

**JOURNEYING THROUGH LIFE  
WITH JESUS,  
THE SON OF GOD:**

**A BRIEF COURSE IN  
LIFE SKILLS FOR CATHOLICS**

**FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS**

Dr. Christauria Welland





**Dr. Christauria Welland**

**Catholic Clinical Psychologist**

**Specialist in Intimate Partner Violence  
Intervention and Prevention**

**Founder and Director of Pax in Familia**

drchristauriawelland@gmail.com

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His Holiness Pope Francis

Art by Lilian Nakato, Kampala, Uganda

**THIS IS A CATHOLIC COURSE ON RELATIONSHIP  
VIOLENCE PREVENTION, WHERE CATHOLIC  
TEACHING IS INTEGRATED WITH  
CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY AND PUBLIC  
HEALTH RESEARCH ON THE PREVENTION OF  
VIOLENCE.**

IN THIS COURSE THE AUTHOR HAS USED EIGHT OF  
THE DIVINE TITLES JESUS GIVES HIMSELF IN JOHN'S  
GOSPEL, TO STRUCTURE THE COURSE, AND TO  
HELP STUDENTS TO ENTER MORE DEEPLY INTO  
THE MYSTERY OF JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD AND  
PRINCE OF PEACE.



I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA,  
THE BEGINNING AND THE END



YOU CALL ME TEACHER AND LORD, AND  
YOU ARE RIGHT, FOR SO I AM.

**Dedication:**

In gratitude to the Lord for bringing us into his Heart,  
and for teaching us to walk in his Way.



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **NOTES FOR THE TEACHER OF THIS COURSE**

Please go to page 112 at the end of this book to find more information about the psychological and public health components of this course.

### **WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?**

This brief course was written for Catholic **adolescents, young adults, and couples, including those preparing for marriage**. It can be used in regular catechesis in or out of Catholic school, in youth groups and retreats, as a component of marriage preparation courses, and in adult Catholic couple's courses and retreats. Those working with **individuals, couples and families in counseling** will also find a great deal that is useful here. Those who have learned how to use this course believe it will be equally helpful for adult catechesis of all ages.

### **VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY**

Violence is epidemic in societies and in families throughout the world. Catholic families are no exception, unfortunately. Intimate partner violence leads to many personal, family and community ills. The human rights of victims are trampled on, Respect and reverence for human life is mocked by those who do not consider their own family members, usually women and children, worthy of the dignity with which God has made us. Victims are physically, sexually, economically and emotionally injured - depressed, anxious and afraid. Often they have posttraumatic stress disorder. All of this affects their

ability to be effective parents and to support their family. Children are traumatized by witnessing violence in the home, and they are often targets themselves. Abusers become more and more isolated from their families with their hurtful behaviour, and unity is destroyed. What could be farther from the vocation Christ has graced us with as Catholics, to walk in his Light and reflect his love to the world, beginning with our families?

In this course, I have chosen eight of the Divine Titles Jesus gives himself in John's Gospel to give structure to the psychological information and techniques that students will learn. While coming to know Jesus more deeply through Scripture and quiet prayer, they will also learn concrete strategies proven by global research to reduce intimate partner violence and violence against children. Fortunately, not one of these strategies goes against the teaching of Christ and the Church, and thus they are integrated into the catechetical material and prayers presented in the course.

At the end of this book there is more complete information about the strategies in list form, and the relevant links to the websites the author used to compile this information. The topic is complex and much could be written. However, the author has elected to keep this course as brief and simple as possible, so that it can be used and appreciated by a wide audience.



## **MAJOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGIES TAUGHT IN THIS COURSE**

- ✦ Healthy Relationships
- ✦ Empathy and Respect
- ✦ Self-Awareness and Self-Talk
- ✦ Self-Regulation and Anger
- ✦ Time-Out and Recognizing Feelings
- ✦ Understanding Abuse and Violence
- ✦ Understanding and Practicing the Equality of Men and Women
- ✦ Identifying and Overcoming Addictions
- ✦ Maturity and Responsibility
- ✦ Self-Validation
- ✦ Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution
- ✦ Assertiveness and Communication
- ✦ Validation of Others and Service

### **HOW SHOULD THIS COURSE BE USED?**

This course was designed to be delivered over 8 weeks as a catechism or human development class that lasts from 60 – 90 minutes, depending on the amount of discussion and activity desired.

Teachers, remind the class what they have learned, and challenge them to recall the Scripture, the prayers, the educational material, and the techniques. Part of the homework for some sessions is to make a banner for the classroom and/or the home to serve as a reminder, and to share knowledge with the family.

There are also several behavioural charts that can be used whenever desired to reinforce learning and practice.

It would be ideal to repeat these sessions in full for your class at least twice a year.

Alternatively, the teacher or catechist can extend the course to 16 weeks, so that there is more time to develop the topics that are covered.

Adolescents and young adults will benefit from taking this course every year after the first time, if possible.

You can also use sessions in class when you see a particular need among the students, or because of local events or troubles.

### **WHY IS NON-VIOLENCE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR CHRISTIANS AND CATHOLICS?**

If we wish to teach the next generation to speak and to live the truth in love, and to reflect the love of Christ to the world, we need to help them develop concrete strategies to control the very human tendency to abuse and violence in attitude, speech, and action.

**We teach them not only what not to do, but how to be different.**

By preventing family violence before it starts, we can avoid the extremely harmful effects of violence on children, women and men, abusers and victims, and break the chain of intergenerational transmission of violence.

These basic attitudes and techniques are simple and can be learned by everyone.

When these strategies are taught to young people and adults, they have been proven to work to contain violence outside the home, as well as in the family.



### **FORMAT OF EACH CLASS**

1. Prayer to the Holy Spirit
2. Read the 10 Wise Sayings as a group (take turns if possible)
3. Reading from the Gospel of John:  
    "I AM" declarations of Jesus
4. Prayer Method of the Day
5. Relaxation Technique of the Day
6. Teach Material on Violence Prevention for the Session
7. Activity
8. Assign Homework



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REFERENCES**

**MAJOR SOURCES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND  
PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION**

- ✦ World Health Organization, Geneva
- ✦ Centers for Disease Control, USA
- ✦ Resilience Skill Sets, University of  
Pennsylvania, USA
- ✦ The Collaboration for Academic, Social and  
Emotional Learning [CASEL], USA

**NOTE TO THE TEACHER:**

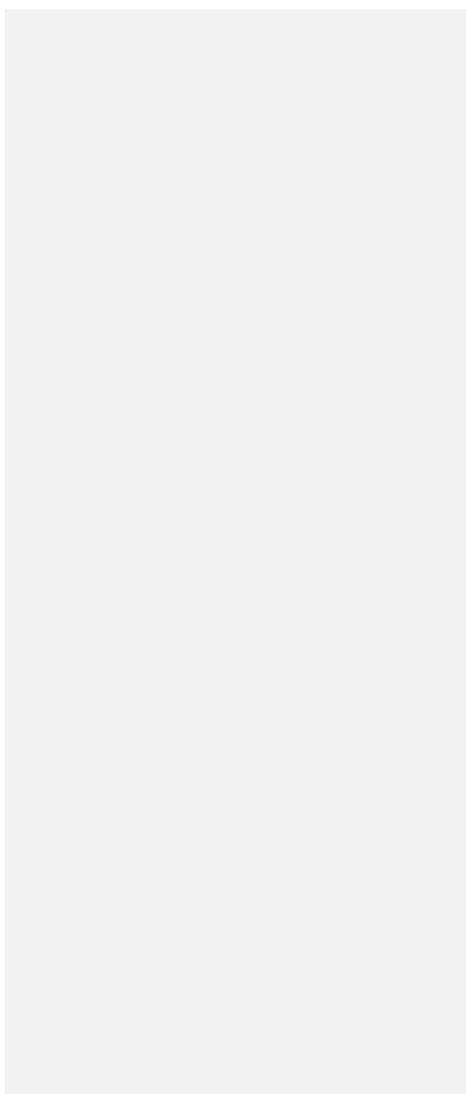
**AFTER THE OPENING PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, READ THE 10 WISE SAYINGS AT EACH SESSION. YOU CAN ALSO EMPHASIZE THEM AS THE MATERIAL COMES UP DURING THE COURSE.**

**THE TEN WISE SAYINGS<sup>1</sup>**

1. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit show us what it is means to love and to be loved, and to give ourselves as a gift for God and for others.
2. As Christians, we always look to Jesus to give us wisdom about how to pray, think, speak and act in our lives.
3. When we are grown-up and mature adults, we will take 100% responsibility for our conduct.
4. Violence is not an acceptable solution to a problem.
5. We cannot control any other person, but we can control ourselves.
6. When speaking to others we do well to state our feelings clearly, without blaming or threatening them.
7. Understanding more about our self-talk, our physical symptoms, and our emotions, is very important for progressing and improving our lives.
8. We can always take a time-out before reacting.
9. We cannot do anything about the past, but we can change the future
10. Even though there are differences between men and women, our rights and needs are basically the same.

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<sup>1</sup> # 4-10 from Sin Golpes, Welland, C. & Wexler, D., 2007





**JOURNEYING THROUGH LIFE WITH JESUS,  
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**Session 1**

**Introduction:**

**I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE  
BEGINNING AND THE END.**

**Rev. 22:13**

**You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right,  
for so I AM.**

**John 13:13**

Jesus is our Lord and our Teacher. He guides us in the path of life and shows us the way to live.

This short course is going to last for 8 sessions. In each one, we will listen to Jesus' voice, telling us who he is, and shedding light on our path, which is sometimes darkened by difficulties, sadness, anger, and confusion.

If we walk with him all the time we will know his love, and we will never feel that we are alone. **He is the friend we can always rely on.**

**COME, LET US TAKE HIS HAND,  
WHATEVER OUR SITUATION.**

Jesus says to us:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Mt. 11: 28-30

**During this course we will recall the statements  
in John’s gospel where Jesus says I AM.**

By saying I AM, Jesus uses the Divine Name of the one true God, and thus reveals his Divinity as the Son of God.

We will ponder these words in our hearts.

They are a window into the very Heart and Being of God Himself.

Jesus calls us to be like Him, and to live closely connected to him.



## I AM THE TRUE VINE

### 1) PRAYER TO HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you.  
Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console me.  
Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must say. Give me your orders.  
I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to me.  
Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

### 2) READ THE 10 WISE SAYINGS

### 3) READING: John 15: 1-5, 9-15.

**“Remain in my love.” (See below)**

[Catechist, select the length of the reading depending on the age and focus of your class.]

### 4) LECTIO DIVINA (DIVINE READING)

Learn today's way of praying!

**Steps:**

- 1) Keep Silence for a moment to turn all your thoughts and desires over to God.
- 2) **Read** the section of the Word slowly and carefully, aloud or silently, a few times. Be alert to any word or phrase that has special meaning or energy for you.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

[As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.]

- 3) **Meditate on the word or phrase that has special energy for you.** Repeat it over and over, and let it speak to your life.
- 4) **Pray deeply. Let your heart and soul talk to God.** Be open and honest. Think about how God is present to you in this word.

**5) Contemplate. Rest silently and freely in the presence of God, without words or images.**

Encourage your students to write down later some of what the word of the Lord has said to them in this prayer experience, if they wish. Learning to practice lectio divina will take time and perseverance, like all spiritual practices.

**5. RELAXATION TECHNIQUE OF THE DAY**

**Deep Breathing**

Learning how to breathe for relaxation is probably the most important way to calm ourselves down that there is!

“Breathing is the only bodily function that we do both voluntarily and involuntarily. We can consciously use breathing to influence the involuntary (sympathetic nervous system) that regulates blood pressure, heart rate, circulation, digestion and many other bodily functions. Breathing exercises can act as a bridge into those functions of the body, over which we generally do not have conscious control.

During times of emotional stress, our sympathetic nervous system is stimulated and effects a number of physical responses. Our heart rate rises, we perspire, our muscles tense and our breathing becomes rapid and shallow. If this process happens over a long period of time, the sympathetic nervous system becomes over-stimulated leading to an imbalance

that can affect our physical health. This can result in inflammation, high blood pressure and muscle pain.<sup>2</sup>

Deep breathing will help us to relax, calm down, get control of our emotions, including fear, anger and sadness, and to become aware of our true self which lives in communion with God.

**Steps to take:**

1. Sit with your spine straight and your feet flat in the ground. Close your eyes if you wish.
2. Place one hand on your chest and one on your abdomen (belly). Relax. Let your shoulders relax.
3. Begin to breathe in fully and slowly through your nose, and to exhale gently and fully through your mouth. Imagine you could feel the air blowing out if you were to put your hand there.
4. Aim to breathe deeply so you can feel your belly expand under your hand as you inhale and your lungs fill up. (If you can feel your shoulders go up with your other hand, you are doing shallow breathing, which will not relax you as well.)
5. Once you have learned how to breathe fully, try to breathe in slowly for 4 counts, and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://psychcentral.com/lib/learning-deep-breathing/>

exhale slowly for 4 counts. When you have mastered abdominal breathing, you no longer need to use your hands to guide you.

6. You can do this anywhere at any time to help you calm down and send more oxygen to your brain!

## **6. MATERIAL ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR THE SESSION**

### **CHRIST, OUR FIRST RELATIONSHIP**

As Christians, our first and primary relationship is with Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Teacher, our Saviour, and our Friend.

### **OUR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS ARE VITAL FOR LIFE TOO!**

We also have many other relationships in our lives. With whom?

[Let them mention parents, siblings, other relatives, friends, schoolmates, depending on age, workmates, boy or girlfriend, husband or wife, children. Make sure they understand that a good relationship is the genuine love and caring connection between people.]





**WHAT IS A GOOD, HEALTHY, AND REWARDING  
RELATIONSHIP?**

**CONNECTION IS THE ABILITY TO BUILD AND  
MAINTAIN STRONG, TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS.**

*[Discuss each point briefly, ask them for examples or  
give examples of people they know.]*

**A good relationship for a Christian is marked by:**

- 1) **A strong spiritual life where I live my Christian values.** That means that I know how Jesus acted and I follow his example. To know this, I must read and become very familiar with the four Gospels. Living my Christian values makes me a good family member and friend, even if my friends are not Christian or Catholic.
- 2) **Mutual respect and equality.** I respect others and I expect others to respect me. I treat others as equals to me, as children of God loved and redeemed by the same Lord. That includes all people regardless of their tribe, their color, their gender, their age, their religion, their economic status, their ancestry, their immigration status, their sexual orientation, or anything else.
- 3) **Sharing power and influence.** I am not always right, neither do I need to decide everything or be in charge of everything. In my relationships there is give and take. And I

expect the same from others. I will develop the ability to communicate clearly, to listen well, and to cooperate with others.

- 4) **Trust and support.** There can be no relationship without trust. I must be trustworthy, by telling the truth, keeping my word, and fulfilling my obligations. If my friend is not doing this, I will be honest to him or her, and I will also be kind when I am saying it. Others know that I will be helpful and supportive with my love, prayers, and kindness, even when I cannot help them materially.
- 5) **Negotiation and justice.** There is no peace without justice. I will strive to practice justice in my life by giving others their due, beginning with God. I will never cheat or steal, or deprive others of what they need to live and be happy. I will learn to negotiate for what I want and need, and I will do so fairly. (We will learn to negotiate conflict constructively in **Session 8**).
- 6) **Affection and openness.** Relationship means that there is love and trust. So I will make sure my friends and family feel my love and know what is important to me. I will tell the important people in my life that I love them. I will listen to them, and share my life with them too. I will seek help when I need it, and offer it to others too. It is hard to be friends

with a person who is cold and cut-off. But I can always be kind. I will try to plant a large garden with the seeds of kindness to others.

- 7) **Emotional, physical and sexual safety.** If I am being abusive or violent in my words or deeds, or not respecting another's sacred sexual boundaries, I cannot be called a friend. Abuse is not love, and to behave this way is to offend God and others, and to ensure that I will not have any true friends. People may tolerate me, but they will not want to be around me. I will know that if someone mistreats me in this way, he or she is not my friend. I will respectfully demand safety and security in my relationships.

**In all my dealings with others, I will learn to respond rather than react.**

That means that I need to be aware of how I am doing inside, and know how to stay calm!

We will learn this in **Session 2**.

**Think about this:**

Everyone makes mistakes, and if we respond kindly to someone else's blunder, others can feel secure in the knowledge that when they make a mistake, our response is likely to be compassionate too. This fosters a culture of safety, happiness, peace, and loyalty. cf. Donna Cameron, 2018

## 7. ACTIVITY:

Spend a few moments to answer these questions in your head, then those who wish can share a bit with the group. You can take notes, or do a drawing if you prefer.

- ✦ Where am I in my relationships? With family, parents, siblings, relatives, friends, boy / girlfriend, spouse?
- ✦ What am I doing well?
- ✦ What needs improvement?
- ✦ Write down 3 ways I could improve.
- ✦ Ask the Lord Jesus to help me.

Review the table we will check off as homework.

**Song:** *[Select a song about Jesus' love.]*



## 8. HOMEWORK:

1. Do a check-up (examination of conscience) every evening before bed. Say sorry directly if that person is near you, or the first chance you get. A simple, "I am sorry I hurt you. Please forgive me" will be very good.
2. Put the relationship graphic where you can see it at home, so you remember what a good relationship is. Explain it to the members of your family and your friends.
3. Stick the chart up or keep it in your notebook or Bible, and mark it off every night, after reviewing your day.
4. Draw a picture or find a photo of the Holy Family, or find photos of happy friends, couples, and families. Post them in your home and/or place in your Bible or notebook.



**HERE'S WHAT A GOOD RELATIONSHIP  
FOR A CHRISTIAN LOOKS LIKE!**



**JESUS SAID:**

**Do unto others  
as you would have them do unto you. Luke 6, 31**



**AM I PRACTICING IMPROVING MY RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH OTHERS THIS WEEK  
(AND EVERY WEEK)?**

	<b>M</b>	<b>TU</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>SU</b>
Spiritual life with Jesus							
Respect/ equality							
Share power							
Trust/support							
Negotiation/justice							
Affection/ openness							
Safety							



## SESSION 2

### I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

#### 1) PRAYER TO HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console me.

Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must say. Give me your orders.

I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to me.

Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

#### 2) READ THE 10 WISE SAYINGS

##### 3) READING: JOHN 10: 11 - 15.

I know my own and mine know me. I give my life for my sheep.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. **I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me**, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

### 3. PRAYER FOR TODAY:

Today we will learn about  
**THE SACRAMENT OF THE PRESENT MOMENT.**<sup>3 4</sup>

Jesus comes to us in a new and living way every day, and in every moment of every day. We should be aware of the events that occur minute-by-minute, from the smallest to the greatest, because this is how God speaks to us. In **the sacrament of the present moment** we dwell in a state of abandonment to the will of God, focused on what God is doing in the present moment. Mary and Joseph were the holiest people in the world, because their lives were guided by a pure and simple commitment to the will of God in every moment of the day. On the surface they were like ordinary people, but in their hearts and minds they reached the heights of sanctity **through complete trust in God's grace and obedience to his Will.** They found the treasure that Jesus speaks of in the gospel.

What is the secret of how to find this treasure? **There is none! It is available to us always, everywhere.** Like God, every creature pours it out generously, making it flow through every part of our bodies and souls, to the very center of our being... How simple is

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<sup>3</sup> De Caussade, Jean-Pierre, S. J., (ed. 2009) *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco

<sup>4</sup> Brinkmann, Susan, OCDS. (2017). *A Catholic guide to mindfulness*. Bessemer, Alabama. Avila Institute for Spiritual formation

this **perfect and total surrender of self to the world of God!**

**4) PRAYER METHOD FOR TODAY**

I can relax in the loving arms of Jesus my Good Shepherd at every moment. He is caring for me and carrying me.

**5) RELAXATION TECHNIQUE:**

I will practice deep breathing to relax my body and mind. Wherever I am, I will take slow, deep breaths, allowing the air to fill my lungs, while I let go of all tension and stress.

**This will help me to surrender to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. I can visualize myself in his arms,** being carried lovingly and feeling safe, happy, and loved. Maybe if I listen closely I can even hear his heart beating.

**6) LEARNING FOR TODAY: EMPATHY & RESPECT**

**WHAT IS EMPATHY AND WHY DO WE WANT IT?**

Empathy is the ability to put myself in someone else's place and feel compassion for what they are experiencing. It is the ability to feel and to show concern and support for another person. I may not agree with them or their feelings, but at least I try to understand them. Some people are naturally more empathic than others, but everyone can learn to "stand in another's shoes." I learn empathy from others, too. If people show me empathy and concern, then I learn to be like that to others.

If I behave with empathy to others, I will have friends and good relationships. If I am “all about myself” and do not show concern or caring, others will reject me and I will be lonely. Sometimes we need help to heal from our wounds, so that we can be caring towards others. Let us ask Jesus to help us, and talk to someone we trust if we feel our heart is wounded.

**DO THIS!!**

**USE RESPECTFUL SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS OTHERS**

(You can use this technique with friends, groups, boyfriend/girlfriend, or your spouse)

- ✦ Tell the other person what you want to discuss.
- ✦ Use sentences that begin with "I," and accept your feelings and thoughts. Do not start sentences with "You", since they may feel accused or blamed, and they will probably start defending themselves.
- ✦ Each person should speak one at a time, and more or less for the same length of time.
- ✦ Listen "actively." Summarize what you think the other person is thinking or feeling.
- ✦ Look for points of common agreement.
- ✦ Only talk about immediate problems. Do not bring the past into this conversation.
- ✦ Give yourselves time for a break.
- ✦ Present your reasons, and offer solutions.
- ✦ Accept when you are wrong.
- ✦ When you have reached an agreement, repeat it or write it down to make sure that both understand clearly what was agreed upon.

- ✦ End the discussion, even if it means taking a time out on the way to the end. (We will learn this in **Session 3.**)

### **DON'T DO THIS!!**

#### **HOW TO AVOID A LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE OTHER PERSON**

- ✦ Do not use insults or humiliations.
- ✦ Do not bring old wounds from the past into the discussion.
- ✦ Do not get off the subject.
- ✦ Do not threaten or intimidate the other.
- ✦ Do not take it for granted that you are going to lose or win the argument.
- ✦ Do not save up all your complaints to dump them on the other person all at once.
- ✦ Be careful to think that you can read the other's mind! Do not assume the worst in them. Ask questions!
- ✦ Do not deny the facts. If you said or did something wrong, take responsibility for it.
- ✦ Do not be proud of "having won" or make the other person feel bad.
- ✦ Do not make faces, ignore, pout, walk away, or give the other person "the silent treatment."

Jesus said,  
*Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*  
*Mt. 5:7*



## **LEARNING FOR TODAY: SELF-AWARENESS**

### **WHAT IS SELF-TALK?**

It's the conversation with myself that goes on all the time in my head.

Sometimes it is helpful to my life, like when I am thinking productive, loving thoughts towards myself and others, being like Jesus.

Sometimes it is not helpful, like when I am critical, judgmental, and unkind to myself or others. Or when I misinterpret what people are saying or doing, because I have a negative or unrealistic way of seeing myself and others.

My interpretation of events (my beliefs about myself and others) can determine how I feel and how I behave in my life.

So.... what do I think or believe about this event?

Let's choose an example.

**My little brother loses my soccer ball, or one of my other prized possessions.**

**(Let them choose an example** appropriate to their age and stage of life, then go over the interpretation they may make that is helpful or unhelpful).

**See the handout on the next page.**

CHANGE YOUR SELF-TALK,  
CHANGE YOUR FEELINGS AND YOUR  
BEHAVIOUR!

- A. THERE'S THE EVENT, THEN THERE'S...
- B. MY BELIEF OR INTERPRETATION  
ABOUT THE EVENT
- C. MY FEELINGS, BASED ON MY  
INTERPRETATION
- D. MY BEHAVIOUR, BASED ON MY  
FEELINGS

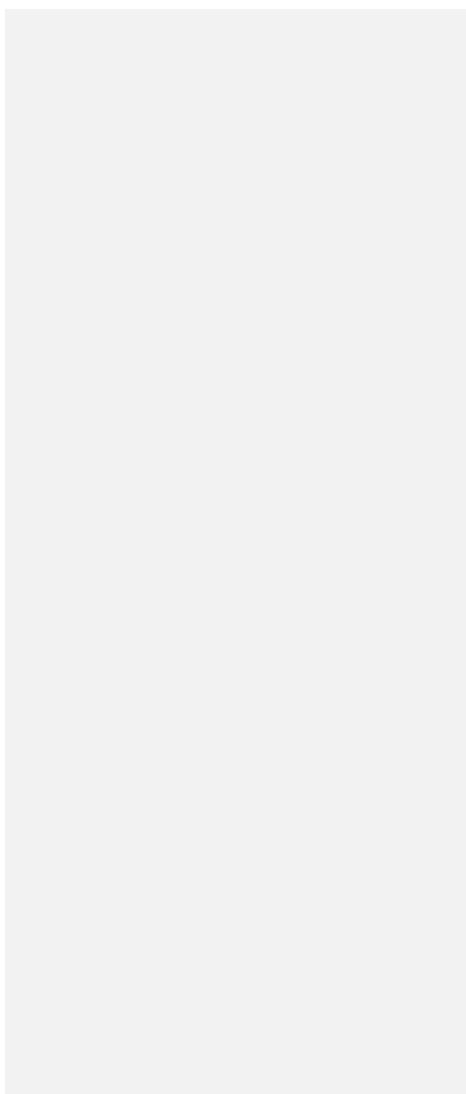
**IF I AM AWARE OF MY**

- ✦ NEGATIVE,
- ✦ SELF-DEFEATING, OR
- ✦ AGGRESSIVE BELIEFS

**I CAN CHOOSE TO BE MORE**

- ✦ POSITIVE,
- ✦ OPTIMISTIC, AND
- ✦ LOVING TO MYSELF AND OTHERS





## **7. ACTIVITY**

### **DISCUSSION:**

How has Jesus shown us mercy and compassion?  
How can we do this for others?

Give more examples from the lives of people we know, or the lives of the saints or holy people we know about.

## **8. HOMEWORK**

Practice saying and doing kind things to others this week. Keep a record of it. See the following handout.

**HERE'S MY RECORD OF PRACTICING SAYING AND  
DOING KIND THINGS TO OTHERS  
THIS WEEK (AND EVERY WEEK)**



	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU
Loving Jesus in the present moment							
Relaxing in the arms of the Good Shepherd							
Saying kind words							
Noticing other's needs							
Helping others with a smile							
Showing mercy and compassion							

**SESSION 3**  
**I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**1) PRAYER TO HOLY SPIRIT**

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you.  
Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console  
me.

Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must  
say. Give me your orders.

I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask  
of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to  
me.

Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

**2) READ: THE TEN WISE SAYINGS**

**3) READING:**

JOHN CHAPTER 8, 12; CHAPTER 9: 1-6.

Jesus spoke to them, saying,

**"I am the light of the world; he who follows me  
will not walk in darkness, but will have the light  
of life."**

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his  
birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who  
sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born  
blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man  
sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God  
might be made manifest in him. We must work the  
works of him who sent me, while it is day; night  
comes, when no one can work. **As long as I am in the  
world, I am the light of the world.**" As he said this,

he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Silo'am" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

#### 4) PRAYER FOR TODAY

- 1) Silent meditation for a moment.
- 2) Now say quietly in your heart, "Lord, I want to see."
- 3) Ask the Lord to help you to see and love yourself and others as he sees you and them.
- 4) Begin to pray **THE JESUS PRAYER**<sup>5</sup>:

**"Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner."**

- ✦ Use deep breathing, slowly and fully
- ✦ As you pray "Lord Jesus Christ"
  - Breathe in peace
- ✦ As you pray "Have mercy on me a sinner"
  - Breathe out tension, anxiety, and anger.
  
- ✦ Pray the Jesus prayer for a while in silence.
- ✦ Try it many times this week, until you get used to praying all the time.

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<sup>5</sup> Writings from the Philokalia: On Prayer of the Heart (1992). E. Kadloubovsky & G. E.H. Palmer, Translators of the Eastern Church Fathers text

Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. I Thessalonians 5: 16-18

The Jesus Prayer is especially good to pray when we are walking, travelling, or engaged in any activity that does not require active thought (any manual work, housework, gardening, cooking, etc.). The prayer becomes a constant rhythm that comes naturally, and keeps us enfolded in the presence of God our Heavenly Father.



## 5) RELAXATION TECHNIQUE FOR TODAY:

### Breathing with conscious intention

- ✦ Use deep breathing, slowly and fully
  - Breathe in peace
  - Breathe out tension, anxiety, and anger.
- ✦ Ideally, you will become experienced at blending this technique with the Jesus Prayer.

## 6) LEARNING FOR TODAY: SELF-CONTROL

### WHAT IS SELF-REGULATION ?

- ✦ The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself.
- ✦ The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.
- ✦ The skills we want to develop:
  - Impulse control
  - Stress management
  - Self-discipline
  - Self-motivation
  - Goal setting
  - Organizational skills

## **READING ABOUT IMPULSE CONTROL IN SCRIPTURE**

Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God. If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain.

James 1: 19-20, 26.

## **LEARNING ABOUT IMPULSE CONTROL**

**STOP, BREATHE, AND THINK  
BEFORE YOU SPEAK OR ACT!!!**

## **RECOGNIZING ANGER TO PREVENT VIOLENCE<sup>6</sup>**

Anger is normal - it tells us something is wrong that needs to be changed. But too much anger can cause physical problems such as hypertension and other problems. Also, the behaviour that follows feelings of anger may not be normal. It can be very destructive, such as physical violence, threats, abusive words, and sexual abuse.

Anger is always a secondary emotion. It comes after some other emotion, such as frustration, extreme

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<sup>6</sup> Welland, C & Wexler, D. (2007) Sin Golpes. Como transformar la respuesta violenta de los hombres en la pareja y la familia. Editorial Pax: Mexico City



stress, feeling neglected or abandoned, or the fear of being rejected or misunderstood.

**WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ANGER?**

- ✦ Tense muscles
- ✦ Sweating
- ✦ Increased heart rate (palpitations)
- ✦ Fast breathing
- ✦ Trembling or shaking
- ✦ Face reddens

**Class:** Stop for a minute and evaluate what your signs of anger are from this list, or add your own.

**Teacher:** Ask 3 people in the class to share their signs of anger.

**Class:** Take 2 minutes to write down or underline what your signs are. **Remember this** so you can improve your chances of self-control through awareness.

We can also have **certain thoughts** that lead us to get angrier, like blaming others, or **certain beliefs**, like thinking we have the right to hurt others or be violent to them.

**Do you have any of these?**

**We will talk more about rights in Session 5.**

## POPE FRANCIS ON ANGER

Christians cannot ignore the persistent admonition of God's word not to nurture anger: "Do not be overcome by evil" (*Romans 12:21*). "Let us not grow weary in doing good" (*Galatians 6:9*). It is one thing to sense a sudden surge of hostility and another to give into it, letting it take root in our hearts: "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger" (*Ephesians 4:26*). My advice is never to let the day end without making peace in the family.

*Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 104*

## THE BRAIN AND SELF-CONTROL<sup>7</sup>

### BASIC NEUROSCIENCE: THE HAND MODEL OF THE BRAIN

First make a fist with your thumb tucked inside your fingers. This is the model of your brain.

**Your fist is the brain, and your wrist and forearm are the spinal cord**, carrying nerve impulses to the rest of your body.

The bottom of your palm is the **brainstem**, which is where instinctive behaviour and involuntary functions are regulated, like breathing, heart rate, hunger, digestion, body temperature, etc. It is our basic, primitive brain.

Your thumb, tucked in the middle of your fist, is the **midbrain**. This is where our emotions and memories are created and processed, as well as where the fight-

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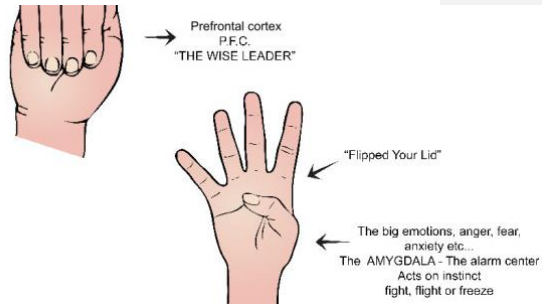
<sup>7</sup> Kelly Bartlett. The Attached Family.  
<http://theattachedfamily.com>

or-flight reflex is triggered. The midbrain is our emotional brain.

The back of your hand and fingers and encasing everything, is the **cerebral cortex**. This is where higher function you occurs. This part of our brain allows us to think logically, act with kindness and empathy, and it houses our reasoning and problem-solving abilities. The cortex is our rational brain. It is the part of the brain that is activated when we have a problem to solve.

Sometimes the emotional brain and the rational brain don't communicate so well. The emotions of the midbrain are simply too overwhelming, our fight-or-flight reflex triggers, and **we flip our lids**. Our feelings are intense, and we're not able to access the logical, problem-solving part of our brain. We need to calm our anger and ease our fears in order to restore our rational brain to its coherent, sensible state.

### THE AMYGDALA VERSUS THE WISE LEADER



## THE HAND MODEL OF THE BRAIN

DANIEL SIEGEL, MD

(Brainstorm, 2013)



WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BRAIN WHEN I AM UPSET, ANGRY, AFRAID, WORRIED, ETC.?

**WILL I FLIP MY LID?**

WILL I LET MY **ALARM CENTER**, THE AMYGDALA, TAKE OVER?

OR WILL I REMEMBER TO BRING IN **THE WISE LEADER**, MY THINKING BRAIN, THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX, TO HELP ME REGAIN SOME PEACE AND CALM, AND MAKE GOOD DECISIONS?

I DO THIS BY BECOMING QUIET AND CALM, TAKING SLOW DEEP BREATHS, AND TELLING MYSELF THAT I CAN HANDLE THIS.

## TIME OUT FOR ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS

One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,  
and one whose temper is controlled is better than  
one who captures a city. *Proverbs 16, 32*

The "Time Out" is a strategy to prevent conflicts from worsening with our family, friends, and especially our love relationships.<sup>8</sup> You may never need it, but it is important to learn to use it effectively, just in case.

The "Time Out" should never be used as a weapon against the other person. It should not be used as a way to avoid conflicts. It should not be used as a way to make the other person feel abandoned, like a power play. Instead, it should be used as a sign of respect for the relationship. The message is: "I care so much about our relationship that I don't want it to be further damaged." **Before I start taking time-outs, I should explain the technique to the other person and obtain their agreement.** This way they won't feel bad when I leave before an argument gets out of control:

### STEPS FOR A TIME-OUT

- 1) Recognize that I am getting upset.
- 2) Let the other person know that I need to take a time-out.

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<sup>8</sup> Welland, C. & Wexler, D. (2007). *Sin Golpes: Como Transformar la Respuesta Violenta de los Hombres en la Pareja y la Familia*. Mexico City: Editorial Pax

- 3) Tell the other person where I am going and for how long, if it is a close relationship.
- 4) Go into a different room or outside for a while - breathe deeply, pray, exercise, do something non-harmful that calms me down.
- 5) Call my spouse or partner to see if it's OK to come back now. [You can omit this step if you both don't have a mobile phone.]
- 6) Once I am calm, come back and see if we can speak to each other respectfully to solve the problem together, or let it go till later, if we both agree.
- 7) Ask forgiveness if I offended my loved one or my friend.

**FIRST AID FOR MY TEMPER:<sup>9</sup>**

- + In order to practice self-control, I must be aware of myself and my automatic reactions.
- + By recognizing when I am getting angry, I provide time for myself to take action on my own behalf, before I hurt someone else.
- + I must learn to relax and to calm myself down without violence, alcohol, or drugs.
- + I can avoid violent speech and action!
- + Non-violence is a decision I make!
- + I can't hurt my family or friends if I am not in the same space or within earshot!

**KEEP TRYING! IT IS DIFFICULT TO  
CHANGE THE HABITS OF A LIFETIME!**

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<sup>9</sup> Welland, C. 2018. How can we help to end violence in Catholic families? A guide for clergy, religious and laity. San Diego, CA. Health Transformations.



## 7 WAYS TO CALM DOWN AND AVOID EXPLODING<sup>10</sup>

1. **Prayer:** Praying unites us with God, the source of peace. It also helps us to become physically, emotionally, and mentally calm.
2. **Deep breathing.** Stop for a moment when you feel tense, and take a deep breath. This increases the oxygen in your body and helps you to think more clearly, to calm down, and to change your focus in the situation.
3. **Run or Walk Energetically.** This is good for both stress reduction and general health. In addition, physical activity helps divert our attention from the stress in our environment that produces tension.
4. **Physical Work.** Physical work can release energy in the same way as running, while at the same time achieving something concrete.
5. **Quiet time.** This means looking for solitude for a while. Listen to music, sit quietly, walk alone in a restful place, like a park, or next to a lake, river, or forest, or anywhere you feel at peace.
6. **Talk.** Talking about stress with another person can also help you. Talk about what's worrying you with someone you trust.

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<sup>10</sup> cf. Welland, C. & Wexler, D. (2007). *Sin Golpes: Como Transformar la Respuesta Violenta de los Hombres en la Pareja y la Familia*. Mexico City: Editorial Pax



7. **Relaxation exercises.** Tense up your muscle groups, and then relax them, or use a relaxation exercise from Youtube, an app, etc.<sup>11</sup>

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3, 14

**DECISIONS TO PONDER:**<sup>12</sup>

- + I will express love, admiration, and affection with the body God gave me.
- + I will strive to understand the consequences of my anger (and violence) by listening to those I have hurt, and by listening to Jesus.
- + I will ask (but not demand) forgiveness of those I have hurt, especially my loved ones.
- + I will look at myself honestly and decide if now is the time for me to change.
- + **If not now, when?**
- + I will avoid all emotional, verbal, physical and sexual harm to others.
- + If I am being disrespected or abused, I will speak up to someone I trust and get help.

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<sup>11</sup> Quick Relaxation: A Relaxation Technique for Stress Relief/  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVHOKq91Uh4>

<sup>12</sup> Welland, C. 2018. How can we help to end violence in Catholic families? A guide for clergy, religious and laity. San Diego, CA. Health Transformations.

**7) ACTIVITY**

- 1) Go over the steps of Time-Out as a group till you have memorized them. Act them out if you like.
- 2) Practice making the hand model of the brain with the person next to you and explaining the different parts to them. Take turns.

**8) HOMEWORK**

- 1) Go over the feelings handout. On a separate sheet of paper, write down the main feelings you have this week, and how you controlled the ones that can make you unhappy. Did you use the wise leader, or did you flip your lid?
- 2) Make a colored banner or sign for your house that says:

**BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD.**

Display it in a prominent place in your home. If the class wants one, make one for the classroom too. Decide who will do it before you leave today.

## WHAT EMOTION AM I FEELING??<sup>13</sup>

### 8 Basic Emotions

And the purpose of each one



**Anger**

To fight against problems



**Fear**

To protect us from danger



**Anticipation**

To look forward and plan



**Surprise**

To focus us on new situations



**Joy**

To remind us what's important



**Sadness**

To connect us with those we love



**Trust**

To connect with people who help



**Disgust**

To reject what is unhealthy

<sup>13</sup> Plutchik, 2017

**SESSION 4**  
**I AM THE DOOR**

**1) PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console me.

Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must say. Give me your orders.

I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to me.

Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

**2) READ THE TEN WISE SAYINGS**

**3) READING: John 10: 1 - 10**

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep**. All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. **I am the door**; if any one enters by

me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.**

**4) LEARNING TO PRAY THIS WEEK:  
PRAYING THE PSALMS IN CHORUS**

**Psalm 32 is a prayer about repentance and forgiveness. Sometimes we follow another voice instead of Jesus, and we get lost for a while. With this prayer we turn back to Him and ask for mercy.**

[Pray out loud in 2 groups; see Group 1 and Group 2 in text]

***Group 1***

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the LORD imputes no  
iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

***Group 2***

When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up<sup>ful</sup> as by the heat of  
summer.

**Group 1**

I acknowledged my sin to thee,  
and I did not hide my iniquity;  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD";  
then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.

**Group 2**

Therefore let everyone who is godly  
offer prayer to thee;  
at a time of distress, in the rush of great waters,  
they shall not reach him.

**Group 1**

Thou art a hiding place for me,  
thou preservest me from trouble;  
thou dost encompass me with deliverance.

**Group 2**

I will instruct you and teach you  
the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

**Group 1**

Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
else it will not keep with you.

**Group 2**

Many are the pangs of the wicked;  
but steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in  
the LORD.

***Group 1***

Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

***Group 2***

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy  
Spirit;

***Group 1***

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

**5) THIS WEEK'S RELAXATION TECHNIQUE:**

**BREATHE AND RELAX.**

**Imagine:** I am going through a very beautiful doorway into a green pasture. This is Jesus, the Door of the sheepfold. Imagine he is keeping harmful things and people away from me, like a strong gate that keeps me safe. He is my refuge.

**Breathe and relax and say the "Jesus Prayer" quietly** in my heart. Breathe in on "Lord Jesus Christ", breathe out on "Have mercy on me, a sinner."

**"Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner. "**

## 6) LEARNING MATERIAL FOR TODAY

### **What do we need to keep out of our lives?**

#### **Harmful thoughts, words, and actions!**

In Session 2 we learned about self-talk.

**Today we will focus on our words and our actions, especially words and actions that hurt others.**

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

##### **ABUSE: WHAT IS ABUSE?**

- 1) Cruel and violent treatment.
- 2) The improper use of something, for example. alcohol or drugs.

People can be abusive and violent to their family, their friends, their acquaintances, and strangers. Bullying is violence to people at school or other places. "Intimate partner" violence (IPV) or domestic violence is aggression that occurs in a close relationship. The term "intimate partner" includes current and former spouses, boyfriends, or girlfriends.

IPV can vary in frequency and severity, and can range from one episode that might or might not have lasting impact, to chronic and severe episodes over a period of years. Violence is harmful, and to be avoided by the followers of Jesus Christ.



If we must fight evil, so be it; but we must always say "no" to violence in the home.

*Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 104*

#### **FOUR TYPES OF IPV<sup>14</sup>**

- 1) **Physical violence** is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.
- 2) **Sexual violence** is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting, watching pornography) when the partner does not or cannot consent. This includes sex with children or adolescents, or people over whom one has power & authority.
- 3) **Stalking** is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety, or the safety of someone close to the victim.
- 4) **Psychological aggression** is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm another person mentally or emotionally and/or exert control over another person.

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<sup>14</sup> Centers for Disease Control, 2017, Preventing Intimate Partner Violence <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-factsheet.pdf>

**DATING VIOLENCE IS REAL!**

**FRIENDS: PAY ATTENTION &  
WARN EACH OTHER!**

**Signs of an Abusive Relationship between  
Boyfriend/Girlfriend**

Some signs may be obvious:

- ✦ One student in the relationship always seems to be controlling the other, either physically, emotionally, or verbally.
- ✦ One student in the relationship has unexplained bruises.
- ✦ One student in the relationship always defers to the other.

There may be other school-related behaviours:

- ✦ A drop in attendance
- ✦ A drop in grades
- ✦ Requests for schedule changes

Consider whether the student has shown the following:

- ✦ Isolation from former friends
- ✦ Loss of interest in activities
- ✦ Loss of self-confidence
- ✦ Sudden weight change



None of these signs by themselves may indicate an abusive relationship (and the signs may be symptoms of other concerns as well), so look at them as a whole.

If you notice that your student, sibling, or friend needs help, say something!

- ✦ When people don't say anything, the abuser and/or the abused may think the behaviour is OK.
- ✦ Speak up and defend each other! Go as a group! (*See below: Bystander Empowerment*)
- ✦ Get help from an adult if you need to.
- ✦ Stay safe yourself!

#### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT SEXUAL RESPECT

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 6: 19-20

**Sexual abuse** is any unwanted sexual contact. It can include anything unwanted, including verbal harassment, touching the victim, making the victim touch the abuser, assault, or rape.

**Use of pornography** makes it more likely that a person will commit violence and/or sexual abuse. Remember that the beauty of the human body is a reflection of the image of God within us. Sex in marriage is holy. As Christians, we can never

objectify, hurt, or take advantage of another's body and believe that we have a right to do that.

Sexual abuse towards a child or adolescent or disabled person is also a serious crime, and does lasting damage to the victim. Since they are not old enough mentally or are unable to give consent to these behaviours, **the fault is always with the adult.**

**Seek help and justice if you are a victim! This can also help to protect others from the same terrible experience.**

#### **POPE FRANCIS AND THE FLESH OF CHRIST**

Any offense or wound or violence to the body of our neighbour is an affront to God the Creator! **My thoughts go, in particular, to the children, the women, the elderly who are physically abused. In the flesh of these people we find the Body of Christ.** Christ wounded, mocked, slandered, humiliated, scourged, crucified.... Jesus taught us love. A love that, in his Resurrection, is demonstrated to be more powerful than sin and death, and seeks to redeem all those who experience in their own body the slavery of our time.

Pope Francis, Angelus, 15/04/18

## **BYSTANDER EMPOWERMENT**

We can stand up to bullies, people who are violent to their girlfriends or boyfriends, and to partners who are hurting their spouse. If we do this as a group, and as a matter of common practice, violence will be reduced. People will know we are watching them and that we will protect each other. We don't even have to say anything if we don't feel safe, just interrupt the behaviour.

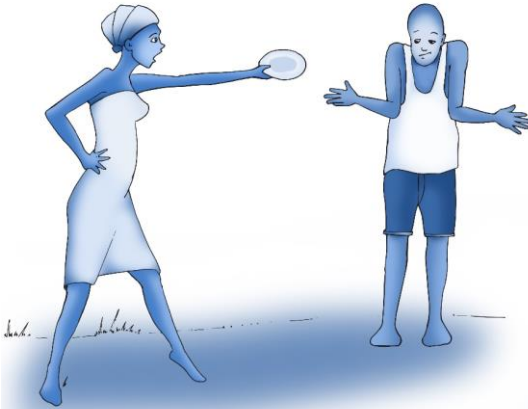
Here is a Youtube example of a group of young men standing up for a woman who is being attacked by her husband, even though they don't say anything:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9dKXXriVmo>

**Jesus said, Do not be afraid.** He stood up for others, especially those who were being victimized. Most of all, he stood up for us, in our place, against the Evil One, against sin and death. Because of his love, courage and sacrifice we are here today, and are on our way to eternal life with God.

**JESUS IS THE DOOR  
WHO PROTECTS US FROM HARM.**

**VIOLENCE IS WRONG, REGARDLESS OF THE  
GENDER OF THE AGGRESSOR!  
WE ALL NEED TO LEARN TO BE NON-VIOLENT!**



## 7) ACTIVITY

### **DRAW:**

a) Jesus as the Door to my soul, and outside the door I can draw some of the things I need to keep out, by taking refuge in Him.

## 8) HOMEWORK

**Read** the reading below in class, and do the exercise as homework.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”

Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians, Chapter 6,  
11 -18.



## THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

Whose side am I on in the battle of life? Jesus or the Evil One? **Do a drawing of myself in armour, dressed as a warrior of my people, on a separate page.** Don't forget to write in the labels! Put it up in your house so everyone can see it.



## SESSION 5

### I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

#### 1) PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console me.

Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must say. Give me your orders.

I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to me.

Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

#### 2) READ THE TEN WISE SAYINGS

#### 3) READING: John 11: 17-44

#### **He who believes in me will never die.**

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise

again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, **“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,** and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, **“Lazarus, come out!”** The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, **“Unbind him, and let him go.”**

## The Death and Resurrection of Jesus is our Hope and our Salvation!



### ST. PAUL ENCOURAGES US TO PUT ON CHRIST, THE NEW MAN

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.**

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Romans 6: 3-8

#### 4) PRAYER FOR TODAY

We will honour the Risen Lord by praying the first Glorious Mystery of the Holy Rosary, and at the same time we will honour Mary the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, who gave us this wonderful prayer.

**The Rosary is both a vocal prayer** that we can say together, **and a meditation** that we make on each one of the most important events in the life of Jesus and Mary.

**Pray the first Glorious Mystery, the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in two groups.**

Be careful not to pray too fast, and pray in unison (one voice), to experience the power of meditative and communal prayer.

#### 5) RELAXATION TECHNIQUE FOR TODAY

- ✦ Stand straight with your arms at your side and your feet apart at shoulder width.
- ✦ Raise both your arms straight in front of you all the way up over your head, as you breathe in slowly. Let your whole body expand.
- ✦ Pause there for 2 seconds.
- ✦ Then breathe out slowly as you lower your arms to your sides. Imagine that you are gently pushing the air down with your hands.
- ✦ Repeat 3 times.
- ✦ You can do this anytime you need to relax and refocus

## 6) TEACHING MATERIAL FOR TODAY

### THE EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

Jesus did things that other men of his day would never have done. He brought us a new way of life. How did he treat other people? Specifically, how did he treat women?

Let's think of one or two examples, like his Mother Mary (John 19: 26-27), the woman at the well (John 4: 5-30), the woman caught in adultery (John 8: 1-11), and the woman who washed his feet with her hair at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7: 36-50).

If your students are not familiar with these examples, select two and read them as a class.

For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, **there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.**

Gal. 3: 26-28

### CONTEMPORARY TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON THE EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

What do the Bishops and Popes have to say about the equality of men and women, or about how men should treat women and girls?

Whenever a man is responsible for offending a woman's personal dignity and vocation, he acts contrary to his own personal dignity and his own vocation.

*St. John Paul II, On the Dignity of Women, 10, 1988*



There are those who believe that many of today's problems have arisen because of feminine emancipation. This argument, however, is not valid, "it is false, untrue, a form of male chauvinism" (*Amoris Laetitia*, 43). The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity. If certain forms of feminism have arisen which we must consider inadequate, we must nonetheless see in the women's movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recognition of the dignity and rights of women.

*Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 54*

The dignity of women still needs to be defended and promoted. In fact, in many places today, simply being a woman is a source of discrimination... Not to be overlooked is the increasing violence against women, where they become victims, unfortunately, often within families.

*The Vocation and Mission of the Family  
in the Church and Contemporary World, #7,  
Extraordinary Synod, 2014*

I would like to stress the fact that, even though significant advances have been made in the recognition of women's rights and their participation in public life, in some countries much remains to be done to promote these rights. Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice. The



verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages contradicts the very nature of the conjugal union.

*Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 54*

### **THE BODY OF CHRIST IS LIVING AND GROWING**

The Church has grown in understanding of how Christ related to all people, and how he calls us to respect the human rights of all others. Each one of us is created in the image of God, and he has clearly told us that what we do to each other, we do to him.

**Women and girls must be treated with the same respect and dignity as men and boys. We may not be the same, but we are equal in God's eyes, as well as before the law.**

"One of the principal marks of Jesus' teaching is the overturning of social conventions...One of the most striking and surprising of Jesus' moves was a radical inclusion of women. He allowed women into his inner circle (practically unheard of for a rabbi); he spoke publicly to the woman at the well; he engaged with the Syro-Phoenician woman; he forgave the woman caught in adultery. And the first witnesses of the Resurrection were women.

[At the time of Christ] males were seen as superior to females. But not anymore—in light of the kingdom of God that Jesus announced."

Bishop Robert Barron, Word on Fire, 2018

**How is Jesus' way different from my way, my family's way? How do the men and boys in my neighborhood treat women and girls? Should I follow them like a sheep, or should I follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd?**

The Christian lives a new life in Jesus. We respect and hold on to the traditions of our ancestors that bring us closer to God and to each other, but some customs and behaviours just cannot be reconciled with the gospel of Jesus. So we decide to follow Jesus on his Way.

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4: 22-24

### **LET'S REVIEW THE TYPES OF ABUSE WE LEARNED ABOUT**

Relationship abuse can be verbal, emotional, physical, and/or sexual. It can happen with young people who are dating as well as with married couples. **Violence against women because they are perceived as weak and inferior is practiced throughout the world, and causes untold suffering.** It is often men and boys who are violent, but some women and girls are also violent first. **No one should be violent to another person, so we all need to learn to change our behaviour!**

Some people are very insecure and afraid of losing the love of the other person, and so they become insanely jealous and suspicious. This makes their relationships very stressful and unhappy. We can get help and learn to be more at peace with ourselves, if we suffer from irrational jealousy. We don't have to make others suffer because we don't know how to trust.

**7) ACTIVITY:**  
**SEE FOLLOWING PAGES**

a) For the women and girls:  
**Living the dignity and equality of a Catholic woman, discussion.**

b) For the boys and men:  
**Masculinity traps, exercise and discussion.**

**2-PAGE HANDOUT FOR GIRLS/WOMEN TO  
DISCUSS:**

**PREVENTION OF FUTURE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:  
FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN**

St. John Paul II and Pope Francis often repeat Jesus' words: "*Do not be afraid.*" Let us not be afraid to live the Gospel by **treating each other as equals worthy of love and respect.**

Catholic women and girls can make a difference by reaching out to and supporting each other. **Abused women and girls usually seek help first from the women they are close to** - their mother or a mother-figure, or from close family or friends. If you are that person, your understanding and compassion can bring light and comfort. But if you are rejecting or blaming of the victim of violence, she will most likely retreat into her painful solitude again.<sup>i</sup>

If you know or suspect that a friend or family member is being abused, you can intervene in this simple but effective way:<sup>15</sup>

- + Go up to her and ask her what is happening
- + Support her by listening without judging or blaming her
- + Help her, she may be in danger
- + Go with her to a person or place where she can get help
- + Respect her confidentiality at all times

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<sup>15</sup> Fawcett, G., Heise, L., Isita, L. y Pick, S. (1999). Changing community responses to wife abuse. A research and demonstration project in Iztacalco. Mexico. *American Psychologist*, 54(1), pp. 41-49.

### LIVING THE DIGNITY AND EQUALITY OF A CATHOLIC WOMAN

- + How can you incorporate the values of dignity and equality into your life and help your family to understand the respect you deserve?
- + When you have children, will you be sure to inculcate the values of dignity in all your children by not favoring boys over girls, thus perpetuating inequality and preferential treatment towards boys?
- + It helps to let our dear ones know they have hurt us, and ask them to make changes in their manner of treating us. This is because many people, including boyfriends, husbands, and parents, are unaware of how hurtful their behaviour is. What if they grew up in a family where insults and sarcasm were standard ways to communicate? What if they believe that men are superior to women and have not understood our equal dignity before God - that Christ's blood was shed equally for both men and women? What if they are so self-focused that they fail to notice our tears and sorrow? We must develop the courage to speak up, and to support each other in this social change.
- + We must be both understanding and forgiving, and know how to set appropriate limits to attitudes, words, and behaviours that are out of sync with the divine love that binds us. We must speak the truth in love and not turn a blind eye to injustice, including when we are the targets.
- + No one can escape some pain in their human relationships. Yet we cannot accept to participate in an abusive relationship that goes against every principle of Christian love. If something is wrong, seek help!
- + **Stand together for change, and do not be afraid!**

## 2 PAGE HANDOUT FOR MEN/BOYS TO DISCUSS

### MASCULINITY TRAPS<sup>16</sup>

- ✦ What did you learn about being a man?
- ✦ Who taught you to be a man?
- ✦ Were you encouraged to be competitive and aggressive?
- ✦ How do you know that you're a real man?
- ✦ Was there any difference in how the boys and the girls in your family were raised and educated?

### BELIEFS THAT MAINTAIN MASCULINITY TRAPS

#### DO ANY OF THESE APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY?

- ✦ I should never show my feelings.
- ✦ I always have to be strong.
- ✦ I should never show weakness.
- ✦ I should never do anything that looks feminine.
- ✦ I should always be in charge and in control.
- ✦ I always have to win.
- ✦ Winning is the most important thing.
- ✦ I have to be first in everything.
- ✦ I should never back down from a fight.
- ✦ I always have to win an argument.
- ✦ I have to stand out by criticizing other people's faults.
- ✦ Real men solve their problems by force.
- ✦ My possessions and my success are the measure of my value and my identity.
- ✦ My value can be seen in the money I make.
- ✦ My vehicle, my clothes, and my house are the proof of the kind of man I am.

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<sup>16</sup> Adapted from Daniel G Saunders, 1982

**MEN HAVE TO..**

**STEREOTYPES THAT MANY MEN FEEL THEY  
HAVE TO MEET TO BE REAL MEN:**

Men have to be \_\_\_\_\_

Men have to do \_\_\_\_\_

Men have to have \_\_\_\_\_

Men should never \_\_\_\_\_

EVEN THOUGH MANY MEN ACCEPT THESE  
BELIEFS WITHOUT QUESTION, AND WITHOUT  
REGARD TO THEIR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL  
HEALTH LET'S TALK ABOUT:

- 1) WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS JESUS?
- 2) HOW DID JESUS SHOW US TO THINK,  
SPEAK, AND ACT AS MEN?

## 8) HOMEWORK

**Think about these questions and write down your answers.**

**Discuss them with your friends too.**

- 1) Pay attention this week at home, at school, in the street, and on the news. Do I see the gender roles (between men and women) playing out around me? Do I see anything that bothers me or that I think is wrong? Do I notice any changes in the younger generation?
- 2) What do I want for my life? For my mother, my sisters, my wife, my father, brothers, husband?



## SESSION 6

### I AM NOT ALONE, THE FATHER IS WITH ME

#### 1) PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console me.

Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must say. Give me your orders.

I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to me.

Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

#### 2) READ THE TEN WISE SAYINGS

#### 3) READING: John 16: 32-33.

##### INTRODUCTION:

Jesus is with the apostles at the Last Supper. He is about to enter the Agony in the Garden, and the hour of his Passion and Death. Jesus knew in advance the terrible suffering he was about to face: being alone, abandoned, rejected, betrayed, injured, even to the point of death, and all of this out of obedience to his Father and for our salvation. In the midst of all this, **Jesus trusted that his Father would always be there.**

#### **READING:**

The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; **yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**

#### **4) PRAYER FOR TODAY:**

##### **PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD THROUGH GUIDED IMAGERY**

**[Note to Teacher:** Please practice this reading before class, and then read the students this guided imagery of entering into and resting in the Heart of Jesus. Use a soft and slow voice.]

“Begin with some slow, deep breaths and become conscious that God is with you, all around you, and present deep in your heart. Sit quietly, close your eyes, and listen deeply in your heart to the words of this short meditation.

“My Lord Jesus, you trusted to the very end, accepting the emotional and physical torture of the Agony and the Cross. When your Heart was pierced by the lance at the moment of your death, you opened your Heart to all those who believe in you. Then came your glorious Resurrection!

Now I desire to come and take my place within your Heart too, along with that cloud of witnesses who have put all their trust in you. I come to the entrance

of your Heart. I let my imagination show me what it looks like and how it feels. I allow the Holy Spirit to gently guide me and encourage me to take the last step to enter. In your Heart there is comfort, there is love, there is safety, there is peace, there is unwavering trust. In this warm place of light, I cannot be afraid. I feel myself beyond harm, beyond loneliness, deeply connected to your love, Lord Jesus. My heart sings for joy and fills with courage. With you, I have the strength I need to follow you and to do your will. I will rest here now for a while, breathing in your peace and allowing my heart to expand with your eternal love. I am not alone, for you are with me always.

[Pause for about 30 seconds.]

[End with Glory be to the Father... prayed slowly, and invite students to take one last deep breath and open their eyes.]

## **5) RELAXATION TECHNIQUE FOR TODAY:**

### **THE SAFE PLACE: A CALMING TECHNIQUE TO USE IN TIME OF NEED**

I can choose any calm and beautiful place in nature, and practice going there in my imagination when I am upset, or feeling afraid, sad, and lonely. It doesn't have to be a place I have actually been. It can be a place I have seen in a photo or video, somewhere that I think is beautiful and relaxing. Or based on today's prayer, I can choose the Heart of Jesus, or the Heart of Mary. **I will call this my Safe Place.** There I will

breathe deeply and relax, and find a safe refuge. I can spend a lot or a little time in my Safe Place, where my heart rate will go down, my muscles will relax, and my racing thoughts will slow down and be replaced by peace and calm.

**6) LEARNING FOR TODAY:  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OTHER ADDICTIONS**

We all know the fear of being alone, abandoned, rejected, injured, **yet Jesus knew his Father would always be there.**

Ask yourselves: **Who has more power, God or our addictions?**

We must fight back against addictions with faith, with love, and with prayer.

Remember the Warrior in Session 4, all ready for battle in his armour?

Let's listen to this reading from the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

**John 18: 1-6**

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there

with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, **"Whom do you seek?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. "When he said to them, "I AM," they drew back and fell to the ground."**

**This is our Lord, the mighty God!**

**We are not alone in our battle** against alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, or any other addiction.

The best way to avoid addictions is **not to start in the first place!** But if I do experiment and find myself falling, it is very important to be **self-aware**, and not to lie to myself and others. **We call this denial.**

I need to recognize what I am doing and why. I need to recognize that I am weak and that Christ is strong. **I can do all things in Him who strengthens me. I am an earthen vessel.**

**He is Lord of heaven and earth!**

Where will all the people I was trying to impress or fit in with be when I am sunk in addiction? They may abandon me, but Jesus will always be at my side and within my heart.

Being addicted to a substance or an activity is so difficult that I need help to overcome it - from God and from others who understand the process.

### A SHORT LIST OF ADDICTIONS

- ✦ Alcohol
- ✦ Street drugs (stimulants and relaxers - or uppers and downers)
- ✦ Prescription drugs (pain killers, stimulants, relaxers)
- ✦ Nicotine (tobacco)
- ✦ Sex, including Pornography
- ✦ Gambling
- ✦ Compulsive internet use
- ✦ Video game addiction
- ✦ Risky behaviour addiction (Adrenaline rush)
- ✦ Food (Binge Eating Disorder)
- ✦ Shopping

Alcohol, uppers, downers, and other commonly abused substances aren't the only things people abuse or are addicted to. In fact, just substitute the word "behaviour" for "substance," and you open up **the definition of addiction to all kinds of dependencies**. Whether it is sex, the Internet, or driving too fast, **the desire to experience a "high" becomes so strong that the addicted person loses control and seeks the activity despite all negative consequences**.

Can you think of anyone you know or know about who continues to abuse substances or behaviours even though they are suffering negative consequences from it? Are you that person?

If we are addicted to a substance or a behavior, we need to educate ourselves, and get help from God and from others who understand the process of addiction and how to change. Most of all, we need to learn how to prevent addiction and to help others not to get involved. Here's a useful website:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction>



**Let's pray this psalm in groups, together. It is a declaration of faith and trust in the Almighty.**

**PSALM 73 (verses 25-28)**

**Group 1**

*Whom have I in heaven but thee?*

*And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee.*

My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

**Group 2**

But for me it is good to be near God;  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
that I may tell of all thy works.

**Group 1**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

**Group 2**

As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



## DO I DRINK AND THEN HURT MY LOVED ONES?

Alcohol, although not the cause of violence, puts the one who drinks at risk of losing control of themselves. Research shows that drinking alcohol or using stimulant drugs greatly increases the likelihood that a person will be violent to his or her partner, or violent in general, while under the influence of the substance. It is also more likely that they will cause physical injury to the other when drunk or high on drugs.

### FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE

- + Alcohol affects cognitive and physical function
- + Alcohol reduces self-control
- + Alcohol exacerbates financial difficulties, infidelity, and other family stressors
- + Alcohol abuse can create conflict, increasing the risk of violence between partners

## 7) ACTIVITY

### a) GROUP DISCUSSION

“To overcome an addiction I need to put something else in its place. Instead of this, that...”

Discuss and write down on the board some of the healthy and good things you can do to replace addictive behaviours that cause harm in your life. Some ideas for replacements: Youth group, sports (formal or informal), art, music, exercise, spending time with family and friends, helping the needy, limited time watching good movies or TV or being on the internet. **What else can you think of?**

**b) DRAMA: CHRIST, THE POWER OF GOD**

**Act this out. Assign the actors or let them volunteer. Try to keep it serious when they all fall on the ground!**

“So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. **When he said to them, “I AM,” they drew back and fell to the ground.**”

**Share: Your thoughts about the awesome power of God and how you might rely on it, as well as using your common sense to avoid pitfalls.**

**8) HOMEWORK**

**DECISIONS TO PONDER BY MYSELF**

**Pray to the Holy Spirit. Then answer these questions for yourself. Write them down in private.**

- 1. I will avoid harmful behaviours like alcohol abuse, drug abuse, pornography, etc. Do I need to seek help for this?**
- 2. Are there people I should avoid if I really want to change my bad habits?**

## SESSION 7

### I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

#### 1) PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console me.

Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must say. Give me your orders.

I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to me.

Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

#### 2) READ THE TEN WISE SAYINGS

#### 3) READING:

**John 6: 35; 40; 48 - 52; 53 - 57; 66 - 69**

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, which any one may eat and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."

After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

#### **4) PRAYER FOR TODAY**

##### **PRAY TOGETHER NOW:**

Lord, we worship you in your Holy Eucharist, in your sacred Body and Blood, given to us as a promise of your everlasting love and of eternal life. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.

We thank you with our whole heart for this gift, and we pray, let us never be separated from you and your divine love.

##### **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:**

- ✦ After Sunday Mass, where you receive the Eucharist and give thanks as a community, also make a habit of visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and praying in silent worship.

- ✦ Attend Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction at your parish. Pour out your heart in praise to the Lord, thank Him for all his gifts, ask his forgiveness for your failings, and ask him for whatever you need.
- ✦ Stop off at your parish often to pray before the Eucharist, just you and Him.
- ✦ Arrange special Eucharistic Adoration hours for your youth group, your adult education class, or other groups at your parish.
- ✦ Be aware that Jesus is living in you now, and pray: **Jesus Son of God, I adore you.**

#### **5) RELAXATION TECHNIQUE FOR TODAY**

Take a brief, contemplative walk for 5 – 10 minutes outside in nature, or in a garden. Breathe slowly and deeply and pay attention exclusively to the present moment. When you get distracted, gently bring your mind back to your breathing and being in the now.

#### **6) LEARNING FOR TODAY: JESUS, FOOD FOR OUR JOURNEY**

##### **RESPONSIBILITY & MATURITY,**

**Jesus nourishes us for the journey**, so that we can grow into full-fledged Christian men and women. As we come to know Jesus in prayer and in the Gospel, we will grow into the fullness of His Body, the Church.

- ✦ Someone who takes **responsibility** for the way they live;
- ✦ Someone who shows **maturity**, who takes pleasure in growing and becoming better every day;
- ✦ Someone who takes care of others, as Jesus does;
- ✦ Someone who loves others as they love themselves, and as Jesus loves us and all people.
- ✦ Then we can be flourishing members of our family, of our community, and of our parish.

### **JESUS LOVES ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME**

*(Galatians 2:20)*

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah describes God's tender and personal love to me.

Thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour... Because you are precious in my eyes, and honoured, and I love you.

Isaiah 43: 1-4

**If the Lord can validate me in this way, loving me unconditionally, I can learn to love and accept myself too.**

Jesus said, "**You shall love the Lord your God** with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mk. 12: 30-31

#### **SELF-VALIDATION<sup>17</sup>**

Self-validation is the recognition and acknowledgement of your own internal experience. It means taking yourself seriously, allowing yourself to feel what you feel, think what you think, want what you want, with acceptance *and* without judgments, second-guessing, self-loathing, or self-contempt.

- ✦ **First validate yourself and your humanity. God created you and he actively wants you to exist and flourish!**
- ✦ **Then apply the wisdom of Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to your life.**

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<sup>17</sup> Fruzzetti, A. F. (2009) Self-Validation Skills for use in DBT Group Skills Training, University of Nevada, Reno

### **HOW CAN I VALIDATE MYSELF?**

- ✦ Let go of judgments of yourself (which typically lead to shame).
- ✦ Maintain respect for your own values,
- ✦ Allow yourself to feel your feelings, instead of keeping them all in.
- ✦ Practice just being who you are, just notice & describe yourself.
- ✦ Try profound acceptance of being, of your feelings, thoughts, actions (but do not harm yourself or others).
- ✦ Recognize when your behaviour is normal.
- ✦ Recognize problematic behaviour and target it for change.
- ✦ Provide support to yourself, or seek it from another.
- ✦ Practice compassion for yourself when you are suffering, as you would for any human being.
- ✦ When in doubt, imagine that someone you care about and respect is in your situation ... how would you respond to her or him? Respond this way to yourself.





**JESUS LOVES YOU AS YOU ARE,  
AND HE LOOKS ON YOU WITH LOVE.**

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she  
should have no compassion on the son of her womb?  
**Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.  
Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my  
hands.**

Is 49: 15 -16

7) **ACTIVITY**

- a) Share with the group: What did you like about today's readings and teachings? Choose one thing that spoke to your heart.
- b) Reflect on the list of ways to validate yourself. Which one of those would you like to try this week?
- c) The Cross reaches to heaven, but it also has two embracing arms. Knowing Jesus' love for me makes me want to share his love with others. Jesus said:

I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, **YOU DID IT TO ME.**" Matthew 25:40

- ✦ Practice the five fingers with five words "YOU DID IT TO ME." (See handout) The mature and responsible Christian loves himself or herself, and also reaches out in love to others. In them we serve Christ.

**8) HOMEWORK**

1. Mark your efforts to serve Christ every day.

**THESE ARE THE EFFORTS I MADE THIS WEEK  
(AND EVERY WEEK) TO SERVE CHRIST  
IN MY NEIGHBOUR**

	<i>M</i>	<i>TU</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>TH</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>SU</i>
I was kind							
I was respectful to women							
I treated all people as equals							
I spoke well of others							
I controlled my desire to win or show off							
I controlled my anger							
I saw Jesus in others							

1) Make a poster for your home (and one for the classroom) of **YOU DID IT TO ME**, with the hand in the centre. Decorate it with symbols of the Eucharist. Explain it to your family. Look at it often and let Jesus speak to you.

***"YOU DID IT TO ME" - HAND EXERCISE***

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.  
(Mt. 5:8)*

**YOU DID IT TO ME**



**THIS WAS A FAVORITE LESSON OF MOTHER  
TERESA OF CALCUTTA**

## SESSION 8

### I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

#### 1) PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, and console me.

Tell me what I must do. Inspire me with what I must say. Give me your orders.

I promise to submit myself to you in all that you ask of me, and to accept all that you permit to happen to me.

Let me only know your will, and do your will. Amen.

#### 2) READ THE TEN WISE SAYINGS

#### 3) READING: John 14: 3 – 7; 15 – 17; 23 – 24; 27.

Jesus said, "When I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" **Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.**

**["If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor**

knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.** He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”]**

#### **4) PRAYER FOR TODAY:**

Give thanks to the Lord for the great gift of God's love for us. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you always walk with Jesus, in the ways of peace and love. Sing a grateful song to Jesus as a group.

#### **5) RELAXATION EXERCISE**

Breathe deeply for a while, relax your muscles, and close your eyes. Imagine that you are walking with Jesus on the Way. Maybe he is holding your hand or has his arm around you. Feel the peace that he is giving you. Go to your Safe Place together and let him comfort and protect you. **Ask him to help you always remain in his love, and to help you stay on his path every day.**

**6) LEARNING FOR TODAY:**

**TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND SHOWING  
RESPECT**

Now that I have learned how to control myself, and calm myself, taking responsibility for my words, actions and responses to others, I am ready to learn how to solve a problem with another human being.

**6 STEPS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND  
PROBLEM SOLVING**

1. Identify the problem.
2. Look for solutions together.
3. Look at the pros and cons of each possible solution.
4. Decide on a solution acceptable to all.
5. Put the solution into action.
6. Evaluate the solution.

**Let's try this out together. If the class is large,  
break into several groups.**

Select a local problem, like plastic bottles lying around, or rubbish on the street, or anything you agree should be improved. Work on the 6 steps together, as a team. Make sure whoever wants to speak gets a chance, and that everyone is respectful. Select one person to give the class a summary of your solution and how you reached it.

**ST. PAUL TEACHES ABOUT MATURITY AND UNITY**

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ**, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, **when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.**”

Ephesians 4: 15-16

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9

**ANGER AND THE CHRISTIAN**

We have learned a lot about anger and how to manage and contain it, instead of allowing it to control us and work to destroy our relationships. Let's listen to what St. Paul says about it:



**Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths,** but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and **be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

Ephesians 4: 26-27; 29-32

#### WHAT IS ASSERTIVENESS?<sup>18</sup>

Sometimes we mistake being assertive with being aggressive. We'll look at that on the chart next.

**To be ASSERTIVE means that I communicate respectfully with the other person, but also with respect for my own rights and needs.** It means that **I am aware** of my feelings and that **I am sincere and direct** with the expression of my feelings and rights, without disrespecting the rights of the other. In the act of being assertive, **I am also taking responsibility for my own feelings and actions,** not blaming them on others.

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<sup>18</sup> Welland, C. & Wexler, D. (2007). *Sin Golpes: Como Transformar la Respuesta Violenta de los Hombres en la Pareja y la Familia.* Mexico City: Editorial Pax

**WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY  
TO COMMUNICATE?**

**HOW DO WE ACHIEVE OUR GOALS  
WHEN WE COMMUNICATE?**

**WHAT IS MORE ATTRACTIVE,  
HONEY OR VINEGAR?**

### THE CONTINUUM OF RESPECT



**Passive**



**Assertive**



**Aggressive**

LOW RESPECT FOR MYSELF	HIGH RESPECT FOR MYSELF	HIGH RESPECT FOR MYSELF
HIGH RESPECT FOR OTHERS	HIGH RESPECT FOR OTHERS	LOW RESPECT FOR OTHERS

## **FOLLOWING JESUS, THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE**

If Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, what does it mean to follow him on that Way?

In our baptism we became part of his Mystical Body, and he has given us the Spirit of the Father and the Son, who dwells within us.

If we love Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life, we will keep his commandments, especially the commandment to love one another as he loves us, even to the point of sacrifice.

And he will give us his peace, in this life and in the next. He said to the Apostles and also to us:

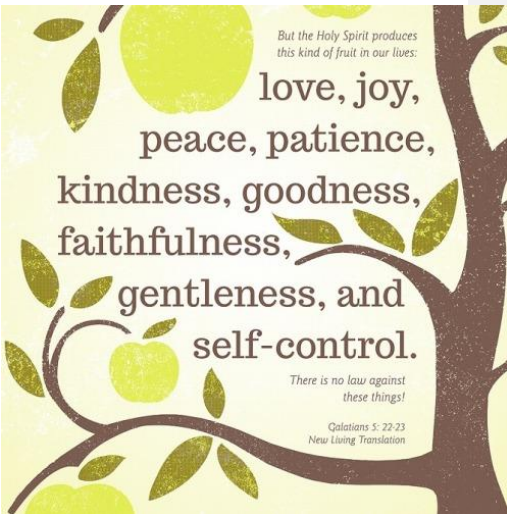
**IT IS I, DO NOT BE AFRAID.** John 6:20

### **Here's what St. Paul says about living in Jesus' Way.**

**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.** And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.

Galatians 5: 22-26

## THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



**IN SESSION 7, WE LEARNED HOW TO LOVE AND VALIDATE OURSELVES. LET'S KEEP THAT UP, AND ALSO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT STEP.**

**JESUS LOVES OTHERS, AND COMMANDS US TO LOVE AND SERVE THE OTHER AS IF WE WERE LOVING AND SERVING HIM. IN FACT, HE SAID THE OTHER IS HIM.**

Learning to validate others will help me to stop being judgmental, and to listen to others. This will help them to open up and feel understood, instead of putting them on the defensive, as if they have to protect themselves from me.

#### **VALIDATION OF OTHERS**

##### **Goals:**

- ✦ **Understand:** What is the other person's *experience*? What can you observe? Without explanations or judgments, without "should" or "shouldn't's."
- ✦ **Communicate what you understand:** Can you acknowledge his or her experience? for example, I know that you \_\_\_\_, I can see that you \_\_\_\_, It makes sense that you \_\_\_\_, Of course you \_\_
- ✦ **Or, find out more:** Can you ask about his or her experience in a way that shows you are genuinely interested and truly want to understand? I know you \_\_ but I don't completely understand. Could you tell me more to help me understand?

## **WHAT IS VALIDATION?**

Validation is the recognition and acceptance of **another person's internal experience as being valid**, even if you disagree with it. Emotional validation is distinguished from emotional invalidation, in which your own or another person's **emotional experiences are rejected, ignored, or judged**.

## **DID JESUS VALIDATE OTHERS?**

Think about how Jesus behaved with Zaccheus, with Levi (Matthew), with the woman caught in adultery, with the woman at the well, with Peter, and so many others in the Gospel. Even though he already knew all about the other person, he approached them with curiosity and respect, not judgmentally and coldly. He listened and let them talk, then he said what he had to say, as our Creator and Saviour. He was always welcoming and inviting. You can picture him with a smile or a serene expression on his face most of the time.

**We can learn to interact with people like this too.** Pay attention to Jesus' attitude, as well as his words and behaviour. Look at the lives of the saints. A heart that is full of God is full of love and compassion.

**WHY IS VALIDATION IMPORTANT?<sup>19</sup>**

**Validation communicates acceptance.**



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<sup>19</sup> Hall, K. <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/emotionally-sensitive/2012/02/levels-of-validation/>

Humans have a need to belong, and feeling accepted is calming. Acceptance means acknowledging the value of yourself and fellow human beings.

**Validation helps the person know they are on the right track.**

Life can be confusing and difficult. Feedback from others that what you are experiencing is normal or makes sense. It lets you know that you thinking and feeling in understandable ways.

**Validation helps regulate emotions.**

Knowing that you are heard and understood is a powerful experience and one that helps you feel calm and soothed.

**Validation helps build identity.**

Validation is like a reflection of yourself and your thoughts by another person, which helps you see your own personality characteristics more clearly.

**Validation builds relationships.**

Feeling accepted builds relationships. Research shows that chemicals related to feeling connected are released when someone is validated.

**Validation builds understanding and effective communication.**

Human beings are limited in what they can see, hear and understand. Validation is a way of understanding another person's point of view.

**Validation shows the other person that they are important.**

Whether the person being validated is a child, a spouse, a parent, a partner or a friend, validation



communicates that they are important to you, that you care about their thoughts, feelings and experiences, and that they are not alone.

**Validation helps us persevere.** Sometimes when change is very difficult, having the difficulty of the task recognized helps people keep working toward their goal. It strengthens us in our inmost being.

cf. Karyn Hall, Ph.D.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13: 34-35

### **JESUS REACHED OUT TO TOUCH THE SUFFERING AND HE CALLS US TO FIND HIM THERE**

#### **POPE FRANCIS TEACHES ABOUT REACHING OUT TO TOUCH THE SUFFERING**

A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness. He or she is consoled, not by the world but by Jesus. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others; they do not flee from painful situations. They discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief. They sense that the

other is flesh of our flesh, and are not afraid to draw near, even to touch their wounds. They feel compassion for others in such a way that all distance vanishes. In this way they can embrace Saint Paul's exhortation: "Weep with those who weep" (*Rom 12:15*).

Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 76, 2018

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Mt. 5:4*

God is eternal newness. He impels us constantly to set out anew, to pass beyond what is familiar, to the fringes and beyond... Unafraid of the fringes, he himself became a fringe (cf. *Phil 2:6-8; Jn 1:14*). **So if we dare to go to the fringes, we will find him there; indeed, he is already there. Jesus is already there, in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, in their wounded flesh, in their troubles and in their profound desolation. He is already there.**

Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 135, 2018

## 8. ACTIVITY

### a) Pray the Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila together

Christ has no body now but yours  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours  
Yours are the eyes through which He looks  
Compassion on this world  
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good  
Yours are the hands with which He blesses all

the world  
Yours are the hands  
Yours are the feet  
Yours are the eyes  
You are His body  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours

**Write this prayer down and share it with your family and the people you love.**

- a) **Conduct a brief review of all skills** they learned, using the index of the book.
- ✦ What to do.
  - ✦ What not to do.

**JESUS SAID:  
I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE  
BEGINNING AND THE END.**



**HOMEWORK**

1. Make a banner for your home, and the teacher can do one for the classroom, with the six steps for problem solving. Write on it about maturity and growth.
2. Share the six steps with your family and choose a practical problem you can solve together, using the steps.
3. Where are you on the continuum of respect? Do you allow people to be disrespectful to you? Are you disrespectful or aggressive with some people? What could you do to improve?
4. Resolve to walk in the Way with Jesus, bearing the good fruits of the Holy Spirit in your life.

**COULD THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT BE OBSERVED IN MY HEART AND MY LIFE THIS WEEK (AND EVERY WEEK)?**

	<b>M</b>	<b>TU</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>SU</b>
Love							
Joy							
Peace							
Patience							
Kindness							
Goodness							
Faithfulness							
Gentleness							
Self-control							



## **NOTES FOR THE TEACHER**

### **WHAT IS THE BASIS FOR THIS COURSE?**

- 1) A firm grounding in Scripture and the Magisterium, including the recent teachings of Pope Francis.
- 2) Use of time-honoured methods of prayer to expand the students' understanding of the Lord and to help them develop a true relationship with Jesus and his love.
- 3) Evidence-based information and techniques developed by global health organizations to focus on healthy development for adolescents and adults, and to prevent violence in the family and community.
- 4) Use of basic but effective relaxation and calming strategies that are at the heart of emotional control (self-regulation) and healthy interactions.

**Included here some notes to clarify the reason for the placement of certain information in the sessions.**

### **SESSION 1 RELATIONSHIPS**

Supporting the development of healthy, respectful, and nonviolent relationships can reduce the occurrence of dating violence and intimate partner violence (IPV), also known as domestic violence, and prevent the harmful and long-lasting effects of violence on individuals, families, and the communities where they live.

Centers for Disease Control, 2017

### **WHAT IS SECURE ATTACHMENT?**

In this lesson we are connecting attachment to the relationship of safety and love that Jesus talks about between the Good Shepherd and the sheep.

Attachment is a lasting emotional bond in which the person seeks and maintains closeness to a specific person, especially when under stress. It is the deep and permanent connection established between a child and the person who takes care of her/him during the first years of life. It affects everything in the life of the person - mind, body, emotions, relationships, and values. It is something that parents and children create together, in a continuous and mutual relationship. It is the secure base that the child seeks to feel safe and protected. It results from a continuous and mutual relationship of protection, satisfaction of needs, limits, love, and trust.<sup>20</sup>

### **EMPATHY & RESPECT ARE ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS FOR RELATIONSHIPS**

**Social Awareness** is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It is the ability to understand social and ethical norms for behaviour and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports. It includes:

- ✦ Perspective-taking

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<sup>20</sup> Bowlby, John. 1969. Attachment. New York Basic Books



- ✦ Empathy
- ✦ Appreciating diversity
- ✦ Respect for others

## **SESSION 2**

### **SELF-AWARENESS** <sup>21</sup>

Self-awareness is the ability to pay attention to one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and psychological and physiological reactions. It is the ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behaviour. It is the ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and an attitude of growth in a positive direction.

- ✦ Identifying emotions
- ✦ Accurate self-perception
- ✦ Recognizing strengths
- ✦ Self-confidence
- ✦ Self-efficacy

Without self-awareness change is impossible. People require the use of their prefrontal lobes to be able to master the impulses of their emotional system. Thus its vital importance in violence prevention.

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<sup>21</sup> Core Competencies for Social Emotional Learning  
<https://casel.org/core-competencies/> See p. 134

## SESSION 3

### SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ✦ Impulse control
- ✦ Stress management
- ✦ Self-discipline
- ✦ Self-motivation
- ✦ Goal setting
- ✦ Organizational skills

## SESSION 4

**Our goal for today's session is to learn about abuse and violence and why we should avoid it.**

It is very important to define abuse and violence clearly for our students, as many people may see some of these behaviours as normal. Once they understand what abuse is, they can learn to avoid it in themselves and work to prevent it in others.

We also want to foster the following attitudes in the students on a daily basis, and to model them in our daily lives (see p. 135):

- ✦ **Optimism:** The ability to notice and expect the positive, to focus on what you can control, and to take purposeful action.
- ✦ **Mental agility:** The ability to look at situations from multiple perspectives and to think creatively and flexibly.

- ✦ **Strength of character:** The ability to use one's top strengths to engage authentically overcome challenges and create a life aligned with one's values

### **VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Several types of IPV can occur together. IPV itself is connected to other forms of violence, and causes serious health and economic consequences. By using an approach that addresses risk and protective factors for multiple types of violence, IPV and other forms of violence can be prevented.

### **SESSION 5**

#### **EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN**

This topic may be new for many of your students. Some may disagree with this principle. The Church has been teaching the equality of men and women for decades, but many, including some clergy, are unaware of it. That is why there is an emphasis in this session on Papal documents, beginning in the 1980s. As Catholics, we will never achieve genuine peace and harmony in the home until basic rights to equality and respect for both women and men are achieved.

There is a lot to absorb and discuss in this session. If you can, spread it out over two sessions, so the students can really think about it and discuss for themselves how they want to be in the future.

### **SESSION 6**

#### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND VIOLENCE**

This session on substance abuse and its close connection to partner violence is essential, Adolescents often begin to experiment with alcohol and drugs, and young adults are equally at risk.

When teaching violence prevention, it is essential to educate our students on the biopsychosocial effects of substance abuse, and especially the increased risk for loss of self-control and subsequent violence that often accompanies it. We are not blaming violence on alcohol and drug use, but we are learning that substances put us at greater risk of abuse and violence.

## **SESSION 7**

### **THE EUCHARIST AS FOOD FOR OUR GROWTH**

Jesus, the Bread of Life, nourishes us for our journey. In this lesson, we are looking at the need for growth in maturity, and responsibility if we are to develop into Christians who reflect the self-giving of our Lord.

Before we love and serve others, we must love ourselves, thus first we focus on learning about God's unconditional love for each of us, and then on self-validation. Service to others will follow these lived experiences.

## **SESSION 8**

## **TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND SHOWING RESPECT**

### **RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING**

Much of the abuse and violence we find in relationships stem from a lack of knowledge of how to solve a relationship disagreement or struggle.

**Problem solving skills are key to violence prevention!**

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.

- ✦ Identifying problems
- ✦ Analyzing situations
- ✦ Solving problems
- ✦ Evaluating
- ✦ Reflecting
- ✦ Ethical responsibility

### **LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE ASSERTIVELY:**

A very useful assessment method, as well as a teaching tool for those who struggle to make themselves heard effectively. Learning how to communicate without accepting or practicing violence is the bedrock of violence prevention.

### **VALIDATION OF OTHERS**

From self-validation, flowing from faith in the love of God, we progress to love of others and whole-hearted service to the human community.

### **SOME TERMINOLOGY**

#### **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. It is essential to incorporate evidence-based social and emotional learning and education. Such programs benefit all children and adolescents whether they're at risk of maladjustment or not. They are critical strategies to enhance children's development.

## **SECURE ATTACHMENT**

Attachment is a lasting emotional bond in which the person seeks and maintains closeness to a specific person, especially when under stress. It is the deep and permanent connection established between a child and the person who takes care of it during the first years of life. It affects everything in the life of the person - mind, body, emotions, relationships, and values. It is something that parents and children create together, in a continuous and mutual relationship. It is the secure base that the child seeks to feel safe and protected. It results from a continuous and mutual relationship of protection, satisfaction of needs, limits, love, and trust.

## **OPTIMISM**

It is the way you think about why things happen. Use optimism to explain why specific good and bad things happen in your life. Learn to think and judge the events of your life in a correct and accurate way. Children can learn it from their parents mainly, and then they will teach it to their children in turn. Teachers can help by fostering these attitudes in class.

### **What do your children earn by having an optimistic view of life?**

- 1) Better mood
- 2) More success in their studies and at work when they grow up
- 3) Better physical health
- 4) Better relationships with others.

## RESILIENCE

Resilience is strong-from-within problem solving, self-control, emotion regulation, motivation to succeed, and self-efficacy. External factors include having supportive parents or primary caregivers, close relationships with other caring adults, close relationships, effective schools and neighborhoods, qualities of Faith and Hope embedded in spiritual and cultural beliefs. Resilience is drawing meaning from adversity. Resilience is a process and **we can help people change at any point in the lifespan.**

## MAIN STRATEGIES FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION – WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/4th\\_milestones\\_meeting/evidence\\_briefings\\_all.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/4th_milestones_meeting/evidence_briefings_all.pdf)

1. Increasing safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children and their parents and caregivers
2. **Developing life skills in children and adolescents\***
3. Reducing availability and harmful use of alcohol;
4. Reducing access to guns, knives and pesticides
5. **Promoting gender equality**
6. **Changing cultural norms that support violence**
7. Victim identification, care and support.

\*Topics covered in this course and within the reach of educators and catechists are **in bold.**



**MAJOR LIFE SKILLS TO TEACH  
FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION-  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

1. Gender equality and disapproval of violence
2. Managing anger
3. Resolving conflicts with respect and peace
4. Negotiating and making commitments
5. Being assertive
6. Practicing empathy
7. Receiving the example of faith, love and respect from parents. \*
8. Parents should teach their children to respect women and treat them as equals. \*

\*As Catholic parents

**CORE COMPETENCIES FOR  
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

<https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

- ✦ Self-awareness
- ✦ Self-management
- ✦ Social awareness
- ✦ Relationship skills
- ✦ Responsible decision-making

## RESILIENCE SKILL SET

### PENN RESILIENCE PROGRAM

<https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/resilience-programs/resilience-skill-set>

- ✦ **SELF-AWARENESS**  
The ability to pay attention to your thoughts emotions behaviours and psychological and physiological reactions.
- ✦ **SELF-REGULATION**  
The ability to change one's thoughts emotions behaviours and physiology in the service of a desired outcome.
- ✦ **MENTAL AGILITY**  
The ability to look at situations from multiple perspectives and to think creatively and flexibly.
- ✦ **STRENGTH OF CHARACTER**  
The ability to use one's top strengths to engage authentically, overcome challenges, and create a life aligned with one's values
- ✦ **CONNECTION**  
The ability to build and maintain strong, trusting relationships.
- ✦ **OPTIMISM**  
The ability to notice and expect the positive, to focus on what you can control, and to take purposeful action.

## **RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS TO EXPAND YOUR VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORK**

**THE ACT RAISING SAFE KIDS PROGRAM**, developed by the American Psychological Association's Violence Prevention Office, is an evidence-based model that teaches positive parenting skills to parents and caregivers of children from birth to age 10. There is ample material available on their website.

<http://www.apa.org/act/>

<http://www.apa.org/act/resources/index.aspx>

### **COACHING BOYS INTO MEN**

Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) is the only evidence-based prevention program that trains and motivates high school coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills and that violence never equals strength.

<http://www.coachescorner.org/>

Both of these excellent secular organizations are interested in expanding their work internationally, and would be interested in collaborating with other organizations. Please contact Dr. Welland for more information and contacts.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Christauria Welland, a Canadian, is a bilingual clinical psychologist in private practice in San Diego, California, specializing in family therapy and domestic violence. Her book, *How can we help to end violence in Catholic families? A guide for clergy, religious and laity* was presented at the World Meeting of Families, 2015, and at the Synod on the Family in Rome, 2015. Bishops throughout the world have received copies of that book. Dr. Welland has been working internationally since 1971, and was selected as a US Department of State Fulbright Specialist in the area of domestic violence. Her Spanish program, *Sin Golpes*, is widely used in offender treatment in the USA and Latin America, where she has trained thousands of therapists. Dr. Welland has been a child, youth, and adult catechist since 1972.

<https://drchristauriawelland.wordpress.com>

With her husband Michael, she has served Mexican migrant families in their Catholic parish since 1992. They are the founders of the Oaxaca Education Fund.

<http://oaxacaeducationfund.org/>

## WHAT IS PAX IN FAMILIA?

Pax in Familia is an international Catholic ministry dedicated to peace, and to the prevention of violence and abuse in Catholic families. Pax in Familia has taught workshops on pastoral responses to and prevention of intimate partner violence in Catholic families in the Americas, Africa, and Asia since 2015.

<http://paxinfamilia.org>

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

[drchristauriawelland@gmail.com](mailto:drchristauriawelland@gmail.com)

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