



# the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 3 to 4

## 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:

**Satisfy preschoolers' natural curiosity about differences while beginning to teach politeness and discretion.**

By age 3 and 4, children begin to notice differences of all kinds. Just as they are learning the colors and shapes of objects, they're tuned in to how people look--tall, short, thin, fat, skin color, gender differences, and disabilities. These new perceptions stem from a growing sense of their own physical identity and their keen curiosity about the world. They may comment loudly and embarrassingly on physical differences--but there is no malice or prejudice intended. Preschoolers don't categorically exclude people (that's one of their charms), but they may ask a lot of questions. How a parent responds is key to preventing prejudice.

### Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Keep it simple.** Kids say the darnedest things--at the darnedest times. If your children ask embarrassing questions about other people, be concrete, concise, and positive in your explanations. "She has beautiful dark skin because her mommy and daddy have dark skin." Explain that loud comments about someone's appearance can hurt that person's feelings, so it's best for them to ask quietly or wait until they get home.
- ✓ **Help your children develop their personal identities.** Get the family together for some relaxed together-time. Ask each person to think about the question "Who am I?" Each person takes a moment to say something about who they are, such as, "I have brown eyes." "I have long hair." "I have freckles." "I laugh like this," etc.
- ✓ **Have a cultural diversity night.** Choose a country or culture. For little kids, find dolls, books, musical selections, from different countries. If practical, buy diverse dolls, with different skin color and gender. Make a meal from that country. Have everyone learn how to say hello in the language of the culture you're exploring.

### Then, Report Back!

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

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