

How to Bow

In the United States we greet one another with a wave, a handshake, or by saying "Hello." But in some Asian countries, especially in South Korea, bowing is the customary greeting. Below are different situations when children should bow. Try each one and think about how you are showing respect. In the U.S. people usually bow from the waist after giving a performance. However, in Korea, there are different types of bows. Do this activity with your child to teach her a lesson in the tradition of bowing and help her explore an important part of Asian culture.



What You Need:

- Big mirror
- A parent or someone older than your child

What You Do:

Here are the different types of bows for different situations:

1. Greeting grandparents, people older than you, and teachers: Stand up straight in front of a mirror. Put your arms to your sides. Bow your shoulders and head forward about 15 degrees for one second and come back up, keeping your head and shoulders aligned the whole time. While you do this bow, you also say hello by saying, "AnNyungHaSayo" (ahn-nyung-hah-say-yo). Bow when you meet and when you leave. If you are leaving, you say, "AnNyungHeKyeSayo" (ahn-nyung-hee-kyay-say-yo). If the older person is leaving and you are staying, you bow and say, "AnNyungHeGaSayo" (ahn-nyung-hee-gah-say-yo).
2. Lunar New Year: Children bow to their elders on this holiday by kneeling and putting their face to the floor with arms outstretched. Children say, "Say-hay-boke-mahni-paduh-sayo" or "Happy New Year." Older relatives give them blessings and money.
3. Now that you know about bowing, play "Omnia Says" (mom says). This is a respect game based on "Simon Says." Have someone say the following actions and make up some of your own. On certain ones omit the words "Omnia says" to trick players into doing the action even though "Omnia didn't say." For example:
 - Omnia says, "Bow to your grandma."
 - Omnia says, "Hug your brother/sister."
 - Omnia says, "Kiss your daddy."
 - "Bow to your teacher." Watch and see who does. Then say, "Omnia didn't say."

Note: You might want to include...

Korean siblings do not bow to each other. Instead, Korean children show respect to older children by not using their names. In fact there are special words for older brother and older sister. They use these terms even for older friends who are not related. The younger girl calls her older sister or an older girl "onni" (un-nee), and the older brother or an older boy "oppa" (oh-pa). The younger boy calls the older sister or an older girl "nuna" (noo-na), and the older brother or an older boy "hyung" (hyung). Try using one of these terms for your older siblings or friends.

More About Bowing:

Bowing in Korea has its roots in Confucianism, a system of relationships taught by Confucius, a Chinese philosopher (551-479 B.C.). He taught that there were five ranks of relationships: government/citizen,

father/son, older/younger, husband/wife, and friend/friend. It is important that you respect your family and your relationships with others. This is shown by lowering yourself and bowing.

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