

Safe Environment Children's Program

Lesson 2 for Grades 9 through 12: Respect and Boundaries

Theme: Applying the Sixth Commandment: **You shall not commit adultery.** Show respect for marriage and family. Respect your body and the bodies of others.

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy.”

1 Corinthians 3:16 - 17

Principle: To teach the Sixth Commandment in a way that children and young people can understand God's rule to respect our bodies.

Catechism: *As long as a child lives at home with his parents, the child should obey his parents in all that they ask of him when it is for his good or that of the family. “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”(Col 3:20; cf. Eph 6:1) Children should also obey the reasonable directions of their teachers and all to whom their parents have entrusted them. But if a child is convinced in conscience that it would be morally wrong to obey a particular order, he must not do so. -- #2217*

Goal: To assist educators, catechists, youth ministers, and other caring adults in teaching children that they have the right to say “no,” to tell a trusted adult when they feel uncomfortable, and to help them recognize who to trust when they need to communicate their concerns.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lesson, children should be better able to understand that:

- The sixth commandment has a rule for children to follow.
- The catechist (religion teacher) is a safe adult whom they can trust.
- Jesus loves them and wants them to be safe and happy.

Activity #1: Review and discuss the vocabulary words:

- **Respect** – to hold in esteem or honor; to refrain from intruding upon or interfering with.
- **Uncomfortable** – experiencing physical discomfort that leaves one ill at ease or uneasy, sometimes causing anxiety.
- **Sixth Commandment** – You shall not commit adultery. Show respect for marriage and family. Respect your body and the bodies of others.
- **Chastity** – a virtue of love and respect for our own bodies and those of others
- **Modesty** – directs a person to observe proper behavior in speech, dress, and action

- **Boundaries** – the limits that define one person as separate from another or from others. There are boundaries that you can see (like a fence around a yard) and boundaries you can't see with your eyes (like the comfort zone around us we call our "personal space"). Boundaries vary depending on the relationship with the other person. For example, a boundary between a child and a grandparent is different than a boundary between a child and a teacher or coach.

Activity #2: Discussion of the Sixth Commandment:

- Discuss the following points with the children:
 - ♦ Our bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are created by God and are holy.
 - ♦ God gave us the Sixth Commandment to tell us to respect our body and the bodies of others. How do we respect our bodies? (*keeping ourselves clean, eating healthy foods, getting enough rest, exercising*).
 - ♦ God wants us to keep our bodies safe from harm. How can we accomplish this? (*staying away from alcohol, cigarettes and drugs, dressing modestly, protecting ourselves*).
 - ♦ How do we protect ourselves? (*wearing a seat belt, using protective gear when playing sports, staying away from fights, saying "no" when someone makes us uncomfortable*.)
 - ♦ How do "boundaries" protect us? (*we have rules for bedtime, for length of phone calls, limits on "junk" food, parents knowing where you are and who you are with*).

Activity #3: Discovering the boundaries in your life – a discussion:

Directions: Remind your students that these lessons are designed to give them the tools to protect themselves when uncomfortable, difficult, or even dangerous situations arise. Tell them that in today's lesson, the class will be talking about boundaries – what they are and how they can help protect us from harm. Open the discussion with the students by asking them if they know what a "boundary" is. Lead the following discussion:

- What kinds of rules must be followed at your house?
- What are your family rules regarding when your homework must be completed? Are there other activities that aren't allowed until your homework has been completed?
- How long and how late are you permitted to be on the telephone?
- Where are you allowed to have food in your house?
- What are your family's rules regarding computer access?
- What are your family's rules regarding video games?
- Does your family limit who can come into your room and when they are allowed to be in your room?
- Do you expect your best friend to sit next to you at lunch every day?
- Do you want your parents to pretend that they don't know you when you are together at a party or at the mall?

Does your school or community have rules you must follow?

- Does your school have a dress code?
- Does your community have a curfew law for teens?
- Why would communities have curfew laws?
- Where do rules in your family, school or community follow the Ten Commandments?

Boundaries define how others treat us and how we let ourselves be treated.

For example, ask your students:

- Have you ever pretended to agree with something or someone when you really did not agree?
- Have you ever chosen not to tell on someone who broke the rules because that person asked you not to tell?
- Have you ever gone along with an activity even though you didn't really want to go along with it?
- Have you ever declined to join in on an activity that you really wanted to do because someone else talked you out of it?
- Have you ever concealed how you really feel about something because of a fear of how other people would react?
- Have you ever spent too much time doing things for other people and been frustrated that you don't spend enough time doing things to support yourself?

Ask your students why they do these things and how it makes them feel.

During the discussion of their reasons, make the following points:

- When you don't speak up, you hide your true self and allow others to violate your boundaries.
- When you disregard your personal beliefs, values, wants, and feelings, it causes you to feel diminished.
- Boundaries are the invisible lines we draw around ourselves for self-protection and self-preservation.
- Most people will respect our boundaries if we let them know what they are. However, with others, we must actively defend our boundaries.

Suggested Prayer to End the Lesson:

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.

Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host,

by the power of God, cast into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.