. The concept of correction and discipline is very much a Biblical concept (Rev. 3:19a). Building and changing character ultimately requires correction and discipline.

Correction and disciplining children is not a one off instance. They need to be undertaken continuously and consistently. It will take time, commitment and discipline. That is why the Bible command parents,

“And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deut 6:6-9.

*“I correct and
discipline
everyone
I love.”
Rev 3:19a*

A.C.E. System Reinforces Right Behavior & Discipline

Students do not become hard working from doing their schoolwork. Character is not developed from studying. This misconception seem to be found in many parents who hope that along the line, the character trait of diligence, hard working, obedience is found when their children are doing their school work.

Rather, character traits need to be developed and brought in to the classroom they are not found in the classroom. Unless there is a system or program, such as the A.C.E. System, it is difficult for schools to build or change characters.

The A.C.E. System reinforces certain behaviors on a daily basis and corrects those that are not desirable. There are other programs such as the Boys' Brigade that can also supplement the A.C.E. Program, and together can effectively build characters.

A.C.E. Indonesian Agenda 2014

- Indonesian Student Convention 10th to 15th April 2014, Puncak, Bogor.
- A.C.E. Principal & Supervisor Training 30th June to 4th July 2014 at BSD, Serpong.
- Indonesian Educators Conference 6th to 7th Nov 2013, Jakarta.
- South Pacific Student Convention, 30th Nov to 5th Dec 2014, Sydney.

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