

Questions and Family Activities



Comprehension Questions:

- As a crossing guard, what does Alexander hope people will respect? What is he afraid of? (that people might not respect his authority)
- What does “Wild Wagon Winnie” not respect? (the rules of the road)
- What's the problem with her lack of respect? (she could cause a serious accident)
- Why doesn't she respect the rules? (she's having fun and she doesn't understand what the rules are or why they are important)
- How did Alexander help Winnie become more respectful? (he helps her to understand why rules are important)

Discussion Questions:

- What does “respect” mean?
- What should we respect? (possible answers: rules and laws, feelings, yourself, other people's property, other people's beliefs, culture and traditions . . .)
- What does it mean to respect rules? Feelings? Property? Beliefs? Yourself?
- How do you feel if someone doesn't respect you?
- Can you think of a time when someone wasn't respectful to you? What happened?
- Is it OK to have fun and be silly sometimes? How do you know if your fun is crossing the line and becoming disrespectful?

Scenarios:

Let's say your mom is on the phone and you'd like to tell her something. Give an example of what you would do if you were NOT being respectful. What's a way you could be respectful?

Let's say your brother has built something out of legos and left it right in the middle of the room that you share with him (and he leaves out messes like that all the time). Your mom has told you to clean up your room. What could you do about the legos on the floor that would show respect for your brother's property and feelings? What might you do if you weren't showing respect for your brother's property and feelings?



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Let's say your friend is really excited to tell you something in class. How can you show respect for your friend while also showing respect for your teacher?

Let's say your little sister did a drawing and she's really excited to show it to you. You don't really think it's that great. What do you say to be honest but show respect for her feelings?

Let's say you need help with a school project that is really frustrating to you. Your dad is busy with something in the backyard. What's an example of how you might ask for help in a way that is NOT respectful? How would you ask for help in a way that IS respectful?

Family Activity: Starting Over

This month, try “starting over” whenever someone in the family speaks without respect. Do your best to ask children to do things in a respectful way. If they don't respond respectfully, simply say, “Let's start that over” and ask again in an especially respectful way – then they can answer in a manner that is much more respectful.

Example:

Isaac is working on his homework and hasn't yet emptied the dishwasher which is his job. If the dishes aren't emptied before dinner, Isaac's big brother won't be able to do his job, the dishes, right after dinner.

MOM: “Isaac, you need to come empty this dishwasher. You're supposed to do it right after school. Come on in here and get it done quickly.”

ISAAC: “I have to finish my homework! I have so much homework tonight! Why do I always have to empty the dishwasher? It's not fair.”

MOM: “Isaac, let's start that over. I'm going to ask more respectfully and I need you to answer more respectfully. Isaac, it looks like you're working hard on your homework. Great job. But we need to get this dishwasher emptied before dinner and the dishwasher is your job. What should we do?”

ISAAC: “Is it alright if I finish this worksheet before I do the dishwasher and can you maybe help me with my homework after dinner?”

MOM: “Great idea. I'll even help you get the dishwasher emptied quickly so you'll have time to get your homework done plus I'll help you with your homework later on.”

Further Ideas

- **Parents:** Treat your children with extra respect this month – and help them to see how their actions are showing respect or disrespect. Be conscious of the tone you use when you speak to your children. Try saying things like “I see that you're busy doing something fun and I respect that and want you to have fun but what do you think you're supposed to be doing right now to respect the assignments your teacher gave you that are due tomorrow?” or “I understand that the dinner I've made is not your favorite. How can you respect me and the efforts I made to make a nice dinner for you?”



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- **Parents:** Avoid negative self-talk this month. Make a point of saying nice things to yourself this month (in your children's earshot) rather than negative things. For more ideas on showing more respect to yourself, read the article, "Thought Replacement Therapy" on The Power of Moms.
- **Older Children:** Discuss with your older children times when they've felt disrespected or seen others be disrespected. Talk about what leads to disrespect and how to solve it. Suggest that "respect breeds respect" and ask them what they think that means.
- **Younger Children:** Work together on being extra polite and using words like please, thank you, excuse me, and you're welcome. Make a chart or put a marble or penny in a jar whenever you or someone else in the family uses a "magic word" and see how full you can get the jar in one week's time.
- **Family:** Talk about how important it is to look people in the eye when you talk to them. Invite all family members (including yourself) to make a real point of looking people in the eye when talking to them. Praise children when you see them doing this and remind them when they forget.



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