

Guarding Your Body

Quarter 4 | Lesson 10 | Life Skills

1. **Connecting:** Play a game to discover that people are the most valuable treasures.
2. **Teaching:** Learn how to handle physical attractions honourably (1 Peter 2:11; Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 5:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4, 7).
3. **Responding:** Consider how to treat people of the opposite gender with honour.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- Paper
- Coloured pencils
- Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:9–10

The Bible calls us to honour others above ourselves. One English translation of this verse says that we should “outdo one another in showing honour.” This is the only contest we are called to have with one another in Scripture! Outdoing one another in showing honour means respecting God’s creations—His people. This attitude is especially important where our attractions to people of the opposite gender are concerned. Pause and consider your own relationships—do you show honour to others? Do you show honour to yourself?

Today as you cover sensitive issues about guarding purity in the body and the mind, keep an attitude of showing honour at the centre. Before class, think to yourself: how can I honour my students as I teach them today? The answer to that question will help you to teach confidently and purposefully.

Lesson Time

1. **Connecting:** Play a game to discover that people are the most valuable treasures.

Greet your students as they come to class today. Ask them to share if they were able to use any of the tips they learned about guarding their hearts this past week. Invite them to share their experiences with others as you wait for the rest of the class to arrive. Then gather the class together to begin your lesson.

Have the students choose partners. Tell the teens to think of something precious or valuable. Each teen will use his finger to write the name of that valuable thing on his partner's back. Then his partner will try to guess what the word is. After a few minutes or when the partner has guessed the word, they should switch roles so the other teen is using a finger to spell a word on his partner's back.

Once both teens have guessed the words, discuss the game together. Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts for each question.

- **What valuable or precious thing did you write on your partner's back?**
- **Which of these things is the most valuable? Why?**

If no one mentions a human being or themselves, tell the students they missed the most valuable thing God created: a human being.

Human beings are God's most precious creation. He values humans so much that He sent Jesus to make a way for us to be adopted into His family forever. He created you with great care. He wants you to value yourself with the same care.

Invite teens to place their hands on their hearts. Have teens repeat: "I am valuable to God. He wants good things for me." Then have each teen turn to a friend and repeat: "You are valuable to God. He loves you and created you for an important purpose."

Just as God loves you and wants to protect you as His most precious treasure, He loves the person next to you and wants to protect him or her! He calls us to protect others as well. Listen to what Jesus said when He was asked which commandment in the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament) is the most important.

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:29–31

- **What does this Scripture tell us about how we should feel about others?**

It is important that you respect others as much as you respect yourself, which means you must respect and honour yourself too.

God sees each person as equally valuable. You are just as valuable as the person sitting next to you, and he or she is just as valuable as you are. You are all treasured by God, and He has called you to treasure each other. This is why you need to treat others with respect and honour—including those you are attracted to.

Last week we talked about emotional attractions or infatuation. This week we will talk about God's ideas about how to handle physical attraction so that you are honoured and you honour others.

2. Teaching: Learn how to handle physical attractions honourably (1 Peter 2:11; Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 5:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4, 7).

Physical attraction is often a part of infatuation. As we learned, it is normal for infatuations to come and go without lasting for long. It is an area that we need to learn how to deal with so that we are treating ourselves and others with honour.

During and after puberty—the time when a person’s body changes from a child to an adult—attraction to the opposite gender can be a new and strong feeling. It is normal for you to start to notice and be drawn to someone of the opposite gender. As we have talked about before, these feelings are not right or wrong. However we must choose how we will respond to these feelings. You may be attracted to someone emotionally and physically.

Physical attraction might cause you to like the appearance of someone and give you the desire to be near that person. For some, the attraction might be so strong that it can be difficult to control. You might wonder about kissing, touching, or engaging in sexual activities with the other person.

When intense feelings are involved, you may be tempted to express those feelings physically through sexual acts. There are many dangers to sex outside of marriage. Because these desires can be so strong, it is wise to spend time with the other person in a group setting to avoid sexual temptation.

Teacher Tip: Often cultural stereotypes that define masculinity and femininity are based on sexual attractiveness and sexual behaviour. If appropriate, mention some cultural characteristics that misrepresent the importance of sexual attraction in a relationship. For example, if a man is sexually active with multiple women, he is considered manly. Remind your students that true masculinity and femininity as defined by biblical values are related to respect and honour for the other person.

You might think that God thinks that sexual feelings are wrong. But God created sexual relations to bring a husband and wife closer together and to allow them to create children. Sexual relations are a unique intimacy that God gave as a gift within marriage. It is important to know that sexual feelings come with a big responsibility—to handle those feelings in a way that honours the person you are attracted to and yourself. Here are some good guidelines for handling physical attraction well.

1. Guard your honour. As we remember from our activity earlier, God’s most precious creations are people. He sees each person as incredibly valuable. He wants us to see each other that way too! You should always try to see others as God sees them—of value beyond measure.

Have a student read the verse aloud from the Bible.

*Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires,
which wage war against your soul.*

1 Peter 2:11

Teacher Tip: Explain to your students that when Peter referred to “foreigners and exiles,” he was talking about Christians. He reminds us that we are not part of the earthly world; we are only temporary visitors, since those who have accepted Jesus will someday live in heaven. Because of this, we should separate ourselves from the sinful desires of the world and not allow them to destroy us.

- **What do you think it means that “sinful desires” “wage war against your soul”?**

It means that your heart is divided between the kind of love God wants you to enjoy and the sinful desires that hurt you or others.

One sinful desire of the flesh that this verse is referring to is lust. “Lust” means having a very strong, selfish, sexual desire for someone. Letting lustful thoughts stay in your mind can create a war in your heart. You may feel divided between lustful thoughts about someone and honouring others and yourself as God intends.

Teacher Tip: Help your students understand that physical attractions are normal throughout life, but God wants us to direct those feelings toward a spouse so we can have healthy, safe, and caring relationships.

2. Guard your thoughts. Where our thoughts go, our actions will follow. So guarding our thoughts is important to help us honour others and ourselves as God intends. Remember the verse we learned in our last class about guarding our hearts? Well, watching over our hearts includes guarding our thoughts because the heart means our thoughts and emotions.

Have a student read Proverbs 4:23 aloud from the Bible.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.
Proverbs 4:23

Remember that your heart includes your emotions and your thoughts. Being physically attracted to someone is not a sin. But allowing your mind to dwell on what it would be like to act on those emotions can cause you to become obsessed so that all you can think about is your sexual feelings. It can keep you from experiencing God’s plan for your relationships.

3. Guard your eyes. Do not look at someone’s body in a lustful way. That person’s body is intended to be honoured and used by God for good purposes. It is only to be shared within a marriage. Let’s listen to what Jesus said about this topic.

Have a student read Matthew 5:28 aloud from the Bible.

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
Matthew 5:28

- **What do you think it means to “commit adultery in your heart?”**

When you look lustfully at someone, you have sinful thoughts and it is as though you have acted on those sinful thoughts before God.

Looking lustfully at others also includes pornography. Pornography is visual material that shows sexual organs or sexual acts or written material that describes these things. The visual material might be a magazine, a television program, a movie, or something you see on the internet. Lust can even be something that you imagine, like a fantasy. These types of images stimulate sexual feelings, which should be kept within marriage.

Pornography and fantasy can be tempting, and you may think it helps to relieve some of the sexual energy you have. But pornography does not satisfy. Pornography can cause you to want to do more than just look at another person's body. It is addictive, which means your desire for it will grow over time. You will begin to want to see images that are more and more exciting, and you may begin to engage in sexual activity.

4. Guard your future. God has good things planned for your future. Listen to this verse about His instruction about sexual purity:

Have a student read 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4, 7 aloud from the Bible. Show the Memory Verse poster, if you are using it.

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable ... For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.
1 Thessalonians 4:3–4, 7

- **What do you think it means to avoid from sexual immorality?**

Help students understand that it means staying away from things that awaken sexual desires outside of marriage.

God intends for you to learn to control your body and to treat yourself and others with honour. Even if you have not made honourable choices in the past, God will forgive you if you ask and can help you start anew.

For some teens, maybe someone has forced them into sexual acts. It is very important that you know that purity cannot be taken away by actions that someone else forces to happen, as in rape or molestation. Anyone who has been abused is still pure in God's eyes. Yet, they may feel dirty, ashamed, or worthless. God can heal anyone who has been molested or abused. If you or someone you know has experienced being forced into sexual acts, you can come talk with me privately.

Teacher Tip: If any teens come to you about being abused, offer comfort and prayer. If it is safe and appropriate, report the abuse to the authorities and try to get the youth into a safe situation. Read the Resource Article at the beginning of this unit for more information on helping those who have been abused.

God can help you with your physical attractions, whether you have questions and need wisdom, or if the physical attractions are difficult to control. You can share all of your feelings with God. He made your body and your mind, and He knows you completely. You can talk with Him about anything.

Teacher Tip: Remind your students that living a life of purity is more than avoiding sex outside of marriage. Purity includes what you think about and how you spend your time. Purity is not about following a list of rules. It is about loving God enough to honour Him with our whole lives. Purity and trust go hand-in-hand because choosing purity means that you trust that God's will and instructions are best.

You may or may not get married in the future. If you do not get married, you may think that means you will not experience love. But sex is only 1 way that love can be shared. There are many other meaningful ways to receive and show love. And you need to handle all kinds of relationships in an honouring way.

3. Responding: Consider how to treat people of the opposite gender with honour.

You are precious and valuable to God! The people you are attracted to are also precious and valuable to Him.

Optional:

Your students can complete these activities using coloured pencils and paper. If you are using the Student Pages, your students can draw on these pages.

End of Option

Lead your teens to an area with dry dirt where they can spread out. Ask the students to draw diamond shapes on the ground. Ask the teen boys to write “women” in the middle of their diamond shapes and the teen girls to write “men.”

God considers each person to be more valuable than even the biggest, most expensive diamond. Each one of you is more precious to Him than you can imagine. Because of this, He calls us to treat one another with honour.

Think of some ways you can honour people of the opposite gender. For each idea you think of, draw a short line from the outside edge of your diamond, as if the diamond is sparkling. Try to think of at least 4 things you can do to honour the opposite sex.



Now think of some ways you can treat yourself with honour. Remember that it is honouring to you, to others, and to God when you guard your honour, guard your eyes, guard your thoughts, and guard your future.

You might realize that you need to guard your thoughts about a young man you are attracted to. You may recognize that you are thinking lustfully about a young woman from church. How can you honour the other person and yourself in these situations? Write 1 or 2 words inside your diamond to share how you will treat yourself and others with honour.

Give the teens 1–2 minutes to think about and write their answers. Then invite the teens to pray about honouring themselves and others. When everyone has had time to pray, gather the teens back together.

- **What were some of the words that came to mind about how to treat and view people of the opposite gender?**

Some answers might be gentleness, respect, and admiration.

Ask your students to stand as you close with a blessing based on 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4, 7:

Blessing: May you call on God for strength to guard your body against sexual sin. May you know that He has called you for holy purposes. And when you struggle, know that He will help you.

Family Connection: Encourage teens to ask their family members, “Who treats you with honour? How does it make you feel?” They can also model honouring others, especially those of the opposite gender, at home and in the area.

Lead the teens in singing this quarter’s song, if possible.

“Reckless Love” by Cory Asbury: <https://youtu.be/Sc6SSHuZvQE>