

Family Viewing Guide

Character and Life Skills: **Freedom**

Grade Level: **3-5**

The Facts

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees Americans the Five Freedoms:

1. **Freedom of religion:** everyone has the right to worship as they please.
2. **Freedom of speech:** everyone has the right to express him/herself freely.
3. **Freedom of the press:** the government cannot restrict the news.
4. **Freedom of assembly:** people have the right to gather together peaceably.
5. **Freedom of petition:** each person has the right to seek help from the government.

Start a Conversation with Your Kids

1. What does freedom mean to you?
2. Do you think responsibility comes with freedom? How so?
3. How can we give you more freedom at home?
4. How are your freedoms at home different than those at school or in the community?

Advice from the Experts

Family Share gives the following advice to parents about teaching their kids “freedom of choice”:

1. **Begin Early.** Let them make decisions about what to wear or what to eat by giving them options to choose from. Then discuss why they made those choices, so they begin to think things through for themselves.
2. **Teach delayed gratification.** Let them choose and live with consequences. Suggest that they save their money for something big that they want. Tell them that if they save diligently you will add to their savings so that they get it sooner.
3. **Use life as a springboard for discussion.** When you see someone smoking, ask, “What do you think he spends on cigarettes in a week? Do you think he wishes he hadn’t started?” Keep dialogues open by asking questions without accusation and without preachiness. Listen to their answers and leave it at that. Get them thinking about these choices.
4. **Don’t use control or manipulation.** These often drive children into making decisions that are harmful. Total control leads to rebellion. Give them as many choices as you can, based on their age and maturity.
5. **Allow them to suffer the consequences.** Don’t compound their bad choices with the absence of consequences. Let them feel the sting of their decisions without you ridiculing or belittling them.
6. **Show unconditional love.** Let them know that you will love them no matter what they do but that you may not love their decisions. You don’t have to condone bad behavior, but you must continue to love and support them emotionally.