**DISCUSSION & REFLECTION FOR PARENTS**

**The Virtue of GENTLENESS**

Parents discuss how to help their children develop the virtue of gentleness:

* How can we encourage the development of the virtue of gentleness in our children?
* How can we as parents help foster in our children the desire to be gentle to all humanity?

**What is Gentleness?**

Gentleness is acting and speaking in a way which is considerate and kind to others. It is using self-control, in order not to hurt or offend anyone. Being gentle mean to be very careful. You can be gentle with people and animals in the way you touch them and the way you speak to them. Being gentle with things means to be careful so that they will not break or be hurt in any way. Gentleness is moving wisely, touching softly, holding carefully, speaking quietly, and thinking kindly.

**Why Practice Gentleness?**

People are very sensitive creatures. Many things are delicate and fragile, but feelings are the most fragile of all. When people are gentle with each other, feelings are protected and no one is hurt. When you handle things gently and carefully, they are less likely to be broken. When you think gentle thoughts, it makes the world a gentler place. Gentle people are loved and appreciated by others.

Without gentleness things are broken and feelings are hurt. Even if you do not mean to do it, you could play too roughly or say things that you will be sorry for. To be gentle, you have to think about being gentle. Otherwise, it is easy to become too rough. People who are too rough scare and hurt other people.

**How Do You Practice It?**

You practice gentleness by first "going inside" and deciding that you do not want to hurt or offend anyone or anything. Then you learn to control yourself, your body, your mind, and your voice. You try hard to be careful (full of care). You notice what your body, your hands and legs, are doing and make an effort to move carefully.

When you play with someone, you make sure you are not hurting them. When you play with a toy, you treat it carefully so that it will not break. When you say something, you say it in a way that does not hurt the listeners feelings.

When you feel made or hurt, instead of blowing up and hurting someone else, you use your voice to talk things out peacefully. You control yourself so that you don't hurt the person who has made you mad.

Concentrate your thoughts on love and kindness, and people will see the gentleness in your eyes.

**Signs of Success:**

You Are Practicing Gentleness When You...

* Decide not to hurt or offend anyone's feelings if you can help it.
* Try not to break or damage anything you touch. Handle things gently.
* Use self-control with your body, your mind and your voice.
* Know where you body and all its parts are all of the time.
* Speak softly when it is necessary.
* Play with others without getting too rough.
* Say things in a tactful way that respects the listeners feelings.
* Think gentle thoughts that make you smile inside.

**Affirmation*:***

I am gentle. Today I will think, speak and act with gentleness.

I will show care for people and for everything I touch.

**Quotable Quotes:**

... love and affinity are the fruits of a gentle disposition, a pure nature and a praiseworthy character... ~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Our problems are not solved by physical force, by hatred, by war. Our problems are solved by loving-kindness, by gentleness, by joy. ~ The Buddha

Let your gentleness by known to everyone. The Lord is near.

~ Bible. Philippians 4:5

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ~ Bible, Galatians 5:22

I choose gentleness... Nothing is won by force. I choose to be gentle. If I raise my voice may it be only in praise. If I clench my fist, may it be only in prayer. If I make a demand, may it be only of myself.”   
 ~ [Max Lucado](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/2737.Max_Lucado)

Nothing is so strong as gentleness. Nothing is so gentle as real strength.  
 ~ [Ralph W. Sockman](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/3445330.Ralph_W_Sockman)

Hate and force cannot be in just a part of the world without having an effect on

the rest of it. ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

A wise mother knows: It is her state of consciousness that matters. Her gentleness and clarity command respect. Her love creates security.   
 ~ [Vimala McClure](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/199444.Vimala_McClure), [The Tao of Motherhood](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2248953)

Adapted from The Virtues Project Educator’s Guide, by Linda Kavelin Popov