



Birthday Celebration:

One of the biggest memories of our children is their 1st birthday. We remember the smushed cake on the face, the tearing of presents, and the belly laughs of a child who knows they're the center of attention. What if we took the time to make this day even more special by extending a birthday celebration for our child. This birthday celebration will be one that you'll share at your child's 1st birthday with friends and family present, so they can truly hear your heart's desire for your child, and can partner with you to make sure those dreams become reality.

Kickstarter 1: WHO they are

You've lived with your little bundle of joy for a few months now, and you've begun to see his/her personality, the preferences, the habits, the disposition. You're beginning to see WHO they really are. John and Stasi Eldredge state simply, "Every little boy needs to know he has what it takes. Every little girl needs to know you delight in her." Even though every child has the same basic need, God has uniquely created your child.

Psalm 139:1-14 beautifully illustrates how intrinsically and uniquely made we are:

1 O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.

2 You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.

3 You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do.

4 You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord.

5 You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

7 I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!

8 If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave,[a] you are there.

9 If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans,

10 even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

11 I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—

12 but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

Take a moment to think about your child. This little one that God has given to you, how has God made him/her unique? List a few characteristics/personality traits you already see in your child. In what ways is he/she fearfully and wonderfully made? Take a moment to define your child's "something special."

Kickstarter 2-WHO you want them to become

It's so easy as a parent to get caught up in the discipline part of parenting, emphasizing what we want our children to DO and not DO, when instead our focus should be on WHO we want them to be! The difference moves from focusing on performance to character. The basic question we want to ask is not, "What do I want them to do," but, "Who do I want them to become?"

This kickstarter is designed to be a simple think tank, to move through a few questions that will help you figure out/put words to WHO you want your child to become. Go ahead and reread Psalm 139:1-14, then take some time to think through and answer the following questions:

1. What were some character traits you struggled with as a child/teen?
2. Why were those a struggle?
3. What character traits came easy to you growing up?
4. What are the most important character traits I want my child to develop?
5. What makes each character trait you listed important to you?

Kickstarter 3-Choosing to FOCUS

The bottom line is that we can want LOTS of things for our children. During this kickstarter we want you to narrow your focus. During the 2nd kickstarter you answered a few questions that helped spur your thinking towards WHO you want your child to become. Get that list out and lets process it to narrow the focus.

We need to define the target. If we say we want our child to be honest, loving, considerate, compassionate, humble, a leader, etc. and blah, blah, blah the target is wide and moving. We want to create an easily identified target so that we know EXACTLY what to aim for. So look at the list from Kickstarter 2 and pick 2 to 3 character traits that are of utmost importance to you to use as your focus for the birthday celebration.

Jeremiah 29:11 says,

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.



God has a specific plan for your child. What's your plan in raising this gift God has entrusted to you? By picking out 2 to 3 characteristics and indicating why those are important, you give your parenting focus. If it's vital to you that your child is honest, you'll take lying very seriously. You'll use the planning guide to help you write out the birthday celebration that will be shared during your child's 1st birthday party.

Francis Chan says, *"Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter."* What really matters to you when it comes to the character of your child?"