

ST. ANN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 9

April

"PEACE, PATIENCE & VIOLENCE

After reading through Chapter 11 notes on *Peace & Patience*, formulate a lesson plan that works for you. The following notes can provide a discussion guide for you.

Are there fights at your school?

How often?

What are some of the reasons for the fights?

What about in middle school – were there fights there too? About what?

Anybody get seriously injured?

When I was growing up, there were fights between _____

When there are fights, is it all boys, or are girls getting involved too?

Why is that?

As you can see – violence is a fact right here – right where you are. It isn't just something that exists somewhere else.

Would you agree or disagree – "Violence is a way of Life"

Why or Why Not?

What do you think it means?

Real life violence seems just like the video images – and it ceases to be real.

As a result of this kind of conditioning, we see kids in the news all the time now doing things that they never would have done years ago.

Kids are shooting, killing, bombing – you name it. School violence is up; violence at home is up > did you hear about the 13 year old who just killed his mother not too far from here?

She told him it was time to come home because it was past his curfew. So he went into the house and struck his mother, and then, when she was on the ground, he jumped on her again and again, including on her head.

She's dead now – because she told her kid it was time to come in.

Columbine, the recent Indian Reservation shootings – kids are just more and more violent and indifferent to death & destruction. It is amazing and sooo sad.

What are we taught in our Christian faith about how to react to the violence of others?

You might recall the Old Testament where there was lots of violence and vengeance. A whole lot of smiting going on.

A lot of people look at that and say “See – even the Bible condones and uses violence. Didn't the Jews have to fight to take over Israel from the people that were already there?”

And it's true. But when Jesus came to earth He showed us a new way – a non-violent way of dealing with conflict. We're supposed to turn the other cheek – not give violence in return for violence.

Which do you think is harder – more manly, if you want to call it that – to take the insults without striking back or hitting back even harder?

Which is easier – really think about it.

You remember that some of the old legal codes talked about "An Eye For An Eye, and A Tooth For A Tooth"?

What did that old saying mean?

Do you agree with its premise?

The idea that you have to retaliate equally (or even more forcefully) when somebody does something to you?

Why? Why do you have to strike back? What do you hope to accomplish?

Will it really make you feel better?

Will it really end whatever problem you may have with the other person?

Is it a sign of weakness to walk away?

Says who?

Think about the movies you go to see: How many are nothing more than non-stop violence? You like those don't you - get to see someone else acting tough and maybe wishing you could be that way too.

How about video games? Not too many of those premised on violence, death, and destruction are there? You play those? Why?

Do they give you a feeling of power over things that you might not feel too much in real life?

Does mastery of those games increase your real-life power in any way?

Or does it just waste time and act as a distraction from whatever else you might supposed to be doing?

Would you agree that the more violence and destruction you see in movies, on video games, and even in the news the more you get accustomed to it?

It becomes easier to watch it and not be bothered?

You know what that is called?

CONDITIONING - you get accustomed to and conditioned to the violence so it doesn't bother you.

It then takes more and more gore, violence, and nasty stuff for you to be "entertained", right?

If you ever stopped to think about that, it's pretty scary.

The conditioning leads to a lack of feeling at all - you go numb. Death and violence stops bothering you, even in real life.

It definitely shows *more* strength and character if you are able to walk away. Lashing out in response is easy. It comes naturally. Walking away is a whole lot less natural.

Let's put ourselves in Jesus' shoes for a moment. Really think about if this were you:

- he was just betrayed by one of His best friends
- He was hated in His hometown and a lot of other places, just for telling the truth
- He was abandoned by His buddies when things got tense; they just ran away and left Him to face the high priests and Romans by Himself
- He was sentenced to a horrible and torturous death for nothing
- He was whipped and tortured
- And finally, He was nailed to a tree

You think He wasn't angry? You think He wanted to lash out and fight back? Wouldn't you say He had good reason to?

But did He? With all the power and might at His disposal, He chose non-violence.

What would you have done if you were Him?

Our goal in life is to imitate His behavior – to reign in our natural impulse to be violent and retaliatory. It certainly isn't easy, but it is possible – with practice.

Unfortunately, our culture, our games, our entertainment, and even our government are all telling us just the opposite.

When you get angry, don't just react. Wait a while. Think (not about the 'wrong' that you just endured) about calming down. Cool off.

Be patient. Your anger will go away if you let it. You really can think better and more rationally when you are calm. Prayer is actually a very good way to get help too.

Have you ever reacted violently to a situation and then regretted it? Why or Why Not?

When you look back on the situation after time has gone by, has your perspective on it changed at all? How so?

As you get older and get involved in drinking and drugs, (some of you), you're going to find that the incidents of violence and fighting will increase.

Kids get drinking and they lose their inhibitions and fear. They get "beer muscles" and want to flex them. Fights are a whole lot more common in bars and at parties after people get loaded. You've got to be careful, cause even if you are not the violent type, you may be with other people who get stupid when they drink, and you'll find yourself in a mess.