

A Parent Companion Guide for the Charley Book: -

The Life and Times of Charley Caterpillar

(This book is for sale online :

<https://lifeworks4umentoringservices.com.au/index.php/product/charley-discover-christmas-hard-cover/>)

A gentle guide for families reading together

1. What This Story Offers Your Child

Charley's journey is designed to help children:

- Understand change and growth in a safe, hopeful way
- Build emotional vocabulary through Charley's experiences
- Notice beauty in Australian nature
- Feel comforted by predictable routines and gentle storytelling
- Explore big ideas (identity, belonging, courage) in small, child-friendly steps

Charley is intentionally **soft, kind, and relatable** — a little boy caterpillar who feels things deeply and learns slowly, just like many children.

2. Themes to Talk About With Your Child

Each chapter or scene naturally opens simple conversations:

- **Growing Up** “Charley is changing — have you ever felt like you’re growing in a new way?”
- **Friendship** “Charley has friends like Anthony and Bunny. What makes a good friend?”
- **Courage** “Charley tries new things even when he’s unsure. What’s something new you tried?”
- **Nature Appreciation** “Look at the gum leaves and kookaburra — what Australian animals do you love?”
- **Feelings** “Charley feels excited, worried, curious. Which feeling did you notice today?”

These questions are intentionally simple, open-ended, and suitable for ages 3–8.

3. How Parents Can Use the Story at Home

Bedtime reading Charley's gentle pace and soft watercolor world help children settle emotionally.

Morning grounding A short section can help children start the day calm and connected.

Nature walks Spot gum leaves, wattle, kookaburras, quokkas — link real life to Charley’s world.

Emotional check-ins Use Charley’s feelings as a bridge to talk about your child’s own emotions.

Creative play Draw Charley, make a leaf house, pretend to be a butterfly — imagination builds confidence.

4. What Charley Teaches Without “Teaching”

This guide keeps things parent-friendly, not professional or instructional.

Charley gently models:

- Kindness
- Curiosity
- Resilience
- Wonder
- Gratitude
- Slow, steady growth

Children learn these simply by spending time with him.

5. A Note for Parents About Change

Charley’s transformation into a butterfly is written to be:

- Hopeful
- Non-frightening
- Emotionally safe
- Spiritually uplifting (without being heavy or complex)

It reassures children that change can be beautiful, natural, and part of life’s design.

6. Conversation Starters for Different Ages

Ages 3–5

- “What colour is Charley today?”
- “Who is your favourite friend in the story?”

- “Can you flap your wings like Charley?”

Ages 6–8

- “Why do you think Charley felt nervous?”
- “What helps you feel brave?”
- “What do you think Charley will do next?”

7. For Parents Who Want a Faith Connection (Optional)

This section is gentle and optional, suitable for families who want it.

Charley’s story quietly reflects:

- God’s care in every stage of growth
- The beauty of creation
- The idea that each child is wonderfully made
- Transformation as part of God’s loving plan

You can simply say:

“God helps us grow just like Charley.”

8. How to Support Your Child While Reading

- Read slowly
- Let your child ask questions
- Follow their curiosity
- Keep the experience warm and unhurried

Charley’s world is meant to be savoured.

9. A Final Word to Parents

Charley is more than a character — he’s a companion for your child’s early years. His gentle nature, Australian surroundings, and soft watercolor world create a safe place for children to explore feelings, friendships, and the wonder of growing up.

Your presence while reading is the greatest gift you can give your child.

Parent Introduction - *The Life and Times of Charley Caterpillar*

By Sylvia M. Fraser

Hello to all you parents.

Charley represents so many things to me — but first and foremost, he reflects my own journey of learning to trust God with my life. I wrote this story back in 1985 when, as a new Christian, I was still very self-reliant. Trusting God was a steep learning curve, as it is for many of us.

Charley helped me understand that life and maturity require more than instruction alone. We need Someone bigger and stronger to lean on — Someone who can guide us through the ever-changing circumstances of life, and through the transitions required to become the person God created us to be.

I was thirty-three years old when I accepted Christ, and I quickly realised that much of what I was learning as an adult was what God originally intended parents to teach their children — providing them with a strong foundation to grow from. These early lessons help shape identity, character, emotional resilience, trust, and faith in God. Together, they form a healthy base from which a child can grow into a confident, caring, and contributing adult.

Thank you for being the kind of parent who invests in your child's growth and wellbeing — not only by providing the resources they need, but by offering the caring nurture that comes from time spent together. Your willingness to engage with your child in many different ways — including reading with them — is a gift that will bless them for years to come.

May Charley's journey remind your family that God is present in every stage of growth."

My prayer is that *Charley Caterpillar* will be a resource that supports you in the rewarding, yet sometimes difficult, task of being a parent. May God bless you and your children richly. **Philippian's 1:6**

Sylvia M. Fraser