



second step Lesson Follow-Ups for Families

WHAT?

Second Step Lesson Follow-Ups are fun, engaging activities you can do with your middle school child and other members of your family. They include Family Projects, Table Talk, and Screen Time activities.

WHY?

These activities are designed to give your middle school child another chance to use new skills learned in *Second Step* lessons. They are also a way for you get to know more about what your middle school child is learning with the *Second Step* program. They're also a great way to spend some fun time together as a family.

WHO?

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WHERE?

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Lesson 1, Language Arts and Social Studies

Family Project: What Are They Feeling?

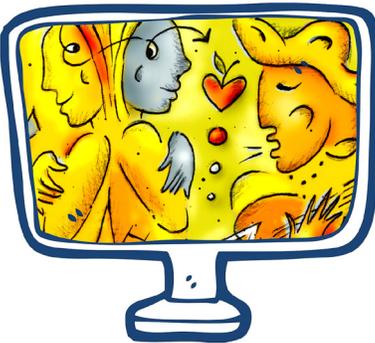


What you'll need: newspapers, magazines, family photos, a mirror

1. Spread out a stack of newspapers and magazines or family photos on a table or the floor.
2. Sit with your child and together find three photos of faces that show a range of expressions.
3. Discuss each face, having your child identify what the person might be feeling. Ask your child to include elements of the expressions (for example, mouth turned down, eyebrows raised, nostrils flared) and other clues that help identify what the people in the photos might be feeling.
4. Facing each other, try to mimic the expressions in the photos. Use the mirror to check your faces. It's okay to get silly!

Lesson 1, Health and Science

Screen Time: How Do Animals Communicate?



What you'll need: TV or computer

1. All animals—from amoebas to humans—communicate with each other. Find an animal-science website or a nature channel on TV.
2. Spend a couple of evenings watching how different animals, such as bees, birds, cats, dogs, chimpanzees, and whales, communicate. For example, honeybees perform a waggle dance when they return to their hive to let other bees know they're home, and chimpanzees greet each other by touching hands.
3. Discuss how the ways animals communicate are similar to and different from the ways humans communicate.



Lesson 1, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Are the Characters Listening Actively to Each Other?

What you'll need: TV

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning about being a good, active listener. Active listeners look at the person who is talking, don't interrupt, and show interest.

1. Choose an age-appropriate TV sitcom your family likes to watch together.
2. Turn off the sound, then play the show.
3. Ask your child: **Are the characters listening actively to each other?** Notice how well the characters are actively listening to each other based on what you and your child see rather than what you hear.



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Lesson 2, Language Arts and Social Studies

Table Talk: What Does It Mean to Be an Ally to Another Nation?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning about being an ally in social situations. An ally is someone who offers support to another. A nation can be an ally, too. An ally is a nation that supports another nation because its people decide that's the right thing to do.

1. Ask your child what it means to be an ally to another nation.
2. Ask: **How is this different or the same as being an ally to someone at school? What countries are the United States' allies? What makes them allies? How is the United States an ally to other countries? Can allies sometimes change? Have your child give specific examples.**



Lesson 2, Health and Science

Table Talk: Allies and Symbiotic Relationships

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

An ally is someone who offers support to another. You can show you're an ally by talking to a person, offering to help if that person is struggling, keeping him or her company, or letting that person know you think it's wrong if someone else is bullying him or her.

In nature, *symbiosis* is a close relationship between different types of creatures where at least one of the creatures benefits. It can take three forms: both partners benefit (like a tickbird and a rhino), one partner benefits but the other is not helped or harmed (like a remora fish and a shark), and one partner gains but the other suffers (like a tick and a dog).

1. Discuss with your child the different types of symbiotic relationships in nature.
2. Ask how being an ally is similar to or different from each type of symbiosis.



Lesson 2, Media Literacy

Table Talk: Pros and Cons of Social-Networking Sites

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

Although for most social-networking sites users must be at least 14 years old, your child may be interested in using them as a way to make and keep friends.

1. Ask your child: **Are social-networking sites a good way to make friends?**
2. Ask your child to come up with pros and cons—at least three ideas for each side—of using social-networking sites.

Some examples are:

- Pro: you can find and chat with people with similar interests.
 - Con: people can post hurtful things about each other, sometimes anonymously)
3. Discuss your child's ideas along with your own thoughts.



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Lesson 3, Language Arts and Social Studies

Table Talk: What's Another Perspective?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime.)

1. Choose a tricky issue in your home, such as cell phone use, wearing bike helmets, bedtime, or chores.
2. Ask your child to imagine the issue from your perspective, while you do the same from your child's perspective.
3. Explain your perspectives with each other and discuss.



Lesson 3, Health and Science

Table Talk: What Do You Observe?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

1. Step outside with your child (or look out the window). Each person should spend five minutes writing down everything he or she sees.
2. Exchange the lists with each other. How much of what you observed was the same? How much was different?
3. Discuss how your way of seeing things may be affected by how you were brought up, what you believe, and what your interests are.



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Lesson 4, Language Arts and Social Studies



Table Talk: Can They Disagree Respectfully?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning respectful disagreement skills: taking other people's perspectives, deciding whether a disagreement is respectful or disrespectful, using good communication skills, and giving constructive feedback.

1. Take your child to a community meeting, or observe one on a local TV station.
2. Discuss the ways meetings are used to share ideas, get feedback on policies and politicians, and debate proposals.
3. Have a family debate over an issue that feels "safe" to discuss. (If you're not willing to extend your child's bedtime, don't bring it up for debate!) Ideas might include what the family would do with a million dollars, what kind of car to buy someday, or what to make for Thanksgiving dessert. Choose one question, come up with one answer, and divide into two groups, for and against. In the examples above, the answers might be: "Let's spend the million dollars on a trip around the world." "Let's buy a used Honda." "Let's make pumpkin pie." Use the respectful disagreement skills to debate the issue.

Lesson 4, Health and Science



Table Talk: Is There Life on Other Planets?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

1. Choose sides for a debate. Have half your family take the position that there is life on other planets and the other half that there is not.
2. Give each side time to come up with support for their positions.
3. Have opposing groups debate whether there is or is not life on other planets while using respectful disagreement skills.



Lesson 4, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Can You Identify Respectful Disagreement Skills?

What you'll need: TV

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning respectful disagreement skills: taking other people's perspectives, deciding whether a disagreement is respectful or disrespectful, using good communication skills, and giving constructive feedback.

1. Choose an age-appropriate TV comedy, drama, or movie that shows a conflict between characters.
2. Before playing the show, ask your child to look for a conflict between characters.
3. After the show, ask how the conflict was or was not resolved. Did the characters use the skills for disagreeing respectfully? What skills did they use?
4. If the characters did not use the respectful disagreement skills, have your child describe how the conflict might have been resolved differently if they had.
5. Then ask some of the following questions: **How often do you see respectful disagreement on-screen? Do you think disrespect is seen as more interesting or exciting? Why or why not? Do you think disrespectful or respectful disagreement between characters onscreen is encouraged? Why?**



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Lesson 5, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Is There a Better Way to Resolve This Dispute?

What you'll need: TV or computer

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning about different styles of communicating. Being assertive is the best middle ground for communicating with people.

- **Assertive:** You let people know what you want and need while still being respectful of others. You use a calm, clear, firm voice.
- **Passive:** You act as if you or your opinions don't matter. You use a timid voice, worried expression, or slumped shoulders.
- **Aggressive:** You use a forceful voice and tense body. The message you give is that other people don't matter.
 1. Watch sports or political news clips on TV or the web that show passive and/or aggressive communication styles.
 2. With your child, identify the dispute.
 3. Then ask: **What communication style are they using? How can you tell?**
 4. Have your child describe how the dispute may have been settled differently if assertive communication was used.



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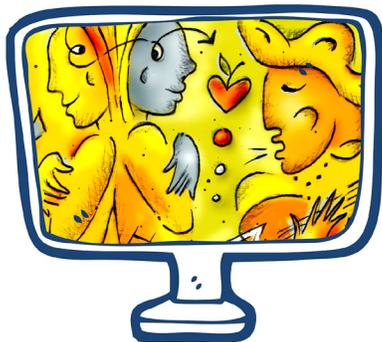
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Lesson 6, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Is It Bullying?

What you'll need: TV or computer

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning about bullying. Bullying is when one or more people repeatedly harm, harass, intimidate, or exclude another person. Bullying is unfair and one-sided.

1. Have your child pay attention to unkind or mean behaviors that occur between characters in a TV show or video game.
2. Ask your child to describe the mean behavior.
3. Have him or her use the definition of bullying to say whether the behavior is bullying.



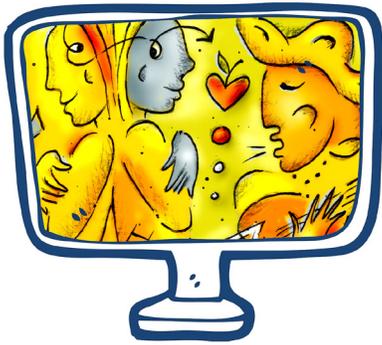
Lesson 6, Media Literacy

Table Talk: What Do You Observe?

What you'll need: opportunity to go to a public place or event, focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

The *Second Step* program definition of bullying is when one or more people repeatedly harm, harass, intimidate, or exclude others. Bullying is unfair and one-sided.

1. With your child, go to a playground, sports game, arcade, or some other place where people gather.
2. Keeping the bullying definition in mind, notice the behavior of the people you and your child see.
3. Later, discuss with your child what you each saw. Ask: **Were any of the behaviors bullying? Why do you think bullying happens more in some places than others?**



Lesson 6, Media Literacy

Screen Time: What's the Message?

What you'll need: TV

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning about bullying. Bullying is when one or more people repeatedly harm, harass, intimidate, or exclude another person. Bullying is unfair and one-sided.

1. With your child, watch animated cartoon programs that show some form of bullying. (Caution: some kids might think that the bullying shown in some cartoons is funny.) Ask your child to watch for examples of bullying.
2. Ask: **Do any of the characters bully others face to face? Do any of the characters bully others behind their backs? What kind of message do you think this sends to young kids? How could these cartoons be funny without the bullying? Can you think of some funny cartoons that do not use bullying?**



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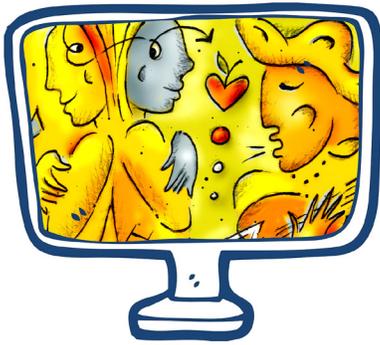
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Lesson 7, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Is This Really Funny?

What you'll need: TV or computer

In the *Second Step* program, your child has been learning about the role of bystanders in bullying situations. Bystanders can be part of the problem or part of the solution. To be part of the solution, bystanders can choose not to take part in bullying, offer support, be an ally to someone being bullied, take action against bullying, and know that they can make a difference.

1. With your child, watch animated cartoon programs that show bullying—you can use the same ones you watched in Lesson 6. This time, ask your child to notice how the bystanders to the bullying behave.
2. Ask: **How do the bystanders react? Do they think the bullying is funny? How does their behavior encourage or discourage more bullying? What kind of message do you think this sends to young kids? Can you think of funny ways the bystanders can be part of the solution?**



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Lesson 9, Language Arts and Social Studies

Table Talk: What Makes You Happy?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime)

In the *Second Step* program, your child is learning how to stay in control when his or her emotions start taking over. Here are the calming-down strategies he or she is learning:

- Doing something physically active
 - Doing something relaxing
 - Thinking about something else
 - Using centered breathing
 - Using positive self-talk
1. Ask your child to talk about a time when he or she felt calm and happy. Describe one of your own calm and happy times.
 2. Remind your child that when he or she uses the calming-down strategy of thinking about something else, he or she can think about this description of a calm and happy time. Your child can even draw a picture of it or write a couple words as reminders (for example, “rainy day with Grandma“), then tack it up in his or her bedroom.



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Lesson 10, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Rate Their Problem-Solving Skills

What you'll need: TV

1. With your child, watch an age-appropriate TV comedy or drama that shows poor problem-solving skills.
2. Together identify the problem and rate the characters' use of problem-solving skills on a scale from one to five (where one is poor and five is excellent).
3. Brainstorm a few ideas for how the characters might solve the problem, and decide on the best solution.



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Lesson 13, Language Arts and Social Studies

Table Talk: What Do You Say?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime), pen and paper

1. Have your child think about what to say to a person who is encouraging him or her to try alcohol or other drugs. Help your child come up with a few things to say in response. You can pretend to be the person offering alcohol or drugs and let your child practice answering.
2. Help your child use some of those ideas in a letter he or she writes to a future self, reminding that self why your child has chosen not to use alcohol or other drugs. Encourage your child to save the letter to reread if needed.



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Lesson 14, Language Arts and Social Studies

Table Talk: Where Will You Be in Ten Years?

What you'll need: focused time to talk (such as at the dinner table, on a car ride, or at bedtime), pen and paper

1. Have your child imagine that it is ten years from now. Then have your child describe a “day in your life“ as it will be in ten years. Where will he or she be? What will he or she be doing?
2. Have your child describe ten things he or she can do now to make that day ten years from now possible. What are ways he or she thinks you can help with these goals?



Lesson 14, Media Literacy

Table Talk: What Makes a Good Role Model?

What you'll need: TV

1. While watching TV together, ask your child to identify role models in the media. These could be athletes, movie stars, singers, or successful businesspeople your child hears about or sees in the media.
2. Next discuss the following questions: **What makes a good role model? Do you think these role models had or have hopes and plans? How might abusing alcohol and other drugs have gotten or get in the way of their hopes and plans?**