

TOPIC: "Reacting vs. Acting."

OBJECTIVE: exploring how the students express emotions and examining the idea of striving for emotional maturity.

MATERIALS: a small rubber ball, work sheets and pencils.

I. Brainstorm the question: What are different ways of expressing our emotions. Have students pick different emotions and ways of expressing them. For Example, if you are sad, you can cry or not talk to anyone. (this lesson is related to the previous lesson on emotions.)

II. Briefly tell class that our emotions color everything we do in life. Knowing how we feel and being able to express our emotions is a difficult and life long process. As children, we were able to express our emotions directly, when we were uncomfortable or unhappy we cried, when we were excited we laughed and played, when we were sad we did not want to play with anyone. Now, as young adults we are learning to deal with our emotions all over again. And one of the first things to examine is learning about **ACTING versus REACTING.** (At this point, throw the rubber ball at someone in the class softly so that they have a chance to catch it.)

After the person catches it, explain that the person **REACTED** and that was a proper response. And many times this is how we deal with our emotions, either expressing them or someone else expressing them to us--**THROUGH REACTING.** The trick, however, is Not to react, but to act more **CONSCIOUSLY.** Give the following example: You are angry at your father because he did not follow through on a promise he made to you. You did not express your initial disappointment to him and now your disappointment has grown into anger. He walks in the room and asks you where is the TV Guide? You respond in anger "I don't know where the damn TV Guide is , I never use it!" You are angry and sarcastic. Now your father will react to your reaction, and you have an unnecessary argument. If you were able to identify your disappointment and express it, perhaps your anger would not of got the best of you.

III. Now hand out the work sheets and have students complete the sentences--being as spontaneous as possible.

IV. After students have completed their work sheets, break them up into small groups to discuss their work sheets. (walk around to make sure that everyone is participating.)

After groups are finished, use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

1. What are your general reactions to doing the work sheet?
2. What did you think about what the students in your groups said? Were there similar situations and feelings between group members?
3. Why is getting in touch with our feelings so difficult?

V. **WRAP UP:** Restate the idea that we should try to get in touch with our feeling and learn to express those feelings in a healthy way. Then read: MATTHEW: 26:36-46.

Gethsemane:

Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, *Stay here while I go over there to pray.* He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And he began to feel sadness and anguish.

Then, he said to them, *My soul is sorrowful to the point of death, Wait here and stay awake with me.* And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed, *My father, he said, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.* He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, *So you had not the strength to stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake, and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak.* Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: *My father, he said, if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done!* And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving them there, he went away again a third time, repeating the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, *You can sleep on now and have your rest. Look, the hour has come when the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! Look, my betrayer is not far away.*

- Ask students how this relates to the lesson?
- a. Jesus had conflicting feelings too.
 - b. he could not find anyone to listen to him in his darkest point. (he was angry, scared, anxious)
 - c. also mention that God listens when no one else can or is capable.

For further information see: **Becoming Aware:A Human Relations Handbook.** by Velma Walker, Lynn Brokaw. pp.53-79.