

Family Viewing Guide

Character and Life Skills: **Courtesy**

Grade Level: **3-5**

The Facts

World-Class Courtesy, A Best Practices Report by Vice President Al Gore (1996), provides a list of essential elements of courteous behavior for businesses and organizations:

- A willingness to discover opportunities to exceed the customer's expectations,
- Sincerity,
- A friendly smile (even over the phone),
- Using the person's last name (unless the customer indicates otherwise),
- A neat appearance,
- Proper use of the language,
- Exceptional listening skills (attentiveness),
- A relaxed and natural tone of voice,
- Appropriate eye contact,
- Clear communication at the customer's comprehension level, and
- Knowledge about the product or service.

Start a Conversation with Your Kids

1. How do the elements of courteous behavior for businesses and organizations apply to our everyday actions and words?
2. What does courtesy mean to you?
3. When have you seen someone else being courteous? What did you think about it?
4. How are you courteous towards others?
5. Why is it important to be courteous?
6. How can we be courteous towards each other at home?

Advice from the Experts

Parents.com gives the following advice to parents on teaching their kids to be courteous:

1. **Good manners are a good habit.** It's important to start as early as you can so manners become something a child does automatically, whether they are at home or away.
2. **Polite behavior will help your child's social development.** An ill-mannered child is a turn-off to adults and kids. While children aren't likely to be offended by a playmate who neglects to say "excuse me", they don't relish the company of a child who doesn't know how to share or take turns.
3. **Learning manners is a lifelong education.** Introducing one new social skill a month makes the process manageable for everyone. Equally important is keeping your expectations in check. There is only so much a small child can do.
4. **Your behavior counts.** Your child learns from you so set good examples of courteous behavior.
5. **Consistency is important.** Acquiring good manners takes a lot of practice and reinforcement, so make sure that you, your partner, and your caregiver are encouraging, and discouraging the same behaviors.