

Lesson 3

Today is Father's Day. Some students may not have a father who is present in their lives. Adapt the lesson as needed to fit to various family situations in your class.

Valuable Relationships

STEP 1 Life Need (5–10 minutes)

- Students will participate in an exercise that measures their ability to follow directions.
 - ☒ Worksheet (create prior to class and photocopy one per student)
 - ☐ Pencils or pens

STEP 2 Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

- Complete a Bible study about God's plans for relationships.
- Optional:* Put together a list of professional counselors or crisis hot lines.
 - ☐ Bibles ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
 - ☐ Paper, pencils or pens, whiteboard or markers

STEP 3 Bible Application (5–10 minutes)

- Plan ways to treat other people with respect.

STEP 4 Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Look at issues dealing with relationships.
- Optional:* Read a *Blueprint* article.
 - ☐ "The Great Debate" from *Blueprint*
 - ☐ Journals (from last week)
 - ☐ (Optional) "Getting Away with Murder" from *Blueprint*
 - ☐ (Optional) paper, pencils or pens, poster board and markers

Memory Verse

"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

— Matthew 22:37-39

Bible Basis:

Divine standards for relationships with parents (Exod. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3) and all people (Exod. 20:13-14; Rom. 13:9-10).

Bible Truth:

God plans for human relationships to show how He values people.

Lesson Aim:

That your students show respect for all people because each individual is of great worth to God.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

This week you will study God's divine standard for relationships.

When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, fathers had full power over their children. Mosaic law regulated the power of parents. For example, poor parents were allowed to sell their daughter as a servant, but under God's law, the daughter's rights were carefully protected (Exod. 21:7-11).

In the Ten Commandments and other parts of Scripture, God established the authority in the family. Children were to honor and obey their parents, and parents were to teach their children to follow the Lord and not to provoke or exasperate them (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:7; Eph. 6:4).

Paul emphasized the attitude with which this command is to be heeded as equally important as the command itself. Colossians 3:20, the parallel passage, says for children to obey their parents because this pleases the Lord. And when there's a conflict between what a parent says and what God's Word says, God must be obeyed (Acts 5:29).

If this kind of Christlike relationship is established in the home, it can lead to a healthy love and respect for all people. In turn, this respect for others and appreciation of their worth to God will keep people from violating the

Continued on next page

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE —cont'd

commandments in Exodus 20:13-14—not to commit adultery and not to murder.

In Romans 13:9-10, Paul sums up the commandments in Exodus 20:12-14 with this rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself,” and draws the conclusion that love doesn’t hurt a neighbor.

Jesus expressed it this way: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. . . Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37-39).

TIPS

CLASSROOM

As you discuss relationships with parents, encourage your students to think of ways to express their appreciation for their family. In so doing, they will be more rooted in the most fundamental of all human relationships. Encourage your students that, as children of God, they can value their relationship with their parents and other people as He values each of them. Be sensitive to the fact that some students may have sporadic contact with one parent or the other.

Understanding Your Students

Teenagers today are being tugged by powerful forces. As they search for identity, they are often found shedding family standards in the interests of “being like everybody else.” Combine media representations of “what’s hot and what’s not” with peer pressure and the teenager’s personal inner urges, and you have an explosive situation. The parents of today’s young people find themselves fighting one battle after another for their own sanity, and for

the well-being of their sons and daughters.

God has designed the family to fulfill needs no other group can. Teens must see that their relationship with their parents is foundational for healthy relationships of any kind. There seems to be wisdom in the advice for a young lady to observe how a young man treats his mother. By doing so, she very well may get a glimpse of how he will treat her.



PRESESSION ACTIVITY

Objective: To brainstorm different ways to rest, worship, and enjoy the Lord’s Day.

Before class, write down some popular song titles, movies, TV shows, and books. As students arrive, ask them to sit in a circle, and then play “echo charades.” The only difference between this version and the standard game of charades is that the group repeats every motion and action the leader does. For example, if the leader points to his or her eye, everyone points to his or her eyes.



The trick is to pay close enough attention to the leader so you can still guess the charade. Make sure the titles are short enough to remember but long enough to provide an exercise in observation skills.

STEP 1

Life Need
(5–10 minutes)

Lesson Aim:

That your students show respect for all people because each individual is of great worth to God.

Students will analyze the culture's guidelines for relationships and compare them with God's guidelines.

Materials:

- ☒ Worksheet (create prior to class and photocopy one per student)
- ☐ Pencils or pens

Before class, prepare sheets of paper with the following titles:

- Sheet #1: "Movies' Rules for Love"
- Sheet #2: "Music's Rules for Love"
- Sheet #3: "TV's Rules for Love"





Divide your class into three groups, giving each group a pre-titled sheet. Say, **If you were to base your relationships totally on the ideas found in music, movies, or television, what would you do?** Have students write a list of hypothetical "rules" that pop culture communicates about relationships. Be sure to have them include specific examples—sitcom scenarios, movie characters, and song lyrics. If they're having trouble getting started, you might want to give the following examples:

Music: Chances are pretty good that the current number one hit is about sexual relationships. Chances are also pretty good that the song's take on relationships is not aligned with God's take. Bring up popular songs and have students break down the lyrics for the "rules" this song has for relationships. Let teens bring up other songs that they are listening to—with positive or negative messages. Let them use those songs as good discussion starters.

Movies: This summer's hit romantic comedy or action flick surely features a stereotypical love plot. Break down what that movie seems to be saying about relationships.

TV: Summer replacement shows are generally not much different from their fall counterparts. What's the current top show, and what are its premises for teen relationships?

Give your teens at least 10 minutes to come up with their own list of culture's rules for love. Then ask:

-  **Are all of our culture's ideas about love and relationships bad?** *(Some of culture's ideas about love are really wrong. But sometimes our culture gets it right.)*
-  **Which cultural ideas about relationships would you say are bad?**
-  **Which ones are good?**
-  **How can we tell the difference between a good rule and a bad rule for relationships?** *(We can consider how living out a given ideal might hurt or help the people around us. Ultimately, we need an objective standard of what's right and wrong in relationships.)*

We are bombarded by so many mixed messages about love and relationships! Sometimes it's hard to know how to treat people around us. And even when we know what's right, sometimes we don't feel like doing it. Today we'll study God's guidelines for relationships and discover why we can always rely on the standards He gives us.



Free! Downloadable
Options for Steps 1 and 4.
RealLifeDownloaded.com

STEP 2

Bible Learning

(15–20 minutes)

Bible Basis:

Divine standards for relationships with parents (Exod. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3) and all people (Exod. 20:13-14; Rom. 13:9-10).

Objective: That your students discover what God desires in their relationships with others.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Whiteboard and marker

Have students turn to the Bible study on page 17 of *Blueprint*. Call on a volunteer to read the introduction.

■ FROM *Blueprint*—Be a People Person

You talk about parents, siblings, and teachers. You talk about who's dating whom and who just broke up. Relationships make for some interesting conversations as well as some interesting living. It's a good thing God gave His people some guidelines about relationships. Read Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3; Exodus 20:13-14; and Romans 13:9-10.

- ▶ Read Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1-3. How do "honor" and "obey" differ in meaning? (*Discuss respect and doing what your parents say.*)
- ▶ What does it mean to obey your parents "in the Lord"? (*Consider Matt. 10:32-39*)
- ▶ How long should a person keep honoring his or her parents? How does this question apply to a child? A teen? A newlywed? A middle-aged person? (*This commandment does not have a time limit. Even though you might be the legal age of an adult, you still have a responsibility to honor your parents.*)
- ▶ How would personal relationships in our society be different if everyone obeyed this commandment? (*There would be better and stronger relationships within families and with others.*)
 - ▶ Think up a slogan about ways you and your peers can "honor" and "obey" your parents.
 - ▶ Read Exodus 20:13 and Romans 13:9-10. What did Paul mean when he said that all the commands are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself"? (*If you truly love others, you will be more inclined to obey the other commandments and treat people with value and respect—just as God commanded. If you broke those other commandments, you wouldn't be showing love.*)
 - ▶ Put Romans 13:10 in your own words. (*"God's commandments tell me some of the things I will or won't do if I have love toward my neighbor."*)



TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Exodus 20:12-14

¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³You shall not murder. ¹⁴You shall not commit adultery."

Romans 13:9-10

⁹The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Ephesians 6:1-3

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—³so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

This next Bible study question deals specifically with how God's commandment should affect dating relationships. Before answering question seven, have someone look up and read Matthew 5:27-28.

▶ **Why do you think Jesus redefined adultery?** *Help students to understand that Jesus was stressing that sin isn't merely outward behavior, but a matter of the heart, of our attitudes. He was stressing the importance of a pure heart as well as pure actions.*

▶ Read Exodus 20:14 and reread Romans 13:9-10. Discuss how God's commandment should affect dating relationships. *(You would treat the person you're dating with respect; you wouldn't take advantage of him or her, or treat the person as an object or possession. You'd probably be kind, considerate, and thoughtful of the person's feelings, thoughts, and standards.)*

▶ What do these three commandments tell us about God and about human beings? *(Allow students to express their opinions. In your discussion, bring out this lesson's Bible Truth: God plans for human relationships to show how He values people. Because each person is created in God's image, each person has worth and dignity and deserves to be treated with respect.)*

Today's memory verse covers just about everything in our relationships with God and others. Look at it with your students. It's printed on page 18 of *Blueprint*.

If today's memory verse sounds familiar, it's because we just read part of it in Romans 13:9. Let's review the answer we came up with for question four.

Remind students that if they truly love God and others, they will naturally keep the commandments. Mention again that the Ten Commandments deal first with one's relationship with God, and second, with one's relationships with others.

▶ Read Matthew 22:39 again. **Why do you think the Lord wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves? Who is your neighbor?** *(Just as we take care of our physical, emotional, and social needs, the Lord wants us to look out for other people's needs and interests [Phil. 2:4]. We don't abuse ourselves or intentionally do things that would hurt us; likewise, we shouldn't abuse or hurt others. If we truly loved and cared for others as ourselves, then we would look after them, spend time caring for their needs, and respect them.)*

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

God's plan for our human relationships is to treat each person with respect, dignity, and honor. Tragically, that's not always the case. Christians and non-Christians alike abuse and control others. Some of your students might be involved in abusive relationships. Don't get in over your head, but do pray for these students, and clearly communicate that these relationships aren't normal or God's design.

You might want to compile a list of crisis hot lines or professional Christian counselors in your area and have it ready to pass along to anyone who needs this information. You may also want your students to know that you are open to talking with anyone privately about problems or questions they may have about specific relationships. You may want to write your phone number on the board to emphasize your availability.



STEP 3

Bible Application

(5–10 minutes)

Objective: That your students plan ways to help them be more respectful in their relationships.

Inform students that you would also like to initiate an effort to affirm the worth of individuals.

Think back to the three relationships we've studied. Respect is due to each of them—parents, people you date, and all others. Pick people in any one of these areas for whom you have the most difficulty showing respect.

Ask students to pair off and discuss with each other the people or the area that is most troublesome for them and how they can be more respectful. For example: "I sometimes have problems respecting my parents. What can I do to put God's standards into practice?" Some ideas follow, but do not give them to students unless they are totally stumped.

RESPECT FOR PARENTS:

Offer to help with a job other than one that is your regular responsibility.

Don't talk back or bad-mouth your folks.

Make an effort to compliment your folks.

RESPECT FOR PEOPLE WE DATE:

As a couple, set limits for your relationship and, with God's help, encourage each other to stay within those limits.

For those who are not yet dating, do this ahead of time. Think through your limits in a relationship—what you will and will not do, no matter what—and make your limits clear to anyone you date.

Plan a date around your girlfriend's or boyfriend's favorite activities, and have a great time.

Refuse to lie about your relationship in order to make yourself look good in your friends' eyes.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS:

Don't participate in gossip or making fun of one's looks and dress.

Do something nice for an older person in your community.

Plan a helpful project with someone who is physically challenged.

When students have brainstormed, ask them to choose at least one of their brainstorming ideas to put into practice this week. Close class by asking students to pray sentence prayers asking God to help them with their "honoring people" project.

STEP 4

Life Response

(5–10 minutes)

Bible Truth:

God plans for human relationships to show how He values people.

Objective: That your students discover what God desires in their relationships with others.

Materials:

- ☐ “The Great Debate” from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Journals (from last week)

Read “The Great Debate” on pages 19-20 of *Blueprint* and look for ways to improve relationships between parents and teenagers.

Today we’ve focused on relationships that matter: parents, dating relationships and other relationships. God fits into all these relationships by being front and center. God values people, and we need to see people through His eyes first before we can love and value them. Choose someone to contact this week who is important to you but you haven’t let them know about how you feel for some time. Write them a short note or email or send a text. It doesn’t take long but the effects are immeasurable. Remind students to continue writing in their journals. Invite students who brought them to share a few entries if they wish. Close in prayer asking for God’s guidance in our relationships.



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

- ☐ “Getting Away with Murder” from *Blueprint*
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Markers



Read “Getting Away with Murder” on page 18 of *Blueprint*. On poster board, make four headers: Gossiping; Treating People as Objects; Treating People as Outsiders; and Not Being Honest. Under each header, brainstorm and write down ways that teens can avoid these sinful pitfalls.

