

Date Used: _____

Group: _____

GETTIN' GOOD AT BEIN' GOOD

Topic: Morality

Purpose of this Session:

Preadolescents in the 4th–6th grades begin to experiment with behaviors that conflict with the values they were taught as children. Kids need the opportunity to talk about right and wrong choices and their struggles in dealing with these choices. This TalkSheet offers the chance for kids and adults together to discuss right and wrong and the pressures placed on kids to do wrong.

To Introduce the Topic:

Make up a distorted Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17). For example, the first commandment could say, "I am your God, but if you wish, you can put sports or television stars ahead of me." Read your distorted list to the kids, then explain that you are going to talk about right and wrong.

The Discussion:

Item #1: Kids generally respond to this question by saying their schools would be unsafe, totally mixed up, and crazy—the ultimate nightmare. People would hurt each other, nobody would learn anything, and so on. Make a list of all the responses.

Item #2: Some kids will want a middle ground between right and wrong—a sort-of-wrong category. Ask the kids to choose only between the two—RIGHT or WRONG. This forced choice gives you the opportunity to talk about how we know right from wrong. Ask the kids why they believe it is wrong to lie, cheat, and so on. Focus on the consequences of doing wrong, possibly referring back to the responses in Item #1. For areas like watching television, take the teachable opportunity to discuss how to choose good programs over bad. Explore with the group why wrong things sometimes look appealing.

Item #3: Ask the group members to choose both the best four sources and the worst.

Item #4: After the group has shared its views, discuss why God's Word is important in learning right from wrong. Explain that God gave us the Ten Commandments and other rules to protect us. Refer back to the distorted reading of the Ten Commandments from the introductory activity. Ask the kids what might happen if they lived out these distorted commands, and point out the negative consequences. Emphasize God's protective nature by looking at the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12). God promises that kids will live long if they honor their fathers and mothers. If parents let kids do anything they want or if kids disregard their parents' rules, the result is rather obvious. Breaking this commandment puts a child's safety in jeopardy.

Item #5: Explain that the first number represents the Old or New Testament (1 = Old Testament; 2 = New Testament), the second number represents the book of the Old or New Testament, the third number locates the chapter, and the fourth number indicates the verse. The three verses in order are Psalm 97:10; Proverbs 14:16; and Romans 12:9. These verses warn us to hate what is evil. Ask the kids to share how Christians can hate evil and love good.

To Close the Session:

Point out that when we live by God's rules we do better than when we break his rules. Explain that Jesus summarized God's commandments into one word—love. Wrap up the lesson by reading and discussing Matthew 22:34–39.