

# SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON PLAN

## “BOUNDARIES – PART ONE”

**Grade: High School**

### OBJECTIVES

The High School student will:

1. Discuss ways that we respect ourselves and others
2. Identify appropriate boundaries for time, emotions, knowledge, and bodies.
3. Contrast healthy and unhealthy relationships.
4. List warning signs that signal boundary crossing in an unhealthy way.
5. Recite NO, GO, TELL as an action plan with a focus on assertive behavior.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Student needs:

- Pencil
- Notebook

Teacher needs:

- Chart paper
- Permanent marker
- Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships chart
- List of warning signs that signal boundary crossing
- Assessment materials:
  - Refusal and assertive skills for safeguarding boundaries
  - Self-reflection on Personal Boundaries 1 Corinthians 13 - Thoughts on love

### CONTENT

#### **RESPECT FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS**

God loves each of us. He created us with love for love and made each of us in His image and likeness. We are all children of God and because of this, we each have great dignity and value. We have this dignity without doing anything to earn it. God always loves us, even when we choose to disobey Him. He calls us to love ourselves and our neighbors. One of the ways that we do this is to show respect for ourselves and others. Respect is a virtue or character trait that leads us to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. Respect is speaking and acting with courtesy, and treating others with dignity, as children of God.

How do you show respect for yourself? (Ask students for responses.) How do you show respect for others? (Ask students for responses.) Respect for ourselves and others comes in many forms:

- Respect through our words: No cursing/foul language, no gossip, no lying and refraining from talking behind someone's back
- Respect through our bodies: Dressing modestly, dressing up for Sunday Mass, eating well, exercising, avoid using drugs, no excessive piercings or tattoos, no intentional

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sexual stimulation or activity outside of marriage

- Respect through our actions: Avoid physically hurting ourselves and others, do not fight, cheat, or steal

How can you tell if someone is being disrespectful? What do they do or how do they act toward you? (Ask students for responses.) We all know what it feels like when someone is not respectful whether it is a peer, a parent, or a stranger. It can be very hurtful. We respect things that are valuable – a treasure, a prized possession, an expensive belonging. We respect and protect these things because they are important to us. Our lives and our bodies are even more valuable! When someone is disrespectful toward you, it hurts because they are not acknowledging the immense worth and dignity that you have as a child of God. We have a responsibility to treasure and take care of the gift of our lives and the lives of others. God calls us to love one another – to be a gift of ourselves to others – to put others' needs before our own. The Gospel of John talks about this when he says,

“We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And we also ought to give up our lives for Christian brothers and sisters. But if anyone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help, how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions.” (1 John 3: 16-18)

#### **SETTING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES**

One way we show respect for ourselves and others is by respecting our boundaries and the boundaries of other people by not overstepping them or allowing someone to cross our boundaries. There are boundaries that we put in place ourselves and boundaries that are put in place by other authority figures like our parents, spouses, teachers or lawmakers. Societies also establish norms over time that set limits on acceptable behavior. All of these boundaries are in place to keep us safe.

Boundaries are physical and emotional limits established in ALL relationships by or for a person. These boundaries vary depending on the relationship. No relationship is perfect. All relationships, whether it is between a parent and child, a boyfriend and girlfriend, or a teacher and student, are between two human beings, and as human beings, none of us are perfect. Daily, we all struggle to become better, more holy versions of ourselves. We are all flawed human beings because we are born with original sin. I am sure that we all remember the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Our communion with God at that time was wounded. We are all affected by original sin and need restoration. Even though we are all created in the perfect image and likeness of God, each of us also has the gift of free will, which allows us to make decisions that sometimes draw us farther away from God.

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Because we are imperfect human beings, we require boundaries in our relationships. Boundaries provide us with the promise of being in a relationship where both people are committed to preserving respect and trust and upholding the dignity and worth of one another. Boundaries, when they are set clearly and distinctly, are easier to abide by and follow. If you have ever played soccer outside in a field with no out-of-bounds markings, you know how difficult it can be to follow the rules. It is much easier to stay in-bounds when you have thick chalk lines drawn on the field. This is the same for us in our relationships. When the thick chalk lines are drawn for us in life, in other words, when the boundaries between two people are clear, specific, and understood by each person, it becomes much easier to avoid crossing over into an inappropriate action, feeling, or situation.

There are many different types of boundaries: boundaries on time, emotions, knowledge, and our bodies. Each of these areas requires a set of boundaries to follow in order to respect your dignity and the dignity of others. Let's briefly look at each one of these areas and talk about what the appropriate boundaries would be. (Have students take the time to brainstorm on their own what the appropriate boundaries would be for each area. Then, come together as a class to share responses.)

- TIME
- EMOTIONS
- KNOWLEDGE
- BODIES

Boundaries are a good thing. Boundaries help to protect each of us. We are created by God as such valuable creations that we are too precious to NOT have our boundaries respected. It is important at your age to work on your skills related to respect and boundaries so that you might excel in your current relationships and learn for the future.

#### **BOUNDARIES IN HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

We have to remember that boundaries are not a one-size-fits-all choice. Boundaries within a friendship will be different than boundaries with a stranger. Boundaries with a teacher will be different than boundaries with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Boundaries also vary by culture. For example, in some cultural communities, greeting others is very physical, with hugs and kisses; while other cultures use only minimal eye contact when meeting someone new. It is important to know which culture we are interacting with so that we behave in an appropriate way and are respectful of the boundaries of others.

Most boundaries reflect our personal preferences or values. In a healthy relationship, each individual is respectful of the other's boundaries and does not cross them. In unhealthy relationships, boundaries are ignored, and people feel uncomfortable or violated. Physical

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or emotional boundaries may be ignored, and both are violations of your personal dignity and value. Both are unhealthy and inappropriate.

Often, it is easy to see when a physical boundary is crossed. Who can give an example of a physical boundary and when it is crossed or ignored? (Ask students to give examples of a specific physical boundary and when it has been ignored.) However, It is more difficult to see an emotional boundary being ignored. Emotional boundaries are limits that we set on the amount and kind of information we disclose and the way we respect the feelings of others. Manipulative behavior, name-calling, sarcasm, put-downs, harassment, and ridicule are just a few examples of the ways that people can ignore our emotional boundaries.

What does a healthy relationship look like? What does it feel like? How do you spend your time? How do you feel about yourself and the other person? What are some words to describe this type of relationship? Take a few minutes to jot down your thoughts on the chart. (Give students time to reflect individually and then ask for responses.) A healthy relationship is life-giving. The other person encourages you to grow. It does not demand all of your time and attention; you are proud to be with the other person in the circles of your family and friends; you maintain your individuality while in a couple relationship; it is respectful; you feel a comfortable sense of belonging.

Let's contrast this with what an unhealthy relationship is like. What does an unhealthy relationship look like? What does it feel like? How do you spend your time? How do you feel about yourself and the other person? What are some words to describe this type of relationship? Take a few minutes to jot down your thoughts on the chart. (Give students time to reflect individually and then ask for responses.) An unhealthy relationship stifles you. It is demanding and possessive. You feel isolated from your friends and family and embarrassed by the other person's behavior; you feel trapped and lose a sense of yourself; there is a loss of control over your own choices; it is not respectful of personal boundaries; you feel “disconnected” from yourself and others.

#### **WARNING SIGNS FOR BOUNDARY CROSSING**

Sometimes an individual tries to manipulate the other into believing he/she should cross his/her own predetermined boundaries. This technique is often used to get others to cross their sexual boundaries. For us to be safe, it is important to be able to identify these warning signs, stay out of situations which compromise our boundaries, and/or get away from the dangerous/unhealthy person and their behavior.

Let's look at some warning signs that signal that someone is trying to cross your physical or emotional boundaries:

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- A person gives you alcohol or drugs.
- A person tries to be alone with you, or asks you to keep a secret and then threatens you if you reveal it.
- A person tries to win you over with gifts, special praise or consideration.
- A person uses conditions to get you to do something you might want. For example, “If you want a good grade, you need to have sex with me.”
- A person tries to isolate you from your support system (like friends and family).
- A person uses persistent means of contact to be in touch with you (repeated calls, friend requests, text messages, etc.)
- A person asks you many personal questions or shares too much personal information.
- A person is persistent in trying to talk you into what they want, even though you have said no.

You have a right to have your boundaries respected and a responsibility to respect the boundaries of others. It is important to recognize that when a person is trying to cross your boundaries and stop it immediately, even if that person is someone you know and like.

#### **NO, GO, TELL SAFETY RULES**

Just as we learn STOP, DROP, and ROLL as a slogan for fire safety, we will use the phrase, NO, GO, TELL to recall personal safety rules. We are going to now review these rules of what to do if you see that your boundaries are being crossed. This simple action plan is called NO, GO, TELL.

1. NO – We say “NO, I don’t like that!” in a loud, assertive voice and use body language to signal “NO.” Remember that being assertive means saying exactly what you mean, directly and confidently. Body language may be stepping back from the person, putting up your hands, or crossing your arms. We say “NO!” loudly because we respect ourselves and want to stay safe. We have to respect ourselves and those around us.
2. GO – After we yell “NO, I don’t like that!” or some other assertive phrase, the next step is to GO away from the person. This means removing yourself from the physical environment you are in with that person. That may mean leaving a party, a friend’s house, a classroom, or wherever you are with the person who is overstepping the boundary.
3. TELL – The last step is to TELL a trusted adult about what happened. When you tell an adult, you are doing the right thing. You are never “ratting someone out” or being a snitch. God gave you these trusted adults to keep you safe and they need to know if someone has made you feel unsafe. If someone violates your boundaries in any way, it is not your fault, and that person deserves to have repercussions for his or her actions. Even if you didn’t try to stop them from touching you or even if they tell you that you

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asked for it, it is never your fault. It is important to not keep secrets about inappropriate touching even if someone made you promise not to tell. When you tell a trusted adult, they need to believe you and listen. If they don't believe you, go tell another adult.

Let's look at one scenario together and practice the appropriate assertive response. (Read the following scenario and ask students to think of a response. You can also have two students role-play the scenario to demonstrate how they would handle it.)

A girl/guy wants to date you. S/he is constantly at your locker, at your lunch table and always around, trying to get your attention and get you to accept their invitation for a date. You feel that your boundaries are being crossed and want to let this person know.

(If you feel the students need more discussion time as a group, feel free to use additional scenarios from Resource A.)

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited,  
it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances.

Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.

It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.

Love never comes to an end. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if tongues, they will fall silent; and if knowledge, it will be done away with.

For we know only imperfectly, and we prophesy imperfectly;

but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will be done away with.

When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and see things as a child does, and think like a child; but now that I have become an adult, I have finished with all childish ways.

Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now I can know only imperfectly; but then I shall know just as fully as I am myself known.

As it is, these remain: faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love.

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#### ASSESSMENT

Ask student to complete:

- Refusal and assertive skills for safeguarding boundaries (Resource A)
- Self-reflection on Personal Boundaries (Resource B)
- 1 Corinthians 13 thoughts on love (Resource C)

# TEACHER RESOURCES COVER PAGE

- Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships chart
- List of warning signs for boundary crossing

# Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

<b>Healthy</b>	<b>Unhealthy</b>

# List of warning signs for boundary crossing

- A person gives you alcohol or drugs.
- A person tries to be alone with you, or asks you to keep a secret and then threatens you if you reveal it.
- A person tries to win you over with gifts, special praise or consideration.
- A person uses conditions to get you to do something you might want. For example, "If you want a good grade, you need to have sex with me."
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- A person uses persistent means of contact to be in touch with you (repeated calls, friend requests, text messages, etc.)
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# ASSESSMENT RESOURCE COVER PAGE

- Refusal and assertive skills for safeguarding boundaries (Resource A)
- Self-reflection on Personal Boundaries (Resource B)
- 1 Corinthians 13 thoughts on love (Resource C)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Refusal and Assertive Skills Practice

For each scenario below, write some thoughts on the appropriate assertive response to the situation. Refer to NO, GO, TELL as the action plan.

*Your girl/boyfriend has been putting you down both in private and in public among friends. He makes fun of your mannerisms by accentuating them and laughing; he makes negative comments about your looks and tells you that you are lucky you have him/her because no one else would want you. You recognize your emotional boundaries are being violated and need to address this.*

*An assistant coach you admire seems to favor you over the others. He appears when you are alone in the locker area and has "accidentally" touched your breast and buttocks on a few occasions. You don't want to hurt his feelings and you know he has control over whether you start on the team or not, but his behavior is making you uncomfortable. You recognize that your boundaries are being crossed. You need to deal with this.*

*Your employer calls you at home and talks about her personal life. She has also given you gifts. It is well known among the other employees that she favors you. It seems she is coming on to you, even though you are 15 years younger. One night she asks you, and only you, to work alone with her until late and promises to bring you home. This makes you feel uncomfortable, especially when she urges you to tell your parents that you are going to a friend's house and will be home by your 1:00 a.m. curfew! You don't want to lose your job, but you know you need to address this.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Self-reflection on Personal Boundaries

Take time to reflect on your own personal boundaries. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. My physical boundaries are:

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

2. My emotional boundaries are:

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 Corinthians 13 – Love is...

After reading and reflecting on the verses in 1 Corinthians 13, use the space below to create your own definition of what love is and what love looks like and feels like.

*Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited,*

*it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances.*

*Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.*

*It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.*

*Love never comes to an end. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if tongues, they will fall silent; and if knowledge, it will be done away with.*

*For we know only imperfectly, and we prophesy imperfectly;*

*but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will be done away with.*

*When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and see things as a child does, and think like a child; but now that I have become an adult, I have finished with all childish ways.*

*Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now I can know only imperfectly; but then I shall know just as fully as I am myself known.*

*As it is, these remain: faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love.*

1 Corinthians 13: 4-13

To me, love is...

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# THE TRUTH AND BEAUTY OF OUR SEXUALITY

One of the great gifts of our Catholic faith is our positive and beautiful view of sexuality.

## **We are made for love**

We can't live without love. Every human person, made in the image and likeness of God, has been given a vocation to love. We are all drawn to relationships where we can experience genuine love -- friendships and romantic relationships, but ultimately in the vocation of marriage. We know this from our own hearts, which long for love.

## **The language of our bodies**

To break out of our loneliness, we have to listen to the language of our bodies, and to the meaning God has put there. Essentially, our bodies tell us that God has made us for the gift of ourselves in the communion of persons of marriage. This is called the "nuptial meaning of the body", and it's the starting point to living the truth and beauty of our sexuality.

## **Real sex and real relationships**

Our sexuality is designed to bring us into relationships in which we can truly love others, by giving ourselves to them. For most of us, we find this in marriage, when we give ourselves to our spouse fully, fruitfully, and forever. But we also see it in priesthood, religious life, friendship and parenthood. In these relationships, through the gift of ourselves, we find love and happiness and we bring it into the lives of others.

## **Use and misuse**

All too often, unfortunately, we don't live according to God's plan. Instead, we buy into the world's view of sex. We use others for our own pleasure, we manipulate others for our ends, or we deliberately sterilize our sexual acts. When we do this, we're not giving ourselves fully in life-giving love. That's surely not where God wants us to be, and we all suffer the consequences -- loneliness, frustration, and feeling used and empty.



## **Redeemed sex**

Fortunately, there's hope -- we're not stuck in the trap of use and misuse. Jesus Himself has redeemed us and our sexuality by speaking the truth about marriage, sex and love, and showing us God's plan for us. When He gave Himself fully and completely to His spouse -- to us -- on the cross, He freed us from our selfishness and showed us that we can also give ourselves to others in love. Thanks to Jesus, and with His help, we can live God's plan for us.

## **What must we do?**

We have to make sure that work to understand this positive and beautiful vision of our sexuality. This is the responsibility of all of us; our parents, our Church's programs, and especially ourselves to reinforce it and ensure that we can grow in an environment of safety and virtue and trust. To do this of course, we MUST embrace the gift ourselves.

When we approach it with prayer and an open heart, this teaching is liberating and transforming, and can lead us to truly live God's plan of life and love.

## **Want to learn more?**

The best way to do this is to learn more about our Church's teaching, particularly Pope John Paul's "theology of the body". Here are some suggestions:

[www.theologyofthebody.net](http://www.theologyofthebody.net)

Theology of the Body for Beginners, Christopher West (Ascension Press, 2004).

Good News About Sex and Marriage: Answers to Your Honest Questions about Catholic Teaching, Christopher West (Servant Publications, 2000)

Real Love: Answers Your Questions on Dating, Marriage and the Real Meaning of Sex, Mary Beth Bonacci (Ignatius Press, 1996).