

Honoring Family

Core Activity

When We Disobey

1. Write on the board the three headings “Physical Harm,” “Emotional Harm,” and “Spiritual Harm,” leaving space under each for listing the students’ ideas in step 3.

2. Have your students get a piece of paper and a pen or a pencil. Instruct them to make two columns on the paper. Ask them to list, in the left-hand column, five situations in which young people might be tempted to disobey their parents. Then ask them to identify, in the right-hand column, the potential danger or harm their parents are trying to protect them from in each of those situations.

3. Have the students name, from their lists, some of the specific harms or dangers that parents are most concerned about. Write those on the board under the appropriate headings.

4. Invite the students to share reasons why young people are tempted to disobey their parents.

5. Ask one student to read Luke 2:41–51. Have the class discuss Jesus’ disobedience in the context of the risk-benefit analysis that they just did for situations between parents and children. Consider questions such as these:

- Jesus said he disobeyed his parents because he needed to be in the Temple, the house of God his Father, talking about the Law with the teachers. How might young people’s reasons for disobeying their parents today compare with Jesus’ reason that day in the Temple?
- How does the risk Jesus faced compare with the risks that parents today are trying to protect their children from?
- How does Jesus’ obedience for the rest of his life compare with what parents today might expect from their children?

6. Explain the following ideas in your own words:

- Just because we disagree with a rule or an expectation that our parents have for us, we do not have the right to disobey and to ignore what our parents ask. We ought to reflect on what they are trying to teach us or to protect us from. When we understand the motivation behind a rule or an expectation, we are more likely to see the positive impact that that rule or expectation will have on us as we grow up.

7. Invite the students to consider the following points:

- Children have a duty to obey their parents, who have a responsibility to care for them. If young people think they can make a case for changing a rule, they should raise the issue at a time when nothing will interfere with a calm discussion.

8. Conclude by noting that the content of this session is drawn from chapter 27 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Parental Joy

Have your students ask their parents or primary caregivers to talk about what their hopes and dreams and thoughts were when they were waiting for the young people to join their lives, and what it was like right after the young people arrived. Even if the students have heard the stories before, invite them to listen with openness this time and to look for the reflection of God's love in the way the parent-child or caregiver-child relationship began. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Additional Activities

Standing Up for Human Dignity

1. Begin by inviting the students to complete the statement "We have laws because . . ." Write their responses on the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead.

2. Ask the students to express similarities between parents and civil authorities. Be sure to point out aspects such as these:

- They look out for our good and well-being.
- They establish rules that maintain order.
- They look at long-term rewards rather than immediate gratification.

3. Divide the class into small groups of four or five. Have the groups brainstorm civil laws with which they disagree and the reasons why they disagree. Have them record their ideas. You can give a few examples, such as drinking-age, speed-limit, and seatbelt laws. Give the groups approximately 5 minutes for this part of the activity.

4. Have each group share its list with the class. Be sure the groups give reasons for disagreeing with the laws they name. You can list on the board the laws with which they disagree.

5. Lead a class discussion of what makes a law just or unjust. Explain that a law is unjust if it is morally wrong, and that we know what is morally right and wrong through natural law, Scripture, and the Tradition of the Church.

6. Ask the students to look again at the list of laws with which they disagree and to decide whether those laws are morally wrong or simply rules with which they disagree. For example, speed limits are not morally wrong; they serve the greater purpose of keeping people safe. Point out that disagreeing with a law does not make the law morally wrong.

7. Invite the class to brainstorm laws, situations, world events, or activities that Catholics oppose as morally wrong but some governments support. They can cite ones that are introduced in the *CFH*, such as segregation, abortion, and the death penalty. As criteria for judging whether a law, situation, event, or activity is morally wrong, have them consider whether it values human life and respects the dignity of the person, the importance of the family, and care for the environment. List the students' responses on the board.

8. Instruct the students to meet in their small groups again and to come up with ways they can voice opposition to the laws, situations, events, and activities that Catholics oppose as morally wrong but some governments support. Allow the groups about 5 minutes for this part of the activity.

9. Gather the class together and give the small groups an opportunity to report a few of their ideas. Take care not to dismiss any ideas; at the same time, be sure to address any suggestions they bring up that advocate violence or compromising one belief to protect another. After all the small groups have reported their ideas, be sure to stress the teachings on civil authorities and civil disobedience on pages 301–304 of *CFH*.

10. Make the following point in your own words:

- As people of faith, we are called to act on behalf of our faith by speaking and acting against laws that are morally wrong. Civil disobedience is one method for doing that, but it should be undertaken only after we have exhausted all legal ways to change a law or action that is morally wrong.

11. If time allows, have the class read the Did You Know? article "Civil Disobedience," on page 304 of the *CFH*, and share any reflections they have. Close by inviting the students to stay attentive to moral issues in their lives and to consider what action they want to take in response to immoral laws.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Setting an Example

Have your students look in Scripture for stories of families that faced difficulty in different ways. Examples are Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22:1–9), Joseph and his brothers (Gen., chap. 37), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:6–18), and Mary and Jesus (John 2:1–11). Ask your students to address these questions:

- Who were the members of the family?
- What strengthened the family? What weakened the family?
- What can these examples teach us about dealing with our own families?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Media Connection: Popular Families

Record an episode of a popular family television program. Show a scene, and then ask the students to analyze whether each member of the family is respecting the others. At the end, add up their assessments to determine whether the program leans toward mutual respect or an imbalance of respect. Ask the students whether they would like to emulate this family, and urge them to explain their answers. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

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