

○ **SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON PLAN**  
**“BOUNDARIES – PART TWO”**

**Grade: High School**

**OBJECTIVES**

The High School student will:

1. List three reasons why boundaries are important in relationships.
2. Identify attributes of a healthy relationship.
3. Define temperance and how we live out the virtue of temperance as high school students.
4. Define chastity and how we live out the virtue of chastity as a high school student.
5. Name three healthy boundaries for dating relationships.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

Student needs:

- Pencil
- Notebook

Teacher needs:

- Chart paper
- Permanent marker
- Definition of temperance
- Definition of chastity
- Ways to Live a Pure Life chart
- Boundaries in Dating chart
- Assessment materials:
  - Inappropriate vs. Appropriate Boundaries
  - Boundaries in Dating
  - Temperance in My Daily Life

**CONTENT**

**SETTING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES**

One way we respect ourselves and others is by setting boundaries. Boundaries are physical and emotional limits established in ALL relationships by or for a person. We do not allow anyone to cross our boundaries, and we do not overstep the boundaries of others. These boundaries vary depending upon 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, we are not perfect. Daily, we all struggle to become better, more holy versions of ourselves. Because we are imperfect human beings, we need 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.

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Boundaries, when they are set clearly, 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 also true for us in terms of our relationships. When the thick chalk lines are drawn in life, in other words, when the boundaries between two people are clearly set, specific, and understood by each person, it is much easier to avoid crossing over them into an inappropriate action, feeling, or situation.

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. 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 how it was traversed.) Typically, it is more difficult to see an emotional boundary being ignored. Emotional boundaries are limits that we set on how much 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 this person when you are in the company of your family and friends; you maintain your individuality while in a couple relationship; it is respectful; you feel a comfortable sense of belonging.

### **VIRTUOUS LIVING**

If we want to set and respect appropriate boundaries within our relationships, we must become men and women of virtue. Virtues are character traits that make it easier and more pleasant to do the right thing because of the good habits we have formed. These virtues help us to do what is right and avoid doing things that are wrong. We will focus on two of the virtues that are extremely important in your lives right now – temperance and chastity.

Let's start with temperance. Does anyone have any idea what temperance means? (Ask students for suggestions before sharing the definition.) Temperance is self-control, self-mastery, and moderation with regard to pleasures and desires. This is the virtue that helps us avoid being controlled by our desires and to consider the consequences of unrestrained

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behavior. God gave us desires which are all good things because they are created by God, but He also did not want us to be ruled by them. What desires do we have as human beings? (Ask students for suggestions. It may be best for you to start by saying that God created us with sexual desires. Have students give additional suggestions such as desires to have a lot of possessions, to be rich, to eat delicious food, to be independent, etc.)

How does temperance help to keep ourselves and others safe from being used? The first thing we need to do is to pray. It is important to ask God for the grace of temperance for our everyday lives. Prayer strengthens us to live out virtuous lives. We cannot do it alone – We need God. The next thing to do is to work daily to keep our desires in check. That means not going overboard when we want something – whether it's another piece of cake, more money, a girlfriend or boyfriend, or more soda. Temperance is saying to ourselves, “I have had enough. It would not be good for me to have more of \_\_\_\_\_, even if I want it.” This takes work, time, and patience. Anyone who has sat down to a large table of food for Thanksgiving knows how challenging temperance can be when it comes to the desire to overeat. Eating is a good thing – but stuffing ourselves beyond the point of being full is too much. Temperance at Thanksgiving means forgoing a third plate of food, saying no thank you to a second slice of pumpkin pie, not gorging ourselves until we feel like we might burst. Temperance means controlling our desires, even if it is in a small way every day. Taking small steps in exercising the virtue of temperance in one area of our life helps us as we work towards temperance in other areas. How can you exercise the virtue of temperance in your life? (Have the students take two minutes to brainstorm their ideas on paper. Then, ask them to share their ideas with a neighbor. Lastly, have students share their ideas aloud and compile a list.) Living out lives of virtue is important, because it helps to build and maintain healthy friendships and relationships. Think about it: If we are overcome and controlled by our own desires, how can we think of the good of the other in our friendships?

The second virtue we will focus on goes hand in hand with the virtue of temperance. Can anyone tell me what the word chastity means? (Ask for student responses before displaying the definition card.) Chastity is sexual self-control or saving all sexually intimate acts for marriage. Chastity is the virtue that seeks to control and moderate one's sexual desires, thoughts, and actions. Let's jot down some ideas about what we already know about chastity. (Have students brainstorm ideas as a class on what they already know about chastity.) God created us with sexual desires so that we would be united to our husband or wife in marriage and be open to having children. Sexual desires are a good thing if we use them in the right way in marriage. If we let ourselves become controlled by our sexual desires, we become like animals – we look for ways we can meet these desires in any way. Often, this means that we become so controlled by these desires that we

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neglect other parts of our lives in an effort to meet our sexual needs. Some people become so controlled by these desires that they start using people sexually or looking at pornography. Both of these choices hurt individuals – God never wants anyone to be used as an object to fulfill someone’s out of control sexual desires whether this happens in person or by looking at pornography. We were not created to look at others and think, “What can they do for me?” We were created to be a gift of self and to think of what we can do to help others.

The message of chastity is not a message that we hear often (or at all) from the media or those around us. We hear the messages, “Do whatever you want, whenever you want, with whomever you want.” The messaging we hear is, “Me, me, me,” which always seems to focus on what is best for us at all times, even to the detriment of others. All of these messages focus on us and disregard anyone else, meaning that most of the time these messages leave people feeling hurt, used, and lonely. When we don’t live out lives of chastity, we allow our sexual desires to control us – we become slaves to our desires. Chastity, on the other hand, is a lifestyle that leads to joy, true freedom, and happiness. It can be easy to think that chastity is just a list of “NO’s,” but let’s look at what chastity is saying YES to. First and foremost, chastity is saying yes to YOU. Chastity is saying, “I have dignity and worth, and I am worth waiting for!” Chastity is also saying YES to your future spouse, even if you don’t have any idea who that is right now! Chastity is saying, “He or she has dignity and worth and is worth waiting for.” Chastity is also saying YES to a great future. This is a future free from disease, unintended pregnancy, heartache, and regret. Lastly, chastity is saying yYES to God. It is saying YES to God’s great plan of joy for you.

How can I strengthen myself to successfully live out the virtue of chastity? (Have students take two minutes to brainstorm their ideas on paper. They will not share these out loud, but you want them to have some ideas on paper before you display the “Ways to Live a Pure Life” list.) Remember that the more closely we try to live the way that Christ asks, the “easier” it becomes. Jesus has given us Scripture and the virtues to help us live good moral lives. These gifts are a road map for life. Ask for His help in following this path.

#### **BOUNDARIES IN DATING**

When we think about boundaries, many of us are not clear as to exactly where boundaries should be with our boyfriend/girlfriend. A general rule of thumb is to avoid putting yourself in a situation where it would be easy to fall into temptation. Stay where the odds are in your favor. At this age, some of you may be in dating relationships or interested in dating. It is especially important for each of you to have personal boundaries established and to be respectful in dating relationships. It is also worth noting that others, including your date’s parents and your date himself/herself, may set boundaries for you in your dating

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relationships. EVERY boundary needs to be treated with respect from all parties in the relationship. Some basic boundaries to set in your dating relationships include:

- Knowing that our sexuality is a gift from God, given to us for our spouse. This gift is not just “fooling around,” “hooking up,” or “no big deal.”
- Actions speak louder than words. If someone says that they love you, but you are feeling pressured to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable, that is NOT love!
- Doing something that “feels good” to your body but you know is not right or appropriate, hurts and endangers your soul. Any sexually intimate act with someone who is not your husband or wife is sinful and robs you of your dignity. You are worth so much more!
- Everyone is NOT doing it! Don't fall into the guilt trap of thinking that you are the only person who is not doing it. Be strong and don't give into peer pressure. Surround yourself with a boyfriend or girlfriend and friends who support your decision to wait and who are waiting themselves.

Finally, remember that you are not the only person who has boundaries in a relationship. Your date may have boundaries you do not understand, but if you expect others to respect your boundaries, you must, in turn, respect theirs. You are too important and special to compromise your boundaries to be in a relationship!

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Where can I hide from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee? If I ascend to the heavens, you are there; if I lie down in the depths, you are there too. If I fly with the wings of dawn and alight beyond the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand hold me fast. If I say, “Surely darkness shall hide me, and night shall be my light,” even darkness is not dark for you, and night shines as the day. Darkness and light are but one. You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works!

*Psalm 139:7-14*

**ASSESSMENT**

Ask student to complete:

- Inappropriate vs. Appropriate Boundaries (Resource A)
- Boundaries in Dating (Resource B)
- Temperance in My Daily Life (Resource C)

# TEACHER RESOURCES COVER PAGE

- Definition of temperance
- Definition of chastity
- Ways to Live a Pure Life  
chart
- Boundaries in Dating chart

# **TEMPERANCE:**

Temperance is self-control, self-mastery, and moderation with regard to pleasures and desires.

# CHASTITY:

Chastity is sexual self-control or saving all sexually intimate acts for marriage.

Chastity is the virtue that seeks to control and moderates one's sexual desires, thoughts, and actions

# Ways to Live a Pure Life

## 1. Build and strengthen your personal character

- Train like an athlete – little steps in the right direction everyday

## 2. Purify your mind

- Stay away from junk food of the mind (inappropriate images, song lyrics, websites, etc.)
- With exposure, we become numb to bad behavior and offensive content.

## 3. Purify your body

- Dress modestly. “Cover your B’s”:
  - For girls, this means to cover your breasts, belly, back, butt, and bra or other undergarments
  - For guys, this means to cover your belly, back, butt, boxers/briefs

## 4. Stay where the odds are in your favor

- Avoid situations where you are likely to fail – stay away from temptation
  - The easiest temptation to avoid is the one that doesn't exist
  - Don't test yourself or someone you love by seeing how far you or they can go before someone fails or sins or gives into temptation

## 5. Pray and receive the sacraments, especially the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist

- Pray for strength in your life of purity. Pray for your future spouse and vocation. Also pray for all the people who don't know about chastity, that they may know the joy that comes from living a chaste life.
- Remember that you cannot live out a life of chastity alone...it's impossible! You NEED God.

## 6. Have a reminder

- Wear a purity ring or purity necklace
- Place a crucifix over your bed

## 7. NEVER GIVE UP & KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE

- “Remember: Christ is calling you; the Church needs you; the Pope believes in you and he expects great things from you!” (John Paul II, 1999)

# **BOUNDARIES IN DATING**

1. Knowing that our sexuality is a gift from God given to us for our spouse and not just “fooling around,” “hooking up,” or “no big deal.”
2. Actions speak louder than words!
3. Any sexually intimate act with someone who is not your husband or wife is sinful and robs you of your dignity.
4. Everyone is NOT doing it!

# ASSESSMENT RESOURCE COVER PAGE

- Inappropriate vs. Appropriate Boundaries (Resource A)
- Boundaries in Dating (Resource B)
- Temperance in My Daily Life (Resource C)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Inappropriate vs. Appropriate Behaviors

Check the box that corresponds with whether the described behavior is inappropriate or appropriate.

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>INAPPROPRIATE</b>	<b>APPROPRIATE</b>
Groping a stranger's leg on a crowded subway train		
Looking at pornography online		
Texting back and forth with an adult teacher about your personal life		
Hanging out with friends at a baseball game		
Texting a naked picture of yourself		
Being alone in your boyfriend's bedroom with him		
Touching your younger brother in his groin area		
Helping to get your younger siblings ready for the day (dressed, brush teeth, eat breakfast)		
Passionately kissing your girlfriend while you lay on the couch together		
Giving a high five to a teammate who just scored a goal		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## **Boundaries in Dating**

When striving to live a life of chastity, it is best to be prepared with your personal boundaries before they are questioned or tested. Use the space below to list and explain/defend three boundaries you have set for yourself in dating.

Boundary #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Boundary #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Boundary #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Temperance in My Daily Life

Virtuous living takes practice. The virtue of temperance can be practiced every day in some little or big way. Indicate below what you will do each day to grow in the virtue of temperance.

<b><i>Day of the Week</i></b>	<b><i>What Will You Do to Exercise the Virtue of Temperance?</i></b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	
<b>TUESDAY</b>	
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	
<b>THURSDAY</b>	
<b>FRIDAY</b>	
<b>SATURDAY</b>	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	

# 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).