

ABC QUICKSTART GUIDE

A TAKE-HOME GUIDE FOR REACHING THE HEART

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Begin by calmly establishing what happened. Then use the ABC framework to reach beneath the behavior. Ask one or two thoughtful questions—do not interrogate. Bring God’s Word with gentleness, and coach your child to practice the better way.

A ASK

Draw out the heart.

B BRING

Apply God’s Word.

C COACH

Practice repentance.

COMPLAINING / WHINING

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

- What were you wanting that you did not get?
- Were you thankful for what God gave you?
- What made you unhappy?
- Were your words helping or hurting everyone around you?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

- Complaining dishonors God because it says His provision is not enough.
- Israel repeatedly complained despite God’s goodness. Complaining reveals a heart that forgets God’s faithfulness.

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing.” — Philippians 2:14

C — COACH REPENTANCE

- Confess complaining.
- Thank God for three specific blessings.
- Say what you should have said instead.

PUT ON Thankfulness VERSES Philippians 2:14 • 1 Thessalonians 5:18 • Colossians 3:15–17

FIGHTING WITH A SIBLING

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

- What were you wanting?
- Did you love your sibling more than yourself?
- Were you trying to make peace or win?
- How would Jesus want you to respond?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

Selfishness produces quarrels.

“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?” — James 4:1

C — COACH REPENTANCE

- Admit selfishness.
- Ask forgiveness.
- Restore what was broken.
- Look for one way to serve your sibling today.

PUT ON Peacemaking VERSES James 4:1–2 • Proverbs 15:1 • Romans 12:18 • Matthew 5:9

LYING

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

- What were you afraid would happen?
- Why did you choose not to tell the truth?
- Were you trusting God or protecting yourself?
- What would have happened if you had told the truth?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

- Lying belongs to the old self.
- God delights in truth.

C — COACH REPENTANCE

- Tell the whole truth.
- Accept the consequences.
- Pray for courage to tell the truth next time.

PUT ON Honesty VERSES Colossians 3:9 • Proverbs 12:22 • Ephesians 4:25

DISOBEDIENCE

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

Did you hear the instruction?
 What did you want instead?
 Were you obeying God or yourself?
 Who was ruling your heart?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

Delayed or partial obedience is still disobedience.
 Children obey the Lord by obeying their parents.

C — COACH REPENTANCE

Obey immediately.
 Obey completely.
 Obey with a respectful attitude.

PUT ON Obedience VERSES Ephesians 6:1–3 • Colossians 3:20 • John 14:15

SNEAKING / HIDING THINGS

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

Why did you not want Mom or Dad to know?
 What were you hoping to gain?
 What were you afraid of?
 Does God ever miss what we do?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

Nothing is hidden from God.
 Sin grows in darkness.

C — COACH REPENTANCE

Bring everything into the light.
 Confess.
 Make restitution if needed.

PUT ON Integrity VERSES Hebrews 4:13 • Proverbs 28:13 • Luke 8:17

NOT TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

Are you blaming someone else?
 What part was your responsibility?
 What could you have done differently?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent.
 Since the beginning, sinners have blamed others instead of confessing.

C — COACH REPENTANCE

Own your part first.
 Ask forgiveness without excuses.
 Make it right.

PUT ON Humility VERSES Proverbs 28:13 • James 5:16 • Psalm 51:3–4

TALKING BACK / DISHONOR

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

Did your words honor Mom or Dad?
 Were you trying to help or win?
 What did your tone communicate?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

God commands honor—not merely outward obedience.
 Words reveal the heart.

C — COACH REPENTANCE

Answer respectfully.
 Speak gently.
 Practice honoring authority.

PUT ON Honor VERSES Ephesians 6:2 • Proverbs 15:1 • Colossians 4:6

TANTRUMS

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

What were you wanting so badly?
 Why did you think you had to have it?
 Were you trusting God?
 How could you have responded differently?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

Outbursts of anger come from sinful desires.
 Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit.

C — COACH REPENTANCE

Calm your body.
 Pray.
 Use respectful words.
 Accept “no” without anger.

PUT ON Self-Control VERSES James 1:19–20 • Galatians 5:22–23 • Proverbs 16:32

REFUSING TO EAT WHAT IS SERVED

A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

Are you thankful for what God has provided?
 Is this about your taste or your heart?
 Are you demanding your own way?

B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

Food is God’s provision and is received with thanksgiving.
 Selfish preferences should not rule us.

C — COACH REPENTANCE

Thank God for the meal.
 Eat with gratitude, within appropriate family expectations.
 Speak respectfully instead of complaining.

PUT ON Gratitude and Contentment VERSES 1 Timothy 4:4–5 • Philippians 2:14 • Psalm 103:2

REMEMBER The goal is not merely to stop behavior. It is to lovingly expose the heart, bring God’s truth, and help your child practice repentance—while continually pointing them to Christ.