



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 11 to 13

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Cooperation**

Cooperation means working with others in harmony to achieve a goal, forming a team committed to finding solutions to any interpersonal conflicts that may arise along the way. It also means being ready to lend a hand by willingly following rules that benefit the greater group.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Get your child to think about the difference between cooperating for a good cause and blindly following the crowd.

In the preteen years, children regress with regard to cooperation. They often test limits and break rules as a way of establishing their independence. They no longer easily accept the rules set by parents and teachers. Hormonal surges make them feel irritable and moody--and unwilling to cooperate.

At the same time as they are breaking away from parents, preteens are much more interested in their friends. However, they're more likely to want to cooperate only with certain friends and to be distant and even cruel to others. Yet despite occasional clashes, it's possible for parents to help preteens pass through this stage with flying colors.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Begin a "Family Diary."** Sit down together periodically and write a couple of sentences each about what the family did since the last entry. Everybody has to cooperate on this project because they must listen to each other, wait for each sentence to be written before starting the next, and avoid repeating items already recorded. This has the added benefit of allowing your preteen a safe place to express him or herself about household rules.
- ✓ **Give your child a role in choosing some chores** that benefit the whole family--and express your appreciation when he does them.
- ✓ **Role play peer-pressure scenarios.** Find a safe, non-threatening time to sit down with your child one-on-one. Have your child play the part of a friend who wants him or her to do something questionable while you take your child's role and model possible ways to stand up to the pressure without alienating their friends. Then switch roles and see what happens!

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

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