MADE IN HIS IMAGE

Safe Environment Curriculum
Grade 7

Diocese of Steubenville
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

MADE IN HIS IMAGE is focused on the fundamental belief that each person is made in the Image of God and therefore deserves to be respected. The curriculum is rooted in a Catholic understanding of the human person (including human sexuality) as taught by the Magisterium. Educators using these materials must form themselves according to the principles taught by the Church.¹

MADE IN HIS IMAGE proceeds from the conviction that parents are key to the safety of children and youth. When children are younger, parents are called to take on a very active role in providing a safe environment for their children, in discerning risks involved in any given situation or relationship, and in assisting their children in discerning the various challenges they are presented with as they grow and develop. As children mature and proceed into adolescents the role of parents, although different, is still essential. While attempting to offer insights and information to adolescents, MADE IN HIS IMAGE also seeks to promote the sacred relationship between parents and their children, encouraging both parents and children to develop, maintain and deepen communication between them. MADE IN HIS IMAGE is intended to supplement the education provided by parents, and to assist parents in their task of educating and protecting the children entrusted to their care.

MADE IN HIS IMAGE follows a set pattern and strategy:

1. **Information for Parents**

Each lesson is proceeded by a letter sent home to the parents.² Intending to respect their role as primary educators and protectors of their children, this letter informs parents about the topics being addressed, providing the scope of the content covered, and offering them the opportunity to withhold their children from this instruction if they so wish. Explaining that classroom activities are only intended to serve as a supplement to the primary education in this area that takes place at home,³ the letter also serves as an invitation to parents to embrace their role as primary educators and protectors of their children by providing additional information and resources that they can use to instruct their children, and engage them in dialogue in this delicate area.

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¹ See Guiding Principles from Church Documents for Addressing Sexuality and Sexual Abuse from the Diocese of Steubenville Safe Environment Program.

² “It is clear that the assistance of others must be given first and foremost to parents rather than to their children” (The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, 145).

³ See Guiding Principles from Church Documents, 48.
2. Prayer and Catechesis

Each lesson begins with prayer which is followed by a catechetical lesson that seeks to instill in the students a greater sense of **God’s love for them**, and the **inviolable dignity** that each and every person enjoys since they are made in the image of God. MADE IN HIS IMAGE is, in essence, a catechesis on the **Church’s vision of human dignity** with very **practical implications** about the **choices** that we make.

3. Moral Formation

Each lesson seeks to assist students in understanding the importance of **making good choices**, as well as the **consequences** that follow from the decisions that we make. Students learn the basic concept that **virtuous living leads to freedom whereas and sin leads to unhappiness.**

4. Safety Information

Following the discussion on making choices, and flowing from it, students engage in activities that seek to instill **basic safety guidelines** in them. They are encouraged to make **choices** that protect their safety and the safety of others, and to **reach out for help** when they have experienced abusive behavior or feel unsafe.

5. Health Friendships and Relationships (Grades 4 – 12)

Formation in healthy friendships and relationships is an integral component of MADE IN HIS IMAGE. Students explore the **difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships** in order to become aware of negative (and possibly harmful) influences in their lives, and to promote healthy relationships that will assist them in living according to God’s design.

6. Communication between Parent and Child

Each lesson concludes with a reflection on the **role of parents**. Students are challenged to see their parents as **gifts from God**, and to recognize that they play a vital role in keeping them safe and helping them to become who God has created them to be. Students are encouraged to work to **develop and maintain open lines of communication with their parents.**

MADE IN HIS IMAGE was written and illustrated by Joseph and Christine Schmidt.

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4 “In accomplishing her mission the Church has the duty and the right to take care of the moral education of the baptised” (*Educational Guidance in Human Love*, 108).

5 “Children, adolescents and young people should be taught how to enter into healthy relationships with God, with their parents, their brothers and sisters, with their companions of the same or the opposite sex, and with adults.” (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 53).
Ten action steps for keeping teens safe.

1. Spend time with your son or daughter; develop open and honest lines of communication.

   Many argue that the greatest defense against abuse is the healthy relationship between parent and child itself. This not only applies to children; it also applies to teens as well. Information is not enough. Teens need the ongoing guidance of their parents to assimilate and apply the information they have learned, as well as to process and deal with the various situations they will encounter in their lives.

2. Teach them that they are loved by God, have infinite value, and they deserve to be respected. Model respect in the way you speak and act. Visibly live out your faith.

   The greatest gift you can give your son or daughter is a healthy relationship with God, rooted in the firm conviction that He loves them unconditionally. Nothing will sustain them more through the trials of life. It’s important to talk to them about God’s love. And it’s even more important for them to witness your own faith by how you live. So, go to Mass, receive the Sacraments, and practice Catholic morality. You should be able to say to your teenagers: follow my example!  

3. Be clear about your expectations for their behavior. Communicate safety rules and moral rules that you want them to follow.

   Don’t simply rely on safety programs or classroom lessons. Parents need to clearly articulate the expectations they have for their teens. Explain to your son or daughter the choices that you want them to make and why. Help them to see that following the moral rules of the Church will help them to preserve their safety and avoid many of the pitfalls and heartaches that young people suffer in our culture.

4. Use “teachable moments” to reinforce and apply safety rules.

   Life is full of opportunities to teach about health, safety and morality. Take passing opportunities to challenge your son or daughter to apply your safety rules. Present them with different scenarios and ask them what choices they would make. They may complain about this, but it will help them to assimilate these important lessons.

5. Talk to your son or daughter about the choices they face day to day. Offer them guidance as they try to make various decisions. Help them to process their thoughts and feelings.

   As much as they don’t want to admit it, teens need their parents. You may think they are not listening to you, but your guidance plays a tremendous role in your teen’s self-image, and in the choices they make. It’s especially important to offer your guidance in love, patience and respect.

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6 Living your faith is not only good for your soul, it’s also has many other positive benefits. Research studies have shown an astonishing number of positive effects of religious practice. Visit www.marri.us and search for “religious practice” to learn more.
6. **Listen** to your teenager. **Pay attention** to their behaviors and attitudes. Be vigilant about anything suspicious that might point to a problem.

   Abuse and unhealthy behaviors often stay hidden for quite some time. For example, in the vast majority of sexual abuse cases, the sexual offender is not a stranger, but rather someone who is known to the victim and the victim’s family. And whether the offender is a family friend, a relative, a teacher, or some other person, they often will try many tactics (including lies, manipulation, and force) to keep the abuse secret. Parents need to be vigilant.

7. Be **involved** in your teen’s life. Know their teachers, coaches, and other adults that work with them. Know their friends. Know where they spend their time. Be vigilant and cautious about the people in their lives, without being paranoid or overbearing.

   Let’s face it: teenagers often will make foolish mistakes. They will put themselves in situations where they can get hurt. And they can often be deceived by people that want to manipulate, use, and hurt them. When it comes to safety, there is no substitute for the careful vigilance of loving parents.

8. Be vigilant with your teen’s **media use**. Be sure they know safety rules for using the internet, texting, social networking, playing video games, etc.

   The tools, devices, and services for media use have increased dramatically in recent years. While this is positive in many ways, these new methods of getting connected also pose many new threats, especially for youth. Statistics about exposure to pornography, outright sexual solicitation and cyberbullying demonstrate the need to be vigilant. The reality is that **the internet is the biggest threat facing your son or daughter right now – and the access they have to the internet is staggering**. Parents need to be educated and vigilant when it comes to internet safety.

   The good news is that **great resources are available for parents**. Netsmartz.org is an excellent source to become familiar with the risks associated with various media devices and sources, as well as the steps parents can take to ensure the safety of their children.

   One danger that is often overlooked by parents is **video games**. Video and computer games are everywhere. Many of them involve innocent entertainment and learning. But a great number (and more than you might think) involve **extremely graphic displays of violence and sexuality**. In many of the most popular games the players are often encouraged (and even rewarded in the game) for brutal displays of violence, even sexual violence. Parents are strongly encouraged to learn about the dangers of video games and monitor their teen’s exposure to them. Plugged In ([www.pluggedin.com](http://www.pluggedin.com)) is excellent source for reviews from a Christian perspective of a great variety of games, movies, music and more.

9. Don’t be afraid to **ask for help** when you need it! Teach your son or daughter that it’s okay to ask for help.

10. Don’t forget to **pray!**

    Pray alone. Pray with your spouse. And be sure to **pray together as a family**! Ask the Lord to protect your son or daughter. Ask Him to strengthen your faith and the faith of your family. Ask Him to teach you to be a good parent, and to make your marriage and family healthy and holy. **Don't underestimate the power of God's grace!**

    Keep in mind: “The family that prays together stays together.” (Fr. Patrick Payten)

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7 [http://www.internetsafety101.org/Pornographystatistics.htm](http://www.internetsafety101.org/Pornographystatistics.htm)
THEME:
“God made us in love. We need to act in ways pleasing to Him. God gives us special people in our lives (parents/guardians) to help us be happy and safe.”

1. PRAYER: Our Father

2. CATECHESIS: God and Us

Objectives

- The students will recognize that they should be treated with love and respect because they are made in the very image of God.
- The students will recognize that being able to claim God as our Father is a treasure from Christ.
- The students will come to a deeper understanding of God’s love for them.
- The students will review some examples of respectful behavior and disrespectful behavior.

Every person, from the first moment of his life in the womb, has an inviolable dignity, because from all eternity God willed, loved, created, and redeemed that person and destined him for eternal happiness. If human dignity were based solely on the successes and accomplishments of individuals, then those who are weak, sick, or helpless would have no dignity. Christians believe that human dignity is, in the first place, the result of God’s respect for us. He looks at every person and loves him as though he were the only creature in the world. (YOU CAT, #280)

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

- OPTIONAL: Once the Our Father is concluded you can grab the attention of the students by looking intently at them and saying: How dare you say that! Pause for a few moments, then continue: How dare you call God your Father? Brief pause. We Christians can take that for granted, but some people would be very offended to hear you claim such an intimate relationship with God. And yet this is our spiritual heritage – our gift for Christ Himself.
- Most of you have been in religion or religious education classes for many years, and you’ve learned a lot about God. But have you ever taken the time to THINK about who God is?
- There are a lot of confused ideas about God in our culture. There are millions of people who say they believe that God exists, but they don’t have any kind of personal relationship with Him. Many people seem to look at God as some sort of mysterious “force.” THIS IS NOT THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF GOD!

⇒ ACTIVITY: A PERSONAL GOD – SEE PAGE 11 (See page 18 for a time-saving answer key!)
One of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring passages of the Bible is printed on the bottom of the handout. Ask a student to read it.

We are the children of God! We are not the children of a “force,” but of a Real Person – a Divine Person!

I’m sure you are all familiar with the passage in Genesis the creation of Adam and Eve. Do you remember how the scripture says that God made them in His image and likeness? That same truth applies to YOU! You are made in the very image of God Himself – a Personal God who invites you to be in a loving relationship with Him.

Since you are made in the image of God, you have infinite worth and dignity. You deserve to be respected and cherished as a priceless treasure!

DISCUSSION: WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL RESPECTED?

Ask the students: What makes you feel respected? What makes you feel disrespected? Write their answers on the board. Try to get the students to offer examples that include both words and actions.

List examples on the board. Notice how many refer to something verbal, something physical, or something virtual (using technology).

Conclude the discussion by making some general statements about respect and personal safety:
- You deserve to be respected because you are made in God’s Image.
- No one has the right to treat you disrespectfully.
- No one should hurt you or to touch you in ways that make you feel bad or dirty.
- If this has ever happened to you know that it’s NOT YOUR FAULT! Be sure to talk to your mom or dad, or another trusted adult, about this as soon as you can.
- God made you in His image. You are loved by God and you deserve to be respected!

3. MORAL FORMATION: Making Good Choices

Objectives

✓ The students will recognize that we should always act in ways pleasing to God.
✓ The students will discover that we need to do what is right in order to be happy.
✓ The students will identify the fruits of the spirit.

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

Since we are made in God’s image we should be respected by others, and treat others with respect. It also means that we need to act in ways pleasing to God.

If we want to be happy we need to do what’s right. God gives us laws so that we know right from wrong. Our parents also give us rules to help us obey God’s laws.

God wants you to be happy!

Doing bad things can sound like a good idea for a while, but in the end we are never happy when we do bad things. Think about it! When you do something you know is wrong, how does it make you feel deep down? Let students respond. Help the students to recognize that they feel bad, sad, or guilty when they choose to do something they know is wrong.

This is what sin is all about! We commit a sin when we do something we know is wrong, something that goes against God’s laws or the Church’s teachings. And when we sin, we
always end up feeling bad about it. Sin might feel good at first, but it always makes us sad in the end.

☐ God wants you to be happy. When we listen to God and the Church, and do what’s right, it helps us to be happy.

☐ Now we’re going to do an activity about some of the virtues and qualities God would like us to practice.

⇒ ACTIVITY: FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – SEE PAGE 12 (See page 19 for a time-saving answer key!)

4. SAFETY INFORMATION: Promoting Safe Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ The students will recognize that making good choices helps to keep them safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ The students will review basic safety rules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ Making good choices helps to keep us safe. When your parents tell you not to run into the street or talk to strangers, and you listen to them, it keeps you from getting hurt. Following basic safety rules helps to keep you safe.

☐ Give each student a copy of the activity page and ask them to answer the questions. After a few minutes, go over the answers together.

⇒ ACTIVITY: SAFETY QUIZ – SEE PAGE 14

5. RELATIONSHIPS: Promoting healthy friendships and relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ The students will recognize that God made them to be in relationship with other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ The students will reflect on the influences that other people have on their lives, helping them to follow God and be happy or hurting them and leading them into sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ The students will identify some of the qualities of healthy friendships and relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ God made us in His Image. He made us to be in relationships with other people: parents, family, friends, etc.

☐ The people in our lives can help us to follow God and be happy. But they can also hurt us and lead us into sin.

☐ It’s important to understand the difference between healthy friendships and unhealthy ones, so that we can be more aware of the influences in our lives.
DISCUSSION: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

☐ Ask the students to name some qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Write them in different lists on the board. For example:
  - Healthy Relationships:
    - Use kind words when talking to you
    - Listens to you when you talk
  - Unhealthy Relationships:
    - Call you names
    - Make you do things you don’t want to do

☐ Just like no one is perfect, no relationship is perfect either. Sometimes we do things or say things that are wrong and sinful. But we should always try to act in ways that are respectful, and we should expect other people to treat us with respect.

☐ We should surround ourselves with people that will help us to love God, love our neighbor, and love ourselves.

ACTIVITY: DESIGN A FRIEND – SEE PAGE 15

6. COMMUNICATION: Fostering Communication with Parents and Guardians

Objectives

✓ The students will recognize that God gave them their parents (or guardians) to love them, teach them and keep them safe.
✓ The students will recognize the importance of strengthening their relationship with their parents or guardians by talking to them about the things that happen to them on a day to day basis.
✓ The students will realize the importance of telling their parents if anything happens to them that makes them feel uncomfortable or scared.
✓ The students will identify ways to improve or maintain open lines of communication with their parents.

“A fool despises a parent’s instructions.”

(Proverbs 15:5)

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ One of the greatest gifts that God gives us is the people that He places in our lives – especially our parents. Let’s face it. We don’t always agree with our parents, and sometimes it’s hard to live with them. But they are a true gift from God.

☐ Already in your life, your parents have taught you more about life than you can even realize! Who taught you how to walk? And talk? Who taught you how to get food? And to form friendships? And get along with other people? Your parents taught you all these things, mostly by modeling it for you.

☐ The teens that are the happiest (really happy, not just popular) are the ones that have a good relationship with their parents.

☐ But, you know, this is a two-way street. It takes effort from both parents and teens to have a good relationship.
It may be amazing to think, but your parents can still teach you a heck of a lot about life! I want to challenge you to talk to your parents about the things that are important to you in your life. Talk to them about the decisions you are facing.

It’s especially important to talk to them when you feel hurt or unsafe. First and foremost, your parents are there to protect you from harm. And that is the first thing in their minds: they want to make sure that you are safe.

It’s extremely important for you to talk to them when you are faced with situations where you feel unsafe, scared, worried, and unsure. More than anyone else, they can guide you to make good and healthy decisions in your life. They can help you to be safe.

⇒ ACTIVITY: RE-THINKING OUR WORDS – SEE PAGE 16

7. REVIEW
- Read the theme for the lesson to the students.
- Review the key points in each section.

8. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
- HANDOUT: CALLED TO GREATNESS – SEE PAGE 16
- HANDOUT: DON’T SETTLE FOR LESS – SEE PAGE 22
- VIDEOS ABOUT MEDIA AND INTERNET SAFETY:
  - Your Photo Fate – This eye-opening video is about the consequences of sending photos. Once you send a photo online, there’s no way to control it. It’s out of your hands. Stream it or download it: www.netsmartz.org/RealLifeStories/
  - You Can’t Take It Back – A teen regrets his participation on a website created to rate others at his school. Stream it or download it: www.netsmartz.org/RealLifeStories/
  - Survivor Diaries - Ryan and Noah share their stories to show that online victimization can happen to boys too. Stream it or download it: www.netsmartz.org/RealLifeStories/
  - Broken Friendship – A friendship is broken when a teen gives her best friend’s password to some other girls at school. Stream it or download it: www.netsmartz.org/RealLifeStories/
- START TALKING! Building a Drug Free Future
  - A new effort is underway across Ohio to prevent drug abuse. The Catholic Bishops of Ohio issued a statement about the initiative. “Start Talking is a program designed by the state of Ohio to help equip families and communities to clearly communicate the important message of drug prevention,” the Bishops said. “We support this critical initiative and we encourage Ohioans to visit www.starttalking.ohio.gov for details.”
  - Among the resources available is an email newsletter for educators. Their website explains: “Teachers are powerful influencers in their students’ lives. What is shared in the classroom can positively impact a child’s decision not to use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs. Teachers have an incredible opportunity to guide students toward making healthy, drug-free lifestyle choices. That is why Drug Free Action Alliance created TEACHable Moments, which are specially designed tips for educators, sent out via email twice monthly for FREE. They contain news that teachers can use to get those critical prevention talks started in the classroom.” Learn more at www.starttalking.ohio.gov/SchoolLeaders.aspx
A PERSONAL GOD

Jesus revealed the love of the Father. God is not some sort of impersonal "force." No, God is a person Who invites each of us into a unique relationship with Him. Fill in the squares containing this symbol (Λ) to reveal the message.

"See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God." (1 John 3:1)
FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the puzzle using the clues and the word bank.

**ACROSS**

5. _______________ helps us to follow the two great commandments from Jesus: Love God above all things and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

6. This fruit enables us to be compassionate toward other people and help them in their times of need.

8. This fruit helps us to be gentle in our words and actions, and so treat people with dignity and respect as children of God. It is sometimes called Gentleness.

9. _______________ enables us to endure the difficulties in life with calmness and acceptance, and to forgive people when they offend or hurt us. It is sometimes called long-suffering.

**DOWN**

1. _______________ enables us to be a good witness for Christ and our faith in His teachings.

2. _______________ is patience in difficult situations.

3. _______________ helps us to be free from negative thoughts and desires.

4. _______________ helps us to follow the two great commandments from Jesus: Love God above all things.

5. _______________ enables us to follow the two great commandments from Jesus: Love God above all things.

6. _______________ is self-control.

7. _______________ is joy.

8. _______________ is kindness.

9. _______________ is goodness.

10. _______________ is charity.

11. _______________ is chastity.

12. _______________ is fidelity.

KINDNESS    GOODNESS    CHARITY
FRUITS       MILDNESS    CHASTITY
ASK          PEACE       SELF-CONTROL
WORK         MODESTY     PATIENCE
FIDELITY     JOY
10. This fruit is the deep happiness that comes from knowing that you are loved by God and are living according to His laws.

12. It takes __________ on our part to be open to the Holy Spirit. We need to let go of our sinful, selfish desires and strive each day to live for God.

**DOWN**

1. Jesus taught us that good people will be known by their ______________, by the good that they do (see Matthew 7:15-20). When we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, His grace will bear fruit in our lives.

2. This fruit provides us with an inner calmness and contentment despite sufferings, worries or other difficulties that we may face in our life.

3. This fruit helps us to live holy lives as a true children of God.

4. This fruit enables us to be committed to God and to those people in our lives we are called to love and serve, especially our families.

5. This fruit enables us to form healthy friendships grounded in love and mutual respect, and to use the gift of our sexuality according to God’s design. It demands that we strive to be pure in our thoughts about other people who are also children of God, and that we save sexual activity for marriage.

7. This fruit gives us the wisdom and strength we need to discipline ourselves, and keeps us from being dominated by sinful and selfish desires. It helps us to enjoy the good things in life in moderation, making choices that are physically and spiritually healthy.

8. This fruit helps us to accept ourselves for who we are, without the need to impress everyone we meet. It also moves us to respect our bodies as Temples of the Holy Spirit, and to never dress or act in ways that will lead others to sinful thoughts or actions.

11. It is important for us to _____ the Holy Spirit to bring these fruits into our daily lives.
SAFETY QUIZ

DIRECTIONS: Circle the correct answer.

- A friend texts you and wants to meet you somewhere. You should ...
  - Not leave until an adult knows where you are going and who you’ll be with.
  - Just leave since it’s not far from home.

- You walk to school every day. You should ...
  a. Walk with a friend because it’s safer.
  b. Walk by yourself because you’re not a kid and it’s no big deal.

- Someone touches you in a way that feels weird or uncomfortable. You should ...
  a. Tell your parents no matter what, even if they threaten to hurt you or someone else.
  b. Keep it to yourself.

- A guy in your neighborhood keeps commenting on your looks. He seems to be particularly interested in you, but generally ignores the other people with you. You should ...
  a. Just be polite and friendly.
  b. Talk to your parents about it and be cautious around him just in case.

- You’re at a party and you’re having a great time. You just met someone from another school and they want to talk to you privately away from the other people. You should ...
  a. Stay at the party; you don’t really know this person or what they might do.
  b. Just go with them and not worry.

- One of your friends tells you that they feel unsafe at home. You should ...
  a. Keep it to yourself because you don’t want to betray their trust.
  b. Talk to your parents or another adult because your friend may need help.

- You are home alone and someone calls your house looking for your parents. You should ...
  a. Tell them that your parents aren’t home, and give them an idea of when they might be back.
  b. Tell them your parents can’t come to the phone and offer to take a message for them.

- You’re at a party and you put your drink down for a dance. When you come back to pick up your drink you should ...
  a. Finish your drink so you don’t waste it.
  b. Throw it out and get a new one in case someone put something in it when you weren’t looking.

- You’re on your way home from school and you are getting ready to go through an area that somehow looks different; something about it makes you feel uneasy. You should ...
  a. Trust your instincts and go a different route.
  b. Ignore your feelings and go that way anyway.

- You’re outside, someone pulls up and asks you for directions to the nearest gas station. You should ...
  a. Play it safe: walk away and let an adult help them, being very careful NOT to get close to their car.
  b. Be polite and give directions the best you can.
Imagine that you can order the perfect friend online. What qualities would you choose for your designer friend? Read through the choices below and pick the ones you would choose.

**I want a friend who ... (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

| ○ Is calm and quiet.   | ○ Is excited and talkative. |
| ○ Is bold and adventurous. | ○ Is critical of me. |
| ○ Is polite to everyone. | ○ Treats me with kindness. |
| ○ Respects my values. | ○ Insults me can says nasty things about me. |
| ○ Respects my boundaries. | ○ Stays angry about disagreements for a long time. |
| ○ Forgive easily. | ○ Helps me make healthy choices. |
| ○ Is concerned for my safety and wellbeing. | ○ Respects their parents and others in authority. |
| ○ Disregards the law. | ○ Is arrogant and opinionated. |
| ○ Uses foul language. | ○ Believes in God and tries to be faithful to Him. |
| ○ Is honest. | ○ Isn't afraid to steal things that they want. |
| ○ Uses drugs. | ○ Has a good sense of humor. |
| ○ Complains about everything. | ○ Makes me feel happy just being with them. |
| ○ Has a good relationship with their parents. | ○ Helps me to be a better Christian. |

Some of these qualities are simply matters of opinion or preference. But some of them are matters of God’s unchanging truth, and we should not compromise on them.

The Bible says, “Wise friends make you wise, but you hurt yourself by going around with fools” (Proverbs 13:20). You should try to surround yourself with people who are living in ways pleasing to God. No one is perfect, but we tend to become like the people we hang around.

What kind of friend are you? You should strive to be a good friend for others - by loving God, being faithful to His laws, and helping other people to find the fullness of His Love.

One final thought: Have you ever asked God to send you good friends? Try it! God wants you to be happy! He wants you to have people in your life that care about you, help you to be happy, and encourage you to reach your full potential.
RE-THINKING OUR WORDS

Sometimes re-thinking the way you say things can have a big impact on how you communicate with others - especially with your parents! As the Book of Proverbs points out: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). Using different words can help you to avoid arguments and find solutions to problems.

DIRECTIONS: Read the statements in the left column below, and re-write them into something that communicates understanding and patience.

HELPFUL HINTS: Avoid generalizations ("you always," "you never," etc.) because they are unusually exaggerations and tend to make people defensive. It’s also helpful to talk about your feelings ("it makes me feel...") because it is less attacking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTEAD OF SAYING …</th>
<th>TRY SAYING …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I hate it when you …</td>
<td>It makes me feel foolish (embarrassed, silly, etc.) when you …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 You never let me do anything.</td>
<td>I really wish I had more freedom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Whatever!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 You don’t understand me.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 You never listen to me.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 That’s not fair!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 That’s so stupid!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Why can’t I …</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9 You don’t trust me!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Another common expression:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Another common expression:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CALLED TO GREATNESS

Guidelines for teens for making choices that protect their safety and well-being

God has made you for greatness! Not an artificial or superficial greatness, like you find in commercials and movies. God has made you for true greatness – a greatness that comes from dignity, freedom and love.

But we live in a fallen world. Much of the media, entertainment, and consumer products presented to you offer a distorted view of what it means to be happy. And the sad reality is that some of the people in your life will seek to manipulate you for their own interests, either in small ways or in ways that can be abusive.

This is NOT God’s way! God has created you for love and freedom. The Lord wants you to experience the fullness of life. God wants you to know the deep joy of authentic love, lasting friendships and true self-worth.

The following guidelines are presented as an attempt to make you aware of dangers to your physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, and provide you with clear boundaries that will keep you safe.

Guidelines for Personal Safety

- Strive to make safe and healthy choices. Be polite to everyone without allowing others to take advantage of you or those around you. Be a model of respect and integrity.
- Always talk to your parents about where you are going and who you are with. Too many young people turn up missing because they failed to follow this simple rule.
- Avoid going places by yourself, such as walking to school, going to the mall, etc. You should be with at least one other person.
- No one should ever touch you in a way that feels uncomfortable or wrong. If someone ever does, tell them to STOP! Be assertive, and get away.
- Tell your parents no matter what if anyone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. Even if someone threatens to hurt you or someone else, you need the help, support and guidance of your parents. If you parents don’t believe you, talk to some other adult and keep talking until someone takes action!
- Always listen if a friend tells you they feel unsafe, depressed or have been victimized in any way. Take them seriously. Encourage them to seek help, and go with them to talk to their parents or another adult.
- Never feel obligated to keep a secret when it involves someone’s safety or wellbeing.
- Tell your parents, and an adult in authority, if anyone makes indecent, rude or suggestive comments about your body or bodily activities, or if anyone uses obscene gestures. This is called sexual harassment. It is illegal, immoral, and should not be tolerated.
- When you are at a party or some other event, never go off to a secluded area, especially with someone you just met. This places you in a dangerous situation – spiritually and physically.
- When you are at a party, never leave your drink unattended. This gives someone the opportunity to put alcohol or a knock out drug in your drink. Always finish or throw out your drink and get a new one in case someone put something in it when you weren’t looking.
• **Never use drugs or alcohol.** Avoid any situation where drugs or alcohol are being abused. Apart from being illegal and immoral, these situations pose many dangers and risks.

• Never **drive** with anyone who is texting, or anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you drive, don’t do this yourself.

• If you are in a situation that makes you feel scared or unsafe, **trust your instincts.** Try to remove yourself from that situation as soon as possible.

• **Be cautious** about adults (or teens who are much older than you) who seem to give you an **undue amount of attention,** or give you special gifts, routinely compliment you about your appearance, or single you out in other ways. This may be the beginnings of an unhealthy attachment or attempted abuse.

• **Don’t be afraid to ask for help** when you feel unsafe or depressed. Never forget that you are **loved by God** and you can **never lose your dignity as a child of God** – no matter what you do, or what others do to you! There is always hope and healing with Jesus Christ!

**Guidelines for Internet and Media Safety**

• **Think before you text, email or post anything.** Once something is sent electronically you can’t take it back, and you can’t always control what problems it may cause or where it may end up. Be aware of the unintended consequences of your media choices.

• Keep in mind that people online are **real people with real feelings.** Don’t use the internet to post rude, cruel or obscene things about other people.

• Talk to your **parents** about their expectations for the internet and media use.

• Never take or send **pictures** of yourself or others that are sexy, indecent or immodest.

• Avoid all forms of media and entertainment that **glamorize sex and violence.** The more people are exposed to these messages, the more they accept them. This causes people to lower their standards of conduct, makes it more difficult to enter into genuinely healthy relationships, and causes them to distance themselves from God.

• Don’t give your **passwords** to anyone except your parents, not even your best friends. Having your password accessible to others makes you vulnerable to others using your accounts to hurt or embarrass you.

• Set your social network settings to **private.** Only friend people that you actually know.

• Never give out **personal information** that will allow people to identify you.

• Never agree to **meet** anyone in person that you met online.

• Never respond to any **comments** that are rude or obscene.

• **Talk to your parents** about anything you encounter online that makes you feel uncomfortable, scared or dirty.

• **Don’t believe** everything you read online, and **don’t let yourself see** everything there is to see online. A staggering number of sites on the internet actively seek to expose youth to inappropriate, dangerous and offensive information.

(Note: For more information about internet and media safety, visit [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org).)
Jesus revealed the love of the Father. God is not some sort of impersonal “force.” No, God is a person Who invites each of us into a unique relationship with Him. Fill in the squares containing this symbol (Δ) to reveal the message.

“See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God.” (1 John 3:1)
FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

DIRECTIONS: Complete the puzzle using the clues and the word bank.

5. CHARITY helps us to follow the two great commandments from Jesus: Love God above all things and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

6. This fruit enables us to be compassionate toward other people and help them in their times of need. KINDNESS

8. This fruit helps us to be gentle in our words and actions, and so treat people with dignity and respect as children of God. It is sometimes called Gentleness. MILDNESS

KINDNESS
FRUITS
ASK
WORK
FIDELITY

GOODNESS
MILDNESS
PEACE
MODESTY
JOY

CHARITY
CHASTITY
SELF-CONTROL
PATIENCE

ACROSS

1. CHARITY
2. CHASTITY
3. SELF-CONTROL
4. PATIENCE
5. KINDNESS
6. PEACE
7. MODESTY
8. MILDNESS
9. GOODNESS
10. FRIENDSHIP
11. PEACE
12. KINDNESS
9. **PATIENCE** enables us to endure the difficulties in life with calmness and acceptance, and to forgive people when they offend or hurt us. It is sometimes called long-suffering.

10. This fruit is the deep happiness that comes from knowing that you are loved by God and are living according to His laws. **JOY**

12. It takes **WORK** on our part to be open to the Holy Spirit. We need to let go of our sinful, selfish desires and strive each day to live for God.

DOWN

1. Jesus taught us that good people will be known by their **FRUITS**, by the good that they do (see Matthew 7:15-20). When we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, His grace will bear fruit in our lives.

2. This fruit provides us with an inner calmness and contentment despite sufferings, worries or other difficulties that we may face in our life. **PEACE**

3. This fruit helps us to live holy lives as a true children of God. **GOODNESS**

4. This fruit enables us to be committed to God and to those people in our lives we are called to love and serve, especially our families. **FIDELITY**

5. This fruit enables us to form healthy friendships grounded in love and mutual respect, and to use the gift of our sexuality according to God’s design. It demands that we strive to be pure in our thoughts about other people who are also children of God, and that we save sexual activity for marriage. **CHASTITY**

7. This fruit gives us the wisdom and strength we need to discipline ourselves, and keeps us from being dominated by sinful and selfish desires. It helps us to enjoy the good things in life in moderation, making choices that are physically and spiritually healthy. **SELF-CONTROL**

8. This fruit helps us to accept ourselves for who we are, without the need to impress everyone we meet. It also moves us to respect our bodies as Temples of the Holy Spirit, and to never dress or act in ways that will lead others to sinful thoughts or actions. **MODESTY**

11. It is important for us to **ASK** the Holy Spirit to bring these fruits into our daily lives.
Do you want to ignore all this stuff and just have fun?

That's your choice. But what are you saying that?

“I like it when others use my body and don’t care about me.”

“I’m not ashamed that I lied to my parents and violated their trust.”

“I don’t really care about you; I’m just trying to have fun.”

“I don’t like myself, why should you like me?”

“They like me when I do what they want; but no one knows who I really am.”

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**COMMITMENT**

Are you willing to sacrifice for true love?

Believing that sex is sacred, I promise to God that I will save the gift of my sexuality from now until marriage. I choose to glorify God with my body and pursue a life of purity, trusting that the Lord is never outdone in generosity.

Signed ________________________

Date ___________

(Text of pledge from Jason Evert)

**Print Resources**

*Pure Love* by Jason Evert

*Life on the Edge* by Dr. James Dobson

*Pure Manhood* by Jason Evert

*Pure Womanhood* by Crystalina Evert

**Online Resources**


[www.LifeTeen.com](http://www.LifeTeen.com)

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*The model of God's love presented here is derived from Christopher West. See [www.christopherwest.com](http://www.christopherwest.com) for more!

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**MADE IN HIS IMAGE**

A Safe Environment Curriculum from the Diocese of Steubenville

[www.diosteb.org](http://www.diosteb.org)

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Don’t settle for less than GOD wants to give you!

Reflections and practical guidelines for relationships and true happiness

Revised 2014
Some guidelines & advice for finding true happiness

Are you willing to sacrifice for True Love?

~ ♥ ~

Talk with Jesus
Jesus is the best friend you will ever have. He cares deeply about you, your relationships and your choices. Talk to Him about your life.

~ ♥ ~

Make your goal clear in your mind.
If you want to be pure you need to make that decision and commitment BEFORE you are faced with temptation. Once you are in a tempting situation it is not always easy to think clearly.

~ ♥ ~

Make a plan and set boundaries.
To preserve your purity you need a plan (I won’t get into these situations...) and boundaries (I won’t do these things...). You need to have this clear in your mind BEFORE you face temptation.

~ ♥ ~

Don’t mistake physical intimacy for real intimacy.
So many people do immoral things because they are looking for love. Real intimacy isn’t based on physical pleasure. Real intimacy is about sacrificial love and commitment.

~ ♥ ~

Make good choices & Avoid pitfalls.
Save all sexual acts for marriage. Avoid actions that can create the bonding of sex and/or lead you to sexual intercourse. No passionate kissing, kissing below the chin, or lying down together. Don’t touch each other in ways that are arousing. Save all these for marriage.

~ ♥ ~

Focus on friendship.
Use dating as a time to get to who people really are and to grow in your understanding of yourself. Physical affection needs to be founded on friendship.

~ ♥ ~

Dress modestly.
(This is especially important for women because immodesty affects men much more than women.) Think about what you wear and what it says. Do you want to be remembered for your body or your personality, your humor, your kindness? Are your choices of clothing tempting others to lust? The people that are lured by immodest dress are not the ones who will respect and love you - they have other motives in mind.

~ ♥ ~

Stay away from alcohol and drugs.
These substances limit your ability to make good choices. Once you make the bad choice of using drugs or alcohol there is no limit to what you might do.

~ ♥ ~

Seek purity in all you do.
How can you be impure in every other area of your life and expect to be pure in dating? You must strive to be pure in all areas of your life: movies, video games, TV, conversations, recreation, etc.

~ ♥ ~

Know when to quit.
Don’t stay in a serious relationship with a person you know you cannot marry. If you carry on you are being dishonest with yourself and that person.

Do you know the Awesomeness of GOD’S design?

God calls us to share in the beauty and depth of True Love. He gives us a model* of True Love and calls us to imitate Him. Our love must always be a reflection of God’s Love. What is His Love like?

FREE - True love is not about force, coercion, or guilt. True love is a free gift of oneself to another.

TOTAL - True love is a sharing of the whole of one’s life with another. Every dimension of your life must be involved: emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual.

FAITHFUL - True love is not something that is here one day and gone the next. True love lasts a lifetime.

FRUITFUL - True love is always life-giving. True love is always open to the gift of life that God sometimes blesses the sexual act.

“Christian MARRIAGE faithfully lived is the fulfillment and expression of True Love!” - Christopher West

“Awesomeness of GOD’S design?”

*model