



second

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?

You can do these activities with your middle school child, and other family members can join as well.

WHERE?

Most of these activities can be done at home around the dinner table or in front of the TV screen.



Lesson 1, Media Literacy

Screen Time: What's Your Interpretation?

What you'll need: DVD player or streaming video, movie, TV

1. Choose a movie that you have at home that is appropriate for children your child's age or younger, and watch a short portion of it with your child.
2. Discuss what each member of your family thought of it (expect answers like babyish, stupid, nice animation, good music, and so on).
3. Next, ask: **Did you agree with what other family members thought of the video? Why or why not? If you disagreed, how did you handle the disagreement? Did you listen actively to the other people when they talked? Were you respectful of other people's thoughts, even if they weren't the same as yours?**



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Lesson 2, Language Arts and Social Studies

Table Talk: Can Countries Disagree Respectfully?

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

Just as two people can disagree, so can two countries. 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 any two countries, such as the United States and Mexico.
2. As a family, come up with ideas about what the two countries might disagree on, such as immigration, sharing resources, civil rights, and borders.
3. Now have half the family pretend they are ambassadors from one of the countries, and the other half pretend they are ambassadors from the other country. Have each group come up with some ways the two countries could disagree respectfully, using the respectful disagreement skills as a guide.
4. Have each group role-play respectful disagreement with the other.



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Lesson 3, Language Arts and Social Studies

Table Talk: Can You Find a United Solution?

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 calmly and respectfully figure out problems in everyday life using these Action Steps:

- Analyze the situation
 - Brainstorm options
 - Consider each option
 - Decide on and Do the best option
1. Have each family member pretend to be a different country, creating a “mini-United Nations.”
 2. Decide on an international, national, local, or schoolwide problem to discuss (for example, global warming, emission laws, or lack of recycling).
 3. Come up with a united plan using the Action Steps to solve the problem. Each person must make sure that his or her country's point of view is being heard and included in the final plan. Everyone will need to use negotiating and compromising skills as they try to come up with a united plan.



Lesson 3, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Which Is the Better Solution?

What you'll need: DVD player or streaming video

1. Watch an age-appropriate TV sitcom (such as an episode of *I Love Lucy*), where a problem is presented.
2. Pause the clip after the problem is presented but before it's resolved.
3. Using the Action Steps from the previous activity, create a plan together for solving the characters' problem.
4. Show the rest of the video. How closely did your plan match the characters' solution? Ask your child: **Which solution was better, your family's or the characters'? Why?**



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Lesson 4, Language Arts and Social Studies

Screen Time: How Can You Help?

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

Many people affected by natural disasters like floods, fires, and earthquakes need support.

1. With your child, think of a natural disaster that has happened recently, either locally, nationally, or internationally.
2. Using the Action Steps in previous activities, come up with several ways your family might be able to help the people in need (for example, you could collect donations of money, clothes, food, and other supplies).
3. Follow through on the idea!



Lesson 4, Health and Science

Family Project: How Can You Support the Environment?

What you'll need: time to volunteer

1. Decide with your family on a local environmental group you'd like to volunteer for. Check with your local parks and public lands departments for ideas. It could be a community effort to clean up a park or stream, a school-grounds cleanup, or helping start or work on a neighborhood public garden.
2. As your family works together on this project, have everyone think about the following questions:
 - How are you supporting each other during the cleanup effort?
 - In what way are you being an “ally” to the environment?
 - Why is it important that families and other groups work together to support our natural environment?
 - Do you feel closer as a family after having worked together?



Lesson 4, Health and Science

Screen Time: How Can You Make Electronic Communication More Personal?

What you'll need: computer or cell phone with texting capability

Texts, instant messages, and email can sometimes be misinterpreted or seem impersonal because there's no body language or voice tone to go along with the words.

1. Ask your child if he or she has ever received a message that was confusing until he or she got more information from the sender.
2. Talk about ways to make electronic messages friendlier (such as using emoticons or abbreviations).
3. Have your child send a friendly, personal email or text message to another family member who might like or need a warm gesture. Remind your child to show empathy in the message. (Some examples are: "I think I know how you feel," "I remember what it was like when I went through that," "I'm here for you if you need me," and "I'm glad you're my cousin/brother/grandmother.")



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Lesson 5, Media Literacy

Screen Time: Do Violent Video Games Lead to Violence?

What you'll need: focused time to talk, a collection of video games

Research shows that being around violent video games can be linked to aggressive behavior.

1. Collect your family's video games (or borrowed video games) in a pile and look through them, noticing the game names, the objects of the games, and the pictures on the covers.
2. Together as a family, discuss whether you agree or disagree with the following: violent video games lead to violence or aggression.
3. Come up with possible reasons for both sides of the argument, while thinking about the following questions: How are violent acts shown? What kinds of participation in violent acts do these video games require? How might violent video games be a practice for violent behavior? Do these games make players less sensitive to violence?



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Lesson 6, Health and Science

Table Talk: Why Do People Act Differently Online Than in Person?

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

Sometimes people will say things online that they would never dream of saying to someone face to face—both good and bad things. Why is that? Psychologists have some ideas:

- You don't know me (it doesn't feel as if the actions count if users are anonymous)
- You can't see me (if users are invisible, they feel safe)
- See you later (users feel as if they're not interacting in real time)
- It's all in my head (users begin to feel as if their online peers are creations of their own minds)
- It's just a game (it's not real)
- We're equals (users feel as if they can't get in trouble)

1. Discuss with your child what he or she thinks each of these ideas mean and how these ideas might make people less inhibited online.
2. Ask if any of your child's friends have ever posted something hurtful or surprising about someone else. Ask if your child has ever done the same.



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Lesson 10, Media Literacy

Table Talk: Is Using Media a Good Way to Deal with Stress?

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

Your child might think watching TV and using other media is a good way to deal with stress. But some researchers have found a strong connection between a lot of TV watching and a rise in depression among youth in the United States.

1. With your child, discuss the different ways he or she—and you—might use media, such as playing video games, watching TV, and surfing the Internet to deal with stress. Ask: **Is using media a short-term or long-term way of dealing with stress? How might using media every day create more stress? What are some other ways of dealing with stress that you could use instead of media?** (Some examples are reading, playing board games, taking a bike ride or walk, and calling a friend.)
2. Make a plan as a family to substitute the ideas you come up with for some of your screen time.