



# the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 14 to 18

## 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:

**Balance a sense of independence with an appreciation of norms and rules.**

Teenagers don't just like their peers; they derive their identity from them. A teenager believes he's smart, athletic, or good-looking if his friends think so. Being accepted by a group--even if the group behaves badly--is essential. Obviously this need to be "in sync" with friends can be alarming to parents. And a teenager's continuing effort to assert his independence by breaking the rules compounds a parent's worries.

But as teenagers move toward adulthood, they can begin to see the bigger picture. They recognize that following the rules ensures a safer, more comfortable life for everyone. And they can understand that cooperation doesn't mean accepting whatever one's friends say or do. Parents can help them in this regard in several ways.

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

- ✓ **Encourage your kids to initiate a community service project** that involves bringing together people or groups from very different backgrounds. This really spotlights the value of working together for a worthy cause.
- ✓ **Stress the reasons *why* it's important to cooperate with rules**--for example, wearing a seat belt is essential for safety, and calling if they are going to be late eliminates needless worry.
- ✓ **Plan a family activity that requires several tasks to be completed**, such as a picnic lunch. Put your teen in charge of delegating different jobs to different members of the family. Your teen also assigns herself a task, and then the family sets about preparing for the outing. When you are comfortably enjoying the picnic, point out how proud you are that the family cooperated so nicely and made the picnic happen.

### Then, Report Back!

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

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