



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 11 to 13

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

A tolerant person accepts diversity and doesn't prejudge others on the basis of religion, race, or gender. If we are to live in harmony with others and seek cooperative solutions to conflicts, we need to focus more on our common humanity than on our differences. How a person treats those who appear different depends to a large extent on what he or she is taught in childhood.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Teach your children about diversity and foster a strong inner voice that will help them resist pressure to behave intolerantly.

Kids this age desperately want to fit in, which often means they feel compelled to go along with the crowd. They may tease or ostracize someone because their friends are doing it. They're not as open as they used to be to their parents' advice, and they don't automatically assume that what their parents say is right.

On the positive side, however, preteens are gaining a conscience. They can put themselves in another person's shoes and consider that person's feelings. They also have intellectual curiosity about other cultures.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Play "You're Out."** This is a powerful way to teach kids about tolerance and rejection. Be sure to allow plenty of time for discussion afterward. Start by rolling dice to see who the first "outcast" will be. Lowest roll goes first. Now explain to the group that for the next 15 minutes, you will all do an activity together as usual, with one change: No one will speak to or acknowledge the person who is "left out." Try a round, then see if others want to have a turn as the outcast. Afterward, talk about how it felt to be left out, and how it felt to do the shunning. Ask your children if there is anyone in their neighborhood, school, or sports team who might be feeling left out. Brainstorm ways to be more tolerant of kids who might be seen as "different" or "uncool."
- ✓ **Take your preteen to visit other houses of worship and different ethnic festivals** in your town to expose them to diversity.
- ✓ **Write away for a pen pal.** Through an organization, find your child a pen pal from another country and encourage letter-writing.

Then, Report Back!

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

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