



## **Grade 7 – session 1 | Lesson Plan & Handouts**

### **Boundaries for Good Relationships in God's Plan**

**Time estimate:** 1 session of 45 minutes or this session may be combined with session 2 into one long session with breaks

#### **Session one objectives:**

1. Develop concept of personal boundaries and the boundary circle for each one
2. Discuss the value of healthy boundaries

**Supplies needed:** ***Boundaries, A Guide for Teens*** (copy of book for presenter)  
(Student Handout 7-1, page 6 of this material) one for each student  
***Reflection Questions*** (Student Handout 7-2, page 7 of this material) one for each student  
Chart paper or chalkboard

*Note: Teacher should read over the grade 6 lesson plan, **Discovering God's Purpose for Relationships**, before teaching this lesson and chapters 1-3 of the book, **Boundaries, A Guide for Teens** by Rev. Val J. Peter and Tom Dowd.*

**Prayer:** Loving God, open our minds and hearts to you. Help us discover your loving plan for each of our lives – a plan to grow, to learn, to give, to receive and to love in relationships with all our brothers and sisters. Help us to know and live this plan which will lead us to happiness with you forever.

**Review:** Last year you discovered more about God's purpose for relationships. You learned and discussed many things.

- God loves you so much that God wants you to have good relationships.
- In these relationships you are to: 1) to love others as God has loved you and 2) to love your neighbors as yourself.
- You learned ***how to treat others in relationships, how to love*** as Jesus loves, and ***who to love.***

- Tell me one thing you remember from last year's session. (*Teacher may have to help students recall these main points!*)
  1. *There are many kinds of relationships (parent, sibling, friend, teacher, coach, etc.)*
  2. *Each relationship has a special purpose.*
  3. *God has taught us how to treat others in relationships. (Golden Rule)*
  4. *We are to love others as Jesus loved.*
  5. *We are to love everyone, even those we do not like.*
  6. *When we do this, we build right relationships, that is, ones that are lived according to God's plan and purpose.*
  7. *Right relationships enable us to love and serve God better and have more insight into God's specific plan for each of our lives.*

In today's session we will discover what boundaries are and how they help us to love others and have healthy, appropriate relationships.

### **Lecture: Introduction to Boundaries**

- God's plan and purpose for our lives involves right relationships with God and with others.
- God's love and care has no boundaries, but our relationships with other people do.
- A boundary is the personal space that you keep between yourself and others.
- There are two types of boundaries: external and internal.
- External boundaries include both physical/sexual boundaries.
  - These boundaries protect your entire body and especially the private parts of your body.
  - External boundaries help keep you safe and healthy.
  - You decide who can touch you, how they touch you, and where.
  - You want your physical/sexual boundaries respected by others and you want to respect the boundaries of other people as well.
- Internal boundaries include your emotional and spiritual boundaries.
  - These boundaries protect your private thoughts and emotions.
  - These boundaries protect the deepest part of who you are – your sense of hope, trust, mystery, security and spiritually.
  - You decide what you will or will not share with others.
- Certain deep feelings are shared only with God in prayer, specially with a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and/or with certain family members and friends.
- Boundaries protect us by allowing certain people and events close to us and by blocking certain people and activities out. They can help tell you what is right or wrong.

- God wants us to have healthy boundaries so that we can grow into the persons God created us to be. If a boundary is too closed (example: not allowing anyone to be close to us) or too open (example: telling everyone our deepest feeling) it is unhealthy. Unhealthy boundaries cause us all kinds of trouble.
- We have to learn how to use boundaries to protect ourselves from getting hurt and to have healthy relationships and friendships. To do this we must learn to develop good boundaries and then let people know what our boundaries are.

### **Activity 1: Boundary Circle**

Give each student a copy of the Your **Boundaries Circle Worksheet** (Student Handout 7-1, page 6 of this material). Before they begin the exercise, make the following points:

- It is important for **you** to know what your boundaries are. It is also important for **others** to know your boundaries.
- The circles on this paper help you visualize how close you let someone get to you – emotionally, spiritually, physically and sexually.
  - Only God shares the inner most circle with you.
  - Strangers are the farthest outside while your family and a few very close friends may be closest to the innermost circle and to you.
- Everyone you encounter fits on this worksheet. Here are some examples:
  1. Most intimate – spouse
  2. Intimate – very close family member or friend
  3. Close – friend or family member
  4. Superficial – acquaintance, classmate, neighbor
  5. Extremely superficial – stranger

Write the names of the people in your life on this sheet according to where they fit.

**Summary:** Use the **Reflection Questions** (Student Handout 7-2, page 7 of this material). You may want to cover this orally with the class or distribute the handout to each one. If you give each student a copy, let them have some time to read it. After a few minutes, ask some students to share their answers to the questions aloud.

### **Value of Healthy Boundaries**

From our exercise, we learned that it is important to have relationships (and people) in the right place in our boundary circles. It is valuable for each of us to have strong boundaries so that relationships (and people) do not drift to places in our lives where they should not be.

Having healthy, strong, good boundaries is essential for a life of happiness as God as planned. It will also keep you safe which is always one of our goals.

Have a piece of chart paper prepared with the following title: **Persons with healthy boundaries:**  
Ask one student to be the secretary for this next activity.

For an optional way to complete this activity, see below.

Let's see if we can characterize people with healthy boundaries. I am going to ask you some questions. We will decide on the answers together and then write the correct answer for each question on our paper. (Note: Answers are in bold italic print.) In this way, we will create a good list of the qualities of people who have good boundaries.

Do you think persons with healthy boundaries are?

1. Confident or doubtful? (*write: confident*)
2. Respectful of self and others or disrespectful? (*write: respectful*)
3. Insecure or secure with themselves? (*write: secure*)
4. Have a clear sense of their views, values and priorities or have no clue about anything? (*write: good values*)
5. Develop weak, superficial relationships or good healthy relationships, especially friendships? (*write: good friendships*)
6. Enjoy true friends and family or dislike just about everyone and everything? (*write: enjoy people*)
7. Will be friends with anyone or are able to identify safe and appropriate people? (*write: pick good friends*)
8. Share appropriately with others or tell everything to anyone who will listen? (*write: share well*)
9. Expect shared responsibility for relationships or feel it is all up to them. (*write: understand give & take*)
10. Can say "No" to another when necessary or can never say no because it will hurt another's feelings? (*write: can say NO*)
11. Take "no" as the start of the argument or do not argue when someone says "No" to them? (*write: accept NO*)
12. Accept whatever is done to them as what they deserve or do not tolerate abuse or disrespect of self or others? (*write: don't allow abuse*)
13. Recognize when a problem belongs to them and when it does not or think everything is their fault? (*write: accept blame appropriately*)

14. Let others walk all over them or do not let others intrude on them? (*write: have backbone*)
15. Can protect themselves without shutting out others or never let anyone in so as not to get hurt? (*write: allow others in*)
16. Are too meek to defend themselves or know how to stand up for themselves when necessary? (*write: can defend self*)
17. Become a twin of other friends or are able to enter into relationships with others without losing their identities? (*write: good sense of self*)
18. Do not reveal too much or too little or reveal everything? (*write: share wisely*)

**Optional methods for exercise:** *Create one set of 18 index cards or one set for each small group. On each card write the two choices given above for each quality using both sides of the card. Example: card one will say "confident" on one side and "doubtful" on the other. Divide the group into pairs or small groups. Give out all the cards. Each group or pair may have more than one card. Ask them to discuss the choices. Bring the group together. Ask the questions to the entire group. Ask each small group with that card to share their answer and then place the card on the chart paper. For this method, you will want to write the long description for each quality and not the shortened version.*

**Summary:** This is a good list of the qualities of people who have healthy, strong boundaries. On this list are qualities that each one of us desires to have. This is the way each of us longs to be and live our lives. Developing qualities like these will help us create boundaries which in turn will lead to right relationships. The next time that we come together we will learn some rules or guidelines for how to do that.

*Keep the chart paper and post it again for the next session.*

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**End of lesson plan. Handouts on following pages.**

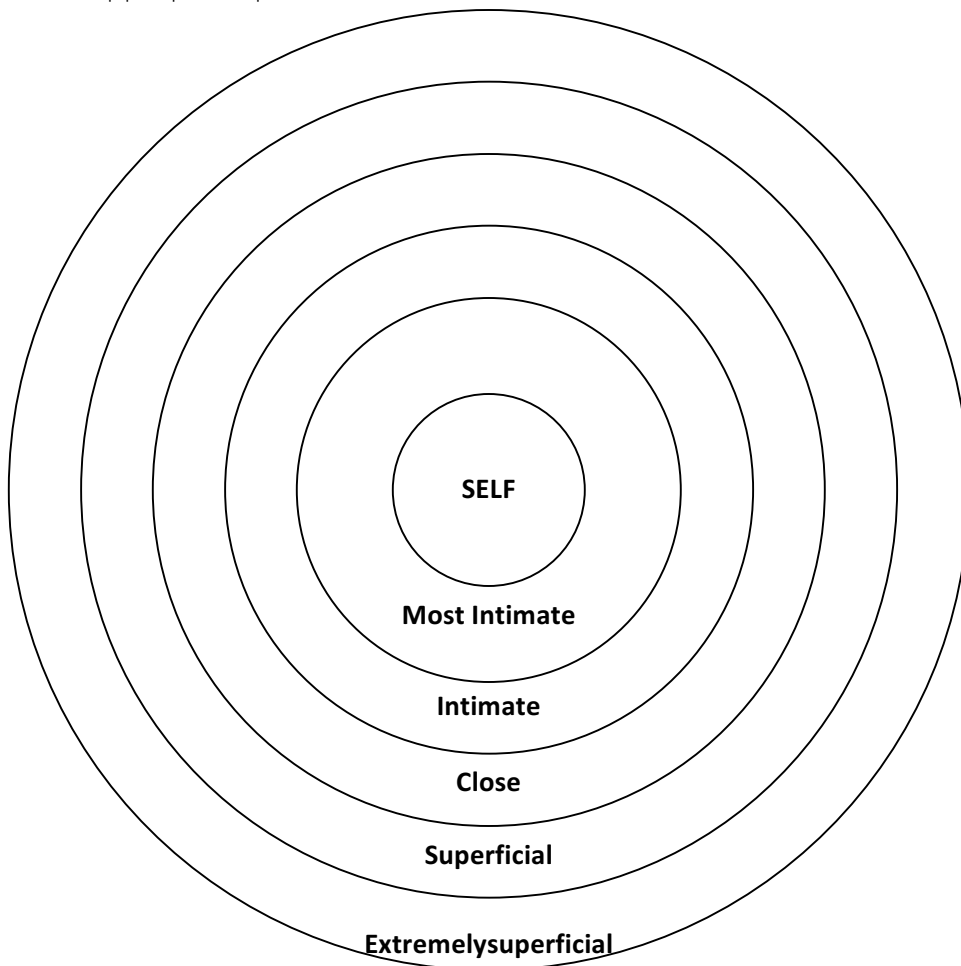
### Your Boundaries Circle Worksheet

It's important for you to know what your boundaries are, and it's equally important that others know what they are as well.

To understand boundaries better, imagine a series of concentric circles surrounding you. These circles represent various kinds of boundaries and various kinds of relationships. These circles can help you picture how close you will let someone get to you – emotionally, spiritually, sexually, and physically.

Everyone you encounter fits somewhere outside or inside these boundaries circles. Strangers are the farthest outside while your family and a few very close friends may be closest to the innermost circle, closest to you.

Where to the various people in your life fit within your Boundary Circle? Write their names in the appropriate places.



### **Reflection Questions**

Directions: Use your personal "Boundaries Circle" and the notes taken during class to help you answer these questions.

1. Whose names are listed closest to the center of your boundary circle? Explain why these people are allowed to be closest to you.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Who or what kinds of relationships are listed farthest from the center of your boundary circle? Explain why.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are the two types of boundaries? Explain and give examples of each.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Explain how appropriate boundaries can help you have appropriate relationships.

### Reflection Questions with Answers

Directions: Use your personal "Boundaries Circle" and the notes taken during class to help you answer these questions.

1. Whose names are listed closest to the center of your boundary circle? Explain why these people are allowed to be closest to you.

2. Who or what kinds of relationships are listed farthest from the center of your boundary circle? Explain why.

*Should have listed strangers and acquaintances farthest from the center because they would know the least about these people and therefore should not be too close in any way.*

3. What are the two types of boundaries? Explain and give examples of each.

*External → Physical – protects my body "Do not get into the car with a drunk driver"*

*Internal → Emotional – protects my thoughts and feelings "Don't talk to strangers"*

4. Explain how appropriate boundaries can help you have appropriate relationships.

*Appropriate boundaries help me to know how close to allow people – emotionally and physically. Boundaries can protect me from being used or hurt and help me make good judgments about friendships and dating relationships.*