

4. Teaching Responsibility

Developing Responsibility



Families may choose one activity under this topic to count as one of the 10 activities needed for the BSA Family Award.

Purpose: To help family members become responsible people by doing their part to help others.

Note to parents: Children will not spontaneously become responsible people and good workers. We train them in stages to adopt good work habits, which will help them be responsible throughout their lives.

Suggested Activities

1. Complete a "family service" chart listing all the chores and the family member assigned to each job. The family decides together how often to rotate jobs. For younger children, place pictures of jobs on the chart. At each job's completion, the child could glue on a sticker, put a check, or put a star in the appropriate place.
2. Develop a "family rules" chart with input from all family members. This can be helpful as a reminder to children of such things as bedtime, TV rules, study time, or leaving the house. It can save a lot of arguing when parents can ask a child, "What is rule number three?"
3. Make signs, banners, or posters with slogans of encouragement such as: "When we fail to plan, we plan to fail" or "A place for everything and everything in its place." Post them in various places around the house.
4. Hold family planning sessions to calendar the week's events so everyone knows what will be happening. Special needs can be coordinated, such as trading chores because of soccer practice or putting a frozen casserole in the oven so dinner will be ready when the parents get home from working late.
5. Give meaningful recognition through "praise notes." Sometimes a play on words can delight a child. For example, place a stick of gum on a card that says, "By gum, you did a good job on the dishes tonight!"
6. Get a pet or plant and teach your child to take care of it. Discuss with your child how the pet or plant depends on its owner. It takes a lot of work to be responsible for living things.
7. Establish a system for family members to let other family members know their whereabouts. The system could be a sign-out board, notes left in a specific place, or phone calls. Establish rules for checking-in when plans change.
8. Let children pick their favorite meals or snacks and help prepare them and clean up.
9. Children need to have some idea about how a court of law operates. This activity will help children to think about the care of property and the consequences of carelessness or destruction. Family members take different roles such as plaintiff (the person making the complaint), defendant (the person against whom the complaint is made), attorneys, judge, jury, or witnesses. Present real or pretend cases such as the following.

Jason forgot to put his bike in the garage. While it was sitting out, someone stole it. He needs a bike to do his paper route, but his parents are refusing to buy him another one. Let the "family court" decide this case.
10. As a family, read aloud a book about developing responsibility. Suggestions:
 - *Follow My Leader: Facting up to Responsibility*, Gianni Padoan, Emanuela Collini, Child's Play International, 1995. At first, being in Wayne's gang is an exciting game of "follow my leader," but Joe soon comes to question the older boy's judgment.
 - *The Child's World of Responsibility*, Janet Riehecky, N. Pemberton (illustrator), Child's World, 1997. Suggests ways to show responsibility, such as remembering to feed kitty, eating one's peas, and wearing boots in the rain.
 - *Pedrito's Day*, Luis Garay, Orchard Books, 1997. When Pedrito replaces, from his own earnings, money he has lost, his mother decides that he is finally big enough for some of his father's earnings to be used toward buying him a bicycle.

Being Prepared

Families may choose one activity under this topic to count as one of the 10 activities needed for the BSA Family Award.




Purpose: To help the family realize the importance of being prepared for situations that may occur and identify areas where they need to become better prepared.

Note to parents: Lord Baden-Powell designated "Be Prepared" as the Scout motto. When asked, "Be prepared for what?" he replied, "Why, for any old thing." These activities will help children discover the advantages of being prepared for a variety of life's experiences.

Suggested Activities

1. Discuss with family members the preparation needed in the following situations.
 - While playing, a child falls and is cut on broken glass. (Knowledge of simple first aid and knowing how to call to get help.)
 - Your family is in a boat on a lake and the boat starts to sink. (Wearing personal flotation devices and knowing how to swim.)
 - A stranger invites you to get into his car, offering you a ride home. (Knowing never to get in a car with a stranger, but to run away and tell an adult.)

Do you know anyone who has saved someone's life? If so, ask them what happened and what they needed to do to help. How were they prepared?
2. Let family members help assemble a first aid kit for the house and one for the family car. Explain to the children how each item in the kit is used.
3. Teach first aid skills to the family. Make sure they know what first aid means: aid given first, before professional help arrives or can be administered. Learn what to do in case of minor cuts and scratches, severe bleeding, fainting, broken bones, burns, stopped breathing, and poisoning. Parents and older children could take a first aid course together, through the Red Cross or another group.
4. Role-play with your children how to say no if someone offers them a cigarette, an alcoholic drink, or drugs, including medicines their parents or doctors have not said they need. Help them understand that these substances are harmful and some are illegal to use. Explain that choosing not to become involved with them will help avoid many physical, social, and emotional problems.
5. As a family, list all the items needed for a home survival kit to use during a disaster such as an earthquake, hurricane, or long-term power outage. Let family members help purchase supplies and assemble the kit.
6. Develop the habit of all family members wearing seat belts in the car. Make sure children's safety seats are properly secured and that the child is placed in the seat correctly. Be aware of your car manufacturer's safety instructions regarding air bags.
7. Show your children the warning labels on tobacco and alcohol products and talk about what they mean. Also show the warning labels on any over-the-counter or prescription medicines in the house. Remind children to never take medicine intended for someone else. Clean out the family medicine cabinets and discard all out-of-date medication. Store medicine out of the reach of young children.
8. Review the rules for Internet safety. Make a small chart listing the rules and place one by each computer in the house.
9. Review the safety equipment needed for any sports your children play. Make sure children have and use helmets when bike riding, in-line skating, or skate boarding. Make sure the helmets are properly fitted.
10. Children need to know how to contact their parents, family members, and emergency help. Role-play with your children some telephone situations like the following.
 - Call 911 (only pretending to make the call, of course, while role-playing), tell the emergency, give the location of the emergency, and stay on the line until the operator tells you to hang up.
 - You are home alone and someone calls to speak to a parent. What can you say so the caller does not know you are home alone?
 - You answer the phone and it is a salesperson asking for information about your family.
 - You answer the phone and the caller says things that make you feel uncomfortable or uses bad words.
11. Take swimming lessons. Teach children safety rules for swimming and boating. Stress the importance of wearing a personal flotation device correctly in a watercraft.

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12. Teach your children to avoid abusive situations and to know how to seek help. Parents should teach children about inappropriate touching, going with strangers, and forms of peer pressure. Children need to be taught the risks of these activities and how to be assertive in certain situations.
 13. The Boy Scouts of America has produced some excellent videos in its Youth Protection series. Parents may want to take part in Youth Protection training. The videos *It Happened to Me*, for Cub Scout-age youth, and *A Time to Tell*, for Boy Scout-age youth, are also available to show your children. Contact your BSA local council for more information.
 14. Teach children how to be safe when the family is using a barbecue grill. Warn them of the dangers of a hot grill that can burn them or even start a fire.
 15. On family camping trips, determine fire safety rules for the family's campfire. Teach older children how to safely lay the wood, start the fire, maintain the fire, and put the fire out. Never leave children of any age unsupervised around a campfire.
 16. As a family, go around the house checking for smoke detectors, fire hazards, fire extinguishers, safety hazards, and poisons within reach of children. Correct any hazards. Make sure smoke detectors have fresh batteries.
 17. Teach children not to play with fire or matches. Teach family members to "stop, drop, and roll." Plan an escape route from every room in your house. Identify where your family should meet if you need to evacuate your home.
 18. Have a discussion about diseases that can be contracted by coming in contact with other people's blood or body fluids. This may be a good time to talk about hepatitis B and AIDS. Children need to understand how to protect themselves.
 19. Use the phone book to make a list of resources in your community that can help your family become more prepared for many situations. The Red Cross office and public library are great resource centers. They have pamphlets, books, and videos to teach a variety of preparedness skills.
 20. As a family, read aloud a book relevant to this topic. Suggestions:
 - *Staying Healthy: Personal Safety*, Alice B. McGinty, Rosen Publishing, 1998; paperback edition, Franklin Watts, 1999. Gives children pointers on how to stay safe.
 - *Hana's Year*, Carol Talley, Itoko Maeno (illustrator), Marsh Media, 1992. A young monkey living in the mountains of Japan gets into trouble when she follows the lead of a mischief-maker. Includes discussion questions on peer pressure.
 - *Kids to the Rescue! First Aid Techniques for Kids*, Maribeth Boelts, Darwin Boelts (contributor), Marina Megale (illustrator), Parenting Press, 1992. Explains how to think wisely in an emergency and what to do in common emergencies such as bleeding, poisoning, shock, and burns.
 - *A Week Past Forever (Children of Courage)*, Cynthia Dilauro, M.D., Taylor Bruce Devore (illustrator), Abdo Publishing, 1993. As they walk along the beach, Nita and her favorite uncle, who is dying of AIDS, talk about the importance of taking care of oneself by making careful choices in life. Includes discussion questions.

Planning and Organizing



Families may choose one activity under this topic to count as one of the 10 activities needed for the BSA Family Award.

Purpose: To help family members learn the skills of setting goals, scheduling, prioritizing, and evaluating.

Suggested Activities

1. Play the "Steps to the Goal" game with the whole family. The goal is a simple treat (one for each person who plays the game).

Equipment: Ten pieces of paper with an activity written on each, such as "take off your right shoe and carry it," "sing a song," "hop on one foot three times," etc. Place the papers in a bowl.

To play: Place the "goal" at one end of the room. One person draws five pieces of paper and places them in a line between the start position and the goal. The first player walks to the first paper in the line, reads it, completes the activity, and moves to the next paper. Play continues until the player reaches the goal. Put the five papers back, mix them, and draw five pieces of paper to set up the course for the next player. The game continues until everyone has reached the goal.

Remind everyone that reaching this goal was fairly simple, but it happened one step at a time. When reaching goals, there is always a series of steps.

2. Have family members make a "To Do" chart for the week. Each family member can write in or color pictures of the things they want to do each day, such as read, do homework, exercise, practice the piano, or make their bed. Check off each task as it is completed.
3. Choose a simple cooking activity such as scrambling eggs or making a peanut butter sandwich. Have one member of the family list the steps needed to make the item. Then make the item, following the steps exactly. You may not add a step that is not on the paper. For example, see what happens when you exactly follow these steps for scrambling eggs:
 - Step 1. Break the eggs.
 - Step 2. Stir with a spoon.

If step one is to break the eggs rather than to get a pan or bowl, you can see that only a mess will result. This is a fun way to emphasize that planning is important.

4. Have family members set personal goals. List the steps to complete the goal. Make a paper chain with a step written on each link. Glue the links together with the first step being the last link in the chain. When each step is completed, remove that link from the chain. The goal is reached when the chain is gone.
5. Ask family members to imagine that they have three wishes. What do they have to do to make those wishes come true? Show them a ball of clay. Tell them that if they wished for the clay to be something, it would happen only if they molded it. Wishes can become our goals but we have to work to reach them.
6. Discuss possible goals for your family, such as going on a vacation, learning to do something new as a family, or completing a project to enhance the house. Select one goal and write it on the top of a piece of paper. List the steps that must be done to reach the goal. Decide how and when each step will be done. Set a time to evaluate your progress. Hang the paper where all family members can see it.
7. Learn how to evaluate. Choose a family goal or individual goals that will take one week to accomplish. Write down the goal and the steps to reach it. Be sure to schedule and prioritize your plans. (Scheduling is listing those steps necessary to reach a goal or accomplish a task, with each step designated for a set time. Prioritizing is placing activities in the order that is most beneficial.) In one week, evaluate your successes and difficulties as you were practicing the skills of goal setting, scheduling, and prioritizing.
8. As a family, read aloud a book about planning and reaching goals. Suggestions:
 - *The Berenstain Bears and the Messy Room*, Stan and Jan Berenstain, Random House, 1983. The entire Bear family becomes involved in an attempt to clean and organize the cubs' messy room.
 - *Those Can-Do Pigs*, David M. McPhail, Penguin USA, 1996; paperback edition, Puffin, 1999. Rhyming text and illustrations describe all the accomplishments of the capable Can-Do Pigs.



Managing Money

Families may choose one activity under this topic to count as one of the 10 activities needed for the BSA Family Award.

Purpose: To help family members learn the importance of managing money, saving money, setting financial goals, and making budgets.

Suggested Activities

1. Have children earn a small allowance. Discuss what can be purchased with the allowance and what percentage should be saved.
 2. Make a list of significant or special chores around the house and assign a monetary value to them. This way everyone knows how much they will be paid for certain chores done in addition to regular chores.
 3. Using your own ideas, or suggestions from a craft book, help each child make his or her own piggy bank.
 4. Discuss why it is important to donate money to a worthy cause. Make a donation jar and encourage family members to add to it from their allowance or other earnings for a set period of time. Donate the money to your religious organization or a worthy cause.
 5. Take your children to the grocery store. Show them how to compare costs of similar items. Show them how much it costs to feed your family for one week.
 6. Compare costs of a family meal at home and at a restaurant. How much does a hamburger cost at a fast-food restaurant? How much does it cost at a restaurant where people are served their meals? How much would you spend on that hamburger if you cooked it at home?
 7. Play a board game involving money, such as Monopoly or Payday.
 8. Illustrate the concept of interest by putting a dollar in a jar. Each week, add to the jar an amount representing the interest earned. At a designated time, use the money to buy a family treat. Talk about why the bank pays you interest and how the bank uses your money to make more money.
 9. Take your children to the bank to open a savings account for each of them. Or, open a family savings account to save for something special, such as a family vacation or new television.
 10. Make up some sample checks and have each family member write out a play check to someone.
- Explain how a checking account works. Explain how an ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) works.
11. Explain how credit cards work. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of credit card use.
 12. Explain what bartering is. Ask family members to talk about trades they have made. Children might have traded toys with a sibling or traded items from their lunches with friends. Did they feel like they got a good deal?
 13. Plan a family vacation together. Figure out the cost for transportation, food, and lodging, and how much will be spent on souvenirs. Write down the vacation budget.
 14. Read through a newspaper advertisement of a store where your family normally shops. Discuss why stores advertise, who pays for the advertising, and why stores have sales.
 15. See if each family member can name the presidents on our coins and paper money.
 16. Collect coins or currency from different countries and compare them to the money used in the United States. Talk about different kinds of money and how they are measured.
 17. As a family, read aloud a book relevant to this topic. Suggestions:
 - *Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich, Last Sunday*, Judith Viorst, Ray Cruz (illustrator), Simon and Schuster, 1980; also available in Spanish: *Alexander, Que Era Rico El Domingo Pasado*, Econo-Clad Books, 1999. Alexander and his money are quickly parted, as he comes to realize all the things that can be done with a dollar.
 - *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*, Margaree and King Mitchell, James Ransome (illustrator), Simon and Schuster, 1993; Aladdin Paperbacks, 1998. Despite serious obstacles and setbacks, Uncle Jed pursues his dream of saving enough money to open his own barbershop.
 - *Pigs Will Be Pigs: Fun with Math and Money*, Amy Axelrod, Sharon McGinley Nally (illustrator), Ellen Krieger (editor), Simon and Schuster, 1994; Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997. The hungry Pig family turns the house upside down looking for enough money to buy dinner at a local restaurant.
 - *If You Made a Million*, David M. Schwartz, Steven Kellogg (illustrator), Lothrop Lee & Shepard, 1989; paperback edition, Mulberry Books, 1994. Describes the various forms of money.