

9th Grade

Diocese of Covington Safe Environment Curriculum

Topic: Personal Safety

Grade: 9th

Approximate Time: 30-45 minutes (1 class period)

Learning Outcomes

- ❑ To increase one's understanding of how the Moral Virtues of Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance are part of good decision-making.
- ❑ Recognize that each person is a unique gift of God deserving respect and dignity.
- ❑ Name behaviors or situations that make teen feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- ❑ Learn to avoid dangers and, when not possible, to resist seductions, withstand peer pressure and demonstrate care for others.
- ❑ Build on personal strengths so as to enhance the ability to resist temptation or more aggressive efforts to engage the teens in inappropriate activity.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

- ❑ Using the material in the book (Chapter 18, The Moral Virtues).
- ❑ Lecture, Scripture Study, class discussion
- ❑ This lesson should be done toward the end of the chapter work so that the students will be better versed in the Moral Virtues and their real-life applications
- ❑ Creative Learning: Students write/perform a skit in a modern setting that asks the main character to say "No" to a situation after considering the situation through the lens of the Moral Virtues.

Values & Attitudes

- ❑ We are called to make good choices.
- ❑ The Moral Virtues can strengthen our decision-making skills.
- ❑ As Christians, we must protect others and report potential problems.

Resources

- ❑ Introduction to Catholicism, A Complete Course, The Didache Series
 - Chapter 18 – The Moral Virtues
- ❑ Bible (Dan. 1, 3:1-24, 46-50, 90-97)

Assessment

- ❑ Students will present an understanding of the material through skits presented in class.

Safe Environment/Religious Education Curricular Points
Lesson Plan Components
Resources & Materials

1. *Background Information:*
 - 1.1. *The goal of personal safety education and awareness is to prepare young people to deal with physical and/or sexual abuse at the hands of a family member, a friend, or a trusted authority figure, as well as from other young people. It is important to know what these abuses are and how to respond so that effective help can be provided in time of need. In the event of abuse, immediate action is required to protect the young person from further mistreatment. All youth ministry personnel and high school teachers must be familiar with the Diocese of Covington's Code of Conduct and Guidelines for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct as well as state law on mandatory reporting of abuse so that proper procedures are followed when abuse is discovered.*
 - 1.2. *Children and teens who have been empowered to make good choices, act responsibly, and who have well-developed self-esteem are generally more capable of dealing with a crisis. Victims of child abuse may have difficulty identifying themselves as victims and making appropriate choices. These are some of the insidious and harmful factors in abuse. It is important that teachers and youth ministers model appropriate adult behavior and guide teens in ways that keep their sense of worth intact.*
 - 1.3. *With some young people, verbal and emotional abuse is more difficult to deal with than physical or sexual abuse. Adolescents can easily be hurt by the way they are treated emotionally, particularly by family members, peers, and others in authority. It is therefore important that in all sessions with high school youth, "ground rules" for respectful emotional and verbal interaction are established by the facilitator, modeled and practiced.*
 - 1.4. *Resources from the Diocese of Galveston-Houston are attached to help you cover/explain safe environment. Please use these as you plan your lesson using this document as a guide.*
 - 1.5. *Remember that a letter must be sent home to the parents PRIOR to the lesson occurring. Please make sure to send any "opt out" forms to the Office of Catechesis and Formation. A letter also goes home to the parents AFTER the lesson is complete.*
2. This week we've been discussing the Moral Virtues. Let's look at how these virtues can help us when we're faced with some difficult decisions and potentially dangerous situations. Hopefully together we'll be able to talk about them in a way that will make you more aware, better able to avoid and resist them, and should danger become harm, more able to take effective action and be more resilient bouncing back. You don't have to be a victim! You are strong and resilient. You can learn to resist temptation within yourself or from others. Even if the worst happens, you can, with the help of others, bounce back.
3. Open with prayer (see attached).
4. Let's begin by discussing what is meant by the word "abuse." Bring out the range of abuse: neglect, physical, sexual and emotional.
5. Learn the warning signs that indicate potential trouble.
6. Internet dangers: chat rooms, solicitation, sexting, and pornography.
 - 6.1. Moral Virtue of Prudence
7. The role of alcohol and drug use: disinhibition (how they lower inhibitions) and the legal age where people can use them.
 - 7.1. Moral Virtue of Fortitude
 - 7.2. Moral Virtue of Temperance
8. Sexual acting out by/among peers: this includes date rape (criminal behavior) and violations of chastity (moral). It can be posed also as an issue of respect for others.

- 8.1. Moral Virtue of Temperance
9. Resisting the illicit attentions from an adult or pressure from peers, boyfriend/girlfriend.
 - 9.1. Moral Virtue of Fortitude
10. Summarize the meaning of appropriate boundaries with all adults and among peers.
 - 10.1. Moral Virtue of Prudence
11. Telling someone is a critical message. Youth who don't keep the abuse secret are less likely to carry shame and guilt for the long term.
 - 11.1. Moral Virtue of Justice
12. What is the mandated reporting law? Bring out the responsibility of adults who learn of possible abuse to a minor. Discuss the reason for the law and why it makes sense for the youth to assist in bringing information forward.
 - 12.1. Moral Virtue of Justice
13. Watching out for others is part of the Christian responsibility. Those youth who are themselves less vulnerable play an especially important role in watching out for the welfare of those who may be more vulnerable – by virtue of age, personality or other circumstances – to abuse or maltreatment.
 - 13.1. Moral Virtue of Prudence
14. Break the students into groups and ask them to read the Scripture for this lesson (Daniel 1 & 3:1-24, 46-50, 90-97). How did the men make good decisions? What Moral Virtues did the young men use in these situations? How can you make good decisions as far as your safety goes? Share and explain your answers.
15. Have the students remain in their groups. Say, "We've talked about a lot of different kinds of situations where teens have to make a choice to say 'no,' to protect themselves or stand up for others who need help. God gives us the Moral Virtues to help strengthen us as we face these, and all kinds, of situations daily. Let's take it a step further. Create a skit with your group showing a teen who faces a real life situation. It could be a situation like we discussed today, or something else. It's important that you show what the teen considers as he/she makes the decision. Make sure to include at least one Moral Virtue in the teen's decision." Allow the students to ask clarifying questions, then work on the skits.
16. Students perform their skits for the class.
17. Close the class praying the song that Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) prayed to God while they were in the furnace: Daniel 3:52-90.

Introduction and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Each of you has been created in God's image. As you continue to grow in the understanding of your gifts and unique purpose in life, Jesus directs that you live a life of love. The Moral Virtues guide our decision-making so that all are treated with respect and dignity, as God intended. Our lesson today celebrates your gift of life and guides you how to be persons of authentic love and how to address those persons and situations which could harm you.

Opening scripture verse and prayer:

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11 - But you, brothers, are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober. Those who sleep go to sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet that is hope for salvation. For God did not destine us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do.

Everyone:

“Lord God, teach me to love as you love.

Teach me to respect my body and to respect the dignity and worth of every human being.

Help me to fully understand that everyone is a brother and sister to me because we share in the same Creator.

Lord, you are the source of all that is good and holy.

Our bodies are holy and are meant to reveal your glory and goodness.

May all my thoughts, speech, and actions reflect your eternal glory and goodness so that I might live as a child of the light.

Please send your Spirit to strengthen me, that I may live out the virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance.

Amen.”

Guidelines for Healthy Boundaries

Boundary (a definition): the personal space, both physical and emotional between yourself and others.

* Physical boundaries: protect your body; you decide who can touch you, how someone can touch you and where he/she can touch you (chaste behavior).

* Emotional boundaries: protect your private thoughts and emotions; you decide what thoughts or feelings you will or will not share with someone.

1. How much you allow people within your boundaries depends on how long you have known them and trust them. Trust grows slowly because only time will validate a person's true colors for honesty, sincerity, kindness, and respect. Remember that "words are cheap; actions reveal the truth."
2. If you expect others to respect your boundaries, you must respect theirs.
3. When someone tries to violate your boundaries, recognize it, stop it, and learn from the experience.
4. Trust your feelings of comfort and discomfort when you are around others.
5. Speak up when someone or something is bothering you.
6. Continue to pray; keep communication open with parents and trusted adults (Boundaries—A Guide For Teens, Peter and Dowd, pp.22-24)

Suggested At-Home Reflection:

1. List healthy boundaries that you have established.
2. Cite an example of how a friend respected your physical boundaries.
3. Cite an example of how a friend respected your emotional boundaries.
4. How did you respond to someone who made you feel uncomfortable? What was the situation? How did you handle it?

Boundary Violations

- Asking personal questions without knowing you
- Saying or doing things that treats you with disrespect
- Frequently violating your personal, physical or emotional space
- Using disrespectful language or touch
- Pressuring or forcing you to engage in sexual acts (Boundaries—A Guide For Teens, Peter and Down) What is sexual abuse? Definition: Any type of sexual contact (touching of the genital area, buttocks, or female breasts) between an adult and a child is sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can also exist between teens.

Forms of sexual abuse:

- inappropriate/unwanted comments, looks or touch in the genital area
- non-physical or physical (can involve violence). Examples include: Comment on a teen's body, expose a teen to pornography, inappropriate or unwanted touching in the genital area, and sexual assault.

Specific Types of Sexual Abuse:

- Sexual assault: sometimes called rape; unwanted sex by force or coercion.
- Incest: a person who is sexually abused by a member of his/her family.
- Molestation: another name for sexual abuse; involves both physical contact and interactions between a young person and an adult; also considered molestation when a teenager engages in sexual contact with a child; usually the molester is in a position of authority or power over the victim
- Pedophile/Pedophilia: an adult who sexually abuses a child due to a sexual attraction to a child or toward children (before the age of puberty)
- Sexual harassment: includes unwelcome sexual attention; can be both verbal or physical; creates a hostile and threatening atmosphere for the victim. (Gordon, p. 11-12)

Preventing Sexual Abuse on the Internet * Rules to Stay Safe on the Internet

1. Don't give out personal information about yourself, your family situation, your school, telephone number, address, passwords, credit card numbers, or any identifying information about your neighborhood (e.g. the name of a park where you play sports). Be careful of your screen name by using a combination of letters and numbers. Also don't disclose if you are a girl or boy.
2. In chat rooms, use a different name than your screen name. That way, you can exit without anyone trying to trace your screen name to an e-mail address.
3. Follow the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would want them to do to you. Let courtesy, respect, and honesty be your guide.
4. Connecting with online friends carries risks of never knowing exactly who is at the other end. Remember that not everyone plays by the same Christian rules that you try to do. Never try to meet an on-line contact in person.

Remember:

Never post pictures of illegal activities (i.e. drinking, drugs). Even a cell phone picture that is sent via internet can be downloaded by ANYONE. Your personal information you post on your social network is public. ANYONE has access & can use it against you now or in the future.

This is also an EASY way for sexual predators (persons who want to harm you) to get information and your picture.

Skills to respond to Attempted Boundary Violations:

1. Practice saying "NO" to someone who continues to direct unwanted attention or touch towards you. Get help from parents, teachers, or other trusted adults until the behavior stops. The "No" might sound something like: "I don't want you bothering me anymore. Am I clear?"
2. Some adults who may want to abuse you sexually may use grooming techniques. These are ways to win your trust and let down your guard.

Things to pay attention to (Red Flags):

- Flattery is different than praise as it is unrelated to an accomplishment.
- Giving you presents, especially expensive gifts or things that you really like.
- Letting you do things or approving behavior that your parents do not allow.
- Spending large amounts of time with you. Wanting to spend time with you alone.
- You feel uncomfortable with the amount of attention or being with the person.
- You really like the nice things they say about you and do for you.
- Discuss these concerns with your parents, teachers, or other trusted adults until the behavior stops.