

CULTURE OF RESPECT

**A COMMUNITY FOCUS
FOR GOOD CITIZENSHIP**

By Jessica Bouzianis

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

We have made this available at WeGottaLove for free personal use. Contact us personally with any questions or feedback.

This was created as a tool for families and small groups to be prompted into conversations and character building.

Week 1: Made in God's Image - Respecting Ourselves and Others

Opening and Short Discussion:

What does respect mean?

Can you think of a time someone made you feel respected?

Can you think of a time that you were disrespectful?

Pick 3 Kids to Read These Bible Verses:

“So God created mankind in His own image... male and female He created them.” – Genesis 1:27

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” – Mark 12:31

“It is God’s will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. For you are free, yet you are God’s slaves, so don’t use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.” 1 Peter 2:15-17

Key Idea: Respect is honoring the value God placed in ourselves and others.

Short Discussion:

- What does it mean to be made in God's image?
- How should that change the way we treat ourselves and others?

Activity:

“Scale of Respect”, draw a vertical line on the whiteboard, the top deserves the most respect and the bottom deserves the least. Ask the class and write on the scale: where would you rank President Trump on this scale? Patrick Mahomes? Dallas Cowboys? Kansas City Chiefs? Your church pastor? Your mom? Dad? Siblings? Checker at the grocery store? The garbage truck driver? The HOA person that couldn’t get the pool keys to work for an entire summer? Jesus?

Then erase it and draw a horizontal line. The truth is that God deserves the absolute highest respect in every way, and all of mankind are leveled. We have equal value as people. Sometimes we hold different positions of authority, we’ll talk about that another day, but when we look simply at the people, we are each God’s creation. Our hearts should have the same amount of honor and respect for the richest person in the world and the poorest, because we are made in the image of God.

Activity:

"Right Way Wrong Way Skits": Pick kids to act out a scenario below, first the wrong disrespectful way, then the right way. After each group acts, briefly debrief: "What changed when they chose respect?"

Sample Situations-

Self Respect (How do you respond to yourself?)

- You made a mistake on a test. (Ex: Disrespect: I'm such an idiot! Why can't I ever learn anything right? There's no point to any of this! I'm just dumb and no one will ever want to be friends with me. The world could end today, and it would be all my fault from doing so bad on that problem. Respect: Ok, deep breath, that was a difficult test and I messed that up a bit but let me see what happened. I'm learning so much, I am really smart, and I can do these hard things. Ok, I see that I forgot to drop this number down in the right place, and that messed up the rest of the answer. I'll be sure that I write more clearly so that same mistake doesn't happen. Father, thank You for helping me here, and thank You that You still love me even when it takes me a little longer to work these problems well.)
- You weren't picked for the team you wanted.
- You broke a really special Lego build of your friend's and feel really bad about it.

Respecting Others:

- You walk into a room where your mom is in the middle of a conversation with your sibling.
- You go to a pizza shop with a group of your friends and are ordering a pizza to share. They want pepperoni pizza, but you know it's pretty spicy and they don't like spicy food. How do you show respect when you disagree?
- You are playing a game your way, and someone else asks to join.
- Trying to figure out a game to play together, and you want to play patchwork while your friend wants to play chess.

Optional Homework:

-Respecting Your Self: Draw yourself and write 3 "God-made" things you're thankful for.

Closing:

Respect is honoring the value God placed in each person, both in ourselves and in others. As we step out of this class, let's all work to show respect to God, to ourselves and to the people around us. Do heart checks on yourself throughout the week and talk with your mom and dad about how you are doing. When you feel challenged to be respectful, try to take a minute to pause and ask for God's help. Remember, God loves you and is excited to help!!

Week 2: The Golden Rule - Respect Through Actions

Opening and Short Discussion:

What does respect look like?

How do you think we can show respect through our actions?

What is an example of disrespect through our actions?

Students to read following verses:

Matthew 7:12 - "Do to others what you would have them do to you..."

Philippians 2:3- "In humility value others above yourselves."

Luke 10:25-37: The Story of the Good Samaritan

Key Idea: Respect is shown in how we act toward others.

Short Discussion:

Why didn't the priest and Levite help?

How did the Samaritan show respect?

What would you do in that situation today?

Activity: "Kindness Role-Play" - Act out respectful vs. disrespectful behavior and take a pause to debrief after each scene.

Scene Prompts:

- You are on a walk and see a bag of dog poop someone left on the sidewalk.
- You are playing your favorite video game when you hear your mom carrying in groceries.
- We're having a big family dinner and see people getting up to go play, and they leave their trash on the table with plates and drinks half empty.
- You go to the bathroom and use the last of the toilet paper.
- You're playing at the park and another kid falls and scrapes their knee.
- Your parents are going outside to do yardwork, it's hot out and you don't want to go outside.

Activity: "Chain Reactions"

Have you ever noticed how your actions can cause a chain of reactions? From the story of the Good Samaritan, we are still being inspired today to help when we have an opportunity. We each have the opportunity to be respectful with our actions, or not, but either way there is nearly always someone watching. Will you choose to spread the love of God through respectful actions, or selfishness through disrespect? When you choose to help bring in groceries, you might inspire others in the family to lend a helping hand. There's an old saying that says, 'Many hands make the work light!' Just like in a domino chain, when one person shows respect, it can inspire the next person, and the next. Our actions affect others.

- Have students give an example of a respectful action, for each one they get to set up a domino. When you have 10 up, give a bad example and knock them down. The reminder through the lesson: Our actions have consequences that affect others. Because of the grace and mercy of God, we have forgiveness when we mess up. Remember, our actions are important!

Optional Homework Activity:

Respect through action: Create a comic strip showing the transformation from selfishness to kindness through respect.

Closing:

Respect is shown with our actions. As we wrap up our class time let's remember to open our eyes to the things happening around us. If we see a need, recognize the opportunity to spread some kindness through respectful action. Father, help us to love and respect ourselves and others through the way that we live!

Week 3: Respecting Parents and Authority

Opening and Short Discussion:

Does anyone know what “authority” means?

Today we’re going to talk about something very important—respecting the people God puts in authority, like our parents and leaders. Why do you think that matters?

Students to read following verses:

Ephesians 6:1-3 - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”"

Hebrews 13:17- “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

Romans 13:1-7- “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”

Key Idea: God asks us to respect those He's placed in authority.

Short Discussion:

- Why do you think God wants us to respect authority?
- What's harder: obeying quickly or obeying with a good attitude?
- Do our words matter if the “authority” doesn’t hear them? If you complain to your siblings or friends about someone else, do those words have power?

Activity: “Respect Role-Play” - Act out disrespectful vs. respectful responses to authority and take a pause to debrief after each scene.

Scene Prompts:

- Your music teacher asks you to do something that you don’t understand, and you are frustrated.
- Your basketball coach is giving instructions at practice, and your friend is being goofy.

- A parent asks you to turn off your show or video game and clean your room.
- Your mom is the teacher for your GLAS class and is giving a history lesson. You think she forgot to share some important information, and you want to know what you are having for dinner.
- You had to go to the store with your mom, and you didn't want to. You walk up to the door and an old woman with a cane is slowly walking in front of you toward the door.

Activity: "Follow the Leader"

A twist to "Simon Says".

Goal: Practice listening closely, following directions, and respecting leadership in a playful way.

How to Play:

1. **Choose a Leader** (start with an adult or teen, then rotate through kids).
2. The Leader gives commands — but here's the twist:
 - **If they say "Please" or "Respectfully,"** everyone must obey.
 - **If they don't,** no one should follow the command.
3. Start with simple actions:
 - "Please hop in place." ✓ (Do it!)
 - "Spin around." ✗ (No "please," don't do it!)
 - "Respectfully touch your toes." ✓
 - "Sit down!" ✗
4. **Switch leaders every few rounds** and let kids try leading. Remind them to speak clearly and lead respectfully.

Discussion Tie-In:

- "How did it feel when the leader didn't use respect?"
- "Why do respectful leaders make it easier to obey?"
- "What can we do if someone in authority doesn't act kind—but we still want to respect God?"

Spiritual Connection:

Link back to **Ephesians 6:1–3** — even when it's hard or inconvenient, respectful obedience is a way of honoring both our parents and God.

Optional Homework Activity:

Create a "Respect Code" poster: 5 rules they believe define respectful behavior toward parents and authority.

Closing:

Respecting authority can be really challenging to our hearts sometimes. It's important to remember that God sees everything, both the leader and the follower. He knows how we are acting and how we are feeling, which aren't always the same. This week let's put some focus on remembering that God loves order, and we can trust Him.

Father, thank You for the people You have placed in authority. We ask that You would give them wisdom to lead well, and help us to be respectful of their position.

Week 4: Respecting Time - Using God's Gift Wisely

Opening and Short Discussion:

Today we are going to talk about respecting our time.

If you had one extra hour in your day, what would you do with it?

What is one thing you wish you had more time for?

Do you think time can be “wasted”? Why or why not?

Students to read following verses:

Ephesians 5:15-16 NLT: “So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV: “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”

Colossians 3:23-24 NIV “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...”

Key Idea: Time is a gift from God. Respect of time means knowing when to act and when to wait.

Short Discussion:

Why do you think God wants us to be wise with our time?

What are some ways that we waste time?

What are some ways we can honor God with our daily routine of chores, school, and play?

Is rest bad?

Activity: "Time Jar Object Lesson"

Supplies:

Jar: represents the time in your class

Ping pong balls: represent priorities like getting out your notebooks, covering the lesson, going over your homework, etc.

Sand: represents questions and silly comments

Goal: Shows the importance of first things first.

Put one ping pong ball in, maybe that's starting to get set up for the lesson, then pour in the sand with loads of questions and comments. At the end try to put in the ping pong balls....they won't fit.

Empty the jar and start again (or have a second jar). Start with the priorities: come to class and get prepared, listen to the lesson, and go over any homework discussions.

Then, pour in the sand. It all fits!

Discussion: Your questions are valuable, but so is the class time. When we are able to use our time in a focused way, we can accomplish more and still have time to answer a lot of the questions.

Activity: “Time Choices: Acting Out”

Act out these different prompts. **Ask after each skit:**

- **Who** was affected by this time choice?
- **What** could the person do differently next time?
- **How** does this show (or not show) respect?
- **Then** act it out with the suggestions.
 - **“Just One More Minute”**
A parent asks a child to help with dinner or chores, but the child keeps saying “Just one more minute...” over and over.
 - **“Late to the Party”**
A friend is throwing a birthday party. One person keeps everyone waiting because they didn’t get ready on time.
 - **“God Time or Game Time?”**
A child plans to read the Bible before bed but plays video games so long they fall asleep instead.
 - **“Question Mountain”**
A student is listening to a new lesson in a class of 50 classmates, but asks every question that comes to mind.

Activity: “Minute-by-Minute Challenge” (No Supplies Needed)

Call out actions kids can do for 60 seconds to feel how long a minute is:

- Jog in place
- Hold a plank
- Whisper a prayer
- Freeze in silence

Ask:

- Did that feel long or short?
- What can you do for God in just 1 minute each day?

Optional Homework Activity: “Time Steward Challenge” (3-Day Track)

Do this at home:

- **Day 1:** Set a timer and spend 10 minutes doing something just for God (prayer, reading the Bible, writing a thank-you list).
- **Day 2:** Ask someone, “How can I help you today?” and do it right away with a happy heart.
- **Day 3:** Choose one time-waster and replace it with something kind, helpful, or meaningful.

Optional Add-On: Draw or write about how each day went. What did you learn about time?

Closing:

Time is one of the most precious gifts the Lord gives us. Time to live and breathe, time together, time to pray....time is something we get to steward and respect. Father, help us to use our time well, and to bring glory to Your name through the way that we live!

Week 5: Forgiveness and Reconciliation - Respect in Conflict

Opening and Short Discussion:

- What does it mean to forgive someone?
- Is it possible to forgive someone but still feel hurt?
- Why is it hard to forgive sometimes?
- How does it feel when someone forgives you?

Point to emphasize:

Forgiveness is not saying what happened was okay—it's choosing to let go of revenge or bitterness and trusting God with justice.

Students to read following verses:

- Colossians 3:13 (NLT): "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."
- Proverbs 15:1: "A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare."
- Bible Story: Joseph forgives his brothers (Genesis 45:1-15)

Key Idea: Respect continues even when someone hurts us-by choosing forgiveness.

Short Discussion:

- How did Joseph show respect to his brothers even after they hurt him?
- What makes forgiveness hard? What helps?
- Do you ever want to just pretend you didn't do something wrong, or that you didn't have a bad attitude, so that you don't have to apologize? Is this respectful?

Activity: "Repair the Heart" Puzzle

Materials: Big paper heart, tape.

Instructions:

1. Explain the big heart represents your heart, and when hurts happen it's like parts of our heart get cut or damaged. Cut the heart into 3–5 jagged pieces.
2. On each piece, write words that hurt or cause conflict (e.g., "lying," "ignoring," "shouting", "rejection").
3. Tape the pieces back together while writing healing words on top ("I'm sorry," "I forgive you," "Please forgive me", "I was wrong").

Discussion Prompt:

- How does it look? Is it possible for us to make this heart look brand new again with tape?
- What happens when we try to repair something that's been hurt?
- Can God heal our hearts and make them new?
- When we forgive or ask for forgiveness, and then pray and ask God to heal our hearts, the pain can actually get mended. He makes our hearts new.

Activity: “Forgiveness Freeze Frame” Acting it Out

Act out each prompt. Start with how to respond disrespectfully, then one of the teachers says *Freeze!* Ask how that could have gone better, then swap out an actor to act it out in a positive, respectful way.

- You promised to go play with your friend but decided you don’t actually want to play right now.
- You are having a really bad day. When your parents ask if your chores got done you respond poorly.
- Your sibling accidentally spilled water all over your paper that you spent all day working on.
- A friend borrowed something from you, returned it broken, and didn’t say anything about it.
- You pressured a little kid to play a game they didn’t want to, now they are upset.

Optional Homework Activity:

Draw a peace path with steps of what to do when you're hurt, or what to do when you need to apologize.

Closing:

It can be challenging to have respect when we have a conflict that we need to resolve. Remember, it’s important to be honest with yourself and with God about how your heart is really doing through it, but it is also important to take the step toward forgiveness. Forgiving does not mean that you are saying what happened was ok, but it means you are releasing it to Jesus so that your heart doesn’t grow bitter. Father, we ask that You would come help our community to love each other well through all the challenges we may face. Help us to forgive quickly. Thank You, Jesus, that You can heal our hearts and make us new again. Be with us, Lord, and help us to live this life healed and whole.

Week 6: Respecting God's Word and Creation

Opening and Short Discussion:

Let's do a quick review....we've talked this semester about creating a culture of respect. How have we talked about doing that?

- Respecting ourselves and others
- Respect through our actions
- Respecting authority and parents
- Respecting time
- Respecting through forgiveness and conflict

Today we are going to add on our final topic: respecting God's Word and creation. What is God's Word? What is creation?

Students to read following verses:

- Psalm 119:105 – "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
- Genesis 1:31 – "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."
- Psalm 24:1 – "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it..."

Key Idea: We show respect when we care for God's Word and the world He made.

Short Discussion:

- Why do you think caring for the world shows respect to God?
- How can we respect God's Word in our home?
- Can we respect God if we only care about His Word but not His Creation—or vice versa?

Activity: "End Scene" Acting it Out

Act out the following scenes in rude, disrespectful ways, then show the respectful way. Discuss how it feels to see respect/disrespect of God's Word and creation.

- You are trying to read the Bible but keep getting interrupted.
- You are going on a walk but a neighbor's trash bin fell over and the trash is going all over.
- Your class has a picnic at a park and the kids leave their trash all over. How do you respond?
- There's a group that is raising money to plant trees across your city, but you are trying to save money for a new something you really want.

Activity: “Protecting Creation”

Supplies: balloons

Steps: The balloon represents God’s Word and the world around us. The goal is to care for it, to protect it, to respect it, and to nurture it, by keeping the balloon from hitting the ground. Divide into two groups. Sit in a big circle, and tap the balloon around or across however it goes, trying to keep it in your circle and off the ground. Each time you tap the balloon, shout out an action that supports the goal. Ex: Read the Bible, pray, plant a tree, water a flower, etc. What creative ideas can you come up with??

Optional Homework Activity:

Find a way to respect the world around you through community service. This could be volunteering in a soup kitchen, or maybe its spending time picking up trash. When you’re done, reflect with a picture or short paper...how does it feel to respect God’s creation?

Closing:

A culture of respect affects God’s kingdom. We have learned some useful tools this semester to help check our own hearts and our responses toward each other, to see the value of people in all sorts of roles, and to use our time and resources in ways that help to build God’s kingdom. We have covered a lot, but we have not covered it all. Respect is something that we all get to choose to grow in for the rest of our lives!

Father, we thank You for the wonders of Your creation and Your Word. We ask for You to come set a seal upon our hearts that is love and respect for all that You are doing. Help us to grow with You and in You, and to cultivate well a culture of respect.