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7 Important Moral Values to Instill in a Child

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Beverly Sace

Books and Brains
Literacy Services



Dr. Cora Hui

Christian Alliance P.C. Lau
Memorial International School



Rosie Hopewell-Fong

HKCA Po Leung Kuk
School



Dr. Canon Thomas Pang

Religious Education
Resource Centre

INTRODUCTION

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Moral values are important in whatever stage of life. But most of the values we have as adults were instilled in us during our childhood years. So how do we teach our children the values that we want them to have as adults?

Read on to find out the answers from six professionals!



JENNIFER CHIN
FOUNDER & CEO

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BEVERLY SACE

Literacy Specialist

Books and Brains Literacy Services

As parents, we are here to guide our children in navigating the world. We do it with choices that are based on our values. As I look back on my childhood and early adulthood and see my experience through the lens of an educator, I thought about the top seven values that I think are important for children to have.

Honesty and Integrity

Integrity is choosing to do the right thing even when no one is looking. It is knowing your morals and principles and standing by them. It is the bedrock upon which character is built.

When a child has integrity, he is able to hold esteem for himself. With integrity comes honesty — though children do go through learning to lie! An example is learning to follow agreed promises such as not using the iPad when mummy is not around even if he wouldn't get caught!

Kindness

If there's only one value I would love my children to have most in the world, it is kindness. Kindness is what makes us human, especially in the face of difficulties. It makes the world a good place to be.

Kindness is acting out of consideration for others, not just our own self-interest. It is seeing with our hearts. It can be expressed as compassion and generosity, such as sharing something when a classmate is without. It could be saying hi to the neighbour when we see them in the street, or comforting and cheering up someone who is sad.

Fairness and Bravery

When children are fair, they share with other children and are better liked. Fairness is fostered when children think of what others need with empathy. Fairness is also a concept that is related to equity. It is fair for the younger child to get glasses because she needs them, and big sister does not. But big brother will get new shoes and she won't because she doesn't need them! Being fair does not always mean being equal.

A sense of fairness also protects children. They will know when they have the short end of the stick and will be able to advocate for themselves and others with bravery.

Responsibility and Accountability

Learning to be responsible is understanding that the buck stops with you. People around you cannot always help you and make decisions for you. It is up to you to steer your life and not be dependent. Learning to take care of pets, as well as their belongings are good starting points.

Setting expectations at home is important in fostering responsibility and accountability. If it is your child's responsibility to prepare what she needs for PE the next day, and if she forgets her cap, and felt uncomfortable at PE, she is accountable for that. If it is her job to buy milk after school each day, she knows that she is accountable for the family not being able to have pancakes for breakfast the next day if she forgot!

Respect

Respect nowadays may mean an admiration for a person who has done impressive feats. However, respect also means showing attention and care to the people we interact with. It means treating our elders and superiors such as teachers with politeness.

Everyone loves a respectful person. When we give respect, we receive it, and our children's lives will be smoother as they navigate the world with politeness, attention and care. One important point here is that children learn respect when we model it and respect them too. It could mean respecting their choices (if not harmful!), thoughts, and wishes.

A Sense of Wonder and Curiosity

The world is an amazing place with our advancing science and technology. Having a sense of wonder leads children to appreciate and learn about our world including the understated beauty of nature. It is being joyful in the little things such as in tasting a new cuisine, "Wow, this tastes fantastic. I wonder how they made this?", or in learning why the dusky sky is pink. Bring your child's attention to the little wonders of every day and they will grow up with a sense of appreciation of beauty — "Look at the majestic moon tonight!"

Love of Family

Of course, I will end with the value of love. With love, hard things become easy. Love gives children a safe base from which to explore life. A loving family is the best starting point as children learn to dip their toes in the waters of the outside world.

We often talk about younger children and sometimes forget that they will slowly (or quickly!) grow into young adults. They will meet problems and situations that may test the values we have tried to instil in them growing up. Feeling loved and having a lot of love in the family give them the courage to persevere and carry on. In their parents' eyes they will always be loved and they can do anything!

“

I wish I had known about Beverly earlier. We only had two months left in Hong Kong when I asked her to work with my eldest who was in Year 2. Christopher was not blending, spelling or reading fluently. He was in the lowest reading level in his class. Instead of enrolling Christopher in school, I asked Beverly if she could teach him intensively thrice a week for 8 weeks. At the end of the 8 weeks, Christopher was on the right reading level, the end of Year 2, when initially he was at Reception level! Christopher is now feeling really confident in his reading and spelling skills, and is now reading a lot more books independently. The two months he spent with Beverly have set him up for smooth school life here in the US!

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books & brains
LITERACY SERVICES

Books and Brains Literacy Services is headed by Literacy Specialist Beverly Sace, providing exceptional services and products to families and schools. We are on a mission to ensure that every child has the right literacy foundation to support their success in life.

For families, Books and Brains helps children with reading difficulties catch up developmentally so that they can focus on reading to learn rather than learning to read. Children at risk are those who are 5-10 years of age who haven't acquired fluent reading and spelling skills. Academic success relies on acquiring these literacy skills.

Our reading clinic is situated within the luxuriously decorated Banyan Suites in Quarry Bay.

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DR. CORA HUI

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Empathy

Moral values are foundational to the development of one's moral compass, which guides young children to do the right things. It begins with empathy — the core moral emotion that allows one to understand the feelings of others. A major determinant of whether a child develops the ability to feel for others is how well they understand and can express their own feelings. A word of caution is that parents raise sons very differently than they do daughters. Parents discuss feelings more and use more words for emotions with their daughters than they do with their sons. Therefore, in addition to asking children what they know, ask them how they feel. A child who learns empathy is more understanding and caring. Empathy can be cultivated through expanding one's emotional vocabulary and learning to take perspectives from others' points of view.

Conscience

Conscience is the little voice in our head that tells us the right things to do. It is the inner voice reminding us what we have learned about right and wrong. Therefore, mindfulness is very important because it tunes us into what our bodies are telling us, hence listening more closely to our conscience. Parents, caregivers, and teachers can teach and promote the development of strong conscience. Conscience can be learned through role modelling, moral reasoning and questioning, purposeful teaching, and guided practice. When a child faces a moral dilemma, talk it out with them. First, hear their own story about it. This will entail

asking them good reflective questions that draw upon their own inner moral sense. As the conversation unfolds and when appropriate, share your own sense of what is right or wrong in this regard. Then, rather than giving them a directive, invite them to see for themselves what the best thing to do is and guide them to make their own decision. Lastly, clear moral behavioural expectations and discipline help youngsters learn right from wrong.

Self-control

Knowing right from wrong as head knowledge is not enough. Self-control is the gatekeeper to stop children from acting on impulse but instead on what they know is morally right in their heart and mind. The exercise of self-control helps young children to see their choices clearly. They learn to put aside their immediate gratification and control their actions. Mini steps to cultivate self-control include: getting a cold drink, drawing pictures, listening to soothing music, taking a brisk walk, talking more slowly or to someone, etc. Our goal is to nurture our children's self-reliance instead of their reliance on us for self-control. The acronym "STAR" sums it up as Stop, Think, and Act Right.

Respect

Respect is about treating others as worthy and with consideration. When children are treated respectfully by their trusted adults, they are more likely to internalize the importance of treating others with inherent worth and dignity. Therefore, treat your child as the most important person in the world. Give love unconditionally. Listen to

them attentively and respectfully. Communicate respect with your whole body. Enjoy being together. Moreover, practicing good manners on different occasions (e.g., at mealtime, when visiting others, at sports events) is a good starting point for developing respectful behaviour. Lastly, it is important for children to disagree with others respectfully. They must remain respectful when they assert their complaint. Instead of starting their message with the word “you”, they should begin with “I”. The “I” message will help them focus on the person’s troublesome behaviour without putting the recipient down. A respectful person is often treated by others with respect, and they often feel good about themselves.

Kindness

A kind person shows genuine concern about the welfare and feelings of others. Teaching kindness to children by highlighting the effect of their kindness on others is essential. Hence, community services are effective ways to instill the virtue of kindness in children. Concrete words of kindness include sharing, giving, comforting, supporting, compromising, and listening. On the contrary, children are mean to others when they do not fully grasp the emotional impact of their unkindness. They may lack problem-solving skills or have poor social skills. If they feel unworthy, they tend to bring others down. Sometimes, they may think that teasing makes them feel superior. When they are picked on, they want to “get back.” Thus, parents, caregivers, and teachers must guide them to replace an unkind action with new behaviour.

Acceptance

All people deserve to be treated with love, justice, and respect, even if we happen to disagree with some of their beliefs or behaviours. Acceptance is about respecting others as persons regardless of differences in race, gender, appearance, culture, beliefs, sexual orientation, or abilities. It is about respecting others for their character and attitudes and accepting people with different perspectives and beliefs. Children will not learn to appreciate differences in others if they have not experienced acceptance for their differences. Hence, we need to accept children for their unique identity, strength and the special qualities they offer to their families and community. When we look for similarities among our differences, we speed up the acceptance

process. Differences can spark creativity and synergy. From tolerance to appreciation, a more harmonious world can only be built on people who recognize the value, embrace the attitude, and take action to celebrate diversity.

Fairness

Fair play and taking turns are baby steps to teaching children the meaning and practice of fairness. When they are treated by their trusted adults fairly with recognition of their uniqueness and avoidance of unfair comparison against others, they are likely to incorporate fairness into their decisions and actions. During a heated discussion between children about fairness, parents intervene before an argument escalates by calming everyone down and letting each one share their feelings. Let each child tell their story, and do not let them walk away until they offer some kind of solution to their problem. Encourage children to see the issue from the other side and find out the real cause together. While it takes more time to involve children in solving their problems, it will pay off when children learn to apply the 7 important moral values as mentioned here—empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, acceptance and fairness—in their daily circumstances. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).



Christian Alliance P.C. Lau Memorial
International School
宣道會劉平齋紀念國際學校

Founded in 1992, Christian Alliance P.C. Lau Memorial International School (CAPCL) marks its 30th anniversary this year as a bilingual primary international school adopting the Canadian Alberta Curriculum, with emphasis on learners becoming servant leaders. CAPCL believes that holistic education encompasses character development based on Biblical principles, language fluency and intercultural competency as global citizens, and service to home, school, and local communities.

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ROSIE HOPEWELL-FONG

Vice Principal & PYP Coordinator

HKCA Po Leung Kuk School

Principled

Children who want to be successful in all parts of their lives should strive to be principled members of their communities. This includes in their homes, with their friendship circles, classmates, after-school clubs, and the wider school community. Being principled means a child is not just honest, but truly understands that being honest to others and more importantly to themselves will ensure they have integrity within their own actions. Through this, they will feel empowered and confident in the choices they make. They will also be seen as a role model for others as they demonstrate this quality by guiding others in their principled approaches to life. In the IB Learner Profile, this attribute means we act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-minded

Being open-minded in our ever-progressing world is a sure sign of a healthy mental mindset. This can contribute deeply to a person's well-being and one's ability to accept all situations and thrive regardless of the challenges one encounters. When we can calmly manage our own emotions, thoughts, and actions, we create the mental space to seek, understand and respect situations from multiple perspectives. In the IB Learner Profile, this attribute means we critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view,

and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Risk-taker

Being a risk-taker doesn't just mean jumping off a cliff or physical danger! It can also mean raising your hand to answer a question, even if you are unsure. Being a risk-taker can look different for every individual, as each person is unique in their personality. We strive to develop confidence in risk-taking, but also in teaching children to understand themselves and the opportunities that come with risk-taking. Developing courage is an extremely important aspect if we are to become lifelong learners who can manage risks and stretch ourselves to try new things. No matter how small the risk is, being thoughtful, consistent risk-takers will surely make the journey of life more interesting! In the IB Learner Profile, this attribute means we approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies.

Caring

A kind and caring child will always find ways to form secure and loving friendships that may last a lifetime! Children who develop this attribute are friendly, generous, considerate, and thoughtful of others. They also show respect for people, property, time as well as the natural elements that surround them. Hence, this value can be extended across all aspects of life and will enable the child to truly nurture their interests in people and things with love and understanding. In the IB Learner Profile, this

attribute means we show empathy, compassion, and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.,

Inquirer

Ask questions and find answers! Children are naturally curious inquirers and if we are curious, we want to learn, know and understand more! Why should this be exclusively for children? We want to develop lifelong learners at our school, and being an inquisitive learner is all about that. Together with the other IB Learner Profile attributes, students have opportunities to learn about everything and anything, not just what they are interested in. Children also need to be invited to explore people, places, things, and ideas they have not encountered - yet! In the IB Learner Profile, this attribute means we nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Communicator

Being a communicator can include communication in all its forms; verbal, non-verbal, written, listening and visual. Children learn to take turns, and they learn to share and respect each other's perspectives in each of these ways. They also learn to take responsibility for their actions. This includes learning how to put themselves in the shoes of others, developing a default towards empathy, forgiveness, and a desire to restore relationships when others might feel hurt. How do we convey our thoughts and feelings, and what do we understand of what others may be conveying in each of those 5 forms of communication?

Developing an understanding of the many ways messages are conveyed is important when developing critical thinking skills. It is also important that children understand the "Why?", the "What?" and the "How?" of things being communicated so they can make informed decisions throughout their lives. In the IB Learner Profile, this attribute means we express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Reflective

Developing reflective practices allow children to develop skills and review their effectiveness to improve upon their learning. The cycle of do, do the same, again and again, without measurable improvement then stops. This cycle, when reflection and deliberate practice are added, can become a growth chart where the line not only goes up and down but ultimately up, instead of around and around! Reflection is about questioning, positively and constructively, what you do, how you do it, and why you do it. This review then illuminates whether or not there may be a better or different way to explore something or develop a skill. In the IB Learner Profile, this attribute means we thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development in all areas.



Our home at 62 Tin Hau Temple Road is a beautiful, small private campus surrounded by trees. We are conveniently located on Hong Kong island, close to the Tin Hau MTR and bus stations.

HKCA Po Leung Kuk School is an IB World School, authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organisation for the Primary Years Programme (PYP). IB World Schools share a common philosophy; a commitment to high-quality, challenging, international education – that we believe is important for our students. Every IB World School has the Learner Profile which consists of 10 attributes that each student will develop. The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. The above are our 7 top tips, each aligned with an attribute of the IB Learner Profile. Whilst there are 10 Learner Profile Attributes in total, all equally could have taken a spot above.

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Love

Love is the greatest value of all, on which all our values should be grounded. Without love, the worldly virtues and values, be they strength, wisdom, knowledge, confidence, goodness, charity and the like, smack of hypocrisy and are no good to us. “Love” is often associated with the romantic love that is emotion-driven. In fact, romantic love is merely one of the many facets of love. The English writer C.S. Lewis speaks famously on four kinds of love: affection, friendship, sexual or romantic love, and selfless love. A biblical verse also says: you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 12:35). How do we love others as ourselves then? It requires sacrifice, forgiveness, patience, kindness, faithfulness and etc. Though not easy to practice, it is the key to happiness and genuine relationships. Make sure to show love to your children and coach them to love as well!

Joy

The world is tough; it is especially so for children today. There will be countless challenges, difficulties, pains and disappointments ahead of them. That is why coaching children to rejoice all the time is essential. People often see joy as the result of what happens around them: I am happy because I got good grades for this exam; I feel excited because I got to watch the concert of my favorite band; I am on cloud nine because I just went on

a date with my crush. Joy can actually be the cause of our life — a perspective on life with which we can stay positive no matter what. I am joyful, so I see all things are good despite the occasional problems in my life. I am sure I can fix them, and things will eventually get better! It is an essential value that helps children overcome setbacks!

Peace

Throughout the teachings of Jesus, peace means seeking security and assurance in God. Only in Him can we find a strong sense of inner security that enables us a peace of mind. For the sake of their emotional stability and mental health, children should learn to establish their peace of mind from their beliefs or faith. Also, the Bible says the peacemakers, who bring peace to people around them, such as family, friends, and schoolmates, are called the children of God (Matt. 5:9) and are blessed by God. Not only is peace a value but also a command in Christian context, for all are responsible for making peace with people, which in turn enhances our peace of mind. Guide children to set aside prejudices, bias and self-centeredness to make peace with others!

Endurance

Endurance means being perseverant when facing obstacles or in frustration and sadness. Some may take it as a form

of passivity, but it is actually essential to a flourishing life. The world is cruel and unfair. Sometimes we do not know why things are the way they are, and sometimes the toughest problem is the one that never seems to get solved. With endurance and resilience, however, we can learn to find the unanswerable answer and break the unbreakable wall. It is the core value that pushes us beyond our limitation to achieve. We often hear children whine and give up so easily, showing a lack of such value. What if, just try to imagine, they embark on their journey with this quality no matter how hard the situation seems? They will definitely find a way out and eventually live out their better self!

Faithfulness

Faithfulness in Greek means “conviction of the truth and belief” and “fidelity”. The Bible says: Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much (Luke 16:10). The above clearly teaches that we should stay true to ourselves and be committed to our beliefs in honesty. This golden law applies everywhere. We all want our children to be able to live out their true selves, and meanwhile, be faithful to the values that we treasure so much. For example, we wish them to show utter honesty in exams; to build strong relationships in faithfulness. It is not even a bit exaggerated to claim that their career is built wholly on this value too! Start cultivating your children with this value today!

Goodness

I believe we all are familiar with the term “goodness”. It means having a good heart, doing good deeds, having no evil motives, and deceiving no one. Jesus goes beyond just that by seeking others’ advantages and giving of himself for them, and forgiving those who oppress him: See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all (1 Thess. 5:15). It is not the noblest form of morality that puts us on a “moral high ground”, but one of the most glorious human natures, which is

hidden in the deepest of our hearts or gets twisted due to the pain and sadness we experience in the external world, that waits for the right moment to resurface. All children are pure-hearted. Help your children to stay gold and do good!

Knowledge

In addition to the above values, Christians should also seek knowledge, i.e. the truth. The world is just too complicated for children to survive without proper guidance. They should learn to walk carefully and wisely because the days are evil (Eph. 5:15); gaining knowledge can set them free (John 8:32) from any deceit and wicked plan. On the other hand, they will also find that the world is so magnificently made in which they are enlightened and inspired by all beautiful earthly things to unleash their full potentials and fulfill purposes. As important as it is, knowledge must be accompanied by virtues. Otherwise, a wise and learned man may bring destruction to others, for it makes people arrogant, while love and virtues build us up (1 Cor. 8:1b). From now on, let’s coach children to pursue both virtues and knowledge!



The Religious Education Resource Centre (RERC) was established in 1978 to serve the goal of Christian nurturing by providing training courses, publishing educational material and supplying audio-visual resources.

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