

## ***Right Relationship Concept:*** **Know the Rules** **(Upper Level)**

### **Learning Objectives:**

- To introduce students to a particular classroom setting, to the catechist, and to each other.
- To build understanding that good rules protect them, facilitate positive social interactions, and are a natural part of growth in the Kingdom of God.
- To establish classroom rules and to review basic safe environment rules.
- To encourage communication with trusted adults when the students feel unsafe, threatened, disrespected or pressured to do things they know they should not do or do not want to do or when rules or boundaries are being violated.

### **Outline:**

- I. Introductions
- II. Opening Prayer
- III. Why Do We Have Rules?
- IV. What Are God's Rules / the Rules of God's Church?
- V. Establishment of Classroom Rules
- VI. Remembering the Rules
- VII. Code of Conduct (Core)**
- IX. Closing Prayer

### **Materials Needed:**

- Whiteboard, chalkboard and chalk or flip chart and markers
- Pens, pencils for class members
- Handouts:
  - PreK - 12: "Rules for Our Class"
  - Grades 4 – 12: "The Ten Commandments" and "The Tablets"
  - Grades 4 – 5: "The Rules According to Jesus"
  - Grades 6 – 12: "The Rules According to Jesus"
  - Grades 4 – 12: "The Rules of Right Relationships"
- Activities:
  - "Rules for Our Class": pens or pencils
  - "The Ten Commandments": pens or pencils

- “The Tablets”: pens or pencils
- “The Rules According to Jesus”: pens or pencils, Bible
- “The Rules of Right Relationships”: no special materials are needed

## **I. Introductions**

- Welcome each student to the classroom. Introduce yourself. Write your name on the board. Hand out a nametag to each student. Help each student with an introduction to the rest of the class.

## **II. Opening Prayer**

*In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

*Jesus, thank you for gathering us together as we begin a new year of (Religious) Education. Please be with us as we get to know each other and plan our year together. Help us to listen and share in our discussion today and throughout the year as we grow in community with one another and you.*

*In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

## **III. Why Do We Have Rules?**

### **Discussion**

- **Pose an open-ended question:** “*Why do we have rules?*” With older students, write responses on the chalkboard or flipchart. Students often respond: “so things are fair; so no one gets hurt; to keep everyone safe; to help everyone get along; to create a good place to learn”; etc. If no one identifies safety, positive learning environment, helping people get along, etc., in some form, add them.

## **IV. What Are God’s Rules / the Rules of God’s Church?**

### **Activity**

- Hand out “The Tablets” and ask the students to list all the commandments they can remember in order. Using “The Ten Commandments”, see who has remembered the most commandments.

- Hand out the “The Rules According to Jesus” and have the students identify the rules that Jesus suggested for how to get along with others and how to treat others in a loving manner. Invite students to identify how these rules can apply today, for example, how can we show that we love our neighbor as Jesus loves us?

## V. Establishment of Classroom Rules

### Discussion

- **Ask:** “*What rules do you have at school or at home?*” Record the answers on the board. **Say:** “*We need to set some rules for this class for many of the reasons you identified earlier (e.g. to keep everyone safe; to help us get along; to treat each other with respect; to help everyone feel accepted and welcome; to create an environment where we can learn; to help us follow Jesus’ example, etc.).* Point to rules written on the board and **ask:** “*Which of these rules do you think we should use in our classroom?*” and “*What other rules do you think we need?*” Circle from or add to the previous list. Most rules fall under a few categories that can be objectified with specific examples:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Example</u>
Physical acting out	Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Respect each other’s personal space.
Appropriate language	No name-calling or using language that is offensive.
Good learning environment	Listen. Take turns. Raise your hand. Be attentive.

- Often it is possible to re-group and re-phrase the rules identified by your class to resemble the general rules of your program, etc. This useful activity helps the students better understand the general rules and helps them feel connected as they see that the rules identified by the adult authorities are the same rules they identified as a class. As you summarize the rules for the class, write them on a poster-board that will remain in the classroom throughout the year.

### Activity

#### Grades 4 – 12; “Rules for Our Class”

In this activity, students make their own list of the classroom rules and draw or cut out pictures to illustrate an example of each. This is an important activity as it

- increases retention of the rules as well as providing “take home” information to share with parents.

## VI. Remembering the Rules

- After establishing classroom rules, it is important to identify how your students will remember the rules and be motivated to follow them. Classroom discussion may help you arrive at a strategy for implementing rules in your classroom.
- **Ask:** “*What helps you remember rules? What happens if you don’t follow the rules at school? At home?*” Encourage students to brainstorm ways to remember the rules and record their responses. If no one identifies “consequences” as a motivation/reminder for following rules, **say:** “*We sometimes need to experience consequences to remember to follow the rules.*” Look at the responses the students have provided and try to re-define them in terms of a consequence for your school/religious education program.
- Implement other strategies to help students remember the rules, e.g., post them in the room, give a warning, review rules before each class, provide reinforcement for following rules consistently, etc. Use the discipline policy set up by the school or religious education program.

## VII. Code of Conduct (Core)

- After identifying rules and expectations for students in the class, let the students know that ALL behavior is governed by rules.

### Discussion

- **Say:** “*Parents and other adults who interact with children are accountable to act responsibly in an ethical and moral way. Although it is not possible to delineate all specific behavior, some behavior is considered ‘acceptable’ and some is not.*”

### Activity

- Give each student a copy of the “Rules for Right Relationships” handout.
- **Communication. Say:** “*Human beings are born ‘hardwired’ to communicate. We communicate with verbal language, facial expressions, and body language. We communicate on many levels: intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Communication is important to human development and maturity.*”

- *The first rule of good communication is to ‘listen!’*
- *God gave us two ears and one mouth so that we should spend more time listening than we spend talking.*
- *Ideally, you should be able to tell your parents or other trusted adults about **ANYTHING** without fear of rejection or inappropriate discipline.*
- *It’s especially important for parents or other trusted adults to be receptive when you say something that is difficult to hear. That’s why it’s important to keep telling your parents or other trusted adults what you have to say until one understands you and helps you work through your feelings.*
- *On the other hand, it’s also important to realize that what you are saying may be pushing some “buttons” in the adults you are talking to and they may be reacting to their own feelings rather than yours. Be persistent! Keep telling trusted adults until one understands what you are saying and can help you.*
- *Timing a conversation is also important and all conversations should be mutually respectful and non-threatening.*
- *In contrast to good communication, some conversations leave us feeling threatened, hurt, embarrassed, abandoned, or with some other negative feelings about ourselves.*
- *On the other hand, some conversations may, on the surface, appear to be “good”, but are actually attempts to manipulate us into doing something we shouldn’t do or don’t want to do.*
- *Any conversation that involves threats, coercion to keep secrets or tell lies, or uses hurtful words is not good communication. If someone engages in this type of conversation with us, we need to let the person know we do not want to continue the conversation and tell our parents or other trusted adults so that they can ensure our safety.”*

## **Discussion**

- **Boundaries.** Say: “Boundaries are everywhere.
- *A concrete barrier creates a boundary between traffic moving in different directions.*
- *A fence marks the separation of two properties.*

- *Lines on a basketball court establish boundaries for determining ‘in’ and ‘out’.*”
- **Consequences.**
  - **Say:** *“Usually, when we violate boundaries, there are consequences.*
  - *A car driving on the wrong side of the road may cause an accident.*
  - *A home owner who constructs a garage on another’s property may be taken to court.*
  - *A player who steps ‘out of bounds’ in a game may cause a ‘turnover’.*”
- **Personal Boundaries.**
  - **Say:** *“Boundaries exist between human beings as well. When other people violate our personal space, we usually feel uncomfortable, uneasy, threatened.*
  - *Parents and other adults who respect children also respect their boundaries. They try to make all children feel welcome, beloved, and “special” but they never deliberately cross the boundaries of adult/child interaction without asking permission.*
  - *Our parents and other adults also have boundaries and they never invite children to cross those either. Children should respect adults’ boundaries, too.*
  - *Some adults may not have a clear understanding of what their boundaries are or they may not respect other people’s boundaries. They may attempt to “single” someone out to make them feel special. This type of behavior is inappropriate.*
  - *Giving someone expensive gifts or insisting that he or she spend time alone with them is not appropriate.*
  - *Certain adults may want to see or touch private parts of a child’s body or ask the child to touch/look at their body. **This type of behavior is wrong.***
  - *If we are ever in a situation where we feel our boundaries are being violated by anyone, we **need to let that person know that we want them to stop immediately.***
  - *We need to get away from them as soon as we can.*

- *We need to tell our parents or another trusted adult what happened so that they can take appropriate action to help keep us safe.*
- *Remember you are NOT responsible for anyone else's behavior. They are."*

### **VIII. Closing Prayer**

*In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

*Lord Jesus, thank you for all the "rules" you have given us. Rules help keep us safe, help us get along, and help us all feel welcome and accepted. Please help us to follow the rules you have given us so we all have the opportunity to learn more about you and our Catholic faith.*

*In the + Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*