

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

Preparing to Teach/Minister to Young People

When thinking of how to best build good relationships with the youth in your classroom or group, think of Jesus, our Master Teacher. Jesus knew he had only a short time to teach his twelve disciples all they needed to know. But he didn't just set up a classroom, order books, and prepare outlines.

Jesus invited those twelve, and many others, to live, work, and walk with him. He invited them into relationship with him. And it was in the midst of living and relating that the disciples learned the most.

We most want for students to learn how to have genuine, positive, affirming relationships – with peers and with adults. One of our tasks then is to model and build good relationships.

Here are some things you can do to model and build good relationships:

- Really listen to the youth – individually and as a group.
- Show genuine interest in their lives and stories.
- Be encouraging and supportive.
- Pay attention to discover their gifts and talents.
- Invite them to use their gifts and talents in ministry – in the congregation and in the community.
- Look for something they do well and affirm it.
- Give sincere compliments.
- Say “thanks” for their time, their help, their ideas, their enthusiasm, and so forth.
- Use your sense of humor – but never be sarcastic.
- Do not speak ill of someone; those who hear will wonder what you will say about them.
- Practice and enforce the Golden Rule.
- Talk a little about your own life and spiritual journey (as appropriate).
- Make sure to tell their parents how well their children are doing.

Many of these relationship building blocks are ones your youth can use well. Model the behaviors, teach skills, encourage their use, and affirm youth as they practice building good relationships.

Following the Jesus way, you and your youth will create a safe and welcoming atmosphere where both relationships and learning will flourish.

Another very important component of creating and maintaining good relationship is setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries for the youth in your class. Setting and maintaining boundaries helps create a positive and safe learning environment. Such an environment helps foster spiritual growth in youth.

What Is a Boundary?

- A boundary is a limit for behaviors.
- A boundary is a rule or guideline.
- A boundary is a standard; a specific description of what is expected and what is appropriate.

Some examples of boundaries are:

“One person speaks at a time.”

“Keep your hands to yourself.”

“Be on time.”

“Use appropriate language. No cussing or swear words.”

“Show respect for others by not putting them down.”

Why Do Youth Need Boundaries?

We all need to know the limits: what is acceptable behavior, what to do and not to do. Established and enforced boundaries help youth recognize the limits and enable them to take more personal responsibility for their actions.

Boundaries keep us safe, emotionally and physically. They help us learn how to show respect for others, and in the process, help us feel better about ourselves. Establishing and reinforcing boundaries help to create an environment where youth can feel comfortable enough to share faith and safe enough to open themselves more to God’s love and grace.

Without boundaries, there are no clear limits for behaviors. When what is expected and appropriate is left unsaid or is unclear, we set you up to fail. Youth are much more likely to rise to the challenge and engage in respectful behaviors if boundaries are clearly stated and reinforced up front.

Types of Boundaries

Physical Boundaries – enable us to protect and honor our bodies as the “Temple of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 8).

We are not only responsible for the spiritual well-being of the youth we work with, but also for their physical well-being. It is always important to give kids clear and specific instructions and rules. Whether in a classroom, on a youth group trip, at a community service project, or on a retreat, adults need to create and maintain a safe environment for youth.

Emotional and Spiritual Boundaries – enable us to protect personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

We undertake the awesome task of helping youth grow spirituality. One way to help foster spiritual growth is to create and maintain a welcoming atmosphere. Sprucing up your actual meeting place can help, but it’s even more effective to set and maintain specific expectations and rules for how to treat one another. Spiritual growth involves building good relationships with God and others, sharing one’s faith, self-disclosing, asking questions, and praying. Each of these activities involves risking and trusting. Our task is to create and maintain an environment with clear boundaries so that youth can be assured that they will be respected, listened to, and cared for, no matter what.

When to Set Boundaries

The most effective time to set boundaries is at the beginning of the year, or at the first session of your planned meetings. Once established, list and post these boundaries so they can be referred to often. It can be helpful to remind youth of these boundaries:

- After holiday or vacation time
- Before an upcoming event – to proactively teach specific boundaries
- After a problem has occurred – in order to correct inappropriate behavior and remind the youth of boundaries and why we follow them.

Who Establishes the Boundaries?

The principal, pastor, religious education director, and teachers, along with parents and adults from your community, should give specific input as to what behaviors are expected and appropriate for youth. Along with clarifying what is expected from youth,

<p>Preparing to Teach/Minister to Young People</p> <p>Safe Environment Program</p>
--

these adults should also establish guidelines for what to do when boundaries are broken. It may be helpful to include selected youth leaders from your congregation or school to be a part of this initial conversation. These youth may be able to provide insights and situational examples that can help determine more clear, fair, and necessary recommendations.

After you have clear ideas and direction from adults and parents, the next step is to meet with the youth themselves. Try the following activity to help youth name, clarify, and take ownership of specific boundaries they will need to follow to create and maintain a caring Christian environment.

Step One: Ask the youth to brainstorm and list their responses to these two topics:

- What damages or destroys relationships?
- What builds or nourishes relationships?

Encourage youth to name specific actions and attitudes that fit into each list (Damages – rumors, cheating, two-faced behavior, talking behind one’s back; Nourishes – respect, spending time with, listening, etc.). Allow students plenty of time to add to the list. Make sure adults wait to add to either list until youth have finished.

Step Two: After completing this list, ask: “What do you notice about these lists?”

Again, allow plenty of time for their responses. Hopefully, they will notice that the contents of these lists are how we want to be treated or don’t want to be treated by others – the Golden Rule.

Step Three: Next, explain to the students: “The purpose of this activity was to help us begin to think about specific boundaries we need to keep in order to create an environment where relationships are nourished, not damaged. You have just listed how you want and don’t want to be treated by others. Let’s condense these two lists into one list of the Ten Most Important Boundaries / Rules for Behavior.” Before naming boundaries, offer youth these helpful suggestions:

1. Keep it simple. State the boundary clearly and concisely.

“One person speaks at a time.”

“Disagree appropriately.”

2. State it positively. Tell them what they should do and how to do it.

“Thou SHALL...” instead of “Thou shall NOT...”

“Be in the classroom, at your desk, before the bell rings.”

3. Stick to the “Golden Rule.” Always keep in mind how you want / deserve to be treated as a child of God.

When the students are finished listing their ideas, add any other boundaries you deem necessary.

Step Four: Create and post your new list of boundaries. Send copies home to parents to read and discuss. Refer to the list often!

Step Five: MAKE SURE to let kids know that these boundaries are expectations. If they break a boundary, let them know that there will be consistent consequences and what those consequences will be. Be sure to consult with your principal, director of religious education, or pastor for exact procedures regarding consequences. It is most important that the youth know that:

1. There are specific boundaries for behaviors that EVERYONE is expected to follow.
2. Maintaining these boundaries will help make this a Christian environment where all are safe and welcomed.
3. There are pre-established and appropriate consequences for breaking boundaries (more on how to set and enforce consequences later).
4. The teacher or another designated adult will address any broken boundaries in a fair and dignified way (more on this in the next section).

Be sure to explain why it is important for all of us to maintain appropriate and healthy boundaries.

- “They help us know how to treat one another and how we can expect to be treated.”
- “Following these rules will help us all learn to show respect to others.”
- “Maintaining boundaries helps us create good Christian relationships.”

Methods for Maintaining Boundaries

Along with naming boundaries, you also need to know ways to maintain and reinforce boundaries with youth. Here are three tried and true methods from the Youth Care Specialists at Boys Town:

Proactive Teaching

Set youth up for success by specifically naming and briefly explaining the boundaries / expected behaviors before each event / activity. A little preventive teaching goes a long way in stopping behaviors before they get started. The steps to proactive teaching are:

1. **Describe the behaviors** that are appropriate and / or expected for this event / activity.
2. **Give a reason.**
3. **Practice** (optional).

Example – In a Girls Support Group, gossiping and complaining can quickly ruin a good discussion. Use Proactive Teaching to remind the girls:

- a. “When describing a problem or situation, please do not use any names. Stick to talking only about yourself and your feelings. No blaming or complaining.”
- b. “It’s important to do this for many reasons: Because no one want to be talked about behind their backs; it is not fair to discuss someone who is not present; we are about solving problems, not laying blame and complaining.”

It’s amazing how these simple boundaries can prevent potentially serious problems and enable the girls to speak more freely, trust one another more, and resolve conflicts in a more responsible fashion!

Effective Praise

One of the best ways to help youth do the right this is to “catch them doing the right thing.” We all need reassurance that we’re doing what we are suppose to do. We all like to receive praise and compliments. A great way to ensure that a positive behavior is repeated is to recognize it with praise. Tell youth what they’re doing right, when they’re doing a good job, and be sure to name exactly what it is that they are doing so well. They they’ll know exactly what to do right the next time!

The Steps to Effective Praise are:

1. **Show your approval.** Smile, speak a word of praise or thanks, or give a thumbs up.

2. **Describe the positive.** Name it specifically: "Alan, thanks for waiting for Juana to finish speaking before stating your point." or "Allison, I really appreciated your note to let me know that you'd be late for the planning meeting!"
3. **Give a reason.** Tell them why what they did was good, important, or helpful. To Alan: "Waiting for someone to finish speaking before you speak is a great way to show respect and to show that you were really listening!" To Allison: "Your note helped me use that extra time wisely instead of worrying and waiting."

Corrective Teaching

Boundary breaking is "bound" to happen. We all cross a boundary now and then, sometimes by accident and sometimes on purpose. Our task as adults is to provide consistent management of boundaries, whether kept or broken. It is important to know, in advance, what to do when boundaries / rules are broken. **Corrective Teaching**, another tried and true method from the Youth Care Specialists at Boys Town, coupled with appropriate consequences, is a most effective method for transforming a broken boundary into a teachable moment.

The steps to Corrective Teaching are:

1. **Stop the problem behavior.** As soon as you notice a broken boundary, address it. Sometimes just moving closer to the problem behavior – moving to sit next to the two whispering teens, or catching the eye of those involved – can stop the problem. Other times a prompt, spoken in a calm and descriptive manner, can help kids get back on track: "Remember, no talking during the Prayer Service."
2. **Give a consequence.** Sometimes it is enough of a consequence to have an adult leader sit next to you or to be gently prompted in front of the whole group. Other times, a more substantial consequence is needed.

Following are some guidelines for consequences:

- Consequences should be established by adults and communicated to youth and parents in advance! Don't wait for a situation to arise before deciding what the consequence will be. It is best to have predetermined consequences that are well communicated to all before any boundaries are broken. Consequences decided on the spur of the moment can too easily become punishing, vengeful, or too drastic.
- Consequences should never be degrading or humiliating. They should be opportunities for learning responsibility.

<p>Preparing to Teach/Minister to Young People</p> <p>Safe Environment Program</p>
--

- Consequences should be given fairly and consistently. All youth should be held accountable for maintaining these boundaries. Don't play favorites or let youth talk their way out of owning up to their behavior.
 - Corrective teaching and consequences should be done one-to-one whenever possible, even if it means taking a youth aside for a moment. It is rarely effective to correct a youth in front of a group. Usually this causes anger and embarrassment and you run the risk of escalating the problem rather than correcting it.
 - Ask for help from parents and other adults. Sometimes the presence of other parents / adults helps youth stay on track. These "extra" adults could be used as "time-out" folks – someone to send a youth to be with if his or her behavior causes the youth to be removed from the large group activity. The "time-out" folks are not meant to be disciplinarians, but rather an option for a youth who may need some extra one-on-one time.
3. **Describe the positive behavior the youth should do.** Now that the youth knows what not to do, let him or her know what to do: "Instead of whispering to Shannon, please give your quiet attention to our guest speaker."
4. **Give youth a chance to engage in positive behavior.** Now is your change to back away and allow the youth to turn his or her behavior around. Watch for any steps in the right direction and give praise for it. Again, most of this can be done in low voice tones, one-on-one, without disturbing or calling attention from the rest of the group, although there may be times when you have to stop the group activity and address a major boundary breaking.

Addressing and correcting any problems promptly and without much disruption sends a powerful message to the whole group. It lets them know that you are watching out for them, that you care about how they treat one another, and that you keep your word. They need to see that you will be firm, yet gentle, in safeguarding their boundaries. Your actions speak much louder than words in these instances.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE WHEN CORRECTING BEHAVIORS. Treat the youth as you would want to be treated. Put yourself in that teen's place. Show genuine empathy and understanding rather than anger and dominance. When dealing with difficult situations, remember these two adages:

"A gentle response turns away wrath."
"Love the sinner, hate the sin!"

Top Ten Boundaries for Youth Group Activities

Here are some time-tested, success-inspiring, “catch ‘em being good” boundaries that address areas of behavior that are common to most religion education settings.

1. **One person speaks at a time.** Whether in small or large group discussions, this is an ever-present opportunity to show respect and to really listen to what everyone has to say.
2. **Disagree appropriately.** This is a very important skill to teach, model, role-play and use. Disagreeing appropriately allows opinions to be voiced without aggression or disrespect. It teaches us how to accept and allow others to be different. It can defuse tense situations.
3. **No put downs.** Show respect to others by refraining from making value judgments about them: “You may not use words like ‘stupid,’ ‘dumb,’ ‘ugly,’ ‘gross,’ or other judgmental, negative words to describe people or their thoughts. Say ‘please be quiet’ instead of ‘shut up.’ No teasing, even if only in fun.”
4. **Say whatever you want as long as it is appropriate** – as long as what is said is on topic and does not contain any obscene or offensive language.
5. **What is said here, stays here** – except for when an adult needs to seek help for a teen in danger. When anyone makes any reference to doing something harmful or illegal to himself or someone else, we need to speak up and seek help. Do not keep this information to yourself. This boundary helps create trust, safety, and a sense of community.
6. **Self-disclose appropriately.** Personal dumping, public confessions, blaming or complaining are never allowed. If it does happen, the teacher should politely interrupt and steer the conversation back on track.
7. **Practice good listening skills.** Looking at the person who is speaking, concentrating on what is being said, etc., all show respect and value of others.
8. **Observe school / church rules about public displays of affection (PDA).** YES, it is important to state this clearly. PDA can cause serious problems among youth groups. Some recommended PDA rules: “Refrain from hand holding, kissing, cuddling, or any other form of exclusive affection at school / church activities; ask permission before giving a hug – especially to newcomers.”
9. **Ask for help** – from adults or youth leaders whenever you need it.

10. Participant. “You get out of class what you put into class. So get into it!”

Boundaries for One-to-One with Teens

When a teen asks to talk to you privately, there are some important boundaries to make known:

1. Some things cannot be kept secret. Let teens know that if they share thoughts of hurting themselves or someone else, or reveal involvement in illegal, sexual, or abusive activity, that you have a moral obligation to tell someone else who can help them. In these serious circumstances, a teen’s physical and / or emotional life is at stake. We must let kids know that we value their life above all else, even about their possible anger at “telling” on them.
2. Meet in an open space where you can be seen, but not overheard, by others. If meeting in an office, keep the door open, or use only an office with uncovered windows. This can prevent any allegations of misconduct and provide you both with the security of knowing others are around.
3. Remind kids that you are not a trained counselor, but that you can point them in the right direction. Have referral sources available with names and phone numbers of professionals who can help.

Skills That Build Boundaries and Help Prevent Conflict

The best way to resolve a conflict is to prevent it! We can help prevent some conflict by teaching, practicing, and modeling good social skills. What is a skill? It is a step-by-step approach, a “how to” method of learning proper social behaviors.

Many conflicts arise because of inappropriate or misunderstood verbal or non-verbal communications. Learning more about and practicing social skills can help youth learn how to relate to one another and to adults in a more appropriate and Christian fashion. Here are some examples:

- How to disagree appropriately
- How to accept criticism
- How to give / receive compliments
- How to ask for help
- How to self-disclose
- How to express empathy and understanding to others
- How to follow rules
- How to apologize / accept apologies



Grade 7 – session 1 | Lesson Plan & Handouts

Boundaries for Good Relationships in God's Plan

Time estimate: 1 session of 45 minutes or this session may be combined with session 2 into one long session with breaks

Session one objectives:

1. Develop concept of personal boundaries and the boundary circle for each one
2. Discuss the value of healthy boundaries

Supplies needed: ***Boundaries, A Guide for Teens*** (copy of book for presenter)
(Student Handout 7-1, page 6 of this material) one for each student
Reflection Questions (Student Handout 7-2, page 7 of this material) one for each student
Chart paper or chalkboard

*Note: Teacher should read over the grade 6 lesson plan, **Discovering God's Purpose for Relationships**, before teaching this lesson and chapters 1-3 of the book, **Boundaries, A Guide for Teens** by Rev. Val J. Peter and Tom Dowd.*

Prayer: Loving God, open our minds and hearts to you. Help us discover your loving plan for each of our lives – a plan to grow, to learn, to give, to receive and to love in relationships with all our brothers and sisters. Help us to know and live this plan which will lead us to happiness with you forever.

Review: Last year you discovered more about God's purpose for relationships. You learned and discussed many things.

- God loves you so much that God wants you to have good relationships.
- In these relationships you are to: 1) to love others as God has loved you and 2) to love your neighbors as yourself.
- You learned ***how to treat others in relationships, how to love*** as Jesus loves, and ***who to love***.

- Tell me one thing you remember from last year's session. *(Teacher may have to help students recall these main points!)*
 1. *There are many kinds of relationships (parent, sibling, friend, teacher, coach, etc.)*
 2. *Each relationship has a special purpose.*
 3. *God has taught us how to treat others in relationships. (Golden Rule)*
 4. *We are to love others as Jesus loved.*
 5. *We are to love everyone, even those we do not like.*
 6. *When we do this, we build right relationships, that is, ones that are lived according to God's plan and purpose.*
 7. *Right relationships enable us to love and serve God better and have more insight into God's specific plan for each of our lives.*

In today's session we will discover what boundaries are and how they help us to love others and have healthy, appropriate relationships.

Lecture: Introduction to Boundaries

- God's plan and purpose for our lives involves right relationships with God and with others.
- God's love and care has no boundaries, but our relationships with other people do.
- A boundary is the personal space that you keep between yourself and others.
- There are two types of boundaries: external and internal.
- External boundaries include both physical/sexual boundaries.
 - These boundaries protect your entire body and especially the private parts of your body.
 - External boundaries help keep you safe and healthy.
 - You decide who can touch you, how they touch you, and where.
 - You want your physical/sexual boundaries respected by others and you want to respect the boundaries of other people as well.
- Internal boundaries include your emotional and spiritual boundaries.
 - These boundaries protect your private thoughts and emotions.
 - These boundaries protect the deepest part of who you are – your sense of hope, trust, mystery, security and spiritually.
 - You decide what you will or will not share with others.
- Certain deep feelings are shared only with God in prayer, specially with a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and/or with certain family members and friends.
- Boundaries protect us by allowing certain people and events close to us and by blocking certain people and activities out. They can help tell you what is right or wrong.

- God wants us to have healthy boundaries so that we can grow into the persons God created us to be. If a boundary is too closed (example: not allowing anyone to be close to us) or too open (example: telling everyone our deepest feeling) it is unhealthy. Unhealthy boundaries cause us all kinds of trouble.
- We have to learn how to use boundaries to protect ourselves from getting hurt and to have healthy relationships and friendships. To do this we must learn to develop good boundaries and then let people know what our boundaries are.

Activity 1: Boundary Circle

Give each student a copy of the Your **Boundaries Circle Worksheet** (Student Handout 7-1, page 6 of this material). Before they begin the exercise, make the following points:

- It is important for **you** to know what your boundaries are. It is also important for **others** to know your boundaries.
- The circles on this paper help you visualize how close you let someone get to you – emotionally, spiritually, physically and sexually.
 - Only God shares the inner most circle with you.
 - Strangers are the farthest outside while your family and a few very close friends may be closest to the innermost circle and to you.
- Everyone you encounter fits on this worksheet. Here are some examples:
 1. Most intimate – spouse
 2. Intimate – very close family member or friend
 3. Close – friend or family member
 4. Superficial – acquaintance, classmate, neighbor
 5. Extremely superficial – stranger

Write the names of the people in your life on this sheet according to where they fit.

Summary: Use the **Reflection Questions** (Student Handout 7-2, page 7 of this material). You may want to cover this orally with the class or distribute the handout to each one. If you give each student a copy, let them have some time to read it. After a few minutes, ask some students to share their answers to the questions aloud.

Value of Healthy Boundaries

From our exercise, we learned that it is important to have relationships (and people) in the right place in our boundary circles. It is valuable for each of us to have strong boundaries so that relationships (and people) do not drift to places in our lives where they should not be.

Having healthy, strong, good boundaries is essential for a life of happiness as God as planned. It will also keep you safe which is always one of our goals.

*Have a piece of chart paper prepared with the following title: **Persons with healthy boundaries:** Ask one student to be the secretary for this next activity.*

For an optional way to complete this activity, see below.

Let's see if we can characterize people with healthy boundaries. I am going to ask you some questions. We will decide on the answers together and then write the correct answer for each question on our paper. (Note: Answers are in bold italic print.) In this way, we will create a good list of the qualities of people who have good boundaries.

Do you think persons with healthy boundaries are?

1. Confident or doubtful? *(write: confident)*
2. Respectful of self and others or disrespectful? *(write: respectful)*
3. Insecure or secure with themselves? *(write: secure)*
4. Have a clear sense of their views, values and priorities or have no clue about anything? *(write: good values)*
5. Develop weak, superficial relationships or good healthy relationships, especially friendships? *(write: good friendships)*
6. Enjoy true friends and family or dislike just about everyone and everything? *(write: enjoy people)*
7. Will be friends with anyone or are able to identify safe and appropriate people? *(write: pick good friends)*
8. Share appropriately with others or tell everything to anyone who will listen? *(write: share well)*
9. Expect shared responsibility for relationships or feel it is all up to them. *(write: understand give & take)*
10. Can say "No" to another when necessary or can never say no because it will hurt another's feelings? *(write: can say NO)*
11. Take "no" as the start of the argument or do not argue when someone says "No" to them? *(write: accept NO)*
12. Accept whatever is done to them as what they deserve or do not tolerate abuse or disrespect of self or others? *(write: don't allow abuse)*
13. Recognize when a problem belongs to them and when it does not or think everything is their fault? *(write: accept blame appropriately)*

14. Let others walk all over them or do not let others intrude on them? (*write: have backbone*)
15. Can protect themselves without shutting out others or never let anyone in so as not to get hurt? (*write: allow others in*)
16. Are too meek to defend themselves or know how to stand up for themselves when necessary? (*write: can defend self*)
17. Become a twin of other friends or are able to enter into relationships with others without losing their identities? (*write: good sense of self*)
18. Do not reveal too much or too little or reveal everything? (*write: share wisely*)

Optional methods for exercise: Create one set of 18 index cards or one set for each small group. On each card write the two choices given above for each quality using both sides of the card. Example: card one will say "confident" on one side and "doubtful" on the other. Divide the group into pairs or small groups. Give out all the cards. Each group or pair may have more than one card. Ask them to discuss the choices. Bring the group together. Ask the questions to the entire group. Ask each small group with that card to share their answer and then place the card on the chart paper. For this method, you will want to write the long description for each quality and not the shortened version.

Summary: This is a good list of the qualities of people who have healthy, strong boundaries. On this list are qualities that each one of us desires to have. This is the way each of us longs to be and live our lives. Developing qualities like these will help us create boundaries which in turn will lead to right relationships. The next time that we come together we will learn some rules or guidelines for how to do that.

Keep the chart paper and post it again for the next session.

End of lesson plan. Handouts on following pages.

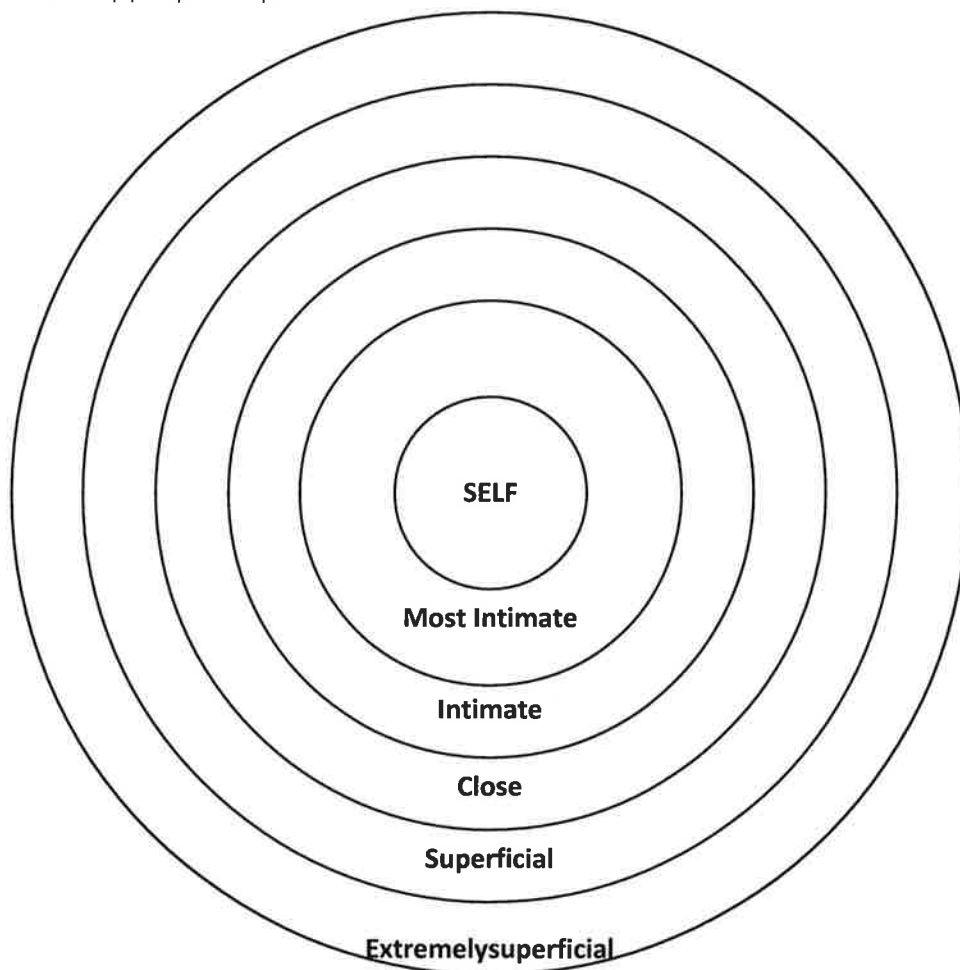
Your Boundaries Circle Worksheet

It's important for you to know what your boundaries are, and it's equally important that others know what they are as well.

To understand boundaries better, imagine a series of concentric circles surrounding you. These circles represent various kinds of boundaries and various kinds of relationships. These circles can help you picture how close you will let someone get to you – emotionally, spiritually, sexually, and physically.

Everyone you encounter fits somewhere outside or inside these boundaries circles. Strangers are the farthest outside while your family and a few very close friends may be closest to the innermost circle, closest to you.

Where to the various people in your life fit within your Boundary Circle? Write their names in the appropriate places.



Reflection Questions

Directions: Use your personal "Boundaries Circle" and the notes taken during class to help you answer these questions.

1. Whose names are listed closest to the center of your boundary circle? Explain why these people are allowed to be closest to you.
2. Who or what kinds of relationships are listed farthest from the center of your boundary circle? Explain why.
3. What are the two types of boundaries? Explain and give examples of each.
4. Explain how appropriate boundaries can help you have appropriate relationships.

Reflection Questions with Answers

Directions: Use your personal "Boundaries Circle" and the notes taken during class to help you answer these questions.

1. Whose names are listed closest to the center of your boundary circle? Explain why these people are allowed to be closest to you.

2. Who or what kinds of relationships are listed farthest from the center of your boundary circle? Explain why.

Should have listed strangers and acquaintances farthest from the center because they would know the least about these people and therefore should not be too close in any way.

3. What are the two types of boundaries? Explain and give examples of each.

External → Physical – protects my body "Do not get into the car with a drunk driver"

Internal → Emotional – protects my thoughts and feelings "Don't talk to strangers"

4. Explain how appropriate boundaries can help you have appropriate relationships.

Appropriate boundaries help me to know how close to allow people – emotionally and physically. Boundaries can protect me from being used or hurt and help me make good judgments about friendships and dating relationships.



Grade 7 – session 2 | Lesson Plan & Handouts

Rules for Good Boundaries

Session two objectives:

1. Learn rules for developing healthy boundaries
2. Review the Ten Commandments and discuss how they relate to personal boundaries and relationships

Supplies needed: Poster or list of the Ten Commandments

Rules for Good Boundaries (Student Handout 7-3, page 5 of this material) one copy for each student

Reflection Questions (Student Handout 7-4, page 6 of this material) one for each student

Parent letter for take home

*Note: Post the chart paper from session one titled: **Persons with healthy boundaries: if desired.***

Prayer: Loving God, open our minds and hearts to you. Help us discover your loving plan for each of our lives – a plan to grow, to learn, to give, to receive and to love in relationships with all our brothers and sisters. Help us to know and live this plan which will lead us to happiness with you forever.

Review: In our last session, we learned:

- A boundary is the personal space that you keep between yourself and others
- There are two types of boundaries: external and internal.

Tell me a few other things you learned about personal boundaries or the value of healthy boundaries from our last session. *Allow the students a few minutes to recall some of the important points from the previous session.*

Today we are going to develop some rules or guidelines that will help us develop good boundaries.

- We have talked about the Golden Rule. Jesus taught us that the Golden Rule is part of the Greatest Commandment: Matthew 22:34-40 (Mark 12:28-31)

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

- Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments that God gave us.
- The Ten Commandments teach us God's plan for our relationship with God and our neighbors. The first three teach about our relationship with God, and the next seven about our relationships with others.
- *Point to a poster or copy of Ten Commandments.*
- God gave us the Ten Commandments to help us. They are to teach us about our relationship with God, with yourself and with others.
- These were some of the first rules that God shared with us to teach us about boundaries and how we are to live in relationship with each other.
- Knowing your boundaries and respecting others' boundaries helps you know when and how to go forward in a relationship.

*Hand out to each student a copy of the worksheet – **Rules for Good Boundaries** (Student Handout 7-3, page 5 of this material).*

- On this page are some questions we can ask ourselves that will help us develop healthier friendships.

(Ask a student to read aloud number one. Some additional comments are below for this discussion. Continue reading all rules until done.)

Number 1: *(Read this after student has read the questions from the handout.)* How closely you allow others within your physical and emotional boundaries usually depends upon how long you have known them and how much you like and trust them. What information you share with them depends on what your relationship is.

With co-workers – not much information, maybe only social.

With schoolmates – mostly social information, and a little private information

With friends – lots of information, both private and social

Number 2: Trust your feelings of comfort or discomfort when you are around others. If someone makes you uncomfortable, your boundary “radar” should go on alert. Pay attention to these internal warning signs.

Number 4: The amount of self-disclosure should be based upon how well you know others and how much you can trust them in appropriate ways.

Number 8: You need to have reciprocal trust that is appropriate.

If your “friend” is not worthy of trust, he or she should not be in your inner circle.

If you expect others to respect your boundaries, you must respect theirs. If you are not worthy of trust, you should not be in their inner circle.

Number 9: When someone tries to violate your boundaries, use that experience to decide how you can handle similar situations in the future. Never hesitate to ask a trusted adult questions about your boundaries and whether they are appropriate. If you have been abused, your boundary “radar” may be mixed up. You may be ignoring feelings of discomfort, which prevents you from realizing the person is violating your boundaries. It is important to talk with a trusted adult. Over time this can help you get your own “radar” back on track. Speak up when someone or something bothers you. Let people know what you won’t tolerate. Don’t be afraid to say no to anyone who may be trying to hurt or take advantage of you.

Activity 3: *Divide the group into pairs. Hand out to each student a copy of the **Reflection Questions** (Student Handout 7-4, page 6 of this material). Assign each pair a different question to read and discuss. After 5-10 minutes, ask each pair to report to the group their thoughts.*

Summary:

In our two sessions this year, we have built upon our safety training. In past years, we taught you about safe and unsafe touches and to tell a trusted adult if someone ever touched you in an unsafe way. This is still true and very important for you to remember. But as you grow older and mature, so will your relationships with others. All relationships are important, those with younger people, peers, and older persons. God gives us many different kinds of relationships so that we can grow into the children God calls us to be. In grade six, we learned that all types of relationships have specific purposes. Relationships are so important that God

tells us in many places in Scripture about how we are to live in these relationships. God desires a loving relationship with each one of us. And God desires that we have many wonderful relationships so that we fulfill God's plan to live with God forever in happiness. This year we developed our understanding of relationships by learning about our personal boundaries, the four types of boundaries, the value of strong, healthy boundaries, and some rules for how to develop them. All of this information helps each of us become the person God has called us to be.

Ask the students to take home their worksheets and keep them in a special place where they can find them again. We all need reminders. Give the students the parent letter for take home.

End of lesson plan. Handout and parent letter on following pages.

Some Rules for Good Boundaries

1. Length of time – How long have you known this person? How is knowing someone longer beneficial to you? How long is long enough before a stranger becomes a friend? How do you decide?
2. Knowledge about the other person – What, and how much, do you really know about this person? Some important things to know about someone you are considering making a closer friend are:

- How does this person react when given “No” for an answer?
- How does this person handle frustrations and disappointments?
- How does she/he express anger?
- How does this person treat his/her parents?
- How does this person speak about/treat the other gender?

How can this knowledge help you make good choices in a relationship? Explain or give examples.

3. Sharing Events – How many different kinds of events have you shared together? What are they? How have these events helped you get to know the other person?
4. Amount of Self-Disclosure – How much personal information have you shared? How much has the other person shared? Are you comfortable with the sharing? Why or why not? Is the amount of sharing reciprocal?
5. Number of Different Experiences – What has this person experienced in life? How has it affected him or her? What can you learn from knowing about these experiences?
6. Role Appropriate – We all have certain roles in life. Some roles are incompatible for friendships. Teachers don’t hang out socially with students; coaches don’t date the athletes they coach, etc. What role does this person have in your life?
7. Age Appropriate – As adolescents, close friendships/relationships with those two or more years older or younger than us can be harmful. What is the age difference between you? How could this be harmful?
8. Level of Reciprocal Trust – Can I trust this person? How do I know? Am I worthy of his or her trust? Why? How do you know when someone is trustworthy? What happens when trust is broken?
9. Levels of Commitment – As adolescents, some types of commitments are harmful or detrimental. What kind of commitment is appropriate for someone your age? Ask your parents and other trusted adults for guidance and counsel in this area.

STUDENT HANDOUT 7-4

Reflection Questions

Directions: Based on the boundary information presented in the last two sessions, answer the following questions.

1. Which of the Rules for Good Boundaries do you need to put into practice to help you have healthier...
...friendships? Why?

...family relationships? Why?

2. Which of the Ten Commandments can help you have healthier relationships with...
...family? Why?

...friends? Why?

3. Which "Rule" do you most need to put into practice to help you have better relationships?

4. How will this rule help you?

5. List the social skills that will help you live this rule.

6. Which of the Ten Commandments will help you live this rule?

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Today your son or daughter in seventh grade completed two special sessions at school or religious education. The sessions, ***Boundaries for Good Relationships in God's Plan***, comprised the annual safe environment training created especially by our diocese for these students. This session built upon material from last year and will be developed further next year in grade eight.

In addition to the basic safety training taught in previous years, these sessions helped the students explore personal boundaries, their boundary circle, the value of healthy boundaries, rules for developing healthy boundaries, and a review of the Ten Commandments.

The content of the session included the following points:

- God's love and care has no boundaries, but our relationships with other people do.
- A boundary is the personal space that you keep between yourself and others.
- God wants us to have healthy boundaries so that we can grow into the persons God created us to be. If a boundary is too closed (not allowing anyone to be close to us) or too open (example: telling everyone our deepest feeling) it is unhealthy. Unhealthy boundaries cause us all kinds of trouble.
- The Ten Commandments teach us God's plan for our relationship with God and our neighbors. The first three teach about our relationship with God, and the next seven about our relationships with others.
- Knowing your boundaries and respecting others' boundaries helps you know when and how to go forward in a relationship.
- We can ask ourselves some important questions in order to know our boundaries in a particular relationship.

As your son or daughter grows into adolescence, it can be difficult to speak with them about important things, such as the material in these sessions. Please make time to talk with them about it. An easy way to start the conversation will be to look over the handouts that were used throughout the sessions. Every student was given a copy to take home. Please contact us if you have any concerns or would like additional copies of the handouts.

Sincerely,



DIOCESE OF
FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND
SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Verification Form

To: Parents/Guardians

Date: School Year 2020-21

Re: Training for students in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs

After you have instructed your child(ren) in the safe environment lesson provided by your parish or school, please complete the information below and return as directed.

Name of student: _____

Parish/school name: _____

Grade: _____

Title of lesson taught: _____

Name of student: _____

Parish/school name: _____

Grade: _____

Title of lesson taught: _____

Name of student: _____

Parish/school name: _____

Grade: _____

Title of lesson taught: _____

Name of student: _____

Parish/school name: _____

Grade: _____

Title of lesson taught: _____

I have received the training materials and used them to teach my child(ren) the lesson as requested.

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____