

# Commitment

## Syllables

com•mit•ment

## Pronunciation

kuh-mit-muhnt

## Definition

Being devoted to bringing something about or causing something to happen. Agreeing to do something.

*(Ellen's **commitment** to the fund-raising project helped the animal shelter feed the hungry kittens.)*

**Simply put:** promising action ... from deep down in your heart

## Related Terms

Guarantee: A promise that something will go or work the way it should.

Pledge (also Vow): A solemn promise.

Promise: To give one's word or statement that (s)he will or will not do something.

## Fundamental Question:

**What are the things in my life to which I am most committed?**

Students will investigate the idea that commitment involves both obligations and actions.

## Objectives

Each student will:

1. Identify five things by which (s)he feels most emotionally driven (e.g., family, philosophy, animal rights, etc.);
2. Make a commitment to have a positive impact on some aspect of each of the five areas, outlining specific actions to be taken; and
3. Explain why commitment generally involves a combination of action and obligation (going beyond affection, devotion, etc.)

## Before you begin

- Print out one copy of *It All Adds Up* for each student;
- Gather poster board, glue, scissors, and several old magazines; and locate your family album.

## Suggested Sidebars:

### Speaking of Commitment (Discussion Idea)

*Committing* is a verb (action word), but *commitment* is a noun (thing). Can you keep a commitment without doing action?

# Commitment

## Taking It to the Next Level

Identify and arrange to visit relatives or neighbors who have been married for a very long time. Find out what they did (or didn't do) to keep their family together over the years. Ask them what role commitment plays in making a family strong.

## Procedure

1. Bring your family album to class. The students will enjoy seeing photographs of, and hearing stories about, your grandparents, parents, siblings, and others. (Yes, Virginia, the teacher *does* have a life beyond the classroom door!) Explain to the students how important your family is to you and the commitment you have to them. Tell about specific actions you take for the benefit of the family. (Alternatively, bring something that represents another important aspect of your life.)
2. Ask: "What are some of the most important things in your life?" (Record answers on the board, including the names of the children who responded. Answers may encompass family, friends, health, pets, hobbies, philosophies, and more.) Point to one of the responses and say, for instance: "Lisa, you said that good health is very important to you. Can you think of an obligation you have to yourself about your health? ('I will do what I can to stay healthy.')" Then say: "Excellent! What are some specific actions you can take to make sure that you *do* stay healthy? ('Brush my teeth,' 'Eat nutritious food,' 'Exercise every day,' etc.) Repeat this process with several examples from the board.
3. Distribute the *It All Adds Up* sheets and review the directions with the students. Assist them in the completion of the sheets as needed.
4. **Follow Up:** Create a classroom collage based on the information on the individual *It All Adds Up* sheets. Students will locate and clip out five magazine pictures (one to represent each of their "important things"). Instruct them to glue their pictures to the poster board to form a collage. Please remind the students not to cover more than the very edges of other pictures with their own.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Reminder:** Commitment means being devoted to bringing something about or causing something to happen. Agreeing to do something in the future.

## It All Adds Up

- Identify four very important things in your life (ex: dog, family, piano lessons, etc.).
- In each case, describe a commitment (or *obligation*) you've made about the important thing (example: keeping my dog healthy and happy).
- Then, add the two ideas to come up with a plan of *action* that can help you live up to your commitment.

My dog ("important")

+ Keeping my dog healthy and happy ("obligation")

= Feeding, watering, exercising, taking to the vet, grooming, microchipping, fencing, and loving ("action")

----- (Important)

+ \_\_\_\_\_ (Obligation)

= \_\_\_\_\_ (Action)

----- (Important)

+ \_\_\_\_\_ (Obligation)

= \_\_\_\_\_ (Action)

----- (Important)

+ \_\_\_\_\_ (Obligation)

= \_\_\_\_\_ (Action)

----- (Important)

+ \_\_\_\_\_ (Obligation)

= \_\_\_\_\_ (Action)

Today's Thought: *The difference between "involvement" and "commitment" is like an eggs-and-ham breakfast: the chicken was "involved"— the pig was "committed."* — **Author Unknown**