



## Intro

“A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.” Elbert Hubbard

Superheroes need friends too. What would Batman have done without his butler, Alfred? What would Superman have done without Lois Lane and Jimmy? The best friends are the ones who stick with you when you are up and when you are down. They love you just the way you are, they ask you to be your best self, and they stand up for you when you falter. Friends make life worth living and good friends help you be the best you possible. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that “The only way to have a friend is to be one” and so part of a superhero’s journey is to learn to be a friend while also accepting friendship in return. It’s a give and take. It’s a journey best walked side by side sharing the ups and downs of life with loyalty, love, and laughter to guide you.

## Reflect

Take a moment before beginning to read through the rest of this kit and think about what friendship means to you. What do you find to be the best traits in a friend? What have friends

meant to you over the years? What kind of role have they played in your life as a child and as an adult?

Then begin to think about what kind of friends you want your son to have. You know as he gets older he will look more and more to his peers for advice and opinions. What kind of traits do you want your son to look for in a friend? What do you want to teach him about friends worth keeping and those that are best to let go?

## How This Works

Each kit focuses on a new superhero value that you can share with your son to create conversations that matter. Often, we don't make the time to discuss our values. Having this kit gives you a quick and easy way to start up these conversations. Our kids love movies, stories, action, and great characters so use these to teach what is most important to you. Use this kit as a guide to share what you value most with your son. It's worth it.

### Movie How To's

1. Rent or buy the movie of the month.
2. Set a date for watching it with your son by putting it on the calendar and let him know.
3. Make it a fun event with popcorn and snacks. No electronic gadgets allowed (for you or him). You must watch the movie too.
4. Allow 20 minutes post movie for a conversation about the movie (so plan to watch it early enough before bedtime that you can still talk about it).
5. Take out the movie questions and introduce the Superhero Value. Keep the conversation upbeat and really listen to your son's responses. If he's not interested in that moment, say you'll talk about it another time and then follow up and do that. (Car rides are especially good for this.)

### Book How To's

1. Check out the book of the month from the library or purchase it.
2. Encourage your son to be a great reader by asking him to read 30 minutes each day during the week. (You could incentivize videogame time by allowing him to earn 30 minutes of videogames by reading 30 minutes of a book.)
3. Ask the book questions listed below once your child finishes the book. (You do not have to read the book to engage in a conversation about it.)

### Other Ways to Continue the Conversation

1. Watch the **Extra Movie Bonus** suggestions and discuss how friendships are not just between humans.
2. Use car rides for conversations that matter. Set electronic devices aside during car rides and make this your time to catch up and talk about stuff. Print out the **In The Car** section and put that above the car visor so you can quickly and easily start a conversation about friendship. Choose a question a day or have your child read you the questions to discuss them. Please DO NOT read them while driving.
3. Set aside time to complete the **Take Action Activity**. This can also be done effectively in the car creating good feelings while getting to your destination.

## Ground Rules for Conversations That Matter

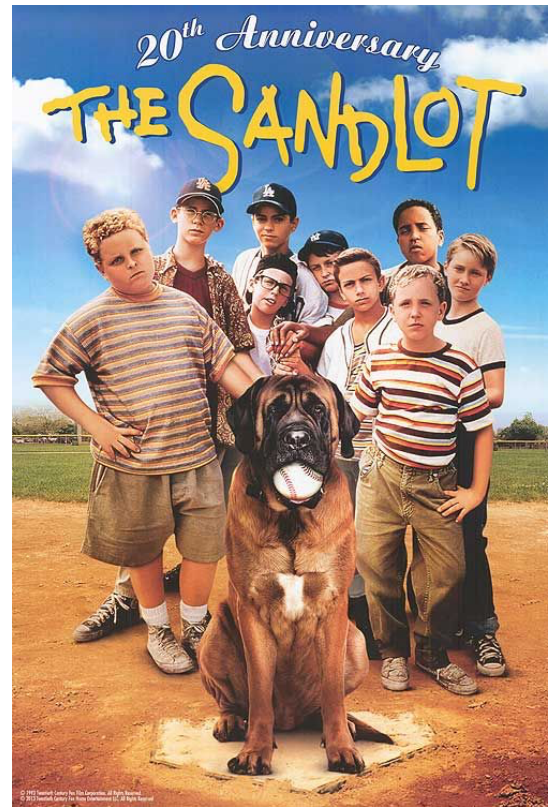
1. Listen without judgment. Think about your son's responses and carefully measure your response. Sometimes just a nod is appropriate as you let your son express himself without any judgment from you. He is exploring who he is--allow him the space to do this.
2. Do not criticize what your son says (or at this point, how he says it--save that for later). Allow this space to be free from all criticism--only in this space can he share who he really is so make this a safe time and place to do that.
3. No parent should be talking more than two minutes at a time. This is about getting your son to talk. No railroading the conversation and making it about you. You want to hear what your son says so listen.
4. Allow for pauses in the conversation. These can be thoughtful interludes where each of you collects your thoughts.
5. No electronic devices for you or for him. No taking calls in the middle of this important time with your son. Period.
6. Allow for the conversation to conclude if your son loses interest. Don't force him to chat if he's not in the mood. (Car rides are great for chats because there isn't anything else to focus on especially if you remove electronic devices during this time).

## Movie: “The Sandlot”

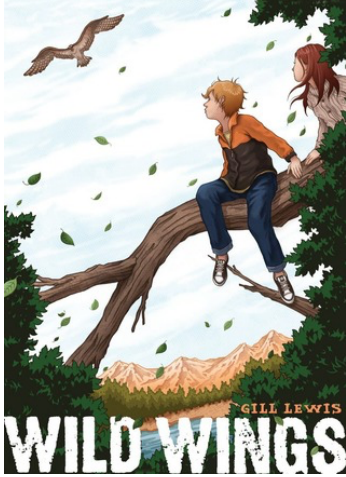
A boy moves to a new neighborhood and doesn't know what to do all summer until he gets invited to play baseball at the sandlot. Friendships form as they come together to work hard and play better and better but when a ball is lost in the junkyard adjacent to the sandlot, they must problem solve to save their new friend.

### Movie Questions

1. What lessons did Smalls learn during the movie?
2. Have you ever been in a situation like Smalls where you had to make friends? How did you do it?
3. Do you have a friend like Benny? Benny is a leader in this group of friends. What makes him a leader? How does he treat his friends?
4. What happens during the film that causes this group of friends to work together? Do you think this situation strengthened their friendship?
5. Which character did you like the best? Why?
6. What would have happened if Smalls just stayed in his bedroom all summer instead of going to the sandlot? Does making friends require risks sometimes?



## Book: Wild Wings by Gill Lewis



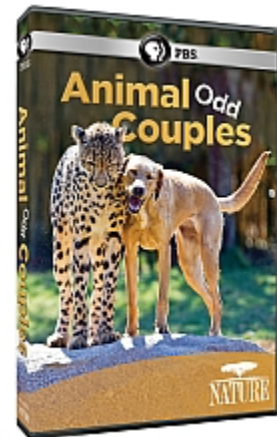
This is a wonderful tale of friendship and wildlife. It is so well-written and suspenseful that both boys and girls will enjoy it. The book is set in Scotland and is about a girl, Iona, who discovers an osprey's nest and shares her discovery with Callum, marking the beginning of an unlikely friendship. The adventure takes off from there. Books are a wonderful way to encourage the exploration of new worlds, new places, and new experiences without spending a dime. This one is definitely in your local library. Ages: 8-12

### Book Questions

1. What did you think about the book? Did you like it? Can you tell me what it was about?
2. Which character did you like the best and why?
3. How does this book relate to the theme of friendship? Who was friends in the book? Did their friendship change who they were at the beginning?
4. What did they do together as friends? How did they support each other?
5. If you could pick one character in the book to be friends with, who would you choose and why?

### Extra: Movie Bonus

There is a wonderful one hour movie called "Animal Odd Couples" by the Nature Channel that uncovers odd but heart-warming friendships between different species of animals. It's a wonderful movie for all ages that is informative and wonderful. It is available streaming on Netflix and maybe other streaming services.



There are also many animal friendship videos you can watch together on YouTube. It is not recommended you let your child watch videos alone on YouTube as there is adult content on there. We do recommend you preview videos and then save them to a web site like GetPocket.com that saves web content for you to watch or read later. Here are some links to a few animal friendship videos that are good for boys 8-11 years old:

Cat and Owl Playing - Fum & Gebra—<http://youtu.be/lqmba7npY8g>

Elephant and Dog - Bubbles and Bella Best Friends—<http://youtu.be/RR0BIQzbOUk>

Best Buddies - Orangutan and Hound Dog—<http://youtu.be/MDSstH49W5Hk>

## In The Car

Put this in your car visor for conversations that matter in the car.

1. What does it mean to be a friend?
2. What do you like in a friend? Do you like friends to be funny, honest, smart, into sports, kind, or what?
3. Who are your friends? Why are they your friends?
4. What makes a person not your friend anymore?
5. What would happen if a friend said you should do something that you know is wrong? What do you do? How do you handle it?
6. Why are friends important?
7. Have you ever been a friend to a new kid at school or a new kid on your team? What do you think you could do to help this new kid adjust and make friends?
8. Share a story about friendship from your own life (but keep it brief and appropriate) where you helped a friend or a friend helped you.
9. Who would you say is a leader in your group of friends? Who decides where you'll go and what you'll do at lunchtime or recess? Or does it change depending on the idea?
10. What does it mean to be a leader? How can you be a leader at school, on a team, or at home?
11. Who in your life is a leader? What do you like about him or her? What makes them a good leader?



## Take Action

Role play with your son about possible friendship scenarios. (My son LOVED doing these silly role playing things in the car and they gave us an opportunity to talk about additional subjects like drugs and alcohol.)

You can start with you being a friend who wants to encourage your son to vandalize the bathroom or take a black marker to the computer or white board at school. Or create other scenarios--a friend asking you to help them cheat on a test, playing rough in sports, or being mean to another kid at school. You be the friend who is using peer pressure to talk your son into something. Help your son reason out possible reactions to this friend. Discuss peer pressure and what to do about it.

Example:

Parent: I hate math and I can't stand Mrs. Jones. I'm going to play a trick on her when she leaves for lunch. You in?

Son: [wait for response]

Parent: I'm going to take this permanent marker and write bad things about Mrs. Jones on the whiteboard that will never come off. Ha ha! Cool kids do this kind of thing all the time. Don't you want to be cool with me?

Son: [wait for response]

Parent: You are a wuss. Come on. This is going to be cool and we can tell everyone it was us.

Son: [wait for response]

Parent: [appropriate response]

Encourage your son to act according to what he knows is right. Brainstorm some possible ways to handle the situation. Could your son say he doesn't want to? Could your son say he has to get to class or go see a teacher about some homework or meet a friend? Or could he just leave and not say anything? What will he do if his teacher asks him if he knows who did this? You might be surprised at how much your son enjoys this and will ask for more role-playing scenarios.

## Summing Up

Hopefully, you have taken up some part of this Superhero Value Kit and made it a part of your parenting process. If you have, congratulations! These conversations are the ones your son will truly remember and look back on when they need a guiding piece of advice. These conversations are the rock or foundation of your son's life. They are that important! Taking the time to do these activities with your son makes you and your son more like every day superheroes and the world could surely use more of those.