

VALUES



Purpose

This lesson will help young people understand the importance of respect and responsibility. Young people will learn how these values build character and shape who they are.

Objectives

Participants will:

- learn the importance of making responsible choices even in the face of difficulty.
- understand the consequences of irresponsible choices.
- learn how to be respectful of and responsible to self, family, school, and community.

Learning Activities

- “Responsibilities”
- “Responsible or Not Responsible?”
- “Respect for Others”

Advance Preparation

1. Read Background Information for this lesson.
2. Review Activity Sheets.
3. Secure necessary materials for the lesson as described.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At home, school, in the community or on the job, young people need to have strong character embedded in positive values that promote respect and responsibility. As decision makers, young people are just beginning to test the waters, to see how they measure up to their own sense of right and wrong in the demanding real world. They are discovering that questions of respect and responsibility can be complex and the answers not so easy by which to come.

Values are the important “internal compasses” that guide people in developing priorities and making choices. Although the internalization of values takes place over time, the groundwork is laid from the first day of life. The foundation of character building begins during infancy and slowly evolves through childhood and adolescence, all the while becoming more sophisticated and complex. People do not suddenly become respectful and responsible human beings when they become teenagers or adults. The development of these values is a long process that includes many interactions between children and adults.

Values are a reflection of who we are, of our culture, and our own unique heritage. Being clear about what the family values helps young people establish priorities and make decisions they can live with and by. What we learn from our families in childhood builds character and serves us throughout life.

Character is the way you really are. It is the way you act, even when no one is looking. People with strong character do good deeds not for show, not for credit, but just as an expression of their true self. Most people want to be good. But developing a good character takes more than words. People with strong character take care of themselves and others. They can be depended upon to do the right thing, even when the right thing may not be popular or “cool.”

Values are a part of our experience that affects our behavior. They encompass our attitudes, the standards for our actions, and our beliefs. Values are often learned from family, people around us, and culture. In addition, values tell others what is important to us and guide the decisions we make. We use our resources – time, money, brain power, etc., on the things we value.

As a rule of thumb, remember the GOLDEN RULE:

**DO UNTO OTHERS
AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM
DO UNTO YOU.**

RESPECT

Respect is a quality that helps young people feel good about themselves, and therefore be accepting of others. People with positive values find it easier to respect others, and therefore tolerate other people's beliefs and individual differences. However, lack of respect can lead to destructive behavior. Here are some **RESPECT DO'S** and **DON'TS** for young people.

RESPECT DO'S

- **Treat everyone with respect by being courteous and polite.**
- **Respect the independence and individuality of others.**
- **Be tolerant, appreciative, and accepting of individual differences.**
- **Get to know people for who they are.**

RESPECT DON'TS

- **Don't insult, abuse, put down, or harass others.**
- **Don't use, manipulate, exploit or take advantage of others.**
- **Don't make inappropriate or unwanted comments about others.**
- **Don't mistreat people because they are different.**

RESPONSIBILITY

I am Responsible! "You can count on me!" Most young people have said this at some point during their teen years. Being responsible is one of the most important issues that young people face as they take their place in the adult world. Responsible young people have a sense of duty. They keep their commitments. Most young people are eager to take on responsibilities, to become more independent and self-reliant. Here are some **RESPONSIBILITY DO'S** and **DON'TS** for young people.

RESPONSIBILITY DO'S

- **Be accountable! Accept responsibility for your own actions.**
- **Think before you act! Consider the consequences for yourself and others.**
- **Be reliable! Always do what you say.**
- **Act as if someone you respect is always watching.**
- **Do your best! Be proud of everything you do.**

RESPONSIBILITY DON'TS

- **Don't blame anyone else for your mistakes or shortcomings.**
- **Don't take credit for someone else's work or accomplishments.**
- **Don't give up or leave tasks undone.**
- **Don't give less than 100% of anything you do.**

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LESSON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Young people have a need to spread their wings while having limits with independence. Finding the balance can be tricky. Too much control by adults can lead to rebelling and poor choices just to get some freedom. Too much freedom leads to feeling overwhelmed – having too much power before they are ready for it.

DO

- Review Background Information.
- Complete “Responsibilities”
- Complete “Responsible or Not Responsible?”
- Complete “Respect for Others”

REFLECT

After completing the activities in this lesson, help young people reflect on what they have learned and how they will use this information. Here are some suggested questions:

- What does it mean to be responsible?
- What are some RESPONSIBILITY Do’s and Don’ts?
- What are some ways you can show others that you are responsible?
- What are some ways you can show respect for others?
- What are some RESPECT Do’s and Don’ts?

APPLY

Ask young people the following questions to help them apply what they have learned.

- What additional responsibilities will you take on at home, school and in your community?
- How will you change any irresponsible behavior that you have?
- What will you do to show others that you respect them?
- What will you do to reach out to others who are different from you?
- What will you do to strengthen your values?

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RESPONSIBILITIES

Listed below are people who have certain **RESPONSIBILITIES** to each other. In a group, brainstorm a list of these responsibilities. Do not judge or debate the responses. The purpose is to hear everyone's ideas.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF . . .

- ❖ A parent to his/her teenager?
 - ❖ A teenager to his/her parent?
 - ❖ A teacher to his/her student?
 - ❖ A student to his/her teacher?
 - ❖ A friend to his/her friend?
 - ❖ An employer to an employee?
 - ❖ An employee to an employer?
- Was it easier to think of responsibilities for adults or for teenagers?
 - Who on the list seems to have the most responsibilities?
 - Who seems to have the least responsibilities?

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RESPONSIBLE OR NOT RESPONSIBLE?

Read each scenario below and decide the RESPONSIBLE thing to do. Discuss your answers with a partner or in a small group.

- ❖ You are with a group of your peers – some you know well, some you do not. Somebody lights up a cigarette and starts passing it around. You really do not want to smoke, but you do not want to look “uncool” either. *WHAT DO YOU DO?*
- ❖ Your friend was away all week because his grandfather died. He has to make up last Wednesday’s Math test and wants you to give him the answers. “Please,” he begs. *DO YOU GIVE HIM THE ANSWERS?*
- ❖ Your parents have said they do not want you to drive at night. But you are with some friends, and they want to stay out later. You could go home before dark, but you would upset your friends. You feel sure that you can drive safely at night. *WHAT WOULD YOU DO?*
- ❖ You are baby-sitting. Some of your friends call and ask if they can come over. The child’s parents have never said you could not have friends over, but they also never said you could. *WOULD YOU LET YOUR FRIENDS COME TO THE HOUSE?*
- ❖ You are at the mall with you best friend. Neither of you have any money. You go to the shoe department and your friend goes to the jewelry department. When you meet up again, your friend has two rings. She puts one in your pocket. Your friend did not have any money, so you know she stole the rings. *WHAT DO YOU DO?*

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RESPECT FOR OTHERS *WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?*

Listed below are some statements. In a small group of your peers, discuss how you feel about each statement.

- **Every individual deserves to be treated with respect, no matter who they are.**
- **Parents in the United States do not respect their children.**
- **Children in the United States do not respect adults.**
- **People in positions of authority deserve more respect than other people with less or no authority.**
- **If you want respect, you must give respect.**
- **If someone disrespects you, they deserve disrespect from you.**

DID ALL OF YOUR PEERS FEEL THE SAME?