

Character Core Curriculum: Family Books

Day	Character Trait	Title	Author/Illustrator	Description/Notes/Cautions
1	Originality	Alphabatics	Suse MacDonald	Alphabet book
2	Cooperation	3 in 1: A Picture of God	Joanne Marxhausen/Ed Koehler/Benjamin Marxhausen	Uses an apple as an illustration of the Trinity
		A Apple Pie	Kate Greenaway	Classic alphabet book
3	Purity	A is for Animals	David Pelham	Pop-up alphabet book
4	Fortitude	People	Peter Spier	Great for a discussion of diversity
5	Trust	Little Bitty Baby Learns Hebrew	Johannah Bluedorn	Hebrew alphabet book
6	Imagination	If I Built a House	Chris Van Dusen	
		House	Albert Lorenz	Different types of dwellings throughout history
7	Resilience	Brothers in Hope	Mary Williams/R. Gregory Christie	Lost Boys of Sudan. Leave plenty of time for discussion. <i>Mentions some children dying an in attempt to cross a river.</i>
8	Provision	Beatrice's Goat	Page McBrier/Lori Lohstoeter	Heifer International
		Give a Goat	Jan West Schrock/Aileen Darragh	Story of kids who read "Beatrice's Goat" and took action
9	Focus	Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain	Verna Aardema/Beatriz Vidal	Kenyan folk tale
		Mimi's Village	Katie Smith Milway/Eugenie Fernandes	Medical care in the developing world (set in Kenya)
10	Equitability	Masai and I	Virginia Kross/Nancy Carpenter	Black American girl imagines she is Masai
11	Creativity	The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse	Eric Carle	
12	Peacemaking	Glory	Nancy White Carlstrom/Debra Reid Jenkins	Colorful modern-day psalm. Features a blue horse, if I remember correctly...
13	Integrity	At Break of Day	Nikki Grimes/Paul Morin	Poetic retelling of the Creation story (emphasizes Jesus as Creator)
14	Honesty	Somewhere in Africa	Ingrid Mennen/Niki Daly	Modern African city boy imagines life in wild Africa
15	Clarity	Little Bitty Baby Learns Greek	Johannah Bluedorn	Greek alphabet book
16	Assertiveness	Caps for Sale	Esphyr Slobodkina	
17	Tender-heartedness	(The Family Under the Bridge)	Natalie Savage Carlson/Garth Williams	Chapter book. We read it a couple years ago. We read over our Compassion kids' letters on Day 17.
18	Faithfulness	Yonder	Tony Johnston/Lloyd Bloom	Poetic story of a rural family through the generations
19	Patience	Now One Foot, Now the Other	Tomie dePaola	A young boy helps his grandfather recover from a stroke
20	Consideration	Blueberries for Sal	Robert McCloskey	
21	Servanthood	Works of Love are Works of Peace	Michael Collopy	Photobiography of Mother Theresa and the Missionaries of Charity. <i>You may want to choose just a few images to share with very young children.</i>
22	Availability	Water, Water Everywhere	Cynthia Overbeck Bix/Mark Rauzon	Water cycle
23	Reliability	A Drop Around the World	Barbara McKinney/Michael S. Maydak	Water cycle (Poem. Kids can find the droplet in each picture.)
24	Strength	Water Dance	Thomas Locker	Water cycle (free-verse poem)
25	Stewardship	Cycle of Rice, Cycle of Life	Jan Reynolds	Growing rice; sustainability. <i>Many references to local religious practices — you may want to study these first so you can explain this to your kids in a way that makes sense.</i>
26	Virtue	What Does the Sky Say?	Nancy White Carlstrom/Tim Ladwig	Poem based on Psalm 19:1-4
27	Depth	Dia's Story Cloth	Dia Cha/Chilie Thao Cha/Nhia Thao Cha	Story of the Hmong Refugees. <i>Contains embroidered images of war.</i>
28	Transparency	Psalm 19		Something I put together — Psalm 19 set against pictures from the Hubble Telescope
29	Ingenuity	A Grain of Rice	Helena Clare Pittman	Exponential growth
30	Teamwork	Construction Zone (Hudson)	Cheryl Willis Hudson/Richard Sobol	The building of the new student center at MIT. An excellent field trip if you travel to Boston.
31	Punctuality	The Story About Ping	Marjorie Flack/Kurt Wiese	<i>Multiple references to ducklings being spanked</i>
32	Teachability	Bee-bim Bop!	Linda Sue Park/Ho Baek Lee	A fast-paced poem about how to make this Korean dish
33	Encouragement	How to Dig a Hole to the Other Side of the World	Faith McNulty/Marc Simont	Great journey through the layers of the earth
34	Humor	The Llama Who Had No Pajama	Mary Ann Hoberman/Betty Fraser	Fun poems
		Eric Carle's Animals Animals	Laura Whipple (compiler)/Eric Carle	More fun animal poems by many different authors
35	Remembrance	Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge	Mem Fox/Julie Vivas	One of our all-time favorite books. About a friendship between a little boy and his elderly neighbors.
36	Restraint	Out on the Ice in the Middle of the Bay	Peter Cumming/Alice Priestley	An interaction between a little girl and a baby polar bear, kind of like a polar "Blueberries for Sal"
37	Purpose	The Tale of Three Trees	Traditional/Angela Elwell Hunt	
38	Resolve	The Family Tree	David McPhail	A boy fights to save a tree
39	Resourcefulness	Sod Houses on the Great Plains	Glen Rounds	Challenges of living in a sod house.
40	Sacrifice	The Giving Tree	Shel Silverstein	I still think this is the saddest book ever.
41	Growth	Christmas Farm	Mary Lyn Ray/Barry Root	Follows two neighbors (a child and an older woman) through the years as they establish a Christmas tree farm
42	Self-Control	Hippos Go Berserk!	Sandra Boynton	A hippo-rific counting rhyme
43	Faith	The Carrot Seed	Ruth Krauss/Crockett Johnson	Get this book if you don't already have it
44	Fairness	Tops & Bottoms	Janet Stevens	Very clever book about a lazy bear and an enterprising rabbit
45	Consistency	The Year at Maple Hill Farm	Alice Provensen/Martin Provensen	A fun look at life on a farm, month by month
46	Industriousness	Ox-Cart Man	Donald Hall/Barbara Cooney	Another favorite about life in old New Hampshire, season by season
47	Determination	Alvah & Arvilla	Mary Lyn Ray/Barry Root	Farming couple finds a way to take a vacation from NH to CA
48	Inquisitiveness	The Moon Over Star	Dianna Hutts Aston/Jerry Pinkney	The story of a family's experience of following the Apollo 11 flight and the events leading up to it
49	Reverence	The Praises: Psalm 148: A Psalm of David	Niko Chocheli	Psalm 148 set against a background of Orthodox-type paintings
50	Devotion	Psalms for Young Children	Marie-Helene Delval/Arno	Many of the Biblical Psalms, simplified and beautifully illustrated
51	Discipline	We're Riding on a Caravan	Laurie Krebs/Helen Cann	A lively poem about the Silk Road
52	Sincerity	A Single Pebble	Bonnie Christensen	Silk Road
53	Persistence	A Visitor for Bear	Bonny Becker/Kady MacDonald Denton	Persistent little mouse wants to be friends with grumpy loner bear...
54	Endurance	Waiting for the Owl's Call	Gloria Whelan/Pascal Millelli	Child rugmakers in Afghanistan. <i>Talks of girls working at the loom so long their fingers bleed.</i>
55	Repentance	How the Grinch Stole Christmas!	Dr. Seuss	
56	Peace	Christmas	Jan Pienkowski	The Christmas Story (King James Version) set against Pienkowski's wood-carving prints. Beautiful.
57	Love	Just the Way You Are	Max Lucado/Sergio Martinez	
58	Humility	Father and Son - A Nativity Story	Geraldine McCaughean/Fabian Negrin	Wondering how Joseph felt
59	Welcoming	Room for a Little One	Martin Waddell/Jason Cockcroft	A Christmas story, set in the stable. One of the few board books that always makes me cry.
60	Wonder	Tonight You Are My Baby	Jeannine Q. Norris/Tim Ladwig	Mary's musings
61	Gratitude	Voices of Christmas	Nikki Grimes/Eric Valasquez	Poems about different characters in the Christmas story
62	Compassion	South	Patrick McDonnell	Possibly my favorite picture book ever. No words. A cat comes to the aid of a lost little bird.
63	Goodness	The Lord's Prayer	Tim Ladwig	Ladwig brings The Lord's Prayer into the present.
64	Intercession	When Daddy Prays	Nikki Grimes/Tim Ladwig	Poems about a father praying for his son
65	Wisdom	The Mysterious Tadpole	Steven Kellogg	Story of a tadpole that gets bigger and bigger instead of turning into a frog
66	Adventure	Something to Tell the Grandcows	Eileen Spinelli/Bill Slavin	Based on the true story of a cow who traveled to the South Pole
67	Thankfulness	Moonlight on the Amazon	Don Best	Stories of a missionary's time in living and working in the Amazon. <i>One story tells of a nurse talking to her kids and kissing them goodbye before boarding a boat for a possibly fatal assignment.</i>
68	Decisiveness	Jump, Frog, Jump!	Robert Kalan/Byron Barton	Classic children's book
69	Acceptance	Leo the Lop	Stephen Cosgrove	
70	Trustworthiness	Make Way for Ducklings	Robert McCloskey	
71	Diligence	And So They Build...	Bert Kitchen	A really cool study in animal behavior
72	Appreciation	How Fletcher was Hatched	Wende and Harry Devlin	An under appreciated dog's friends build an egg around him so he can hatch like a chick.
73	Tenacity	The Arrival	Shaun Tan	A wordless book that makes you feel like you are a new immigrant in NYC. Amazing. <i>More of an adult picture book — will be confusing and possibly mildly frightening to some kids.</i>
74	Hospitality	Serena Katz	Charlotte Pomerantz/R. W. Alley	A story about a fascinating NYC woman's spontaneous hospitality to a small-town family.
		C is for City	Nikki Grimes/Pat Cummings	Colorful alphabet book about New York City
75	Prudence	To Every Thing There is a Season	Jude Daly	Simple book set in South Africa; text from Ecclesiastes. Gentlest intro ever to the subject of death.
76	Initiative	Click Clack Moo, Cows That Type	Doreen Cronin/Betsy Lewin	Cows get hold of a typewriter and create havoc on the farm
77	Stillness	Mouse Was Mad	Linda Urban/Henry Cole	Billed as an anger management book for kids... Really, this is just an awesome, fun book!
78	Thriftiness	Sunday Outing	Gloria Jean Pinkney/Jerry Pinkney	A really neat story about shared sacrifice
79	Honorability	The Streets are Free	Kurusa/Monika Doppert	Children in a barrio in Venezuela work together to have a playground built in their neighborhood.
80	Bravery	Kids at Work	Russell Freedman/Lewis Hine	An undercover photojournalist documents child labor during the Industrial Revolution; helps to change labor laws.
81	Courage	They Called Her Molly Pitcher	Anne Rockwell/Cynthia von Buhler	True story of a woman who helped us win the Revolutionary War. <i>Contains mild war images.</i>
82	Confidence	Story of the Creation	Jane Ray	KJV of the Genesis creation story, well illustrated
83	Submission	Now Let Me Fly	Delores Johnson	Story of a girl taken from Africa and sold into slavery in the American South. <i>Talks of slave owners splitting her up from her husband.</i>
84	Discretion	Unspoken	Henry Cole	Beautiful wordless story of a girl who finds a slave hiding in her family's barn. .
		Follow the Drinking Gourd	Jeanette Winter	Story of the Underground Railroad and a song some slaves used to help find their way to freedom
		Barefoot	Pamela Duncan Edwards/Henry Cole	Story of a slave traveling the Underground Railroad, told from the point of view of animals in the woods
85	Community	A Place Called Freedom	Scott Russell Sanders/Tomas B. Allen	A family escapes slavery and then helps others escape to their new community in Indiana
86	Obedience	The Other Side	Jacqueline Woodson/E. B. Lewis	Black and white neighbor girls become form a friendship in segregated America
87	Leadership	The Lewis & Clark Trail	Richard Mack	Photographic journey through America as it likely looked to Lewis & Clark, along with their journal writings
88	Vision	On the Oregon Trail	Jonathan Nicholas/Ron Cronin	Photographic journey along the Oregon Trail; interspersed with settlers' (often hilarious) journal entries
89	Empathy	The Long March	Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick	Chockaw Indians remembering the Trail of Tears discuss whether to help the Irish suffering the Potato Famine. <i>Contains references to children dying along the trail.</i>
90	Contentment	The Snowy Day	Ezra Jack Keats	
91	Freedom	You Are Special	Max Lucado/Sergio Martinez	This is one of those critical stories I think everyone should know well — kids and adults.
92	Friendliness	Meet Danitra Brown	Nikki Grimes/Floyd Cooper	Poems about two girls' friendship
93	Discernment	Moja Means One	Muriel Feelings/Tom Feelings	Swahili counting book with descriptions of life in Swahili-speaking regions of Africa
94	Respect	Jambo Means Hello	Muriel Feelings/Tom Feelings	Swahili alphabet book (similar format to the counting book)
95	Enthusiasm	Mud	Mary Lyn Ray/Lauren Stringer	A fun, squishy ode to mud. Reminds me of Mud Season in New Hampshire (Mary Lyn Ray's home state)
96	Gentleness	Handa's Surprise	Eileen Browne	A southwest Kenyan girl takes a gift of fruit to her friend
97	Tolerance	The Relatives Came	Cynthia Rylant/Stephen Gammell	A carload of Virginia relatives come for a long summer visit. Priceless.
98	Helpfulness	Sheep in a Jeep	Nancy E. Shaw/Margot Apple	
99	Loyalty	The Last Brother	Trinka Hakes Noble/Robert Papp	Story of two young buglers on opposite sides during the Civil War. <i>Mild war images.</i>
100	Curiosity	Uncommon Traveler (a story of Mary Kingsley)	Don Brown	True story of a single British woman's travels in Western Africa
101	Belief	I Believe	Pauline Baynes	Lavishly illustrated Nicene Creed
102	Benevolence	If the World Were a Village	David J. Smith/Shelagh Armstrong	Makes demographic statistics accessible to kids by creating a "village" of 100 people
103	Attentiveness	Good Night, Gorilla	Peggy Rathmann	
104	Optimism	Four Feet, Two Sandals	Karen Lynn Williams/Khadra Mohammed	Story of two Afghan girls who become friends in a refugee camp in Peshawar, Pakistan
105	Alertness	Dawn Watch	Jean E. Pendiwoi/Nicolas Debon	A girl sailing with her father on Lake Superior watches for danger
106	Flexibility	From Kalamazoo to Timbuktu	Harriet Ziefert/Tanya Roitman	Join Mike & Millie on their adventure around the world!
107	Kindness	Love Is	1 Corinthians 13/Wendy Anderson Halperin	Gorgeous illustrations. Hardcover edition is in color.
108	Perseverance	The Butter Man	Elizabeth Alalou/Ali Alalou/Julie Klear Essakalli	An American dad tells his daughter the story of experiencing famine as a child in Morocco
109	Peacefulness	Where the Poppies Now Grow	Hilary Ann Robinson/Martin Impey	Two British friends remember their childhood and involvement in World War I. <i>Mild war images.</i>
110	Neutrality	The Slant Book	Peter Newell	A rollicking poem about an out-of-control perambulator
111	Organization	Aunt Minnie McGranahan	Mary Skillings Prigger/Betsy Lewin	True story of an aunt who inherits nine orphaned nieces and nephews
112	Warmth	The Mitten	Jan Brett	Classic preschool book
113	Commitment	Silver Threads	Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch/Michael Martchenko	Story of a Ukrainian couple on the Canadian frontier during World War I
114	Preparedness	Gila Monsters Meet You at the Airport	Marjorie Weinman Sharmat/Byron Barton	One of Wes's favorites. A NYC boy is nervous about his family's move out west.
115	Ambition	Talkin' About Bessie	Nikki Grimes/E. B. Lewis	Poems about Bessie Coleman, black aviation pioneer
116	Truthfulness	The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash	Trinka Hakes Noble/Steven Kellogg	A kid tells his mom about his field trip to a farm
117	Modesty	If I Built a Car	Chris Van Dusen	
118	Beauty	The Beautiful World that God Made	Rhonda Gowler Greene/Anne Wilson	
119	Groundedness	Migrant	Maxine Trottier/Isabelle Arseneault	A Mennonite migrant girl's story. Beautiful, sensitive introduction to the subject.
120	Meekness	Lights on the River	Jane FRESH Thomas/Michael Dooling	A Mexican migrant farming family's story
121	Care	Voices from the Fields	S. Beth Atkin	Migrant children's and teenagers' writings
122	Responsibility	Children of the Yukon	Ted Harrison	
123	Efficiency	Building an Igloo	Ulli Steltzer	Black-and-white documentary of the building of an igloo. Strangely way more intriguing than it seems it should be.
124	Observation	Benno and the Night of Broken Glass	Meg Wiviott/Josée Bisailon	The Night of Broken Glass (World War II) as seen through the eyes of a neighborhood cat
125	Mercy	My Favorite Food	Tiziana & John Bendall-Brunello	Animals talk about their favorite foods. A mercifully sweet break from WWII.
		Mrs. Katz and Tush	Patricia Polacco	A Black boy and his elderly Jewish neighbor become friends and realize their pasts have some things in common.
126	Action	Irena's Jars of Secrets	Marcia Vaughan/Ron Mazellan	True story of a Polish Catholic social worker's efforts to free Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto. <i>Mentions that some Jewish children's parents were never found.</i>
127	Hope	Star of Fear, Star of Hope	Jo Hoestland/Johanna Kang/Mark Polizzotti	A French woman remembers the confusion and regret she felt when her best friend, a Jew, disappeared
128	Generosity	A New Coat for Anna	Harriet Ziefert/Anita Lobel	
129	Inventiveness	Rosie Revere, Engineer	Andrea Beaty/David Roberts	
130	Adaptability	Imogene's Antlers	David Small	
131	Security	Psalm Twenty-Three (Ladwig)	Tim Ladwig	Psalm 23, set in the inner-city. One of our absolute favorites.
132	Grace	The Lord Builds the House: The 127th Psalm	Johannah Bluedorn	Sweetly detailed illustrations of the dreamland domestic existence of a quiver-is-full-type family...
133	Forgiveness	Bless the Lord: The 103rd Psalm	Johannah Bluedorn	More of the same. The illustrator's background and innocence make me cringe, but her work really is beautiful.
134	Joy	Come Sunday	Nikki Grimes/Michael Bryant	Poetic vibrance of a Black church. Books 131-134 are good for a discussion of diversity within the Church.
135	Courtesy	Do Unto Otters	Laurie Keller	Join an otter with ADHD (is it even possible?!) for a discussion about manners... Packed with bad puns.
136	Discipleship	A is for Airstrip	Marilyn Laszlo/Elizabeth Maddrey/Linda Perry	An alphabet book about Marilyn Laszlo's (Mission Possible) work doing Bible translation in Papua New Guinea
137	Boldness	Back of the Bus	Aaron Reynolds/Floyd Cooper	Rosa Parks' story, told from the point of view of a boy sitting at the back of the bus. Historically very accurate.
138	Calmness	Through My Eyes	Ruby Bridges/Margo Lundell	Pictorial autobiography of Ruby Bridges, the first Black child to attend an all-white public school in the American South
139	Steadfastness	Freedom Summer	Deborah Wiles/Jerome Lagarrigue	Story of two friends, black and white, during desegregation
140	Dependability	This Is the Rope	Jacqueline Woodson/James Ransome	Poetic story of a Black family during The Great Migration
141	Conviction	That's Where God Is	Daniel Morrow/Alison Strobel Morrow/Cory Godbey	A boy searches for God and reports back to his grandfather (Lee Strobel, of "The Case for Christ")
142	Righteousness	Noah's Ark	Peter Spier	Delightfully illustrated — you could spend hours looking at this book
143	Willingness	Grandma and the Pirate	David Lloyd/Gill Tomblin	A boy and his grandmother spend a day at the beach. I love this book.
144	Renewal	The Color of Home	Mary Hoffman/Karin Littlewood	About a young Somalian refugee in America. <i>The boy paints himself under a bed, hiding from bullets. But that's war. By this point in the year the kids were ready for that, and by the end of the book the boy is healing.</i>