

THE FAMILY BONDING KIT



Dr. Mike Kelly

www.THEINSTITUTEOFWELLBEING.com

THE FAMILY BONDING KIT

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MIND
IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

These days, family bonding isn't as simple as it sounds. We all lead hectic lives, and all family members – even small kids – can have busy schedules. Plus, constant distractions from TV and social media can get in the way of attentive interactions between parents and kids, as well as between siblings.

As parents, it is important that you take the time out of your hectic schedules to be with your family. It teaches children that they matter and that relationships are worth **nurturing**. It's vital for children to have a sense of belonging and connection. Connection fosters optimal brain development, self-esteem, impulse control and more.

All of the games, tasks and activities in **The Family Bonding Kit** have been designed to be completed together as a family - By all working together towards a common goal, you're helping your children to appreciate the value of team work and persistence and you're also creating something meaningful that you can all be proud of as a family.

We encourage you to really engage with your children, observe and listen and really hear them. Hug and kiss them, encourage them, guide them and laugh with them and enjoy the fun bonding activities with your whole family.

On completion of **The Family Bonding Kit** I hope you feel closer, more connected, cohesive and continue to grow as a family.

Dr. Mike Kelly



5 BONDING TIPS

STEPS FOR BETTER FAMILY BONDING

1. Eat together

Sitting around the table is a great time for everyone to engage in a group conversation and for you to find out what's happening in your children's lives. Setting up some routines around mealtimes can also provide a sense of security and comfort – especially for younger children. You may choose, for instance, to eat at regular spots around the table. This sense of familiarity can help with creating a state of stability and comfort.

2. Get children involved in preparing meals

Encouraging kids of all ages to be actively involved in preparing meals can help make the time that you sit down at the table as a family even more meaningful. Small children can help you wash vegetables, set the table, and older children may even be interested in helping you prepare the family meal.

3. Exercise and play together

Getting some fresh air and exercising can be a fantastic way to bond as a family. Try to find a fun, outdoor activity that the whole family can get involved in. Depending on the age of your children, this could be bike riding (with small kids sitting in seats on the back of adults' bikes), a game of tennis, or a swim. Family exercise is also a great way for kids to develop important skills, and for everyone to get some valuable exercise.

4. Be interested

It may seem obvious, but when it comes to family bonding, it's very important that you take an active interest in your kids' lives – not just by taking them to lessons or ferrying them around in the car. Sit down and help them with their homework. Ask them about their friends, their activities and what they like and don't like. If your child shares something special with you – perhaps a secret fear or reservation – be sure to follow up at a later date to show you've remembered and let them know that it's important to you too.

5. Have one-on-one time too

As well as spending time together as a group, having one-on-one time with individual family members can go a long way towards developing strong, trusted relationships. If you have several children, make sure that they feel your attention is equally divided – and not forgetting your partner (if you have one).

3 TIPS FOR STRONG SIBLING BONDS

1. Set the tone for closeness from the start.

When you bring a new baby into the family, the temptation is to tell curious siblings to stand back. But in reality, the baby benefits from those hugs and kisses from brothers and sisters. Those interactions create a bond and a significant sense of belonging to one another. Let them cuddle with a little assistance and show even young big brothers and sisters some basic baby care tasks they can perform to help take care of their little one.

2. Talk about your own sibling relationships with your kids

One day I told my kids about how when my siblings and I were little, I was jealous of the fact that my sister had her own room, and I had shared one with my brother. I would pretend to go to sleep each night, I would wait until our parents were in bed, sneak out of my creaky bed and combat crawl across the hallway to my sisters' room to giggle and tell jokes in hushed whispers. My children loved that story so much, they've asked me to tell it over and over. (I think it had something to do with the element of mischief and the fact that the kids were pulling one over on the grown-ups). Whatever your favourite memories are of your own siblings, share them with your kids to let them know family is special.

3. Give your kids *assignments* in nurturing one another

Kids like to feel they have something to contribute. If your older son is a really good at football and your little one is just starting out, encourage him to work with his little brother on some basic skills. Even little children can feel engaged in the nurture and training of a sibling by teaching them to build with blocks, to peddle a tricycle around the hallway, or by reading to one another. Nurturing siblings creates a sense of investment in one another and a shared pride when the sibling succeeds in something.

INSTRUCTIONS

WE RECOMMEND WORKING THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES OVER A WEEK

Each activity takes at a minimum of 30 minutes

YOU WILL NEED:

Pens, paint, paper, glue, glitter and any other media your child enjoys

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL (FOR PARENT)

After each activity, take 5 minutes to fill out your reflective journal. It prompts reflection on the activities and provides a means of engaging critically and analytically with the kits content.

OUR FAMILY CREST

This coat of arms will represent your family, so it's really special! Brainstorm with your children for ideas that could represent your family's identity. This is a great opportunity to talk about family history, flags that represent the countries grandparents come from, traditions, culture and even favourite family meals or movies.

Draw, paint, or collage these ideas onto your family crest. Run wild with creativity together.

Lastly, think of a family motto and write it on the banner - Laminate the finished crest, if possible.

TIP – These make really great family greetings cards too – Scan them, or take them to your local printers.

FAMILY CONTRACT

The family contract is an important document indeed! In fact, every member of the family must agree to its contents and sign it at the bottom!

First you must discuss family values.

Ask questions like what is important to you?

Why is it important to talk to each other?

With all this information, you must create a list of 10 promises to each other that can never be broken!

We've done the first 2 for you.

**The children can decorate the border ready to be stuck on the fridge!

OUR FAMILY RULES

Family rules help everyone in your family get along better. They make family life more positive and peaceful.

Together, you must create a list of 10 family rules. You can make rules about things like physical behaviour, safety, manners, routines and respect.

Good family rules are positive, specific and easy to understand.

They say exactly what behaviour you expect, for example: “We say please when we ask for something”. They are easy for children to understand, for example: “Use a quiet voice inside the house”. They tell children what to do, rather than what not to do, for example: “Put your clothes away”, rather than, “Don’t be messy”.

OUR FAMILY MANTRA

A family mantra is a powerful bonding tool.

It’s something a child will remember their entire life! So, make it good!

Using age-appropriate wording, discuss with your children the following:

What do we (as a family) stand for?

What kind of family do we want to become?

What kind of feeling do we want in our home?

How do you hope people describe us?

How do we want to give back to others?

How can we make our world a better place?”

Then use the template to create your mantra.

It should be authentic, heartfelt, and meaningful.

Make it short and easy to remember.

Repeat it often.

Repeat the first part, then ask your children to finish it.

Be sure to live out the words of your family mantra.

5 THINGS I LOVE ABOUT YOU

Each person must take a sheet, choose a family member and write their name at the top of the page. Then write or draw five things they love about that family member. When finished, take it in turns to discuss your work.

FAMILY PORTRAITS

Sit around a table together and each choose a member of your family to paint or draw, make sure nobody gets left out. Choose your media, be creative, use colour but remember you don't have to be an artist to have fun.

LOOKING FORWARD

(To be completed by parent(s) when you've finished all of the activities in the kit.)

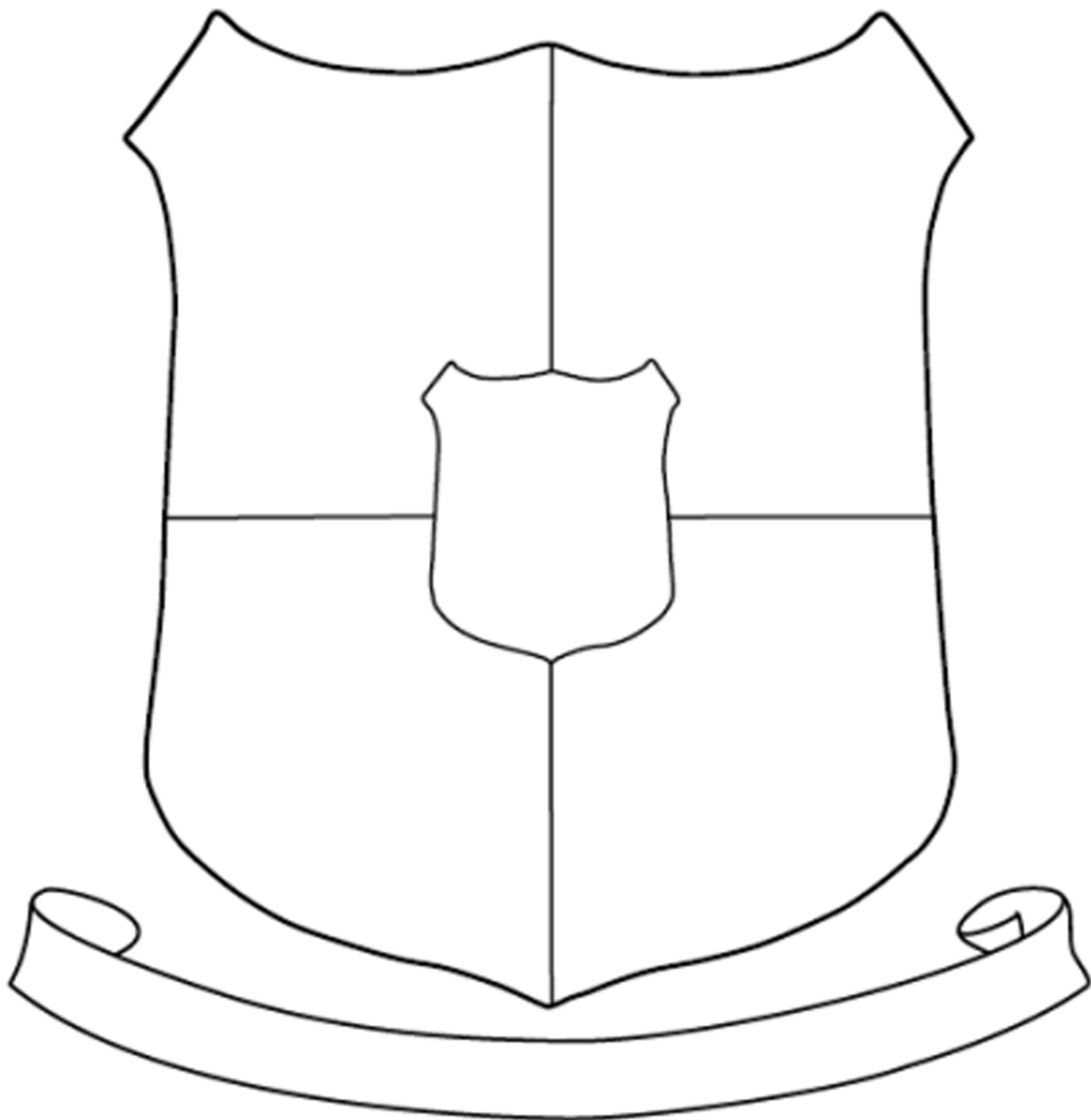
Take 10 minutes to make a note of what you've enjoyed, what you've learned and what were the most positive aspects of the kit. Think about how you'll make it a part of everyday family life.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

ACTIVITY

THINGS THAT WENT WELL:	THINGS THAT WERE CHALLENGING:
FAVOURITE MOMENT:	SOMETHING TO DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME:
WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHILD(REN)?:	WHAT DID YOUR CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT YOU?:

OUR FAMILY CREST



OUR FAMILY CONTRACT

THE FAMILY

HEREBY MAKE A SOLEMN PROMISE
TO OURSELVES AND EACHOTHER TO ALWAYS...

- Have love and respect for each other
- Celebrate each-others achievements
-
-
-
-

FAMILY RULES

THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR



OUR FAMILY MANTRA

IN OUR HOUSE WE

WE BELIEVE

WE LOVE TO

WE CHOOSE TO

5 THINGS I LOVE ABOUT YOU

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the majority of the page below the title and the dashed line. It is intended for the user to write their five things they love about the recipient.

FAMILY PORTRAITS



LOOKING FORWARD

What are the three most important things you've learned from doing the activities in the family bonding kit?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What aspect(s) do you intend to continue?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

How can you make sure you keep the momentum going?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

FINALLY - FOR NOW

Whilst we're following the guidelines, and performing good personal and emotional hygiene, we are still human and it is vital to be our brother's keeper, good to our neighbours, family, friends and society.

It is important to remember that people don't recover from a disaster until they believe their personal needs appear to be met. Is there something you can do to help?

Finally, here are **four** key points:

- Promote safety
- Ensure connectedness
- Create an environment of comfort and calm, observing social distancing.
- Nurture self-empowerment, then pass it on.

All the very best.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Mike Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Mike Kelly
Think well, Live well and Be well.