

**Respect for the Opposite Sex, 5 Lessons, to be taught in 5 separate but consecutive lessons
Part of the Series, Character-Building from the Bible**

Character Trait: Respectfulness

Opposite: Disrespectful, lewd (in relation to the opposite sex)

Other forms of the word: respect n. (You should show respect.)
 respect v. (You should respect your elders.)
 respectful adj. (You should be a respectful son or daughter.)
 respectfully adv. (Speak respectfully to your mother.)

RESPECT FOR THE OPPOSITE SEX --5 Lessons

Respect for the opposite sex or gender—definition:

Showing an attitude and behavior of purity and honor because of the position God gave someone as a woman or a man created in His image.

Rhythmic repetition to be used for this definition throughout the lessons:

An **at**-ti-tude of **pu**-ri-ty and **ho**-nor
Respect! **Men** to **women** and **wo**-men to **men**.

Song for the series:

God made us all
Male or female
And it's good
It's very good.

It's good to be a woman.
It's good to be a man.
Yes, it's good.
It's very good.

We respect each other
As brothers and sisters
And it's good.
It's very good.

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1. God created us male and female and said it was good.

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 1:24-28,31, 2:7, 15, 18-24

Memory Verse for Lessons 1& 2: Genesis 1:27-28

Lesson Aim:

At the conclusion of this lesson students will understand that it is good to be men or women because that is the way God created us. Therefore they will respect their own gender and respect those of the opposite gender as well.

Beginning the Lesson:

We all know that human beings, and even most animals, come in two kinds—male and female.

How did this happen? Is one better than the other? Some people do shameful and hurtful things with the male and female parts of their bodies. Does this mean that our male and female bodies are bad? Today let's look into the Bible and see what God intended when He made us male and female.

Main points of the lesson, with participation:

- On the sixth day of creation, God made all kinds of animals. He made them to reproduce after their own kind, which means he made them male and female so that they could reproduce. He said that it was good. (Genesis 1:24)
- Then, still on the sixth day, God purposed in Himself to make man (humanity) in His image. (Genesis 1:26a)

Participation: Rhythmic repetition, speaking to one another: "Let us make **man** in our **im-age**."

- He purposed to make man (humanity) to rule over all the animals. (Genesis 1:26b)

Participation: Rhythmic repetition, students repeating each phrase after you. Use appropriate gestures with the repetition:

"Let them rule" (Let them rule)

"O-ver the fish" (O-ver the fish)

"O-ver the birds" (O-ver the birds)

"O-ver the cat-tle" (O-ver the cat-tle)

"O-ver the creep-ing things" (O-ver the creep-ing things)

"O-ver them all!" (O-ver them all!)

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- So God did create man (humanity) in His image. He created both male and female. (Genesis 1:27)

Participation—Rhythmic repetition. Boys stand up when the group says male, girls when they say female:

So God cre-**a**-ted man/ **in** His own **im**-age
Male and **fe**-male, **He** cre-**a**-ted **them**.

- Then God blessed them (plural—both male & female) and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill and rule the earth. (Genesis 1:28)

Participation—Rhythmic repetition with gestures.

You are **two**. (Hold up one finger on each hand.)
Now **mul**-ti-**ply** (Flash all ten fingers twice as you speak.)
Fill and **rule** the **earth**. (Circle motion, then point as if giving an order.)

- God saw all He had made and said it was very good. (1:31) This includes male and female.
- More detail about how God did this is found in chapter 2. Chapter 1 is an outline of God's creation bringing us up to the most important part—the creation of humankind. Chapter 2 focuses on the creation of humankind in more detail.
- God created the male from the dust of the ground, then breathed life into his nostrils and he became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7) This gives more detail about how God created the first man.

(Lead the whole group in pretending to scoop dust from the ground and form it into a man. Lead the whole group in pretending to blow life into the man.)

- God placed the male in a beautiful garden to care for it. (Genesis 2:15)
- God purposed not to leave the male alone, but to make a helper comparable to him. (Genesis 2:18)

Participation—Rhythmic repetition:

It is not **good** for **man** to be a-**lone**.
I'll **make** him a **hel**-per who is **like** him—he'll **like** her!

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- God knew Adam’s need for a mate, but Adam didn’t yet realize it, so God helped him see his need by having him name all the animals. In doing so, Adam realized that there was no animal suitable to be his companion and mate. (Genesis 2:19-20)

Participation: Let several students, one at a time, pretend to be different animals, and let the group name them.

- God caused Adam to sleep while He took one of his ribs and fashioned a woman. (Genesis 2:21-22a)

Participation: Group sketch. All the boys pretend they are growing drowsy and falling asleep. You say, “God is now doing an operation on you. He is removing a rib. He is making something wonderful out of it. He is closing up the wound. You are waking up. Look! (Pointing to the girls.) A companion suitable for you. One like this can someday become your wife.)

- God brought the woman to the man. This was the first marriage. (Genesis 2:22b)

Participation: Group sketch. Pretend you are God escorting the woman to the man.

- The man recognized the woman as being part of himself. (Genesis 2:23)

Participation: Rhythmic repetition. **Woo!** This is **wo**-man!

- Therefore God ordained that a man leave his parents and cleave (stick) to his wife in marriage. (Genesis 2:24)

- So from the beginning, God created us male and female. That is the way He wanted us to be, and it is good.

Participation—Sing the song for the series.

Application:

Without saying anything negative about boys, let the girls name three things that are good about being a girl.

Without saying anything negative about girls, let the boys name three things that are good about being a boy.

Invitation:

Boys and girls, men and women—Jesus loves us all. He died for us all and He wants to be your Saviour. Have you asked Him? He is waiting.

2. Lesson 2: God gives us rules as males and females.

Lesson aim: To show that God gave us rules to show us how our maleness & femaleness could always remain a blessing. These rules are all based on the idea that God made our maleness and our femaleness for marriage. Sex is a blessing, but only when used in the way God intended it. Anything else is a sinful perversion of God's good gift.

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 20:14 & 17

- Transition- God created male and female good. He performed the first marriage and commanded the man and woman to multiply or to have children. But sin entered the world and ruined all the things God had created good. People got confused and more and more rebellious, doing things as male and female that did not honor God. These hurtful practices brought great pain into their lives.
- God gave us rules to show us how to live in ways that would please Him and would be good for us.
- God gave us many rules about how to act as men and women. (In appropriate ages mention the following, but if the ages of the children are not appropriate, then omit all of part of the following: *God intended male and female to come together in marriage. In marriage, sex was a blessing. God gave many rules warning us not to use this precious gift outside of marriage.*

Participation—As I mention each of these rules, you respond with “Respect! Respect! Respect!”

- *People of the same sex were not to have sex together (Leviticus 20:13).
Students respond: Respect! Respect! Respect!”*
- *People were not to have sex with near relatives (Leviticus 20:11-12).
Students respond: Respect! Respect! Respect!”*
- *They were not to have sex with animals (Exodus 22:19).
Students respond: Respect! Respect! Respect!”*
- *They were not to have sex before marriage or outside of marriage. (Exodus 20:14).
Students respond: Respect! Respect! Respect!”*

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- *This was all a part of respecting one another as men and women, and respecting the gift of marriage.)*
- For all ages—God gave us the Ten Commandments.

Participation: Hold up ten fingers.

- In the Ten Commandments, God says that people who are married are supposed to be faithful to one another. (Exodus 20:14)
Participation: Clasp the ring finger. Say “Be faithful! Respect my mate!”
- He says they are not supposed to even think about being with someone else who is not their mate. (Exodus 20:17)
Participation: Grasp their heads. Say “Be respectful in my thoughts.”
- When marriage partners love and respect one another, they are faithful to one another. The family stays together and is happy and blessed.

Participation: Sing the song for the series.

Application: Read these scenarios, or others you create. The students respond, “Respect” or “No respect.”

- Abigail has agreed to a trial marriage with her boyfriend. If it works, they plan to get married.
- Kwame’s friends are all experimenting with girls, but Kwame has decided to save all of that for the special girl who will be his wife.
- Mr. Danu orders his wife around in a very harsh voice.
- Mr. Mensah buys expensive things without even talking it over with his wife. He said he is the boss in his home and he can do whatever he wants.
- Kwesi has been visiting prostitutes. He says it is OK since he will not marry them and they are just prostitutes anyway.
- Mrs. Arthur tries hard to prepare food that pleases her husband.

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- Emmanuel's friends have developed some nasty names by which they refer to girls when no one else is around.
- Barbara has begun wearing clothes that show as much of her body as possible. She thinks it looks like the models and it attracts the attention of boys.

End by praying that God would help us to appreciate one another and show respect for one another.

Invitation: God has given us His rules, and none of us has followed them perfectly. Only one person did that—Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God. He wants to save you and forgive all your sins. If you have not yet taken Him as your Saviour, remember that you can do it anytime, anywhere, just by calling on Him and asking Him for forgiveness.

3. Lesson 3--God wants men to respect women.

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph showed respect to Mary.

Memory Verse for Lessons 3-5: I Timothy 5:3-4

Lesson Aim: At the conclusion of this lesson, the students will understand that men should show respect to women and boys to girls.

Beginning the Lesson:

Show a sketch of a very domineering man who is always putting down his own wife, his daughters and other women as well.

Ask, What do you think of this man's actions? Is he showing respect to his wife? To his daughters? To other women in his life? Is it "manly" to mistreat women? Does God care how men treat women?

Transition:

In today's story, we will see how one man showed great respect to a very special woman in his life. Because of it, he is considered a great man whom we still remember even today. His name is Joseph. At the beginning of our story he was promised in marriage to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Main points of the story, with participation: Matthew 1:18-25

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- Mary had been betrothed to Joseph. This was a very serious promise that they would be married. It was more serious than having a fiancé. (Matthew 1:18)

Participation: Rhythmic repetition. Repeat with clapping & swaying:

“Ma-ry, my be-lov-ed, I pro-mise I’ll mar-ry you.” (repeat)

- Before they came together, she was found with child. They had never been together as husband and wife—nothing even close to it. They had both kept themselves pure, waiting for marriage. Yet Mary found that she was pregnant. 1:18

Participation: Together, students make gestures to show that this turn of events is confusing and they don’t understand.

- This child was of the Holy Spirit. The baby was not the result of a sexual union. This pregnancy was something special—something unique—something that God Himself had done. 1:18

Participation: Sing or chant together: “Something special, something special from God.”

- Joseph naturally thought that the pregnancy must mean that Mary had been unfaithful. He knew the child was not his, since they had never been together. How disappointed he must have felt! It looked like Mary had betrayed him. 1:19

Participation: Together, students act like Joseph being upset and disappointed.

- Joseph wanted to do what was right, and he didn’t want to embarrass Mary or make her a public example. He didn’t want to bring her shame. He wanted to respect Mary, yet he also felt he could not marry her, since the baby was not his. So he was planning to break the betrothment and put her away quietly and privately. That would bring her the least shame of any plan he could think of. Even in his disappointment, she was showing respect for Mary. 1:19

Participation: Student repeat: “I’ll put her away privately. Shhhh!”

- Joseph was thinking about these things when an angel of God appeared to him in a dream and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. The child within her was not a result of unfaithfulness, but was from the Holy Spirit. 1:20

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Participation: Sing or chant together: “Don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her precious baby comes from God.”

- The angel told Joseph Mary would give birth to the promised Savior, the One who would save His people from their sins. He told them to call the baby “Jesus”, meaning “Saviour.” 1:21

Participation: Sing or chant together: “Mary will give birth to the Saviour, Jesus.”

- All this happened just as the prophet Isaiah had written that it would happen. It had been recorded in the Bible hundreds of years before the event. 1:22-23

Participation: Repeat together, pointing far away: “God’s Word said it would happen like this, long, long ago.” (Repeat)

- Joseph had seen the angel in a dream from God. When he got up, he did just as the angel had told him to do. He dropped all his plans to put her away privately. He went ahead and got married to Mary. 1:24

Participation: Sing or chant together: “So they got married, as the angel said.” (repeat)

- Even though Joseph went through the wedding ceremony and began to live in the same home with Mary, the Bible says he did not have marital relations with her (use whatever phrase for this you think your children will understand) until after Jesus was born. This baby was very special, and the mother of this baby deserved special respect. Joseph surely desired to make love to Mary, just as any new husband would desire to do so. But he brought those urges under control. Out of respect for Mary’s role as the mother of the promised Saviour, he did not sleep with Mary until after Jesus was born.

Participation: Hold up two fingers, one representing Mary and one Joseph. Hold them a little apart. Repeat: “They didn’t come together, till Jesus had been born.”

- Conclusion--Joseph is a good example of a man who respected women, and showed it in the way he treated his own fiancé and later his wife, Mary.

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Application:

Let the boys try to think of ways to show respect for girls. List at least six ways. Then ask the girls if they feel these ways really show respect. Ask them in what other ways they would like boys to show respect for them.

(For older students)—Joseph was a normal man with normal desires for a woman, but he controlled those desires toward Mary. How can young men today control their desires for a young woman so as to honor God?

Ask the boys to try to show respect for women and girls this week.

Invitation:

We all need God's help to live like we should. God gives us the power of His Holy Spirit when we trust Jesus as our Savior. If you have not taken Him yet, He is still waiting for you. Why not take Jesus today?

4. Lesson 4 God wants women to respect men.

Follow up from last week's lesson: Ask the boys who tried to show respect for women and girls last week. Let one or two tell about their experience in one minute or less.

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 2:13-23 Mary showed respect for Joseph.

Lesson Aim: At the conclusion of this lesson, the students will understand that respect for the opposite gender works in both directions. As men should respect women, so women should also respect men.

Main points of the Lesson, with participation:

- After Jesus was born, and after the wise men had come from the East to worship Him and then left again, God sent an angel to speak to Joseph in a dream. Matthew 2:13a

Participation: Ask all the boys to lay their head on their hand as if they are sleeping. Ask the girls to pretend they are an angel, put their hands around their mouths, and call, "Joseph! Joseph! God has a message for you!"

- An angel of God warned Joseph in a dream that he should flee to Egypt with Mary and the child Jesus because Herod would look for Jesus and try to kill him.

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Matthew 2:13b

Participation: With the boys still pretending to be asleep, let the girls repeat after you: “Arise! / take the young Child and His mother/ flee to Egypt/ and stay there/ until I bring you word/ for Herod will seek the young Child/ to destroy Him.”

- God did not speak to Mary, although she was the mother who gave birth to Jesus. God spoke to Joseph as the head of the family and gave instructions for them all. Matthew 2:13.

Participation:

Joseph did what the angel told him, and Mary followed Joseph’s lead as the head of the family. That very night, they set out for Egypt. Matthew 2:14

- Mary stayed with Joseph and the child Jesus in Egypt until Herod died. Because she showed this respect to her husband as leader of the home, their lives were spared and the Bible prophecy was fulfilled that said, “Out of Egypt have I called my son.” Matthew 2:15

Participation:

Rhythmic repetition:

“**Ma**-ry re-**spec**-ted **Jo**-seph as the **lea**-der of their **home**” (repeat)

“She **lis**-tened and their lives were **spared**.” (repeat)

- King Herod had told the wise men to come back and tell him where the baby Jesus was, but they did not do so. They went home another way. Matthew 2:16a

Participation: Have the group act out refusing the expected route home and going back another way.

- Herod was very angry about that, so he ordered all boys 2 years old and under to be killed throughout Bethlehem and all around it. He felt sure then that the baby Jesus would be one of those to die. Matthew 2:16b

Participation: We don’t want the group to pretend to be the evil King Herod, so let them act out the fear and grief of parents who heard about Herod’s order.

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- This also fulfilled another prophecy that had been written in the Old Testament part of the Bible, a prophecy about great weeping and mourning for children who were killed. Matthew 2:17-18

Participation: Hold their hands together and open like a Bible. Repeat: “The Scripture—it’s **al**-ways true.” (Repeat)

- After Herod died, an angel again appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that they could return to their homeland, for the one who sought to kill Jesus was dead. Matthew 2:19-20

Participation: Let the boys pretend to be Joseph sleeping and the girls act out the part of the angel telling him he could return home.

- So Joseph did what the angel said. He and Mary and little Jesus returned to their homeland. Again, the angel spoke to Joseph as the head of the house, and again Mary obeyed and followed him. Because she showed Joseph this respect, the family was happily settled in their homeland once again. Matthew 2:21

Participation: Let the boys act out telling Mary about the dream, and the girls saying, “Yes, Joseph, I will follow you.”

- But on the way home, they heard that Herod’s son was ruling. A third time an angel of God warned Joseph in a dream. A third time Mary respectfully followed Joseph as the head of the family. Matthew 2:22

Participation: Let the boys pretend to be Joseph asleep and the girls pretend to be the angel warning David about Herod’s son. Then let the boys act out telling Mary about the dream and the girls act out Mary saying, “Yes, my husband, I will follow you.”

- So Mary, Joseph and Jesus settled in Galilee to the north. They settled in a town called Nazareth. This also fulfilled a prophecy that said, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” Matthew 2:23

Conclusion:

Mary is a good example of a woman respecting her husband. Although God had given her a tremendous privilege to bring His Son into the world, she still respected and followed the leadership of her husband as the head of the family.

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Women are not obliged to obey every man, but they can practice speaking and acting respectfully to men. This brings honor to God.

Application:

Make a list of six ways women commonly disrespect men, three ideas contributed by girls and three by boys. Ask for students to act out an alternative respectful way of dealing with each issue. Ask the girls to try to show respect for boys and men this week.

Invitation:

We all need God's power to live in ways that please God. This power comes to us in the person of the Holy Spirit when we receive Jesus as Savior. Have you taken Jesus yet? If you have done so recently, please write "I took Jesus" on a note and slip it to me any time. If you are still thinking about it, what is holding you back? Jesus is ready to receive you when you are ready to say "yes" to Him. Why not ask Him to be your Savior today?

5. Lesson 5 Jesus showed respect for women.

Lesson Scripture: John 8:1-11 Jesus showed respect for the woman caught in adultery by giving her fair treatment and hope.

Lesson Aim: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will see Jesus as the perfect example of treating women with respect.

Beginning the Lesson:

We have seen that Jesus' foster father, Joseph, was a wonderful example of showing respect to women in the way he treated his betrothed, Mary. Yet in all of the Scripture and in all of history, there is one example that shines out above all others. As he grew and became a man, Jesus the Messiah was perfect in the way He treated women. Never has any man shown more kindness and more respect to women. There are many examples, but today let's look at just one of those examples. Let's look at the Gospel of John, chapter 8.

Main points of the lesson, with participation:

- Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, a quiet place where He and His disciples often went to pray. John 8:1

Participation: As a group, pretend they are walking up a hill.

- Jesus might have spent all night praying there, as He sometimes did, for early in the morning He went down to Jerusalem and went into the temple. There, many people started coming to Him. In the custom of teachers, Jesus sat down and taught them. John 8:2

Participation: Have the students sit down if possible, and make motions with their hands, moving their mouths silently as if they are teaching.

- The religious teachers, the scribes and Pharisees, brought to Jesus a woman who had been caught in adultery (caught being unfaithful to her husband) and sat her down in the midst of the crowd. John 8:3

Participation: Have the students pretend they are the crowd watching the woman being brought in. They should act shocked.

- They claimed she was caught in the very act of adultery. John 8:4

Participation: Ask students to hold up fingers to show how many people are involved to commit adultery. Then ask them to raise fingers to show how many people were brought to Jesus. Ask a student to explain what is wrong here. (A man had to be involved for her to be caught in adultery, yet no man was brought with her. She was brought alone to face charges. Apparently the man was not charged.)

- They said that Moses in the Law had said anyone caught in adultery was to be stoned. They asked what Jesus said, trying to find an excuse to accuse him of some wrongdoing. John 8:5, 6a

Participation: Half the students should pretend they are throwing stones, crying, "Moses said to stone her." The other half should open their hands and ask, "What do you say?" Repeat three times.

Then they all rub their hands together and say, "Now we've trapped him. He **has** to say something wrong!" Repeat three times.

- Instead of answering, Jesus stooped down and wrote something on the ground with His finger.

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Participation: No one knows for sure what Jesus wrote. What do **you** think He wrote? Could He have written a list of their sins? Could He have written the name of the man? (Let a few students give their ideas.)

- They kept on asking Jesus what He thought, so finally He got up and said, “Let him who is without sin amongst you cast the first stone.”

Ask your assistant or a teacher how Jesus’ answer outsmarted them. (He did not deny the law that required stoning, in fact, He upheld it. But He gave them the responsibility of carrying it out based on how well they themselves had kept the law. If someone picked up a stone, he would be claiming to be perfect, without sin.)

- No one picked up a stone. Then the religious leaders began to leave. The oldest left first. Ask your assistant why this was. (Probably because the older they were, the more sins they had.) Finally even the youngest left. John 8:9a

Notice that the religious leaders wanted to focus on the woman, to shame her, to strip her of dignity. Jesus did not focus on shaming the woman. Instead, He focused on the sins of the leaders. Suddenly, they were the ones who felt embarrassed and ashamed.

Participation: Let the group pretend they are the religious leaders. One by one, let them hang their heads in shame and “walk” away, using hands for walking, heading in different directions.

- Then Jesus and the woman were left alone. This was Jesus’ chance to really make her feel ashamed and worthless. John 8:9b

Participation: Let the group ask the question of one another in rhythm: “**Will** He make her/ feel a-**shamed**?” (Repeat several times.)

- Jesus said to her, “Where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”

Participation: Let the group ask in rhythm: “**Where** are those /ac-cu-sers of yours?” (Repeat several times.)

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- The guilty woman answered, “No one, Lord.” Why did she call Jesus, “Lord”? That term meant that she was bowing to His authority, that she was agreeing to follow Him and obey His teachings. John 8:11a

Participation: Let the group repeat rhythmically: “She **called** Him **Lord.**”

- What would Jesus say to her? Would He say, “No matter what they say. I do condemn you. You are a wicked, filthy sinner. Get out of my sight!”? Would Jesus say that?

No, Jesus knew that although she had sinned, she was God’s precious creation, made in His image. She had been shown no respect by the religious leaders, but Jesus wanted to show her respect, to show her kindness.

He said to her, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more.”

Jesus did not come to be her judge. He came to be her Savior. He did not come to be OUR judge. He came to be our Savior.

He did not excuse her sin. He said, “Go, and sin no more.” John 8:11b

Participation: Students say, “Respect. Respect. Respect. Respect. Go, and sin no more.” Repeat several times.

- Can’t you imagine how that woman must have felt? The perfect, sinless, holy Son of God had said that He did not condemn her. He had forgiven her. Can’t you just feel the respect flowing back into that poor sister’s veins? Can’t you just see her back straightening, her head coming up, her shoulders moving back? Can’t you just see her saying, “I will sin no more! I will sin no more!”?
- Respect can do great things for a person. When you treat a person with respect, you help someone see himself as God sees him. You look past the sin that has beat him or her down, and see underneath the person of value that God created.
- Never did Jesus ever speak a word of disrespect toward any woman. He saw women as creatures of value made by God in His own image. Will we treat women and girls with respect as Jesus did?

Application: Help the students compile a list of ways that men and boys commonly show disrespect toward women. Make sure that both genders contribute to the list. Then let students act out the

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opposite of the disrespectful ways shown, demonstrating how to show real respect.

Invitation: Jesus is the best example of showing respect to women, but He is much more than that. Have you ever considered what Jesus said about Himself? He said He was God's Son who came down from heaven, that He lived eternally with His Father, that He came to be our Saviour. Have you believed on Jesus and asked Him to be your Savior? If not, He is waiting for you to make up your mind. Will you decide to follow Him today?