

# THRIVE!

## LESSON 4A

### TEACH KIDS "HOW" NOT JUST "WHAT"



## THE GOAL OF THIS LESSON

To learn how a working definition can identify specific ways a child can change. You'll also learn to break a character quality down into measurable and attainable pieces for a child. You'll feel hopeful that your kids can actually change one step at a time. Young people will learn how character is built and how to define specific steps to practice.

## WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH THIS LESSON

- You'll know how to equip children to change by focusing on "how," determining practical steps toward the goal.
- You'll feel empowered with a new way of approaching a tendency in your child that has been hard to change.
- You'll be able to use a working definition to define specific steps to bring about that change.

## Teach Kids “How” not just “What”

### STARTING STRONG

#### Parents

##### Make Character Practical

Sometimes parents emphasize the “what” and don’t talk about the “how.” Talking about developing kindness, patience, or respect are good but helping children understand what that looks like in practical terms can maximize change. Working definitions that are child-specific are often helpful to encourage character development in practical ways.

For example, a plan for kindness for Billy might define it this way. Kindness is letting my brother have the first turn, or listening to my brother’s ideas. Patience might be waiting with a happy heart, or not interrupting. In each case the definition details specifics that a child can actually do and say to develop that quality. David focused on outward words and inward dialogue when he wrote in Psalm 19:14, “May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

#### Young People

##### Consider “How” not just “What”

You likely have a lot of expectations placed on you. Most of those are good. But sometimes the focus is on “What” you need to do. “Finish your homework.” “Clean your room.” “Be kind to your sister.” And the list goes on and on. Notice that all of those examples focus on your behavior. But they also point to something inside your heart. Thoroughness, organization, and thoughtfulness are heart qualities that those expectations illustrate. One of the ways to be more successful is to focus on the “how” not just the “what.” Develop a plan to get your homework done, room cleaned up, or to be kind to your sister. If you think about the how, you’ll get very practical and you’ll find yourself overcoming the hurdles that are presently in your way. More importantly, though, you’ll find yourself developing the heart qualities that are actually life skills to drive you forward.

### A Parent’s Prayer for Peace

*Father, I know that if I had more peace then my child wouldn’t react as much. It seems that my family rides the waves of my own emotions at times. I know they need me to express a peace in the midst of the storms of life. I can only receive that from you. When my child is upset, please help me to communicate calm. I know that you provide that peace that passes all understanding and I ask that you would give it to me today. Please help me to fit into your plans so well today that I feel an overwhelming sense of calm in my heart. Please communicate your grace through me to my family today. Thank you. Amen.*

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### Taking Notes During the Video

Teaching answers the question, “How?”

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,  
**Philippians 2:12**

A Working Definition gives specific practical ways that in individual child might practice the target quality.

Internal dialogue takes place in the heart

Use a “working definition” to make a character quality practical

The teaching component brings hope