

What Are Your Family's Top 5 Moral Values?

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What are your deepest held moral values? How are you teaching these values to your children? Are you doing it alone or are you seeking help from religious organizations or other resources?

Teaching your kids moral values is one of the most important responsibilities you have as a parent. In order for your children to act morally, they need to know the good, care about the good and practice doing the good.

The way your kids choose to treat others is critical. There are too many news stories of children committing suicide due in part to the cruel behavior of other kids. There are too many kids posting mean comments on social media. Too many kids avoiding activities due to bullying. How do you guide your kids in treating others?

Knowing the Good

What does it mean to be a good person? What traits does your family most value? Renée Trudeau, author of [Nurturing the Soul of Your Family](#), shared that when her son was entering middle school they created a “Family Purpose Statement”. She described they “highlighted the top five qualities that were most important to us. At the top of our list: kindness and compassion—to self and others.”



What virtues make your family's top five list? Some to consider include:

- **Acceptance:** having an objective attitude toward other's ideas and practices that differ from your own
- **Compassion:** understanding the suffering of others or self and wanting to do something about it
- **Cooperation:** helping your family and friends, returning favors
- **Courage:** willingness to do difficult things
- **Equality:** believing everyone deserves equal rights and to be treated with respect
- **Fairness:** acting in a just way, sharing appropriately
- **Generosity:** willingness to give resources, help or time to others
- **Gratitude:** showing appreciation to others
- **Honesty:** being truthful and sincere

- **Integrity:** sticking to your moral and ethical principles and values
- **Kindness:** being considerate and treating others well
- **Perseverance:** persisting in a course of action, belief or purpose
- **Politeness:** using good manners, acting in socially acceptable ways
- **Respect:** showing consideration for the worth of someone or something
- **Responsibility:** being reliable in your obligations
- **Self-control:** staying in control of your words and behavior
- **Tolerance:** having a fair and objective attitude towards different opinions, beliefs or practices
- **Trustworthy:** reliably doing what is right even when it is difficult, being true to your word

One way to help your children internalize these characteristics is to notice them. When you see your child being responsible, honest or showing compassion, comment on it. For example, if your child attempts to comfort a child who is hurt, you can say *“That’s kind of you to help him.”*

Caring About the Good

There is a big difference between knowing about moral values and actually trying to adopt the traits. Often standing up for your morals takes courage and strength.

After your family has [selected your top five values](#), find examples of how you’ve demonstrated those in the past. Your kids may want to create a poster for each value with pictures and examples of that value. Leave space to add more examples.

Next encourage each person commit to one value they want to focus on for the week. Check in daily with each other to see if there was an opportunity to act on that value. What happened? How did it feel? What did you learn?


Asking your kids these questions sends the message that you care about these values. Like adults, your kids will make mistakes and act in ways that don’t represent their highest values. When this happens, help them find a way to make amends. Ask questions to guide your kids in figuring out what they would like to do to make things better.

Doing the Good

Our Moral Values

Our Family's Top Five Moral Values:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____




Identifying Your Most Important Moral Values

What virtues does your family most value? Your values guide your decisions. Your decisions determine the quality of your life. Some values to consider include:

Acceptance: an objective attitude toward other's ideas and practices that differ from your own
Compassion: understanding the suffering of others or self and doing something about it
Courage: willingness to do difficult things
Fairness: acting in a just way, sharing appropriately
Generosity: willingness to give resources, help or time to others
Honesty: being truthful and sincere
Integrity: sticking to your moral and ethical principles and values
Kindness: being considerate and treating others well
Perseverance: persisting in a course of action, belief or purpose
Peacefulness: dedication to resolving conflicts without using violence
Politeness: using good manners, acting in socially acceptable ways
Positivity: looking for the best in situations, others and yourself
Respect: showing consideration for the worth of someone or something
Responsibility: being reliable in your obligations
Self-control: staying in control of your words and behavior
Trustworthy: reliably doing what is right even when it is difficult, being true to your word

Courtesy of Priceless Parenting, <http://www.PricelessParenting.com/>



Your kids will have daily opportunities to choose to act on their values. Behaving ethically requires a strong moral conviction.

It's a proud moment when your children choose to show compassion and take responsibility for speaking up. During a middle school basketball game in Kenosha, Wisconsin, the kids demonstrated their moral convictions. [CBS reported](#) "The student athletes stood up for one of the team's cheerleaders when they heard some derogatory words directed toward her during a basketball game at Lincoln Middle School. Chase Vazquez, Scooter Terrien and Miles Rodriguez walked off the court in the middle of the game to address the mean-spirited comments directed at cheerleader Desiree Andrews, who has Down syndrome." Wow!

Neurodiverse students like Desiree offer opportunities to demonstrate your values. You can help your kids build [empathy and compassion for neurodiverse kids](#) by watching some of the videos Chris Ulmer, a special education teacher and founder of [Special Books by Special Kids](#) has created.

It's not always easy to stay in control of your words and actions. My son's cross country coach taught the kids to THINK before they speak or act by considering:

- T- Is it true?
- H- Is it helpful?
- I- Is it inspiring?
- N- Is it necessary?
- K- Is it kind?

This simple acronym helps kids pause to consider the impact of their words and actions beforehand.

While your children will have many influences on their moral development, you play the biggest role. You are their first teacher. They look to you to learn how to act in the world.

While your words are important, it will be your actions that will teach them the most. How are your actions guiding your children in [living up to your highest values](#)?

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