

Right Relationship

Concept: Unconditional Attention

Use with Lessons:

- God Gave Us Families
- Christian Community
- Setting Priorities / Making Time for God
- Serving Others
- Catholic Social Teaching : The Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Key Concepts:

- God made us to need others.
- We need attention from our parents and other people.
- Attention can be positive or negative.
- Right relationships:
 - Offer positive attention
 - Help us to attend to others
 - Pay attention to our gifts and the gifts of others.
 - Attend to our need to participate in many kinds of relationships.
- It is important to tell a trusted adult who we receive attention from and when the amount or kind of attention we receive is not right.

Discussion: Attention Grades PreK—4

God made us to need others. From the time we are born we need attention from our parent(s). We need someone to feed and care for us and we need someone to spend time with us.

Who spends time with you? Who gives you their attention? When we are very young we spend the most time with our parents, grandparents, or maybe a daycare provider. As we get older, there are other adults who are involved in our lives. Who are some of those adults? (some examples may include: teachers, coaches,

group leaders, friend's parents, etc.) People give their attention to others in different ways.

What are some of the ways that adults give attention to children? (some examples may include: listening, reading, eating together, playing a game, going places together, etc.) Parents need to know who is paying attention to their children.

Talk to your parents about the adults who spend time with you. Tell your parents all the ways other adults give you attention.

Game / Activity: Paying Attention

Paying Attention / Active Listening: This game is similar to other "ice-breaker" or memory games you may be familiar with. Have students sit in a circle or around a table so that they can all see one another.

Introduce the game by saying, "An important part of right relationships is paying attention to others." "It is important to attend to what others are saying, and also how others are feeling and what others need. Sometimes this means that we have to do more than listen, we also need to watch for signs and actions that can tell us how someone is feeling or what they need." Instruct students that they will need to pay attention to each other during the game. Ask each student to think of a word, a sound, or an action.

That shows a feeling. (You may wish to remind students that all words, sounds and actions must be respectful of others and not offensive). One student will begin by sharing their word, sound or action. The student seated to the right of them will have to repeat the word, sound, or action given by the first and add their own. The game proceeds clockwise around the circle / table, until every student has had a turn.

To make the game cooperative, encourage students to "see how far we can go without making an error." Celebrate each string of correct responses and encourage students to better their record each time. (If time allows, play until the group makes it around the entire circle and celebrate when they reach their goal.)

Discuss the following: "What did you enjoy about this activity?" "What was difficult?" "How are 'paying attention' and 'remembering' related?" "How are they different?" (You have to pay attention to something in order to remember it, but sometimes you can pay attention and still have a hard time remembering.. To "test" yourself, have someone give you some clues. If you were paying attention the clues will help you remember...if you weren't, all the clues in the world won't help!) **"How did you feel when someone was paying attention to you?" "Could you tell when someone wasn't paying attention?" "How?" "How did that feel?" "Why do you think paying attention to others is important in right relationships?"**

Discussion: Positive and Negative Attention Grades 3-6

God created us to need others, to be in relationships with others, and to need attention from others. That doesn't mean that we all need to be famous or the star of the show. In fact some of us are really uncomfortable when everyone's attention is on us. Are you the kind of person who likes to be the center of attention? Or would you prefer to feel like no one is noticing what you say and do? No matter whether you are someone who likes to be the center of attention, or behind the scenes, we all need others to spend time with us, to listen to us, and to care for us.

Sometimes it can be hard to get the attention we need. What do we do when we aren't getting the attention that we need? In a

right relationship we give and receive attention from others that is positive—that meets our needs, model's Christ's love for us, and respects our dignity as unique individuals created in God's own image.

When we aren't getting the attention we need, we may, without even thinking about it, begin to do things that get attention, even if it's negative. Over time, people have done some pretty silly and pretty unhealthy things to get attention. You can maybe even think of some things you have done. Have you ever done something and later thought, "I wonder why I did that?" It might be that you were needing someone to pay attention to you. Sometimes we

can get caught in a relationship that really isn't right, because attention from someone, even if it's negative, often feels better than no attention at all.

Think about the relationships you are in: Are you getting the attention you need? Are you getting negative or positive attention?

If your relationships don't provide the attention you need, or include more negative than positive attention:

- Talk to a trusted adult.
- Tell your parents that you need their attention.
- Let your parents know who is paying attention to you.
- Ask for help if the attention you are getting is negative attention.

Discussion: Balancing Attention Grades 7-12

Attention is an important part of right relationships. We all need others to spend time with us, to listen to us, and to care for us. Sometimes it feels like no one is paying attention to us, and sometimes when we find someone who does, it is hard not to want to spend all of our time with them. It is important to remember, though, that a right relationship doesn't demand all of our attention, and doesn't stand in the way of us benefitting from the attention of others.

Right relationships help us attend to others. As Catholic Christians we are called to attend to others, to be part of a community in Christ. While a right relationship is focused on the needs of both persons involved, a right relationship also helps both individuals fulfill their

call to attend to others. A relationship that demands all of our attention, to the neglect of our other relationships is not a right relationship.

In a right relationships we pay attention to each other's gifts. We all have gifts that we are called to use. In a right relationship, we are attentive to each other's gifts and encourage each other to use those gifts. A relationship that doesn't allow you to develop and use your gifts isn't right.

Right relationships attend to our need for many kinds of relationships. When you think about it, there are very few things we do as Catholic Christians that don't involve relationships. We are called to focus our attention on our relationship with God, to model Christ in our relationships

with others, to be members of our church community, to honor our father and mother, to love our neighbors, and to care for the poor and vulnerable. We are social beings and we benefit from participating in many different types of relationships. In those relationships we receive love, guidance, respect, and the opportunity to serve. A relationship that does not allow us to meet our need for relationships with others is not right.

If you are involved in a relationship with someone who:

- Demands all of your attention..
- Stands in the way of developing /using your gifts...
- Isolates you from relationships with others...

Talk to a trusted adult.



...works with me?



...talks to me?



...eats with me?



...reads to me?

Mom

Aunt

Uncle

Coach

Grandma

Brother

Friend

Who Pays Attention to Me?

Grandpa

Dad

Cousin

Pastor

Sister

Teacher

..plays with me?

...goes places with me?

....texts me?

...chats with me?



Positive Attention Strategies:

STJU KAS

TRSAT A
NVSETRCONIA

OD MESTONHNIG
OT EPHL ROTSRH

TIREW A TONE

DESN A XETT

Your Attention Please!

Negative Attention:

GTFNIIGH

TNGLTEI
ORTSHE SUE EM

ERINABGK HET SLERU

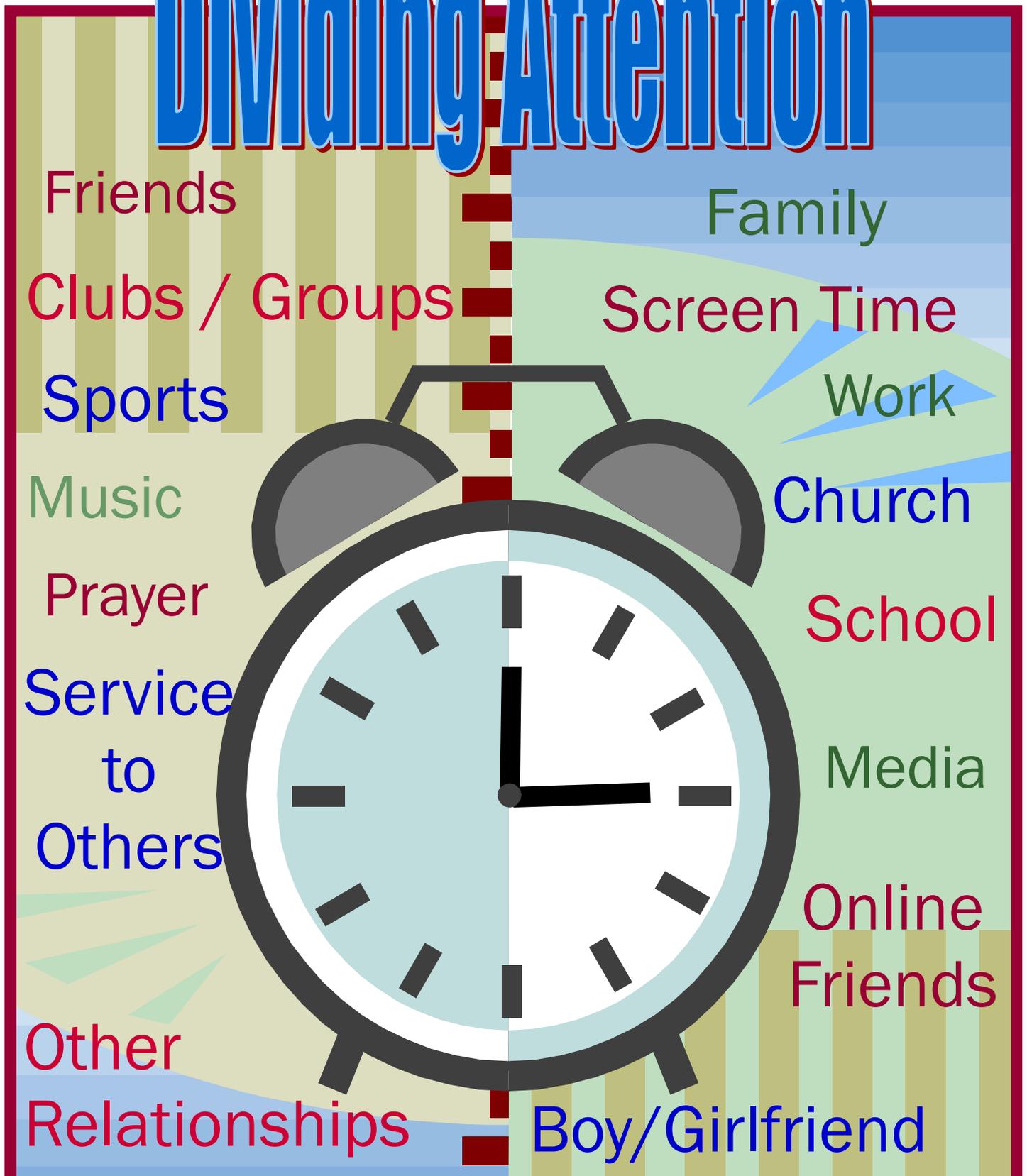
MECRANIGS DAN
CRIGYN

Created as social creatures, we all need attention from others. Do you get all of the attention you need? How do you go about getting attention when you need more? Who do you seek attention from? In the puzzle above, unscramble the words that describe some positive ways to get attention and some negative ways people sometimes turn to if they are not getting the attention they need. In the blanks below, see if you can come up with a few more positive attention strategies. List any negative attention seeking habits that you would like to break.

Other positive strategies:

Negative habits I'd like to break:

Dividing Attention



There's only so much time in a day, right? How do you decide who and what gets your attention? To have right relationships, we need to focus our attention on others; but we also need to pay attention to our gifts, and how we are called to use them. Use the clock above as a pie graph—show how much of your attention you think you should give to each of the above. Add anything missing that deserves your attention. Is there anyone or anything that demands your attention?To the neglect of something else?

Quality Time

Siblings

When Susan and her sister spend time together at home they are usually in different rooms. If they are in the same room, her sister is almost always wearing ear buds (they have very different taste in music— Susan likes country and her sister loves hip hop!).

What could Susan do to spend quality time with her sister.

Parents

Matthew loves video games. Whenever he has any free time he can be found playing video games. His mom and dad like to eat together at meal times. His little brother usually joins them, but Matthew prefers to eat his meals on a TV tray while he is playing video games.

What could Matthew do to spend more quality time with his family?

Friends

Jonathan really enjoys spending time with his friends. Sometimes he feels like his responsibilities (homework, chores, family time, practice, etc.) don't leave much time for friendships.

How might Jonathan spend time with friends while still meeting his responsibilities?

Others

Makenzie knows that she can learn a lot from people outside her family and her circle of friends. For example, she has learned a great deal about her faith from her youth minister, and the foreign exchange student who has been staying with her neighbors is teaching her a foreign language.

How might Makenzie find opportunities to learn from others that are safe and fun?

Attention

This week we discussed the Right Relationship concept of Attention in the context of our religious education lesson.

Younger grade levels (PreK-2) discussed how God created us to need others and to need attention from adults. When we are very young, most of the attention we get from adults is from our parents, grandparents, or other caregivers. As we get older and are involved in activities and relationships outside our home, we are likely to need and receive attention from other adults (e.g. teachers, coaches, the parents of friends, group leaders, etc.) Students were encouraged to talk to their parents about the adults who spend time with them—the adults who pay attention to them.

Grades 3-6 discussed the concepts of “positive attention” and “negative attention.” They were encouraged to consider positive ways to seek attention, including telling their parents if they need attention. They were instructed to let their parents know who is paying attention to them and to seek help if the attention they are getting is negative.

At the middle school / high school level, students discussed attention as an important quality of right relationships, but also highlighted the value of balancing the attention given to all of the significant relationships in their lives. Right relationships don't demand all of our attention, but rather, help us attend to all of our relationships and use our gifts to attend to others.

If your child reports concerns about a relationship with an adult or peer, or if you would like more information about right relationships, please contact the Diocesan Child Protection Office (308)382-6565 or cpo@gidiocese.org.

Attentive Listening

A good way to show your children that you are paying attention to them is to use active listening skills. We use active listening skills every day without thinking much about it, but when we are trying to give a clear message that our children have our undivided attention, it is useful to make these skills very deliberate actions.

1. When your child starts a conversation with you, put aside other distractions.
2. Make eye contact.
3. Respond to what they are saying by:
 - Nodding your head
 - Saying “uh, huh”
 - Asking a question.
 - Repeating what they said.
 - Making a comment.

Quality Time

You have probably heard it said that it is not the quantity of time that we spend with our children that is important, but the quality of the time we spend with them that is significant. In our busy world it can be difficult to find quantities of time to spend together. In addition, the pressure to “multi-task” in most areas of our lives can have an impact on the quality of time we spend with our children. To improve the quality of time we spend with our children, we don't need to be engaged in any particular activity, achieve any specific goal, or create an image worthy of preserving in a scrapbook or posting on Facebook. We merely need to put aside past stressors, future worries, and competing thoughts; and focus on the here and now of our interaction. Select one of the precious few moments that you have to spend with your children. As you interact, take time to appreciate the feelings of the moment. Notice the details of the experience. Focus on the purpose of your interaction and your desire to give your children unconditional, positive attention.

DIOCESE OF GRAND ISLAND CHILD

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Diocese of
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Office

Activity Examples

Your Attention Please! Grades 3-6

Positive Attention Strategies:
STJU KAS
JUST ASK

TRSAT A
NVSETRCONIA
START A

CONVERSATION

OD MESTONHNG
OT EPHL ROTSRH
DO SOMETHING

TO HELP OTHERS

TIREW A TONE
WRITE A NOTE

DESN A XETT
SEND A TEXT

Negative Attention:
GTFNIGH
FIGHTING

TNGLTEI
ORTSHE SUE EM
LETTING

OTHERS USE ME

ERINABGK HET SLERU
BREAKING THE

RULES

MECRANIGS DAN
CRIGYV
SCREAMING

AND CRYING

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Other positive strategies: _____
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Dividing Attention Grades 7-12

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Add this to your Resource Binder

Please keep these materials and add them to the resource binder for your catechists.

If you have ideas for future issues, questions, or feedback on the materials you have received to date. Please contact the Diocesan Child Protection Office at (308) 382-6565 or cpo@gidiocese.org.