



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 5 to 7

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:

Get children to notice "hate" words and choose less extreme language, which will help them avoid negative generalizations later on.

Children in K-2 grades often behave intolerantly because of their dualistic thinking: Kids are either good or bad, smart or dumb, best friends or worst enemies. Girls and boys who used to play together now often separate into gender-specific groups. A child may be oblivious to a friend's race or religion, for example, but may gravitate toward classmates who share their interest in sports or dolls.

Children at this age follow the examples of the important adults in their lives. A child who sees his father refusing to be treated by a female doctor or hears racist remarks from a grandparent, may parrot these prejudices in pretend play. This is a crucial period in a child's development, and parents play a key role.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Ready, Set, Verify!** Stereotypes lead to prejudice. As a family, make a game of watching for stereotypes on TV, in song lyrics, and advertisements. Whenever someone says, "All blondes are dumb," or "all grandparents are deaf," the person who's heard the stereotype has to verify it. Give evidence to turn it around. E.g. "I know a blonde who's smart. Let's write that one down as busted." Keep score on how many stereotypes prove true.
- ✓ **Play "First Impressions."** *Materials: Old magazines, scissors, heavy paper, glue.* Cut out pictures of as many different kinds of people as you can. Include diverse races, ages and body types. Glue each photo to a piece of heavy paper. Sit down with your children and hold up the photos one at a time. Ask them to say aloud the first thing that comes to mind, while you write down their impressions next to each photo. Then go through the photos a second time, and ask the kids if they think their impressions hold up under closer scrutiny. Talk about what made them call out what they did.
- ✓ **Don't allow "hate" words against other people.** Treat "I hate..." like any other bad word. Be conscious of your own biases, and ask family members to curb prejudiced remarks.

Then, Report Back!

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