

What a Good Friend Does

A Lesson on Respecting Others

Grades 4-6

Goal: Students will learn the difference between treating others with respect and using them as a means for an end. Activities will reinforce the qualities of a good friend, and what each of our responsibility is toward others. Topics will include gossiping, bullying, and internet safety.

Diving into Dignity

Human dignity is **universal**. This means every person has dignity. Dignity is not based on age, gender, race, status or abilities. No matter how old or young, strong or weak, every person has dignity simply because they are human. Some people deny that certain groups of people possess dignity and, instead, treat them as objects rather than persons. Today we'll learn about how to respect the dignity of others through friendship.

Based on the Human Dignity Curriculum (World Youth Alliance)

Lesson: Today's lesson is about friendship. Each and every person is created in the image of God. In God there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is called the Trinity. This means that God is always living in perfect friendship within himself. This is a mystery. God created us to be in friendship with others.

Discussion:

What does it mean to be a good friend?

What are some of the qualities you like in friends?

What are some of the qualities you try to have yourself to be a good friend to others?

There are many factors that can make it difficult to be a good friend. To follow the example of God in the Trinity, being a good friend means always doing what is best for the other person, even if it is not the very best thing for ourselves. Kids and teens spend so much of their time on instant electronic communication. How often do they stop to think about what they are texting/posting/tweeting/snap-chatting?

Activity: Ask students to think about:

- The last 5 texts on their phones
- The last post/tweet they wrote
- The last photo they instagrammed
- The first thing they said to their best friend when they got to school today

Much of the content we share through conversation or social media is positive and harmless, even fun. But, some of the content can be very hurtful. We all know of instances in which people have been hurt by gossip. Sometimes it can even go so far as to cause someone to change schools, be depressed, or even cause harm to themselves. What can we do to stop this cycle?

Watch: [Video on Gossip](#)

Discussion: Knowing that we are meant to reflect the great love and friendship of the Trinity, how might we not only stop gossiping ourselves, but also commit to making our classes, families and schools gossip free?

Activity: Have students make a list of the five qualities of a friend they value as most important. After they have their list of five qualities, ask them to give themselves a rating on those same five qualities {1-10}. Remind them that to have a good friend, it's important that they be one, first.

Activity: Students are asked to be investigative reporters. Instead of finding out gossip about people, they will be investigating their very best qualities. Break the class into pairs, preferably students who do not know each other very well. Give them a list of questions and ask them to make up some of their own: Where were you born? Who is in your family? Where would you like to travel most? What is your greatest aspiration? What is your greatest accomplishment? Who is your favorite person you have eaten a meal with?

Once students have completed their interviews, ask them to share what they have learned with the class. Remind them that it is always best to get to know people before making judgments about them. When we first see or meet new people, it is easy to recognize our differences. But, once we get to know someone personally—learn about them and where they come from—we begin to notice similarities that can build friendships.

Watch: [Net Smartz](#)

Discussion:

Why should we only share information online with those we have met in person?

How can you stay safe online?

What should you do if someone who you don't know is trying to get information from you online?

Prayer:

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Teachers' Note: This day's activities correspond with the study of Human Trafficking for the older grades. Part of this discussion focused on keeping kids safe, particularly on the internet. Here are resources for internet safety for kids of all ages. Please review these and share them with your class parents as appropriate:

Website with teaching materials for all grade levels on internet safety and keeping kids safe from traffickers. Includes handouts, exercise suggestions and online resources. From the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Gossiping talking points and topics

Project iGuardian offers practical solutions for teens, parents, and educators for keeping kids safe from online sexual predators. Online resources as well as information on booking school presentations and a local tip line. Created by Department of Homeland Security.

Lesson adapted from the plans on the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Life, Justice and Peace website