

Section Two

CATECHIST'S NOTES for Grade 7

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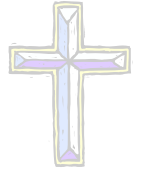
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Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This class is planned to help the students realize the goodness of our vocation: our call to be Christians, and our call by God Himself to an important life. It could be a call to become a priest or religious, or it could be a divine vocation to enter marriage with a very special person, and have children, and find our way to heaven by doing great things on this earth in ordinary circumstances.

The whole idea of vocation is explored here: God's deep concern for everything in our life, and how we plan our lives — the ways we learn to put all that we are as boys and girls into becoming men and women.

Specific objectives

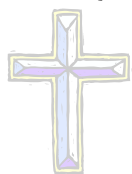
1. To recall the first vocation we have: to be personal friends and followers of Christ, and to shape everything in our lives in ways that are faithful to the Lord.
2. To think about our special vocations: how God cares very much about the life each one of us will live — the kind of life He invites us to and that we decide to live, and all the special circumstances of the life He invites each one of us to have.
3. To understand how vocations work: God calls us freely to something important, and we freely decide. There is a call, a consecration, and a commitment.
4. To survey kinds of vocations, and to invite the students to think about, and to pray about, what kind of life they wish to have before God.
5. To study the relationship between our sexuality and our vocation, and how every vocation calls on all the gifts that God has given to us.

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

1. Each of us receives a sacred call from God through our baptism.
2. Our baptismal promises represent our response to our vocation as Christians.
3. Christ calls each of his baptized followers to a certain individual vocation.
4. Every vocation involves a call, a consecration, and a commitment.
5. Every vocation requires a chaste heart.



Path through the lesson

Opening prayer

A certain profound faith statement can be made at the beginning of this class:

God made us entirely. He made us male or female, boys or girls. His reasons are deep ones, and they are tied with the purposes he has for us in life. We are not on earth only for fun, though life should be full of fun and deep happiness — if we live our lives wisely, as God invites us to. Whatever vocation we have, our being a boy or girl will affect the vocation deeply. Obviously only a girl can have a vocation to be a mother and only a boy to be a father. But even if one decides to be a religious, one would become a sister to give all of oneself — all the feminine grace and emotions and ways of being that God give us — to serve the family of God in a special way. And a boy would become a brother or priest to use all he is, all his masculine traits and all his feelings and talents, to serve God in a special way. God made us entirely, and He wishes us to bring all we are to whatever life He calls us.

If the catechist begins with some thoughts like these, the prayer for vocations (at the end of this set of notes) may be more meaningful for the students.

1. Baptism: Our vocation to be Christians

There are many ways of going through this lesson. The catechist should read the lesson plan over carefully, and not the points he or she wants to stress. Sometimes it will be useful for the catechist to read parts of the lesson, at other times asking the students to share the reading. At any point the catechist should be prepared to press the students to *think*: “Have you often thought of this: God Himself has you personally in mind, and He has plans for your life? Have you tried to think about what God wants you to be and to do with your life?” Or: “Your first vocation is to be a Christian. Do you think you are doing a very good job at that? Are you living the kind of life that your baptismal promises call you to?”

The first section goes through two major points: A) an account of our call to be Christians; and B) our baptismal promises to live in a distinctive way, as followers and friends of Christ. Enough time should be given to this to help the students realize: I ought to be different from many people. We all share a single vocation, and we all have special vocations. All of us have first vocation to be friends of Christ. This is the first our calls: to know the Lord, to have the light of faith; to be called to learn to love each other, as Christ loved us; and to live in ways that please God and make us worthy of eternal life. All of our duties: to be truthful, and just, and merciful; to be pure and to be modest, are related to the personal promises we make to our Lord in deciding to be His disciples.



2. Baptismal promises: Our response to our first vocation

The promises as given in the student text should be studied and discussed at this point. They may also serve as a fitting closing prayer.

3. Special vocation within our Christian vocation

The Lord cares very much about your life, and He invites you to great things. He calls you:

- A) To live as His personal friend, as a true Christian.
- B) To live a *special kind* of life that He knows will be a good life for you to live.
- C) To live this life in *very special* circumstances. Everything about your future is important to God.

Some people think vocations are only for particularly religious kinds of life. But this is not true. One of the chief points of this lesson is to show that *everyone* has a vocation from God, and *whatever God calls us* to is best for us.

One of the most important kinds of vocations is the vocation to get married, to become a father or mother, to found a home, to have children, and teach them to know this world and the Lord in ways that lead both those they love and themselves into friendship with God and to everlasting life.

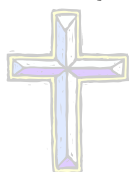
We never understand sexuality well just by studying anatomy or sexual behavior. What sex is really for is accomplishing great and good things: like bringing children into the world and building a kind of love that is faithful and lasts, and making homes generous and happy places.

Every vocation, not only that to marriage, requires that we give to our lives all that we are. What we are as male or female, as a boy or a girl, is important to our vocation. Even a vocation to be a religious requires that one give all of oneself. A girl remains very much a girl when she becomes a religious sister. Her being a real woman, with the feelings and sensibilities and special gifts of women, will be important in all she does. And a boy must bring all his being, all his masculine traits and gifts and strengths to whatever vocation he comes to.

The Lord calls you both also to a special *kind* of life, and He calls you to live this life in a *most special* way. For example, if you have a vocation to marriage, God's concern extends to everything. He cares about whom you marry, and what and how many children you have, and the details of your life. Everything affects your happiness on earth, and forever, so everything enters into God's plans for you. And you too need to be concerned with everything.

ACTIVITY

Chart on vocations — Perhaps it would be best to ask the students to go through this longer activity at home. But in class take time to show them how they are to fill in the chart. If they have looked this chart over a bit, some of the points made in the next two sections below will be a greater interest to them.



4. Call, consecration, commitment

These are the “three C’s” for vocation. In speaking of these, we speak of the dimensions of vocation. God really *calls* me to a life best for me, and it is wise for me to pray and to think earnestly so that I discover what my call in life is. But to enter a vocation is free *consecration*. God does not demand that we choose this form of life; He invites us. And every vocation requires *commitment*. We make great promises, like the baptismal promises, when we choose any special vocation. And life works only when we are faithful in carrying out what we have promised.

There should be some effort to go through the kinds of vocations. Young people sometimes think of wanting to be a doctor, or teacher, as the heart of their vocation. We should suggest to them that it is really important that we decide what we want to *do* with our lives. But one of the first things is to decide what we will be. Ask them to notice in their own families, for example, that one’s father or mother may be a teacher or a truck driver or a doctor. But even more important than the kind of work or profession they have is the way that they arrange the entirely basic things of life. It is more important for a father to be success as a good husband and father than to be successful in teaching or in business. Vocation is first about the central love that our life has, although the kinds of things we do are important too.

5. Vocation and sexuality

Reflection on vocations points out to us the importance of thinking clearly about our sexuality. We cannot plan well what our lives should be if we have not reflected on what we are, and how all of our being is to find its place in God’s world.

Tying things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student’s sheet.

Prayers for vocations (from the National Catholic Vocation Council)

Creator God,
 Life is your gift to me.
 Through Baptism, you invite me to share the gift of my life in service to others.
 Be with me as I choose each day to show your presence in our world.
 Give me the courage and generosity to respond to your love, to your call.
 I pray especially for those who serve you as priests, brothers, sisters, deacons, and lay ministers.
 Keep them close to you.
 Open the minds and hearts of many other men and women that they may accept your challenge to build the Kingdom. Amen.

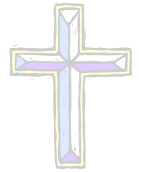
For further reference and background the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1-3; 542-543; 900; 914-919; 925-933; 1142; 1461-1467; 1516; 1536-1553; 1562-1568; 1572-1576; 1601-1624; 1638-1658; 2337-2350.

MODESTY — A strong and thoughtful virtue

CATECHIST'S
NOTES

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Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality



Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This lesson aims to help students grasp the meaning of modesty, to appreciate its attractiveness and goodness, and to help them understand why Christ wishes us to have modesty in our hearts and in our lives.

Specific objectives

1. To help students see why modesty is an important virtue in our times because it is so closely related to self-respect and reverence for other people. Modesty helps us to face sexuality more sensibly.
2. To make clear that the most important dimension of modesty is modesty in our minds and in our hearts.
3. To explain why modesty in speech and in dress has important good fruits.
4. To show how modesty affects everyday life.

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

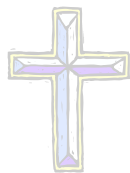
1. Modesty, like courtesy, is a kind, thoughtful, and generous virtue.
2. Modesty of heart and mind will lead to modesty in life.
3. Modest persons recognize the need for proper and pure talk about sexuality.
4. Modest persons know that the kinds of clothes they wear reflect their respect for self and body.
5. Modest persons are guided by their faith in selection of media, style of dance, and physical signs of affection.

Path through the lesson

Opening prayer

Read or have a student read Philippians 4:4-9. Then explain these thoughtful words a bit to the class:

The words of St. Paul in this passage speak forcefully of how joyful lives spring from hearts and minds that rejoice in good things. The tone is not all negative. The stress is not to avoid bad and dangerous things; rather, it cries out: Fill your minds and



hearts with what is good, what gives gladness and stirs up generosity of heart. You need not be troubled with things that wound and bruise our lives. Have your minds filled with what is true and noble and pure, with good things that make us glad and are worthy of praise. Then the God of peace will be with you.

If the catechist reflects on these words before the class, it will not be difficult to find ways to help the students appreciate what is being said.

1. Modesty and courtesy

One can go through this first session easily. Perhaps you can have the students read the material. The first paragraphs speak about modesty in unfamiliar ways. Modesty is not just a matter of “keeping rules.” We are dealing with something far deeper, with the respect that we need to have for ourselves and our bodies, for the people we are with, and for the Lord who is in our midst always. Make clear that we are not saying that modesty just refers to ways we talk and dress. These are just signs of something much deeper, of a modest and thoughtful heart.

Certainly many young people do not understand modesty. Television tends to make fun of it. And people who are carried along by what television says sometimes think that modest people are inhibited. They are squares! We want the students to see something else, and that is why there is the comparison with courtesy. Here we are not so much talking about courtesy for itself, but speaking of it so that they may understand modesty better. (Still, if the students are helped to appreciate the kindness involved in real courtesy, that is an important plus.) The lesson itself explains what needs to be said: Love is more important than courtesy, but if we love people, we will care about them enough to show them the kindness of true courtesy. And pure hearts and serious self-control are more important than the gracious gestures of modesty. But if we have pure hearts, and do respect people, we will be glad to show it by the reverence that modesty means.

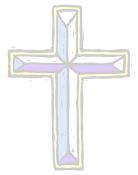
This continuation of the first presentation strikes at the important elements of virtues like courtesy and modesty. Neither courtesy nor modesty is chiefly concerned with being fussy about rules; both are concerned with having one’s right heart express itself in thoughtful ways of behaving. It is easy for students to understand that being a loving person within is not enough. We have to show our caring by the kind ways that we speak and act — and this outer kindness is the chief mark of courtesy. So also it is not enough for us to be, hidden within, decent and good people. We have to show our respect for ourselves and others also by the ways that we act.

DISCUSSION: Thinking about modesty and courtesy

The questions in this section can lead to good discussions. The students can be helped gently to see that as Christians they should not just go along with the world in everything. At times TV and the media make fun of modesty and pretend that modest people are somewhat stupid, artificial, and inhibited. Now

there are some people like that, of course; but modesty really is a healthy and happy virtue. People do not have to act constantly shocked to be modest, and they do not always have to be criticizing others. Most good people are not like that at all. The teacher should plan ahead with discussion points such as these and be ready to stress the questions judged most suitable for this class.

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DISCUSSION: Learning how to be in control

This discussion develops an important idea from this section: having pure hearts and modest ideas keeps us in charge of our own lives. When we have unchaste hearts, and dress and talk immodestly, it is easy for things to get out of control. Our lives should be led intelligently. We should go in the directions that our minds and our hearts know are good, not as if we were out of control, driven by hormones or passions we cannot understand or control.

2. Modesty in heart and mind

The presentation goes through several aspects of the virtue of modesty. The first and most important form of modesty is that which becomes rooted in our hearts and minds. Then we have: modesty in speech; modesty in dress, and modesty in action. These different aspects of modesty fall together very well.

Modest hearts and minds can appeal to young people. For Christ, the important things are those that touch the heart of our being, not just external words and acts. It is a lesson in inwardness, in opposing phoniness — a lesson which appeals to young people. But it leads to a call for consistency also. If we want to be friends of Christ, and to have lives that are decent and unselfish, we cannot fill our minds with the kinds of images and ideas that are calculated to drive people to act selfishly and impurely. We have to watch what we put into our minds, what we watch on television, and in movies, and in other things. This is not a matter of being nervous and timid; it is good sense. If we fill our minds and memories with trash, what is within will, as Jesus says, break out in our acts in harmful ways.

3. Modesty in speech

The material in the lesson plan can be very helpful here, but the teacher should go over it very carefully before the class.

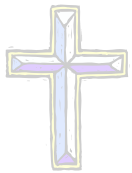
4. Modesty in dress

If some young people seem to have no sense of modesty at all in the way they dress, it is hard to blame them very much. The media, and much of the modern world, give them very bad examples. So in going through this we need a right tone. We are not blaming people, but helping them to be thoughtful, to see what Christ wants them of them in this, and to understand why.

5. Modesty in action

Three points are stressed in this section. A) We need to be thoughtful in what we allow into our minds. Good people do not let their minds be

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Class 2

saturated with movies, TV, and other entertainments of a kind that lead toward unchaste thoughts, attitudes, and immodest behavior. B) Modesty does not mean we cannot have fun. Dancing, and all kinds of good times, are really much more fun (as St. Paul suggested in the meditative prayer that the lesson began with) when we do not mix up wrong and ugly things with the good times we wish to have. D) Being a Christian is something very good, and it is something very happy. But it costs something to be a Christian. We need to stand for something, and live as if we do, or we lose wonderfully happy gifts of the Lord.

DISCUSSION: Modesty and a life of faith

This discussion points toward making “applications” in life from what we have studied. The main themes of the lesson are drawn on here. Since modesty is a virtue of respecting persons well, we reflect on how Christ cares about and will help us in acquiring modesty. The final question goes into applications; the stress here should be friendly. “Let us not raise ideas in ways that point fingers at others, or judge them.” If we want to help each other have a kind and reverent attitude that helps others, what aspects of modesty can we encourage to change public attitudes for the better? Does our manner of speech really make much difference? Should we be thoughtful about how we dress, when we know that the world’s attitudes toward dress often come from a spirit unfriendly to Christ?

Tying things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student’s sheet.

For further reference and background the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1832; 2337-2350; 2354; 2520-2524.

RECONCILIATION in our year of growing up

CATECHIST'S
NOTES

Grade 7 • Class 3

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Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality



Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This lesson seeks to help young people to make good use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in ways that will help them most in their years of growing up. At this time of their lives, this sacrament is a necessary support for their life of faith and grace. It offers the help they need especially now, even though this is also a time in which they are especially tempted to neglect this sacrament. Temptations at this time of life are more disturbing, and sins are more embarrassing. Life, in general, gets more confusing. They need certain special helps from the Lord, so that as they grow up in many ways, they may grow also in the life of faith. Regular celebration of this sacrament will help them get a strong hold on their faith and on their will to live in ways Christ calls them, even in times of great confusion and stress.

Specific objectives

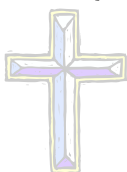
1. To show why, in the chaotic years of adolescence, when faith may begin to feel less important to us, and our friendship with Christ seems to fade, this special sacrament is so strong a help in renewing and deepening our friendship with Christ.
2. To show the many specific good things that an intelligent use of confession does for us as we are growing up.
3. To show how a thoughtful use of confession helps young people face problems regarding sexuality much more sensibly.
4. To help young people learn again how to go to confession with tranquility, and without embarrassment.
5. To help young people understand that we receive the grace of conversion only after the Holy Spirit asks us to seek it.

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

1. Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Reconciliation to help us grow to be the best we can be.
2. The Sacrament of Reconciliation does several good things for us.
3. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a help in dealing with our questions and confusions over sexuality.



Path through the lesson

Opening prayer

The opening prayer could have two parts: a reading from St. John's Gospel account of the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and a brief prayer reflecting on it.

Reading: John 20:19-23.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, during Your Passion Your disciples, overcome by fear and weakness, abandoned You, and denied they even knew You. On the day of Your resurrection You did not reproach them, but gently forgave them, and gave them Your peace and forgiveness. You gave to them, and to those who would be their successors in handing on the faith, the power to forgive our sins and bring us back to peace. Help us to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with great faith and confidence in You, and to experience the peace and strength You wish us also to have. We ask this in Your name. Amen.

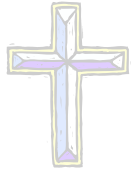
1. A sacrament for our years of growing up

The first section of the lesson speaks of strong and important matters. The catechist might read the first lines, and perhaps ask questions to invite the students into reflection.

As we grow up, there are greater problems we must learn to overcome. The world pressures young people to live in ways they know are foolish, but the temptations are great. The world invites us to fall into the use of drugs and alcohol. It invites us to pity ourselves rather than get a good grasp of our lives. It invites us to forget what life really means, and to drift into daydreams of lust with movies obscene magazines and websites. It inclines us to live in ways that make us forget who we are, and what God made us to be, so that in passing moments we are tempted with gratifications that ruin our lives.

The catechist must lead the discussion toward remembering how Christ helps us to overcome all these problems. The disciples of Christ in the Gospels were also threatened and for a while overcome by the world. But Christ was a faithful friend. They abandoned him rather shamefully in His passion, as we have abandoned Christ when we have sinned deliberately. But He cares enough to call us back to friendship, as He called the apostles back to His friendship. Recall that Christ Himself is really very new us, and He touches our lives. He sends His Holy Spirit to encourage us in our repentance. It is Christ we come to when we go to confession, and He really cares about us, forgives us our sins, and gives us power to be His close friends again. Is your friendship with Christ alive? Will Christ always be a friend to you?

Be prepared to present this part of lesson in ways that seem useful for your class. For example: "We are all Catholics. That is supposed to mean that we have found Christ, and He is our friend. It is not good to be phony about so important a thing as faith. Let us check on two things: A) Are we really true friends of Christ? B) Do we keep the friendship alive? Then go through the designated sections with the students.



2. Good things the Sacrament of Reconciliation can do for you

There are several important things this section notes that his sacrament does for us. You might note on the board brief descriptions of these good things, and then go through each one of them:

- A) Our sins are forgiven.
- B) We receive the power to overcome temptation.
- C) Our Communions and our lives become more honest.

Talking about A): People can commit mortal sins, like having deliberate impure sexual acts, using drugs, and so on. The *only way* to get rid of mortal sins, and come back to grace and friendship with Christ, is by his forgiveness — which comes only with this sacrament. One must be *seriously sorry*, united with the honest *intention to come to this sacrament* when we are able to.

Talking about B): Reconciliation protects our future. When Christ forgave the apostles on Easter morning, He not only took away their sins, but also gave them power to be able to be good and faithful friends for the times ahead. Things will often seem too tough for us, if we do not come to Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He is with us in this sacrament, and when we come to Him, He gives us power to get control of our lives.

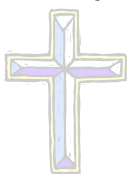
Talking about C): Sometimes people commit sins they know are mortal sins. Then they fail to go to confession. To complicate matters further, they go to Communion with unforgiven mortal sins. Knowing this is a very bad and dishonest thing, and a great sin. They pretend to be good friends of Christ. These people are refusing to be sorry before receiving the Eucharist. Lives get very mixed up, and faith becomes very weak, because of sins like these. But Christ will readily forgive even this if we go promptly to confession while we still care. Let us try to see to it that we keep our lives honest before our Savior, who knows us and cares about us.

3. Reconciliation helps us face sexuality honestly

This section could be a bit demanding for students. The catechist should be prepared to present the material gently but clearly. It covers things that students who are serious about their faith need to hear, and want to hear, but they cannot be expected to volunteer to speak out too much about these things. A sensitive catechist can help the class very much by letting them realize that the problems that can drive people from being religious in adolescence are common ones, ones other people have had too, and problems they can overcome if they wish.

A) *Reconciliation and sins of impurity* — This section is one that the catechist should stress with the students. It can be read to them thoughtfully, and the catechist should not “improvise” too much here. If the catechist wishes to add things to what is presented in the lesson, the material should be well thought out in advance.

B) *How does one confess embarrassing sins?* — This section is also one the catechist should present, rather than require students to read on their own.



The students may have important questions here, and the catechist should be prepared to answer them.

C) *Yes, but what do we say?* — The material here is crucial to understanding. The catechist should have much experience regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When we urge other people to do the courageous things faith requires, we need to have experienced how helpful this is for own lives.

Toward the end, the catechist should add something like this: “God made us male and female. He gave us sexuality, for good and important reasons in life. Sexuality is a good thing that works out well in our lives when it is used well. But if we are pressured to handle sexuality badly in our thoughts and actions, many things will go very wrong. Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation give us power to face sexuality in a way that will not make our whole lives go toward chaos.”

OUTLINE: Remembering the “how” of confessing

This exercise is very important. By the seventh grade, many students have forgotten how to go to confession. This should be presented in an encouraging spirit. Make sure you stress point D), the *importance of sorrow*, and the *intention of reforming our lives*. Perhaps writing the five points on the board will be helpful to the students. This is not so stressful a thing to teach, but the young people need your witness: Confession is a good and important thing! You can profit a lot by celebrating it regularly. (If they ask: “How often?” tell them once a month is a good rule. But young people have a right, and sometimes *need*, to go for special occasions: when something has gone wrong, when we have done something we know is seriously wrong, — then we should get to confession as quickly as we can. But we should go confidently, knowing that going to Christ is going to the source of greatest peace and strength.)

Tying things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student’s sheet.

Concluding prayer

This “Act of Contrition” is included on the student’s page:

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

Remind them that the “Act of Contrition” is a good prayer to have securely in memory. There are many times we need this prayer, and it ought to be a part of our night prayers every day. This prayer is a reminder of how important we are to God, and of how merciful and forgiving He is.

For further reference and background the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1385; 1420-1470; 1854-1861.

CHRIST and the courage to be pure of heart

CATECHIST'S
NOTES

Grade 7 • Class 4

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality



Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This lesson helps the student know what the beatitude “Blessed are the pure of heart” means, and realize how true it is. It helps them see why it takes courage to have a pure and honest heart, but that life is badly hurt if we become cowards in this. For love is the most important of all things, and a pure heart is one that makes love be true to itself. The pure heart does not confuse selfish and lustful mistreatment of self and others with love, but knows that love means really caring for the ones we love, and wants them to have what is truly good.

Specific objectives

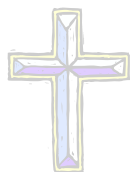
1. To show that pure love (love not mixed with selfishness and dishonesty of heart) is the strongest and most burning love, just as pure gold is better than gold mixed with lead.
2. To clarify the differences between real and pure love — which shines in people who really care about us and want us to be happy and have what is surely good — and false love, seen in people who pretend to care about us, but are only pretending, or looking out for themselves.
3. To show why the world that does not know Christ, or the goodness of the generous love He teaches, also is an impure world. Love was made to be pure, to be true love, and so generous and truthful and a blessing to all. But the world mixes the love it longs for with many kinds of selfishness, and so turns its broken love into something false and the cause of much pain.
4. To show how, just as impurity and dishonesty about love hurt everything, so a pure heart helps everything, because it cares honestly about generosity in love, and about lasting love, homes, and the care of children.

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

1. Pure hearts make the world a better place.
2. Courage is needed in relationships of pure love.
3. Selfish, non-courageous love can lead to that lust which destroys dreams.
4. A life of chastity is the proper consequence of our sexuality.



Path through the lesson

Opening prayer

The catechist may remind the students that through the centuries young people have learned from the great goodness of Mary how important, how good and generous, is purity of heart. Purity is not a nervous and weak virtue. It is strong, and courageous, and full of peace. Pure love is the strongest kind of love, as pure gold is the richest kind of gold. Friendship with Mary helps us realize how great and good it is to have a generous and pure heart. We begin the class by saying together the "Hail Mary," asking Mary to help all of us to have strong, generous, and pure hearts.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

1. Pure love versus selfish love

This first section is thoughtful, but not too hard for the young people to understand. They can see very easily why pure food is better than food mixed with dirt. They might like making humorous remarks about this. And they know well that pure gold is better than gold mixed with cheap materials. When they think of this, they can begin to get the real idea of pure love. It is not a phony love, but love that has all the fire of love and nothing else. Nothing ugly or bitter is mixed with it.

The students can be told: When Christ praised love, he was praising real love, pure love, love that is just love. He never thought much of fake or dishonest love. It is good to have someone in the class read the short quotation from I Corinthians. The words of this passage are beautiful. The class can be asked what they think of love like this. Do they like seeing love like this anywhere in their lives?

Love that is not pure. It is important to help the students think through the ideas in this lesson. The first two sections — dishonest love and selfish love — can be going through quickly. But time should be given to let the students speak of kinds of love like this that they know from stories.

The idea of "lustful love" takes a bit more time. What we are aiming at is helping the students *feel* how deceitful and ugly the lustful love in the little story really is. The catechist might tell them the story, and stress the details that reveal the deviousness of "love" that really does not care about the person being used. A presentation of this story with some feeling makes them see for a while how false is much of the "love" badly thrown into young people's entertainment these days.

Happy and good sexual activity goes only with marriage. Catholic faith never forgets that *God* created sexuality. Certainly sexuality is not bad; God made it good. But it is an important good thing, and God made it for precious purposes. What is bad is treating something precious, something that needs to be treated with truthful love, as if it were a trivial toy that could be exploited "just for fun." Treating sex that way is foolish and wrong, and causes much



bitter pain. God made sexuality for important purposes.

When we think of marriage, we see what God made sexuality for. It was not a toy for immature people, but a great gift able to strengthen and preserve forever the generous love of marriage. One is not ready for sexual activity until one is ready for the generous promises of marriage. Even to see lustful gestures in movies or television, when people are treating sexual feelings as trivial fun, is to see how dishonest lust is. It pretends a love and a generosity which it by no means has. Lust pretends to say: "I love you and will always love you." But it does not really love. Rather it wants cheap pleasure for itself. The pleasure of selfish love is cheap, because it forgets the important thing sex is really made for — love that lasts and is generous, and gives everything to make love last, and homes strong, and gives children the strength of love in strong homes. Lust does not give the whole heart; rather it wants to use the other selfishly. Pure love is the love that makes husbands and wives love each other a whole life long, that makes their homes strong; it is a love that makes homes strong enough to be safe for little children. Impure love rather is looking for pleasure NOW, pleasure that quickly fades and disappoints. Pleasure without generous love is not very deep and not very lasting.

But the world refuses to understand how important and good are the things sexuality was made for. And so it encourages people to treat sex, which God made as precious and important, as if it were a cheap toy. And when it does this, it makes it harder for love to last, and for homes to be happy, and for children to be safe.

2. Relationships and pure love

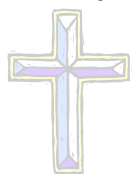
First make sure the students understand the idea of courage. They are often teased into doing stupid or wrong things, by being told they are sissies or cowards if they do not. But they are able to understand what courage really is. It is worth the time to help them see this clearly.

The lesson explains the difference between courage and foolish but dangerous activity. But to make this vivid, it is good for the catechist to show some cases of courage: the sacrifice of martyrs, or the immense bravery good soldiers sometimes show, or the courage that heroes who save the lives of people whom they love show. Then show some cases of foolish bravado of people who drive with stupid speed in dangerous circumstances and hurt or kill people. Anyone can then see the difference between courage and foolish, rash acts.

Questions. Some time should be taken with the questions. The students should be given a chance to show that they do see the real meaning of courage and to give examples themselves.

3. Selfish love, sexuality, and broken dreams

Courage is important for being good and decent people all the time. The catechist should go through the story of the boy who is tempted to sell drugs and make vivid the point of the story. If we want to do good things in this world, we often have to be very courageous to do so. Students can see and feel



how often people act like cowards because they are afraid of being called cowards. Is it better to be a coward, or to be called one? Once they see how courage is needed for being good and decent in other matters, they can see also why courage is needed to remain pure in heart and in activity.

We do not need to remind the students of the consequences if we treat sex as something trivial and cheap, the way the world often does. They know how MTV and many movies and television shows rather tease one into thinking and acting in ways we know are bad. And what is worse, as the lesson says, is that so many people we would like to be friends with often push us toward cowardliness, teasing us that we are cowards if we will not do what we know is bad and harmful. There is a traitor in my own heart too, as the lesson suggests. It will take courage to have a pure heart, in a peaceful and strong life.

4. Sexuality and its consequences

This section should be prepared well in advance. We want the students to know and be convinced: Christ is able and will give them the courage to lead the good kinds of life they need to please God and to make their lives decent and happy ones.

Take a bit of time for the *questions* about Christ: about how He experienced very well the teasing and mockery that good people often get. He went through humiliations in the passion, but He was brave, and came out looking far better than those who wanted to humiliate Him. Try to draw out of the students' remembrance of this part of Christ's life. This helps them to see how great a thing courage is, when it is the courage defending what is more precious.

The catechist should take time to make clear how Christ really promises us that He will not let it be too difficult for us to be pure of heart or generous. We may be very weak, but He is very strong. And He promises to make it possible and easy for us to live the kind of life He wants us to. Be sure to discuss the various ways that we can receive God's grace in our lives today, especially through Mass and the Eucharist; Reconciliation, and our own prayer.

Typing things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student's sheet.

For further reference and background, the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 574-575; 608-609; 1638-1658; 1805; 1808; 1831; 2030; 2331-2356; 2360-2363; 2517-2527.

THE **CATHOLIC** Vision of Love

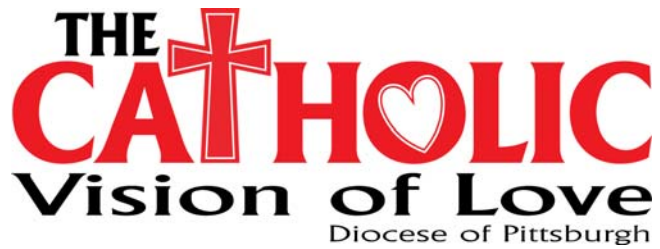
Diocese of Pittsburgh

Personal Safety Curriculum



Grade 7

**Personal Safety
7th Grade Lesson Plans
Communication Boundaries**



Texting, Touching, And Talking About Ourselves And Others

LESSON OUTLINE:

- Introduction & Opening Prayer: 5 – 7 Minutes
- Teaching on Respect, Focus on the Dignity of the Human Person: 7 – 15 Minutes
- Activity—Talking about Texting, Touching and Taking Responsibility for Our Words: 20 Minutes
(This can be done by dividing the group and letting students talk about each scenario, then share with large group, or by facilitating discussion about each scenario with the entire group.)
- Wrap Up & Connection to Catholic Social Teaching and Dignity of Human Person: 5 – 10 Minutes
- Closing Prayer & Activity: 5 – 7 Minutes

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Human life is sacred: *"Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."*

(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2258, Notation 56 CDF, instruction, Donum vitae, intro. 5.)

1. All life has dignity: *"The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (article 1); it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude (article 2). It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment (article 3). By his deliberate actions (article 4), the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience (article 5). Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth (article 6). With the help of grace they grow in virtue (article 7), avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son¹ to the mercy of our Father in heaven (article 8). In this way they attain to the perfection of charity."*

(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 1700 and Part Three Life in Christ: Section One—Man's Vocation Life in the Spirit, Chapter One the dignity of the Human Person)

2. Truthfulness in Speech: *“The eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. This moral prescription flows from the vocation of the holy people to bear witness to their God who is the truth and wills the truth. Offenses against the truth express by word or deed a refusal to commit oneself to moral uprightness: they are fundamental infidelities to God and, in this sense, they undermine the foundations of the covenant.”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2464)

3. Charity is Christ-like: *“The Ten Commandments state what is required in the love of God and love of neighbor. The first three concern love of God, and the other seven love of neighbor.” “As charity comprises the two commandments to which the Lord related the whole Law and the prophets . . . so the Ten Commandments were themselves given on two tablets. Three were written on one tablet and seven on the other.”*
(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2067, Notation 27 St. Augustine, Sermo 33, 2, 2: PL 38, 208.)

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

4. Respect and Reputation: The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly explains this: *“Respect for the reputation of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury.²⁷⁷ He becomes guilty:*

- *of rash judgment who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor;*
- *of detraction who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them;²⁷⁸*
- *of calumny who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.*
(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2477)

“To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way: Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it. And if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.²⁷⁹ (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2478)

“Detraction and calumny destroy the reputation and honor of one's neighbor. Honor is the social witness given to human dignity, and everyone enjoys a natural right to the honor of his name and reputation and to respect. Thus, detraction and calumny offend against the virtues of justice and charity” (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2479).

"Every word or attitude is forbidden which by flattery, adulation, or complaisance encourages and confirms another in malicious acts and perverse conduct. Adulation is a grave fault if it makes one an accomplice in another's vices or grave sins. Neither the desire to be of service nor friendship justifies duplicitous speech. Adulation is a venial sin when it only seeks to be agreeable, to avoid evil, to meet a need, or to obtain legitimate advantages" (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2480).

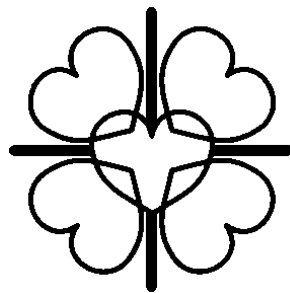
"Boasting or bragging is an offense against truth. So is irony aimed at disparaging someone by maliciously caricaturing some aspect of his behavior."
(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2481)

"A lie consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving."280 The Lord denounces lying as the work of the devil: "You are of your father the devil...there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies"281 (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2482).

"Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error. By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord"
(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2483).

"The gravity of a lie is measured against the nature of the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims. If a lie in itself only constitutes a venial sin, it becomes mortal when it does grave injury to the virtues of justice and charity" (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2484).

"By its very nature, lying is to be condemned. It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity. The culpability is greater when the intention of deceiving entails the risk of deadly consequences for those who are led astray" (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2485).

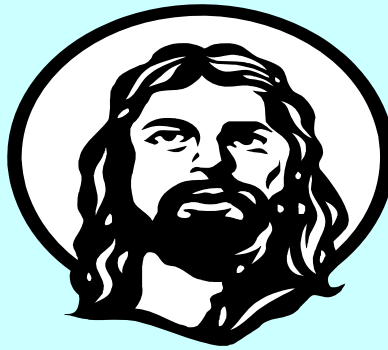


Introduction & Opening Prayer: 5 – 7 Minutes

Catechist



**COMMUNICATION BOUNDARIES
OPENING PRAYER**



Leader: We begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader: "Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" (Ps 25:5).

All: "Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" (Ps 25:5).

Reader: God, help us to know your truth, help us to learn to follow your ways, and to trust in all your words.

All: "Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" (Ps 25:5).

**TEACHING ON RESPECT,
FOCUS ON THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON: 7 - 15 Minutes**

ACTIVITY 1 (Introduction Activity) WORDS, WORDS, WORDS Less than 5 Minutes

Materials: black construction paper, white chalk

Give black construction paper and white chalk to every student in the class and tell them that they have 30 seconds to write something negative that they have texted, messaged, written, or said. When the time is up, tell them that they have 30 seconds to try to get the chalk off of the paper and have them either hang their papers around the room for everyone to see, or just display them in their seats.

(Catechist Note: The students might be apprehensive about writing negative things on the construction paper—this is a good thing! However it makes this activity a little trickier. The point of this activity is to show the students that what is written, spoken, or typed cannot ever fully be erased.)

Ask: Did it work? Just like that white chalk on their paper, we can't ever really take back or erase the words that we speak, so it's important to remember that all our words should be uplifting, kind, good.

Explanation/Lesson Content: 5 to 10 Minutes

- From the activity, which was easier: putting words on the paper or taking them off?
- Were any of you embarrassed about what you had written?
- How does this relate to what you have seen in the past week or two at school or in the news?
- What are some of the ways that individuals can make their thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and opinions public? **(texting, emailing, facebook, email, notes, messages, speaking, etc)**

Our projected image is a culmination of all of the information that we show others: our words, our posts, the messages written on our t-shirts, how we speak, what we say, where we say it, who we talk about, and to whom we speak.

- How does God instruct us about our words and how we use them? **(get some responses from the class before entering into the teaching)**

“The eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. This moral prescription flows from the vocation of the holy people to bear witness to their God who is the truth and wills the truth. Offenses against the truth express by word or deed a refusal to commit oneself to moral uprightness: they are fundamental infidelities to God and, in this sense, they undermine the foundations of the covenant.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2464)

Refer to the background on this lesson (pages 1-3) for specific points to highlight about lying, gossiping, slander, etc. and cover them based on responses elicited from students.

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR WORDS!!!

(Have the students read the following words from the bible)

- ✓ “Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23);
- ✓ “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29)
 - Jesus warned us about the power of our words. He taught us that our words are so important that they will actually determine our condemnation or justification.
 - He said we will be held responsible for all our words, even our careless, idle words.

“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt. 12:36-37).

Clean Speech: From Grandma to the Bible

- Can Grandma come to lunch? Think about it...how would Grandma react if she was listening to your lunch table or locker room conversation?
- What about if Grandma was reading your texts? Is Grandma a friend on Facebook?
- The “Grandma Test” helps to determine if what we are saying is appropriate. If you wouldn’t say some of this around Grandma, why not?

One of Jesus’ disciples had a lot to say about speech. Paul cautioned believers to guard their words and forbid any corrupt or worthless talk to come from their mouths.

Paul instructed that only those things which lift-up, encourage, and are gracious should be expressed to others:

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Eph. 4:29).

- Does that mean that we shouldn’t be honest? No. It means that we should speak well, and be honest with charity and kindness.

Obscenities, profanity, cursing, dirty jokes, or making fun of others is not something that should ever be found in the mouth of a believer.

“Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving” (Eph. 5:4 NIV).

Even **sarcasm** can be harmful. The etymology of the word “sarcasm”

- comes from the Latin word, sarcasmus,
- and the Greek word, σαρκασμός (sarkasmos), - to tear flesh like dogs,
- from sarx, sark-, flesh
- the root word literally means "to cut a piece of flesh (from the targeted person)." (Liddell & Scott Greek-English Lexicon, 1996 Oxford University Press)

The tongue is a powerful weapon: *“It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”* (James 3:6)

- Today there are more ways than ever to communicate with others: talking, writing, emailing, blogging, posting, typing, texting, youtube, facebook, instant messaging, webcam.
- With more ways to say what we want, we have to recognize the power in our words.
- Using good language and clean words is one way that we honor and respect ourselves and our God.
- Treating our bodies with respect is another way that we honor God.

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroy God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

- Why did God give us the Ten Commandments? **(Allow the students to give some possible suggestions.)**
- God gave us the Ten Commandments to reveal our sins and show us a better way to live with each other, and to respect ourselves, each other, and God.

Some of the commandments speak directly to the issue of words, let’s take a closer look:

DISCUSSION GUIDE ACTIVITY

20 Minutes

ACTIVITY 2—TALKING ABOUT TEXTING, TOUCHING AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR WORDS

Catechist/Facilitator Notes:

Talking with young people about boundaries is very important. This can be done in a couple of ways. One way to discuss this with young people is to divide them in to small groups to discuss each scenario, and then bring the entire group together and have the young people explain their decisions. Another way to do this is to read each scenario to the class and help them discuss what to do. Some things to ask, or to keep in mind:

“I don’t know....” While there are times that this response from a child means what they are saying, often they are ways to say, “I don’t want to express my opinion around my peers,” “I’m afraid to say what I really think,” or “I don’t want to think about this very hard.” Do not accept responses that avoid answering the question. In those cases, consider responding with, “How about we all talk with a partner about this for a minute and then share with the group,” “Oh, I bet if we all thought about it together we could figure it out,” or “Well, tell me a reason that you like one in particular....”

“Why do you think that boy is crying?” Emotions are often difficult to discuss—for everyone. But young people really need to practice empathy with their peers. Remember to ask open ended questions to clarify and help explain. Another great question to ask in conversations about tough topics, “What do you mean by that?”




It’s okay to say, **“This is complicated, so let’s really talk about it...”** Young people should be able to practice talking about their feelings, reactions, and experiences. This is a great way to open the door for conversations with their parents.

Set boundaries for this kind of discussion with young people (example: One person talking at a time; write down ideas and pass them to the front; get together with your group and discuss, etc).

Some considerations from this activity: This is an important activity to help teach children about sexual predators, exploitation, and groomers. Groomers use information that they gather about the victim to make them feel safe and liked.

Some of the scenarios discussed in the activities in this section look at tactics that kids can watch out for (these are themes for which there are many variations, let the kids know what they are):

1. **Let's go private.**" (inviting the child to leave the public chatroom and create a private chat or move to instant-messaging or phone texting)
2. **"Where's your computer (located, what room) in the house?"** (to see if parents might be around)
3. **"What's your favorite video game, television show, sports team?"** (questions like these tell the groomer more about their victims so that they know what gifts to offer – e.g., concert tickets; Webcam, software, video games)
4. **"I know someone who can get you a modeling job."** (opens a doorway for inappropriate photos)
5. **"You seem sad. Tell me what's bothering you."** (sympathy leading to a false sense of trust)
6. **"What's your phone number?"** (asking for personal info of any kind – usually happens at a later stage, after the target's feeling comfortable with the groomer)
7. **"If you don't... [do what I ask], I'll... [tell your parents OR share your photos in a photo blog / Webcam directory / file-sharing network]"** (intimidation – used as the groomer learns more and more about the target)
8. **"I have never loved anyone as much as I love you."** (playing on the emotions of the target, this sometimes will convince kids to do things that they normally wouldn't even think of)

JESUS
THE WAY, 
 **THE TRUTH,**
THE LIFE. 

DISCUSSION GUIDE ACTIVITY

1. TALKING ABOUT SITUATIONAL EVALUATIONS: 10 minutes

(Catechist presents each scenario to the large group, then students discuss in small groups for 60 seconds OR students discuss in small groups and then discuss with larger group)

Recommendation: Separate the class into groups of 3 or 4. Ask some of the questions to the class for general discussion then facilitate discussion on each question.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Yesterday you heard that a girl from homeroom made herself sick after lunch. When you saw her coming out of the bathroom today, you remembered that some kids called her bulimic, and also heard that she got called to the nurse's office. Today after school, your friends were talking about it and didn't know that she got called to the nurse's office.
 - ⇒ Should you tell them about what you heard or that you saw her coming out the bathroom?
 - ⇒ What are some of the possibilities for gossip here?
- A teacher always hugs you after everyone leaves the classroom and sometimes asks you really personal questions.
 - ⇒ Is there anything wrong with that, why or why not?

ENTIRE CLASS DISCUSSION

- Someone from a gaming site online wants you to send them a picture of you in your bathing suit.
 - ⇒ Is this ok? Why or why not?

NOTE: The possession or transmission of media with compromising or suggestive images of minors is considered child pornography and is against the law. This includes webcam and email, which has certain legal ramifications, as well as social, emotional, and reputational effects. Boundaries identify responsibilities. Crossing these boundaries, and crossing state lines with child pornography is a felony.

EITHER SMALL GROUP OR ENTIRE CLASS DISCUSSION

- A friend from online asks you for your address and tells you that they love you even though you've never met them.
 - ⇒ Is that ok? Why or why not?
- Your friend's dad offers to drive you home without your friend and takes a very long way to your house. When you mention this to your friend, she gets weird and very defensive.
 - ⇒ Do you talk to your parents about this, or just ignore it?
- You spent the night at a friend's house this past weekend and something happened that you're not sure about. Your friend's brother and his friends were there, and they had some alcohol. Your friend drank some of the alcohol with the boys. They also were watching things on the TV that you know your parents wouldn't like. When you got home, your mom asked you how the weekend was and you said, "OK". You thought that telling your parents about this might get your friend in trouble. Now, you feel funny about going back to your friend's house and your mom keeps asking you why.
 - ⇒ What do you tell your parents?
- A friend takes your cell phone into the bathroom and sends a text message to someone else with it.
 - ⇒ Is this ok? Why or why not?

Note: The phone is linked to who you are: whatever is sent or received on your phone is your responsibility. The possession or transmission of media with compromising images of minors is considered child pornography and is against the law. This is known as sexting and has certain legal ramifications, as well as social, emotional, and reputational effects. Boundaries identify responsibilities.

- ▶ Someone sends you a picture message on your cell phone of someone without their clothes on.
 - ⇒ Is this ok? Why or why not?
 - ⇒ Also, is this legal?
 - ⇒ What do you do and who do you tell?

Note: The phone is linked to who you are: whatever is sent or received on your phone is your responsibility. The possession or transmission of media with compromising images of minors is considered child pornography and is against the law. This is known as sexting and has certain legal ramifications, as well as social, emotional, and reputational effects. Boundaries identify responsibilities.

2. WHO DO I TALK TO? (And why/how could they help? – 10 Minutes

+ Distribute student handout

(Catechist presents each person to the large group, then students discuss in small groups for 60 seconds if they need to, although some of these should be pretty straightforward – distribute student handout, Who Do I Talk To?)

Catechist Notes

WHO DO I TALK TO? (And why or how could they help?)

| | | | |
|--------|---------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Parent | Teacher | Trusted Adult (who's that?) | Priest |
| Doctor | Friend | Friend's Parent | Anyone else? |

- ➡ What if my friend tells me that he/she is in trouble?
 - ➡ What if I know that my friend is doing something dangerous, even if it is online?
 - ➡ What if I think that my friend is doing something dangerous?
 - ➡ What if I think that someone is hurting my friend?
 - ➡ What if someone keeps sending me text messages that I wouldn't want my parents to see?
 - ➡ What if someone is making me feel uncomfortable online?
 - ➡ What if I sent someone to someone online or through a text message that is embarrassing now?
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3. WRAP UP & CONNECTION TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON – 5 – 10 Minutes

We talked about a lot of really important things today. Let's review a few things:

1. What we say and how we say it makes a difference:

"Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, and do not leave room for the devil" (Ephesians 4:25-27); "A mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise pours out knowledge, but the mouth of fools spurts forth folly. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse one crushes the spirit" (Proverbs 15:1-4).



God is clear about the power of words, especially regarding the respect and reputation of ourselves and others.

From the Old Testament teachings and Commandments to the New Testament, we are held responsible for **rash judgment, detraction, calumny, boasting, lying, and flattery.**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains and clarifies:

"Respect for the reputation of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury.²⁷⁷

He (we) become(s) guilty:

—▶ of **rash judgment** who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor;

—▶ of **detraction** who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them;²⁷⁸

—▶ of **calumny** who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.
(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2477)

- ▶ "To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way: Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it. And if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.²⁷⁹
(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2478)

- ▶ “Detraction and calumny **destroy the reputation and honor of one's neighbor**. Honor is the social witness given to human dignity, and everyone enjoys a natural right to the honor of his name and reputation and to respect. Thus, detraction and calumny offend against the virtues of justice and charity”
(**Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2479**)
- ▶ “Every word or attitude is forbidden which by **flattery, adulation, or complaisance** encourages and confirms another in malicious acts and perverse conduct. Adulation is a grave fault if it makes one an accomplice in another's vices or grave sins. Neither the desire to be of service nor friendship justifies duplicitous speech. Adulation is a venial sin when it only seeks to be agreeable, to avoid evil, to meet a need, or to obtain legitimate advantages”
(**Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2480**)
- ▶ “**Boasting** or bragging is an offense against truth. So is **irony** aimed at disparaging someone by maliciously caricaturing some aspect of his behavior”
(**Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2481**)
- ▶ “A **lie** consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving.”²⁸⁰ The Lord denounces lying as the work of the devil: “You are of your father the devil...there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies”²⁸¹
(**Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2482**)
- ▶ “Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error. By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord” (**Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2483**)

2. Sometimes we have to speak up:

- ▶ Especially if it involves dangerous behavior. What if a classmate brings a drugs or a gun to school, or your friend tells you she's not eating until she loses 10 pounds? In cases like that, you need to tell a parent, teacher, or another trusted adult. Telling a grown-up who can help is **not** gossiping.
- ▶ Sometimes it's hard to determine what you should tell and what you should not tell. The best way to avoid being a part of the gossip problem in your school is to steer clear of kids who gossip, and if you hear a rumor, don't repeat it - and don't listen to it, either.
- ▶ Being a trustworthy and honest person means that when someone trusts you with a personal secret, keep it to yourself (unless someone is in danger).
- ▶ At first, you might not even realize that you're gossiping. But if someone gossips *with* you, he or she also might gossip *about* you. And it doesn't feel good to be on the receiving end. Talk with someone about this, like a parent, teacher, youth minister, or guidance counselor.

3. Remember, you have the power to change the way people view youth:

- ▶ Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. (1 Tim 4:12) When St. Paul wrote that to Timothy, he intended for all of us to **hear it, read it, believe it, and live it!**

4. So what if we have said something that we shouldn't have?

- ▶ Have respect for yourself too. It's not fair to "beat yourself up" over sins and weaknesses. God says to call *no man* a fool, including yourself: "...but whosoever shall say You fool, shall be in the danger of hell fire" (Matthew 5:22)
- ▶ So, when you make a mistake or say something harsh, don't say to yourself: "You idiot! How could you be so stupid? I have to be the dumbest person in the whole world!" Instead, think about how you can change this.

5. Picture this:

- ▶ Gossiping and lying, saying harsh things, and using sarcasm that hurts others is like driving down the road and collecting dead bugs on the windshield. It makes things a little hard to see, but they are just little bugs on a big windshield.
- ▶ Going to confession can help clean the windshield and it gives you a chance to start over. But, if you refuse to acknowledge your sin (even if they are little or venial sins), the bugs on the windshield might become blinding, and then you won't see the really big things that can trip you up and kill you.

End the Class with the Closing Prayer:

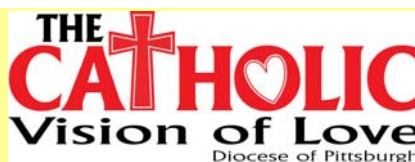
Interactive Prayer: Words, Hands, Hearts

Give white (or another color) construction paper, cut out in the shape of a hand, and permanent markers, to every student in the class and tell them that they have 30 seconds to write something positive that glorifies God and blesses others in every finger of the hand (five things total).

They may need to be prompted through this, so write some words on the board that fit: **awesome God, holy Lord, blessing, faith, hope, love, forgiveness**, etc.

Helpful Hint: Ask them to write down the words that they want to have more of in their lives.

Another way to work this activity: Explain the entire activity then play the song "*Give Us Clean Hands*" by Chris Tomlin for them to listen to and reflect on while they write on the construction paper.



COMMUNICATION BOUNDARIES CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: “Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created.” Worthy (Revelation 4:11) Let us begin honoring God’s creation in our prayer today, as we begin all things,

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader 1: “Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (I Cor. 3:16-17). God, we offer to you our bodies. Help us to glorify you in all that we say, write, and do.

All: Give us clean hands, oh Lord.

Reader 2: “Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23); “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29) God, help us to guard our words, our thoughts, and our reactions to the people around us.

All: Give us pure hearts, oh Lord.

Reader 3: So give us clean hands and give us pure hearts, Let us not lift our souls to another. Oh God let this be a generation that seeks, Who seeks Your face, Oh God of Jacob. (From the song “Give Us Clean Hands” by Chris Tomlin)

All: Jesus, help me to love myself and my neighbor today, as you have loved me.

Leader: Jesus taught us how to pray to His Father, so let us together pray the Lord’s Prayer:

All: Our Father, who art in Heaven...Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

