
PILOT EDITION



ONLINE

*Workshops to strengthen relationships between
young adolescents and their parenting adults*

The Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families

Start-Up Guide and Tool Kit



www.KeepConnected.info

www.SearchInstitute.org

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FEEDBACK, PLEASE! If you have ideas for how to improve this *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families*, please send them to Gene Roehlkepartain at gener@searchinstitute.org. Your feedback will inform future editions.

Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families: Start-Up Guide and Tool Kit

March 2021 pilot edition

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Organizing the Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families

One key to sustaining strong relationships is for families to integrate shared activities, routines, or practices into their everyday lives. These help to keep a focus on their relationships in the midst of everything else that is going on. The *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families* is an activity for families to do together to follow up on their discussions during the online workshop sessions. They have an opportunity to solidify commitments to each other from the session and then to build a plan that put those commitments into practice.

Purpose

The Family Pledge project helps families:

- Create a shared memory of the shared workshop experience.
- Create continuity between sessions.
- Focus on commitments they make for sustaining positive relationships.
- Remember to follow through by having a visual reminder of their commitments.

How It Works

This activity takes place in the days right after each of the first three workshops, with families adding to the pledge project based on the previous session's topic. Then during the final session, each family will share something from its pledge with the other families as part of a closing ceremony in the workshop series. They can then be encouraged to check in on their pledge at regular intervals following the workshop series.

Topics

After each workshop, families decorate the selected craft to highlight the session's theme as it applies to their family. It is based entirely on the family's own perspectives and hopes. Then families work together to talk about priorities, goals, and next steps in each area.

The session topics build on the five elements of developmental relationships in Search Institute's framework:

- Workshop 1 A picture of their family, the names of their family members, and core strengths of their family.
- Workshop 2 Care and
Share Power
- Workshop 3 Challenge Growth and
Provide Support
- Workshop 4 Expand Possibilities

Options

We have identified four creative projects you can use to implement *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families*. Each is identical in content; they only differ in the craft that is involved. They are:

- 1. Family Pledge Box** Each family decorates a cardboard box and keeps artifacts from the series (that reflect family commitments) inside the box.
- 2. Family Pledge Collage** Each family creates a collage that represents their family and its shared commitments.
- 3. Family Pledge Crest** Each family draws or colors representations of its commitments on a family crest.
- 4. Family T-shirt Design** Each family creates a t-shirt design that demonstrates its commitments based on the workshop series.

If you have another idea that fits your families, your organization, or your culture, feel free to use it, as long as it fits well with the overall purpose of reinforcing family relationships.

Supplies

Do not assume that each family will have (or will gather) its own supplies. Rather, we have provided supply lists so that your organization can provide a **Family Pledge supply kit** to each participating family at the beginning of the workshop series, making it easy for them to create the pledge project.

Tools in this Guide

On the following pages, we have provided separate instructions, supply lists, and guides for families for each of the four options: the Pledge Box, the Pledge Crest, the Pledge Collage, and the Pledge T-Shirt. Select the option you will use. Then add the appropriate family guide to their workshop packet. Finally, provide the appropriate instructions and supply list to the people who will be organizing the sessions so they can provide the appropriate supplies to the families.



The Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families



Description

Following each workshop, families decorate a cardboard box. They add symbolic objects to it to after each session to highlight their family's commitments related to the workshop's topic.

How it works

Before the workshop series begins, provide each family with a *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan Kit* with all the needed supplies and the instructions. After each session, they will follow the instructions for how to take the next step in completing their box. Each family will share something from its pledge with the other families as part of a closing ceremony in the workshop series.



Supplies for each family

Basic Supplies

- A plain white box¹
- Markers (several colors)
- Glue, a glue stick, or tape
- Scissors to cut paper
- A fine-point permanent marker (e.g., Sharpie)

Supplies to Create Reminder Symbols

Follow up to Session 2

- Pieces of ribbon for each family member (1 or 2 inches wide and 12 inches long); the kind used to wrap presents (express care)
- Yellow construction paper (share power)

Follow up to Session 3

- 4-5 wide rubber bands (wide enough to write on) (support and challenge growth)
 - White construction paper (expand possibilities)
-

¹ Plain white boxes are available in office, storage, and gift stores. An example is the Container Store: www.containerstore.com/s/gift-packaging/gift-boxes/white-1-piece-cube-gift-boxes/12d?productId=11001010&green=33605C0E-A5A2-56D4-9C5A-868851D1C857



The Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families



Welcome!

A key to keeping strong relationships going in families is to weave shared activities or routines into our everyday lives that keep us focused on our relationships. The *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families* is designed to help you do that. Doing this activity together between workshops helps your family:

- Spend a few minutes together reflecting on the session’s topics.
- Create a shared memory focused on something that’s important to you.
- Focus on commitments you make to keep your relationships strong.

After Session 1: Thriving Through the Teenage Years

1. Locate the box in the Pledge to Keep Connected Family Kit. Find the markers or other decorating supplies. For now, **decorate only the BOTTOM of the box.**
2. Have a young person draw a picture of the family, or attach a family photo to the box BOTTOM.
3. Have everyone in the family sign the bottom of the box, too.
4. Think back to the session when you talked about family character strengths—qualities of your family that you particularly value. (See Handout 1.2 in your workbook.) Add some of the key values you chose on that handout to the bottom of the box. (If you want to add others that are important to you, do that, too.)
5. Have each family member tell a story about something that has happened in your family that reminds them of one of the strengths you’ve written down. If they can’t think of something, they can also tell a story that makes them proud to be part of the family. It could be a recent story or a story from your ancestors.
6. When you’ve finished, thank each other for helping remember all the good things!

After Session 2: Staying Close While Letting Go

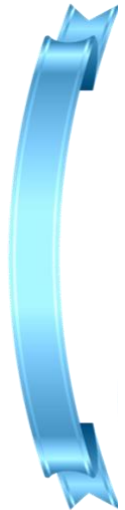


EXPRESS CARE

1. Get your Pledge Box and the decorating supplies.
2. This time you're going to start by decorating the TOP of the box. Have someone in the family **write Express Care on the top of the box**. Creative or artistic letters are great!

We're putting Express Care on the top because care is the starting point that opens up our relationships. Without care, relationships can stay shut.

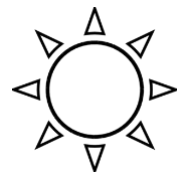
3. Have everyone remember ways they appreciate others expressing care to them. Start by remembering some of the ideas you talked about during the session. As you remember things, write them (or draw symbols of them) on the top of the box where you wrote Express Care. Continue until everyone has added what they want to add (or until there's no more room left).
4. Read aloud: *The challenge we all face is that we usually have good intentions about expressing care to each other. But it's easy to forget when we get busy and fall back into our routines. Would you agree or not? Can you think of examples?*
5. To help us all remember, we're going to create "reminder ribbons" for our pledge boxes. (Get the ribbons from the Pledge kit.)
6. Think about all the ideas you've had together about expressing care.
7. Decide as a family what you will all do to become more consistent in expressing care *in that one way* that you all agree that you'd like to do more. Write that on the ribbon using the marker.
8. If you wish, you may also write it on a ribbon for each person—or on something else that will help everyone remember.
9. Put the ribbon in the Keep Connected Pledge box. Read it each time you open the box as a reminder of how you all want to keep expressing care as an important part of your family relationships.



SHARE POWER

Next, turn to one of the sides of the box. Write Share Power on the first side of the box using artistic writing.

10. Based on the activities in the workshop, think together about 2-3 things you would like to work on together to be more intentional in how you share power in your family. They can be small things, but include ways everyone can be involved.
11. Find the paper sun in your pledge kit. The sun symbolizes power.
12. Write your shared commitments on the sun, as a way of showing your commitment to following through. Talk together about how you're going to encourage each other to keep your shared commitments.



13. Paste or tape your sun to the share power side of your pledge box. (Or, if you prefer, you can put it inside the box.)
14. When you've finished, thank each other for spending time together.

After Session 3: In the Zone: Challenge and Support Growth



CHALLENGE GROWTH

This session will take a longer because it includes preparing for the final session. So plan some extra time, or break it into two parts.

1. Get the Pledge Box you have been working on, along with the markers and other decorating supplies.
2. Artistically write **Challenge Growth on the second side** of the box.
3. Talk together about ways you challenge each other to grow in your family, remembering some of the things you talked about during the workshop. Be sure to remember the positive ways adults challenge growth with kids *and* how kids challenge growth for adults.
4. Add pictures, symbols, or words to that side of the box that reflect the ways your family challenges growth for each other.



PROVIDE SUPPORT

Then write **Provide Support on the third side of the box.**

5. Repeat the process: Talk about ways you provide support to each other, remembering ideas you talked about during the workshop. Highlight both the positive ways adults support kids and how kids support adults. Talk about any ideas that seem most doable for you. Which ones seemed most surprising?
6. Add pictures, symbols, or words to the Provide Support side of the box that reflect the ways people in your family really like to support each other. If there are ways you really don't like people to provide support, write them down too, then cross them out with a big X.
7. Get the rubber bands from the session. Recall that you wrote your "hard thing"—one thing you want to work on—on them. They are a reminder of the "Growth Zone." They have to be stretched to do any good. But you don't want to stretch them too much, or they'll break. During the online session, other family members wrote things on the rubber bands that they would do to support each other.
8. Have everyone read aloud what they wrote on the rubber bands for each other. Add those commitments to the box, either by putting the rubber bands in the box, or writing the commitments on another rubber bands or on a note card, a piece of paper, or a sticky note.





**EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES**

Thinking ahead to the next session . . .

1. Write **Expand Possibilities on the fourth side** of the box. Expand Possibilities will be a focus of the final session, so you haven't talked about it until now.
2. Expand Possibilities is expressed in three actions:
 - a. Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.
 - b. Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.
 - c. Introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.

What are ways your families does these three things for each other? How do adults do them for youth? And how do youth do them for adults?

3. Once you have several ideas, pick 4-5 that fit well with your family. Write or draw them on the Expand Possibilities side of the box.
4. Then give each family member 3 notecards, sticky notes, or small pieces of paper. Without taking, each family member should write on each note card or sticky one way they would appreciate other family members helping them expand possibilities more. *One idea per note card.*
5. The have each person read one of their cards with a request and put it on the table. Other family members should not debate it or argue about it or say they already do it. If they don't understand, they can ask about it, but that's all. (Some requests may be heartfelt, so it's important to be sensitive.)
6. Rotate and have each family member add their first request. Then have everyone add their second request without any discussion. Then their third so that all the requests are shared before there is any discussion.
7. Now look at all the requests. Are there any similarities? Put them together—but only if the people who made the requests agree that they are similar. Don't try to force any requests to fit with others.
8. Next decide which requests or groups of requests fit into the following broad categories:
 - Requests that are easy to fulfill now if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that are challenging but doable to fulfill, if we worked together on them.
 - Requests that are hard to fulfill now, even if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that we really cannot fulfill in the near future, even if we really want to.
9. Be honest. If everyone doesn't have something in the first two categories, see if there's a first step in the other two that would fit in the first two. If something overlaps for everyone, brainstorm how you might together help to fulfill the

request creatively for everyone. If they're all different, brainstorm ways they might reinforce each other. Then put the others in the box for now.

10. Use that idea to decide on what you will do as a family to expand possibilities for each other. Find the white construction paper in the Keep Connected Pledge and Plan kit, and cut out the shape of a lightbulb to represent your family's new idea for expanding possibilities. Write your idea on it, and place it on or inside your Pledge Box.

11. As a symbol of expanding possibilities through new ideas, find the sheet of white construction paper and cut out a big light bulb. Then write on the light bulb what your family is committed to do together in the coming weeks. Add the light bulb to your pledge project.



If you can, take a break and come back to this next section on another day . . .

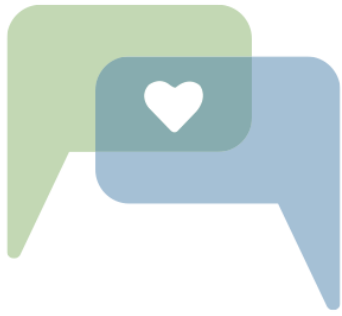
Looking Back and Looking Forward: Your Pledge and Plan

12. Gather as a family, and start by looking back at your Pledge Box and its contents. Remember the character strengths you identified in your family. Remember each of the keys: express care, share power, challenge growth, provide support, and (coming next), expand possibilities.
13. What were some ideas and commitments you made to yourself and each other that have particularly stuck with you? Perhaps all are important in some way, but are there some that stand out more than others for the whole family?
14. As a family (being sure to listen to everyone—remember Share Power), identify three commitments or “pledges” that came up through Keep Connected that you believe would be really important for your family to focus on moving forward to maintain strong relationships and to keep connected through high school. (Your ideas don't need to be like any other family's; each family is different.)
15. Find the green construction paper, and cut out three trees. Write these three commitments on these three trees, and tape them onto your Pledge Box.

Build Your Family's Plan to KEEP CONNECTED

16. Turn to the “Good Habits to Keep Connected” worksheet on the last page. And follow these steps:
 - a. Write the three commitments or pledges you came up with in the box #1 at the top.
 - b. Move to box #2. Think about why these three commitments are important. How will they help you? Write down those benefits. (It's important to remember the benefits when you are having a harder time keeping commitments.)

- c. Think about what might get in the way of those commitments, and write some of the big things in box #3. Be honest. Time, money, emotions, habits, and many other things can get in the way of things we want. We can't deal with those barriers unless we are conscious of them.
 - d. Look at the barriers. If those things come up, what will you do to get rid of or work around them? Write down specific plans in box #4. Seeing those specifics can be important when you're caught in the middle of a challenge.
 - e. In box #5, put names of specific people who will keep you on track. They'll be honest, loving, and firm. They'll also help you get rid of the barriers.
 - f. And don't forget the rewards in #6. When you've made some progress and hit some milestones, how will you celebrate? Don't wait to the end, but find some ways to celebrate pretty soon to reinforce a good start-up.
 - g. And be sure to check in with each other from time to time, being intentional about it in box #7. Maybe it's weekly or monthly. If things aren't going well, it's okay to start over, to reset. You won't know to do that unless you check.
17. Once you have a first draft, you may want to wait and come back to it after the final session, then tweak it together. And when you check in, you can always adjust it too. It's your plan.
18. Before you go to the final session, as a family, review the plan and decide what you want to share with the whole group—just a couple of things that are significant or exciting for you. It can be something you've learned or something from your plan. You might, for example, just read your three commitments.



Good Habits to Keep Connected

Use this storyboard to think through what you'll do together to keep connected. Focus on strategies you can use and people who will encourage you to stick with it.

1. COMMITMENT
What will we do to keep connected?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

2. BENEFITS
How will this keep us connected?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. BARRIERS
What obstacles could get in the way:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. PLAN
How can we remove or get over these obstacles?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. SUPPORTS
Who will help us stay on track?

6. REWARDS
How will we celebrate milestones?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

7. REVIEW
When will we check in with each other?

PLEDGE COLLAGE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS



The Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families



Description

Following each workshop, families create a collage. They add pictures and symbolic objects to it to after each session to highlight their family's commitments related to the workshop's topic.

How it works

Before the workshop series begins, provide each family with a *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan Kit* with all the needed supplies and the instructions. After each session, they will follow the instructions for how to take the next step in completing their collage. Each family will share something from its pledge with the other families as part of a closing ceremony in the workshop series.

Supplies for each family

Basic Supplies	Supplies to Create Reminder Symbols
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A posterboard to on which to create a collage• Old magazines, etc., for pictures to clip²• Markers (several colors)• Glue, a glue stick, or tape• Scissors to cut paper• A fine-point permanent marker(e.g., Sharpie)	<p><u>Follow up to Session 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pieces of ribbon for each family member (1 or 2 inches wide and 12 inches long); the kind used to wrap presents (express care)• Yellow construction paper (share power) <p><u>Follow up to Session 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4-5 wide rubber bands (wide enough to write on) (support and challenge growth)• White construction paper (expand possibilities)• Green construction paper (commitments to grow relationships)

² When you provide magazines or other sources of images for families to use to create collages, make sure the pictures are reflective of the participating families in terms of race/ethnicity, family structure, and other aspects of their identities.



The Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families



Welcome!

A key to keeping strong relationships going in families is to weave shared activities or routines into our everyday lives that keep us focused on our relationships. The *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families* is designed to help you do that. Doing this activity together between workshops helps your family:

- Spend a few minutes together reflecting on the session’s topics.
- Create a shared memory focused on something that’s important to you.
- Focus on commitments you make to keep your relationships strong.

After Session 1: Thriving Through the Teenage Years

1. Locate the posterboard in the Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families Kit. Find the markers or other decorating supplies. For now, **decorate only the CENTER of the posterboard.**
2. Have a young person draw a picture of the family, or attach a family photo to the CENTER of the posterboard.
3. Have everyone in the family sign the center of the posterboard, too.
4. Think back to the session when you talked about family character strengths—qualities of your family that you particularly value. (See Handout 1.2 in your workbook.) Add some of the key values you chose on that handout to the center of the posterboard. (If you want to add others that are important to you, you can do that, too.)
5. Have each family member tell a story about something that has happened in your family that reminds them of one of the strengths you’ve written down. If they can’t think of something, they can also tell a story that makes them proud to be part of the family. It could be a recent story or a story from your ancestors.
6. When you’ve finished, thank each other for helping remember all the good things!

After Session 2: Staying Close While Letting Go



EXPRESS CARE

1. Get your Pledge Collage and the decorating supplies from the Pledge kit.
2. This time you'll start by decorating the TOP of the collage. Have someone in the family **write Express Care on the top of the collage**. Creative or artistic letters are great!
We put Express Care on the top because care is the starting point that opens up our relationships. Without care, relationships can stay shut.
3. Have everyone remember ways they appreciate others expressing care to them. Start by remembering some of the ideas you talked about during the session. As you remember things, write them (or draw symbols of them) around Express Care near the top of the collage. Continue until everyone has added what they want to add (or until there's no more room left).
4. Read aloud: The challenge we all face is that we usually have good intentions about expressing care to each other. But it's easy to forget when we get busy and fall back into our routines. Would you agree? Can you think of examples?
5. To help us all remember, we're going to create "reminder ribbons" for our pledge collages.
6. Think about all the ideas you've had together about expressing care. Decide as a family what you will all do to become more consistent in expressing care *in that one way* that you all agree that you'd like to do more. Write that on the ribbon using the marker.
7. You may also write it on a ribbon for each person—or on something else that will help everyone remember.
8. Tape the ribbon on the Keep Connected Pledge collage. Read it each time you look at the collage as a reminder of how you all want to keep expressing care as an important part of your family relationships.

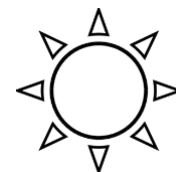


Next, turn to left side of the collate. Write Share Power on this side using artistic writing.



SHARE POWER

1. Based on the activities in the workshop, think together about 1-2 things you would like to work on together to be more intentional in how you share power in your family. They can be small things, but include ways everyone can be involved.
2. Find the yellow construction paper in your pledge kit. Cut a large sun out of it. The "sharing sun" symbolizes power.
3. Write your shared commitments on the sun, as a way of showing your commitment to following through. Talk together about how you're going to encourage each other to keep your shared commitments.
4. Paste or tape your sun to the share power portion of your collage.
5. When you've finished, thank each other for spending time together.



After Session 3: In the Zone: Challenge and Support Growth



CHALLENGE GROWTH

This session will take a longer because it includes preparing for the final session. So plan some extra time, or break it into two parts.

1. Get the Pledge Collage you have been working on, along with the markers and other decorating supplies.
2. Artistically write **Challenge Growth on the right side** of the collage.
3. Talk together about ways you challenge each other to grow in your family, remembering some of the things you talked about during the workshop. Be sure to remember the positive ways adults challenge growth with kids *and* how kids challenge growth for adults.
4. Add pictures, symbols, or words to the right side of the collage that reflect the ways your family challenges growth for each other.



PROVIDE SUPPORT

5. **Then write Provide Support on the bottom right side of the collage.**
6. Repeat the process: Talk about ways you provide support to each other, remembering ideas you talked about during the workshop. Highlight both the positive ways adults support kids and how kids support adults. Talk about any ideas that seem most doable for you. Which ones seemed most surprising?
7. Add pictures, symbols, or words near Provide Support on the collage that reflect the ways people in your family really like to support each other. If there are ways you really don't like people to provide support, write them down too, then cross them out with a big X.
8. Get the rubber bands from the session. Recall that you wrote your "hard thing"—one thing you want to work on—on them. They are a reminder of the "Growth Zone." They have to be stretched to do any good. But you don't want to stretch them too much, or they'll break. During the online session, other family members wrote things on the rubber bands that they would do to support and stretch each other—without stretching too far!
9. Have everyone read aloud what they wrote on the rubber bands for each other. Add those commitments to collage, either by putting the rubber bands in the collage between support and challenge, or writing the commitments on another rubber bands or on a note card, a piece of paper, or a sticky note.



Thinking ahead to the next session . . .

1. Write **Expand Possibilities on the bottom left side** of the collage. Expand Possibilities will be a focus of the final session, so you haven't talked about it until now.
2. Expand Possibilities is expressed in three actions:

**EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES**

- Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.
 - Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.
 - Introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.
3. What are ways your family does these three things for each other? How do adults do them for youth? And how do youth do them for adults?
 4. Once you have several ideas, pick 4-5 that fit well with your family. Write or draw them near Expand Possibilities on the collage.
 5. Then give each family member 3 notecards, sticky notes, or small pieces of paper. Without taking, each family member should write on each note card or sticky one way they would appreciate other family members helping them expand possibilities more. *One idea per note card.*
 6. Then have each person read one of their cards with a request and put it on the table. Other family members should not debate it or argue about it or say they already do it. If they don't understand, they can ask about it, but that's all. (Some requests may be heartfelt, so it's important to be sensitive.)
 7. Rotate and have each family member add their first request. Then have everyone add their second request without any discussion. Then their third so that all the requests are shared before there is any discussion.
 8. Now look at all the requests. Are there any similarities? Put them together—but only if the people who made the requests agree that they are similar. Don't try to force any requests to fit with others.
 9. Next decide which requests or groups of requests fit into the following broad categories:
 - Requests that are easy to fulfill now if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that are challenging but doable to fulfill, if we worked together on them.
 - Requests that are hard to fulfill now, even if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that we really cannot fulfill in the near future, even if we really want to.
 10. Be honest. If everyone doesn't have something in the first two categories, see if there's a first step in the other two that would fit in the first two. If something overlaps for everyone, brainstorm how you might together help to fulfill the request creatively for everyone. If they're all different, brainstorm ways they might reinforce each other. Then put the others away.
 11. Use that idea to decide on what you will do as a family to expand possibilities for each other. Find the white construction paper in the Keep Connected Pledge and Plan kit, and cut out the shape of a lightbulb to represent your family's new idea for expanding possibilities. Write your final ideas on it, and place it on your collage in the Expand Possibilities section on the bottom left.



If you can, take a break and come back to this next section on another day . . .

Looking Back and Looking Forward: Your Pledge and Plan

1. Gather as a family, and start by looking back at your Pledge Collage. Remember the character strengths you identified in your family. Remember each of the keys: express care, share power, challenge growth, provide support, and (coming next), expand possibilities.
2. What were some ideas and commitments you made to yourself and each other that have particularly stuck with you? Perhaps all are important in some way, but are there some that stand out more than others for the whole family?
3. As a family (being sure to listen to everyone—remember Share Power), identify three commitments or “pledges” that came up through Keep Connected that you believe would be really important for your family to focus on moving forward to maintain strong relationships and to keep connected through high school. (Your ideas don’t need to be like any other family’s; each family is different.)
4. Find the green construction paper, and cut out three trees. Write these three commitments on these three trees, and tape them onto your collage.

Build Your Family’s Plan to KEEP CONNECTED

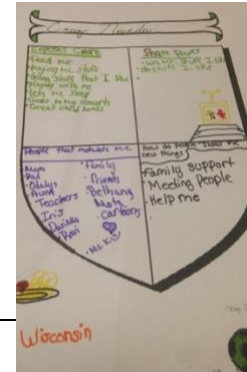
1. Turn to the “Good Habits to Keep Connected” worksheet on the last page. And follow these steps:
 - a. Write the three commitments or pledges you came up with in box #1 at the top.
 - b. Move to box #2. Think about why these three commitments are important. How will they help you? Write down those benefits. (It’s important to remember the benefits when you are having a harder time keeping commitments.)
 - c. Think about what might get in the way of those commitments, and write some of the big things in box #3. Be honest. Time, money, emotions, habits, and many other things can get in the way of things we want. We can’t deal with those barriers unless we are conscious of them.
 - d. Look at the barriers. If those things come up, what will you do to get rid of or work around them? Write down specific plans in box #4. Seeing those specifics can be important when you’re caught in the middle of a challenge.
 - e. In box #5, put names of specific people who will keep you on track. They’ll be honest, loving, and firm. They’ll also help you deal with the barriers.
 - f. And don’t forget the rewards in #6. When you’ve made some progress and hit some milestones, how will you celebrate? Don’t wait to the end, but find some ways to celebrate pretty soon to reinforce a good start-up.
 - g. And be sure to check in with each other from time to time, being intentional about it in box #7. Maybe it’s weekly or monthly. If things aren’t going well, it’s okay to start over, to reset. You won’t know to do that unless you check.

2. Once you have a first draft, you may want to wait and come back to it after the final session, then tweak it together. And when you check in, you can always adjust it too. It's your plan.
3. Before you go to the final session, as a family, review the plan and decide what you want to share with the whole group—just a couple of things that are significant or exciting for you. It can be something you've learned or something from your plan. You might, for example, just read your three commitments.

PLEDGE CREST: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS



Family Pledge to Keep Connected

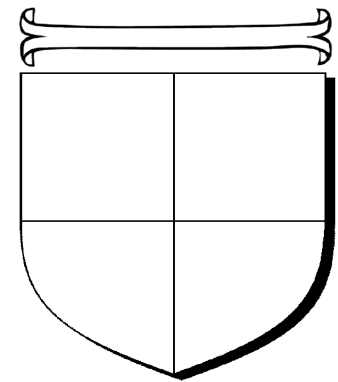


Description

Following each workshop, families decorate a family crest. They add symbolic objects to it to after each session to highlight their family's commitments related to the workshop's topic.

How it works

Before the workshop series begins, provide each family with a *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan Kit* with all the needed supplies and the instructions. After each session, they will follow the instructions for how to take the next step in completing their family crest. Each family will share something from its pledge with the other families as part of a closing ceremony in the workshop series.



Supplies for each family

Basic Supplies

- A poster board or large paper with a crest drawn on it (see illustration above)
- Markers (several colors)
- Glue, a glue stick, or tape
- Scissors to cut paper
- A fine-point permanent marker (e.g., Sharpie)

Supplies to Create Reminder Symbols

Follow up to Session 2

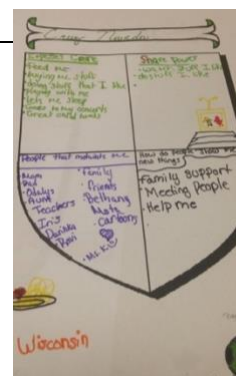
- Pieces of ribbon for each family member (1 or 2 inches wide and 12 inches long); the kind used to wrap presents (express care)
- Yellow construction paper (share power)

Follow up to Session 3

- 4-5 wide rubber bands (wide enough to write on) (support and challenge growth)
 - White construction paper (expand possibilities)
 - Green construction paper (commitments to grow relationships)
-



Family Pledge to Keep Connected



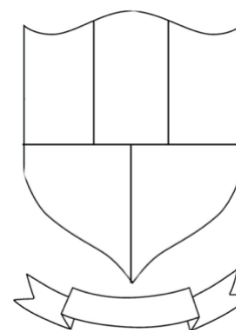
Welcome!

A key to keeping strong relationships going in families is to weave shared activities or routines into our everyday lives that keep us focused on our relationships. The *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families* is designed to help you do that. Doing this activity together between workshops helps your family:

- Spend a few minutes together reflecting on the session’s topics.
- Create a shared memory focused on something that’s important to you.
- Focus on commitments you make to keep your relationships strong.

After Session 1: Thriving Through the Teenage Years

1. Locate the large piece of paper with the crest drawn on it in the Pledge to Keep Connected Family Kit. Find the markers or other decorating supplies. For now, **decorate only the area of the crest where the name banner is.**
2. Have a young person draw a picture of the family, or attach a family photo where there’s the banner for the name. Have everyone in the family sign the same area of the crest, too.
3. Think back to the session when you talked about family character strengths—qualities of your family that you particularly value. (See Handout 1.2 in your workbook.) Add some of the key values you chose on that handout around the name banner. (If you want to add others that are important to you, you can do that, too.)
4. Have each family member tell a story about something that has happened in your family that reminds them of one of the strengths you’ve written down. If they can’t think of something, they can also tell a story that makes them proud to be part of the family. It could be a recent story or a story from your ancestors.
5. When you’ve finished, thank each other for helping remember all the good things!



After Session 2: Staying Close While Letting Go



EXPRESS CARE

15. Get your Pledge Crest and the decorating supplies.
16. This time you're going to start by decorating the first space in the crest. Have someone in the family **write Express Care** in this space. Creative or artistic letters are great!
17. Have everyone remember ways they appreciate others expressing care to them. Start by remembering some of the ideas you talked about during the session. As you remember things, write them (or draw symbols of them) in the Express Care space. Continue until everyone has added what they want to add (or until there's no more room left).
18. Read aloud: The challenge we all face is that we usually have good intentions about expressing care to each other. But it's easy to forget when we get busy and fall back into our routines. Would you agree? Can you think of examples?
19. To help everyone remember, create "reminder ribbons" for the pledge crests. (Use the ribbon from the Keep Connected Pledge kit.)
20. Think about all the ideas you've had together about expressing care. Decide together which one way you all like to have family members express care that you *don't do enough*.
21. Decide as a family what you will all do to become more consistent in expressing care *in that one way* that you all agree that you'd like to do more. Write that on the ribbon using the marker.
22. You may also write it on a ribbon for each person—or on something else that will help everyone remember.
23. Attach the ribbon to the Keep Connected Pledge crest. Read it each time you look at the crest as a reminder of how you all want to keep expressing care as an important part of your family relationships.

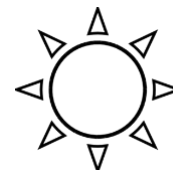


Now write **Share Power** in the next space on the crest using artistic writing.



SHARE POWER

24. Based on the activities in the workshop, think together about 2-3 things you would like to work on together to be more intentional in how you share power in your family. They can be small things, but include ways everyone can be involved.
25. Find the yellow construction paper in your pledge kit. Cut a large sun out of it. (The "sharing sun" symbolizes power.)
26. Write your shared commitments on the sun, as a way of showing your commitment to following through. Talk together about how you're going to encourage each other to keep your shared commitments.
27. Paste or tape your sun to the share power space on your pledge crest.
28. When you've finished, thank each other for spending time together.



After Session 3: In the Zone: Challenge and Support Growth



CHALLENGE GROWTH

This session will take a longer because it includes preparing for the final session. So, plan some extra time, or break it into two parts.

9. Get the Pledge Crest you have been working on, along with the markers and other decorating supplies.
10. Artistically write **Challenge Growth** in the third space in the Pledge Crest.
11. Talk together about ways you challenge each other to grow in your family, remembering some of the things you talked about during the workshop. Be sure to remember the positive ways adults challenge growth with kids *and* how kids challenge growth for adults.
12. Add pictures, symbols, or words to that space on the crest that reflect the ways your family challenges growth for each other.



PROVIDE SUPPORT

Then write **Provide Support on the fourth space in the crest.**

13. Repeat the process: Talk about ways you provide support to each other, remembering ideas you talked about during the workshop. Highlight both the positive ways adults support kids and how kids support adults. Talk about any ideas that seem most doable for you. Which ones seemed most surprising?

14. Add pictures, symbols, or words to the Provide Support space on the crest that reflect the ways people in your family really like to support each other. If there are ways you really don't like people to provide support, write them down too, then cross them out with a big X.

15. Get the rubber bands from the session. Recall that you wrote your "hard thing"—one thing you want to work on—on them. They are a reminder of the "Growth Zone." They have to be stretched to do any good. But you don't want to stretch them too much, or they'll break. During the online session, other family members wrote things on the rubber bands that they would do to support each other.



16. Have everyone read aloud what they wrote on the rubber bands for each other. Add those commitments to support space on the crest. You may also write the commitments on another rubber band or on a notecard, a piece of paper, or a sticky note, if you want to keep the rubber band as a bracelet.



Thinking ahead to the next session . . .

1. Write **Expand Possibilities in the fifth space in the crest.** Expand Possibilities will be a focus of the final session, so you haven't talked about it until now.
2. Expand Possibilities is expressed in three actions:
 - a. Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.

**EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES**

- b. Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.
 - c. Introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.
3. In what ways does your families do these three things for each other? How do adults do them for youth? And how do youth do them for adults?
4. Once you have several ideas, pick 4-5 that fit well with your family. Write or draw them on the Expand Possibilities space in the crest.
5. Then give each family member 3 notecards, sticky notes, or small pieces of paper. Without taking, each family member should write on each note card or sticky one way they would appreciate other family members helping them expand possibilities more. *One idea per note card.*
6. The have each person read one of their cards with a request and put it on the table. Other family members should not debate it or argue about it or say they already do it. If they don't understand, they can ask about it, but that's all. (Some requests may be heartfelt, so it's important to be sensitive.)
7. Rotate and have each family member add their first request. Then have everyone add their second request without any discussion. Then their third so that all the requests are shared before there is any discussion.
8. Now look at all the requests. Are there any similarities? Put them together—but only if the people who made the requests agree that they are similar. Don't try to force any requests to fit with others.
9. Next decide which requests or groups of requests fit into the following broad categories:
 - Requests that are easy to fulfill now if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that are challenging but doable to fulfill, if we worked together on them.
 - Requests that are hard to fulfill now, even if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that we really cannot fulfill in the near future, even if we really want to.
10. Be honest. If everyone doesn't have something in the first two categories, see if there's a first step in the other two that would fit in the first two. If something overlaps for everyone, brainstorm how you might together help to fulfill the request creatively for everyone. If they're all different, brainstorm ways they might reinforce each other. Set aside the others for now. You may want to come back to them later.

11. Use the idea you selected to decide on what you will do as a family to expand possibilities for each other. Find the white construction paper in the Keep Connected Pledge and Plan kit, and cut out the shape of a lightbulb to represent your family's new idea for expanding possibilities. Write your idea on it, and place it in the expand possibilities space on your pledge crest.



If you can, take a break and come back to this next section on another day . . .

Looking Back and Looking Forward: Your Pledge and Plan

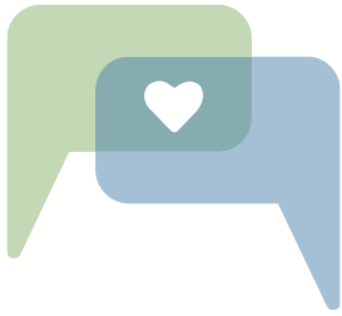
12. Gather as a family, and start by looking back at your Pledge Crest and its contents. Reflect on the character strengths you identified in your family. Remember each of the keys: express care, share power, challenge growth, provide support, and (coming next), expand possibilities.
13. What were some ideas and commitments you made to yourself and each other that have particularly stuck with you? Perhaps all are important in some way, but are there some that stand out more than others for the whole family?
14. As a family (being sure to listen to everyone—remember Share Power), identify three commitments or “pledges” that came up through Keep Connected that you believe would be really important for your family to focus on moving forward to maintain strong relationships and to keep connected through high school. (Your ideas don't need to be like any other family's; each family is different.)
15. Find the green construction paper, and cut out three trees. Write these three commitments on these three trees, and tape them onto the top of your Pledge Crest.

Build Your Family's Plan to KEEP CONNECTED

16. Turn to the “Good Habits to Keep Connected” worksheet on the last page. And follow these steps:
 - a. Write the three commitments or pledges you came up with in the box #1 at the top.
 - b. Move to box #2. Think about why these three commitments are important. How will they help you? Write down those benefits. (It's important to remember the benefits when you are having a harder time keeping commitments.)
 - c. Think about what might get in the way of those commitments, and write some of the big things in box #3. Be honest. Time, money, emotions, habits, and many other things can get in the way of things we want. We can't deal with those barriers unless we are conscious of them.
 - d. Look at the barriers. If those things come up, what will you do to get rid of or work around them? Write down specific plans in box #4. Seeing those

specifics can be important when you're caught in the middle of a challenge.

- e. In box #5, put names of specific people who will keep you on track. They'll be honest, loving, and firm. They'll also help you get rid of the barriers.
 - f. And don't forget the rewards in #6. When you've made some progress and hit some milestones, how will you celebrate? Don't wait to the end, but find some ways to celebrate pretty soon to reinforce a good start-up.
 - g. And be sure to check in with each other from time to time, being intentional about it in box #7. Maybe it's weekly or monthly. If things aren't going well, it's okay to start over, to reset. You won't know to do that unless you check.
17. Once you have a first draft, you may want to wait and come back to it after the final session, then tweak it together. And when you check in, you can always adjust it too. It's your plan.
18. Before you go to the final session, as a family, review the plan and decide what you want to share with the whole group—just a couple of things that are significant or exciting for you. It can be something you've learned or something from your plan. You might, for example, just read your three commitments.



Good Habits to Keep Connected

Use this storyboard to think through what you'll do together to keep connected. Focus on strategies you can use and people who will encourage you to stick with it.

1. COMMITMENT
What will we do to keep connected?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

2. BENEFITS
How will this keep us connected?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. BARRIERS
What obstacles could get in the way:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. PLAN
How can we remove or get over these obstacles?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. SUPPORTS
Who will help us stay on track?

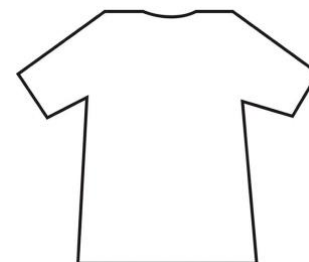
6. REWARDS
How will we celebrate milestones?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

7. REVIEW
When will we check in with each other?

PLEDGE T-SHIRT DESIGN: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS



The Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families



Description

Following each workshop, families decorate a t-shirt design. They add symbolic objects to it to after each session to highlight their family's commitments related to the workshop's topic.

How it works

Before the workshop series begins, provide each family with a *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan Kit* with all the needed supplies and the instructions. After each session, they will follow the instructions for how to take the next step in completing their t-shirt. Each family will share something from its pledge with the other families as part of a closing ceremony in the workshop series.

Supplies for each family

Basic Supplies

- A posterboard cut into the shape of a t-shirt
- Markers (several colors)
- Glue, a glue stick, or tape
- Scissors to cut paper
- A fine-point permanent marker(e.g., Sharpie)

Supplies to Create Reminder Symbols

Follow up to Session 2

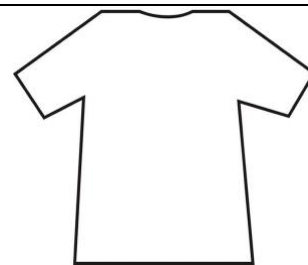
- Pieces of ribbon for each family member (1 or 2 inches wide and 12 inches long); the kind used to wrap presents (express care)
- Yellow construction paper (share power)

Follow up to Session 3

- 4-5 wide rubber bands (wide enough to write on) (support and challenge growth)
 - White construction paper (expand possibilities)
 - Green construction paper (commitments to grow relationships)
-



The Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families



Welcome!

A key to keeping strong relationships going in families is to weave shared activities or routines into our everyday lives that keep us focused on our relationships. The *Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families* is designed to help you do that. Doing this activity together between workshops helps your family:

- Spend a few minutes together reflecting on the session’s topics.
- Create a shared memory focused on something that’s important to you.
- Focus on commitments you make to keep your relationships strong.

After Session 1: Thriving Through the Teenage Years

7. Locate the posterboard cutout in the shape of a t-shirt in the Pledge to Keep Connected Family Kit. Find the markers or other decorating supplies. For now, **only decorate the back of the t-shirt.**
8. Have a young person draw a picture of the family, or attach a family photo to the back of the t-shirt.
9. Have everyone in the family sign the back of the t-shirt too.
10. Think back to the session when you talked about family character strengths—qualities of your family that you particularly value. (See Handout 1.2 in your workbook.) Add some of the key values you chose on that handout to the back of the t-shirt. (If you want to add others that are important to you, you can do that, too.)
11. Have each family member tell a story about something that has happened in your family that reminds them of one of the strengths you’ve written down. If they can’t think of something, they can also tell a story that makes them proud to be part of the family. It could be a recent story or a story from your ancestors.
12. When you’ve finished, thank each other for helping remember all the good things!

After Session 2: Staying Close While Letting Go



EXPRESS CARE

Catch-Up Version

If you didn't do the ribbon or note card activity during the session, you can do it now:

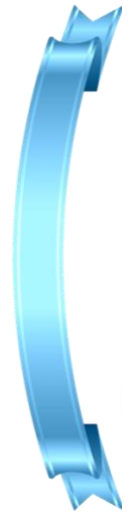
To create your reminder ribbons, you'll need:

- **One piece of ribbon** (about 1 or 2 inches wide and 12 inches long). It can be the kind of ribbon you might use to wrap a present.
- If it's hard to find a ribbon, find a notecard or a piece of paper. Poke a hole in it, and then weave a piece of string or yarn through the hole.
- A marker that will write on the ribbon. (Test to be sure the marker won't bleed through and damage what's under the ribbon.)



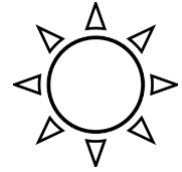
SHARE POWER

1. Get your Pledge t-shirt and the decorating supplies.
2. Pick a front section of the shirt to decorate to represent "Express Care." Have someone **write "Express Care" in the middle of this section**. Creative or artistic letters are great!
3. Have everyone remember ways they appreciate others expressing care to them. Start by remembering some of the ideas you talked about during the session. As you remember things, write them (or draw symbols of them) around where you wrote Express Care. Continue until everyone has added what they want to add (or until there's no more room left).
4. Read aloud: The challenge we all face is that we usually have good intentions about expressing care to each other. But it's easy to forget when we get busy and fall back into our routines. Would you agree? Can you think of examples?
5. To help us all remember, we're going to create "reminder ribbons" for the t-shirts. (If you have the ribbon from the last session, pull it out. If you don't, see catch-up instructions in sidebar.)
6. Think about all the ideas you've had together about expressing care. Decide together which one way you all like to have people express care that you *don't do enough*.
7. Decide as a family what you will all do to become more consistent in expressing care *in that one way* that you all agree that you'd like to do more. Write that on the ribbon using the marker.
8. If you didn't do it before, you can also write it on a ribbon for each person—or on something else that will help everyone remember.
9. Put the ribbon on the Keep Connected Pledge t-shirt. Read it each time you look at the t-shirt as a reminder of how you all want to keep expressing care as an important part of your family relationships.



1. **Move to a different part of the front of the shirt. Write Share Power there, using artistic writing.**
2. Based on the activities in the workshop, think together about 2-3 things you would like to work on together to be more intentional in how you share power in your family. They can be small things, but include ways everyone can be involved.

3. Find the yellow construction paper in your pledge kit. Cut a large sun out of it. The sun symbolizes power.
4. Write your shared commitments on the sun, as a way of showing your commitment to following through. Talk together about how you're going to encourage each other to keep your shared commitments.
5. Paste or tape your sun to the share power section of the t-shirt.
6. When you've finished, thank each other for spending time together.



After Session 3: In the Zone: Challenge and Support Growth



CHALLENGE GROWTH

This session will take a longer because it includes preparing for the final session. So plan some extra time, or break it into two parts.

17. Get the Pledge t-shirt you have been working on, along with the markers and other decorating supplies.
18. Artistically write **Challenge Growth in a different section of the front of the t-shirt.**
19. Talk together about ways you challenge each other to grow in your family, remembering some of the things you talked about during the workshop. Be sure to remember the positive ways adults challenge growth with kids *and* how kids challenge growth for adults.
20. Add pictures, symbols, or words to that section of the t-shirt that reflect the ways your family challenges growth for each other.



PROVIDE SUPPORT

Then write Provide Support on a different section of the front of the shirt.

21. Repeat the process: Talk about ways you provide support to each other, remembering ideas you talked about during the workshop. Highlight both the positive ways adults support kids and how kids support adults. Talk about any ideas that seem most doable for you. Which ones seemed most surprising?
22. Add pictures, symbols, or words around Provide Support that reflect the ways people in your family really like to support each other. If there are ways you really don't like people to provide support, write them down too, then cross them out with a big X.
23. Get the rubber bands from the session. Recall that you wrote your "hard thing"—one thing you want to work on—on them. They are a reminder of the "Growth Zone." They have to be stretched to do any good. But you don't want to stretch them too much, or they'll break. During the online session, other family members wrote things on the rubber bands that they would do to support each other.



24. Have everyone read aloud what they wrote on the rubber bands for each other. Tape or pin those commitments to the support section of the t-shirt. (Or you can write the commitment on the t-shirt, a notecard, or a sticky note.)



**EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES**

Thinking ahead to the next session . . .

19. Write **Expand Possibilities in a final spot on the front of the t-shirt**. Expand Possibilities will be a focus of the final session, so you haven't talked about it until now.
20. Expand Possibilities is expressed in three actions:
- Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.
 - Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.
 - Introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.

In what ways does your family do these three things for each other? How do adults do them for youth? And how do youth do them for adults?

21. Once you have several ideas, pick 4-5 that fit well with your family. Write or draw them in the Expand Possibilities section of the t-shirt.
22. Then give each family member 3 notecards, sticky notes, or small pieces of paper. Without taking, each family member should write on each note card or sticky one way they would appreciate other family members helping them expand possibilities more. *One idea per note card.*
23. Then have each person read one of their cards with a request and put it on the table. Other family members should not debate it or argue about it or say they already do it. If they don't understand, they can ask about it, but that's all. (Some requests may be heartfelt, so it's important to be sensitive.)
24. Rotate and have each family member add their first request. Then have everyone add their second request without any discussion. Then their third so that all the requests are shared before there is any discussion.
25. Now look at all the requests. Are there any similarities? Put them together—but only if the people who made the requests agree that they are similar. Don't try to force any requests to fit with others.
26. Next decide which requests or groups of requests fit into the following broad categories:
- Requests that are easy to fulfill now if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that are challenging but doable to fulfill, if we worked together on them.
 - Requests that are hard to fulfill now, even if we made them a priority.
 - Requests that we really cannot fulfill in the near future, even if we really want to.

27. Be honest. If everyone doesn't have something in the first two categories, see if there's a first step in the other two that would fit in the first two. If something overlaps for everyone, brainstorm how you might together help to fulfill the request creatively for everyone. If they're all different, brainstorm ways they might reinforce each other. Set the others aside for now.

28. Use that idea to decide on what you will do as a family to expand possibilities for each other. Find the white construction paper in the Keep Connected Pledge and Plan kit, and cut out the shape of a lightbulb to represent your family's new idea for expanding possibilities. Write your idea on it, and attach it to the t-shirt in the Expand Possibilities section.



If you can, take a break and come back to this next section on another day . . .

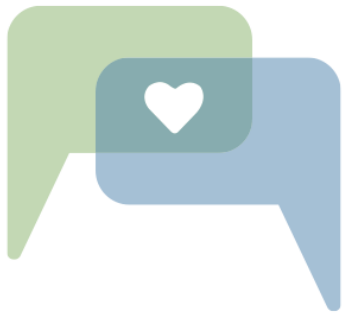
Looking Back and Looking Forward: Your Pledge and Plan

1. Gather as a family, and start reflecting on what's on your t-shirt design. Remember the character strengths you identified in your family. Remember each of the keys: express care, share power, challenge growth, provide support, and (coming next), expand possibilities.
2. What were some ideas and commitments you made to yourself and each other that have particularly stuck with you? Perhaps all are important in some way, but are there some that stand out more than others for the whole family?
3. As a family (being sure to listen to everyone—remember Share Power), identify three commitments or “pledges” that came up through Keep Connected that you believe would be really important for your family to focus on moving forward to maintain strong relationships and to keep connected through high school. (Your ideas don't need to be like any other family's; each family is different.)
4. Find the green construction paper, and cut out three trees. Write these three commitments on these three trees, and tape them onto your t-shirt.

Build Your Family's Plan to KEEP CONNECTED

1. Turn to the “Good Habits to Keep Connected” worksheet on the next page. And follow these steps:
 - a. Write the three commitments or pledges you came up with in the box #1 at the top.
 - b. Move to box #2. Think about why these three commitments are important. How will they help you? Write down those benefits. (It's important to remember the benefits when you are having a harder time keeping commitments.)

- c. Think about what might get in the way of those commitments, and write some of the big things in box #3. Be honest. Time, money, emotions, habits, and many other things can get in the way of things we want. We can't deal with those barriers unless we are conscious of them.
 - d. Look at the barriers. If those things come up, what will you do to get rid of or work around them? Write down specific plans in box #4. Seeing those specifics can be important when you're caught in the middle of a challenge.
 - e. In box #5, put names of specific people who will keep you on track. They'll be honest, loving, and firm. They'll also help you get rid of the barriers.
 - f. And don't forget the rewards in #6. When you've made some progress and hit some milestones, how will you celebrate? Don't wait to the end, but find some ways to celebrate pretty soon to reinforce a good start-up.
 - g. And be sure to check in with each other from time to time, being intentional about it in box #7. Maybe it's weekly or monthly. If things aren't going well, it's okay to start over, to reset. You won't know to do that unless you check.
2. Once you have a first draft, you may want to wait and come back to it after the final session, then tweak it together. And when you check in, you can always adjust it too. It's your plan.
 3. Before you go to the final session, as a family, review the plan and decide what you want to share with the whole group—just a couple of things that are significant or exciting for you. It can be something you've learned or something from your plan. You might, for example, just read your three commitments.



Good Habits to Keep Connected

Use this storyboard to think through what you'll do together to keep connected. Focus on strategies you can use and people who will encourage you to stick with it.

1. COMMITMENT
What will we do to keep connected?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

2. BENEFITS
How will this keep us connected?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. BARRIERS
What obstacles could get in the way:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. PLAN
How can we remove or get over these obstacles?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. SUPPORTS
Who will help us stay on track?

6. REWARDS
How will we celebrate milestones?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

7. REVIEW
When will we check in with each other?
