

Family Boundaries

**FAMILY HAS CLEAR RULES AND CONSEQUENCES,
AND MONITORS THE YOUNG PERSON'S WHEREABOUTS.**

By Nathaniel Miller

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Nathaniel Miller grew up with a loving, albeit at times, misguided family. As a youngster, his sisters were sporting the latest bouffant hairstyle. Any unwary birds or low-flying aircraft were caught. Nate's father exercised his medical abilities on stray animals. His mother was a teacher both at home and at school, but only paid for one. Despite this and occasionally running into the closed screen door, Nate has grown up and is well-adjusted. You might say we put the FUN in dysfunctional. Learning to appreciate relationships within family has been a main drive of Nate's life.

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We Are Family

Psalm 133:1 "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity."



- The family boundary I dislike the most is ____, because...
- Boundaries are meant to...
- Discipline is...
- In my family discipline happens when...
- Self-discipline is learned from...
- What do boundaries (laws) have to do with relationships? Family? Friends? God?
- How do boundaries get set in your family? How are they defined, if they are?
- What would happen if there were no boundaries within your family? With any relationship?
- What happens in a relationship when boundaries are not defined or understood?
- How are relationship healed when boundaries and relationships are hurt? Family? Friends? God?
- How can unity be obtained within a family?
- What consequences are used in your family? How are they set?
- When boundaries are broken how are relationships affected?
- What boundaries have you set for yourself?

So What?

Considering this discussion on boundaries, rules and relationships, what hopes or wishes do you have for your relationships with...

- Your family...
- Possible future family...
- Friends...
- God...
- Yourself...

Candle Time

Give each person a slip of paper and a pencil. Ask each to write a prayer need or concern that he or she would feel comfortable having another person read and hear. Ask the group to toss the prayers into the center of the circle. Have each individual retrieve a slip that is not his or her own from the pile. Let each person say a prayer for that particular need or concern. Close in Lord's Prayer.

EXPLORE



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| Galatians 6:2 | Bear one another's burdens... |
| Proverbs 3:11 | ...do not despise the Lord's discipline... |
| Proverbs 13:24 | Those who spare the rod... |
| Exodus 20: 1-7 | ...God spoke all these words.... (Ten Commandments) |
| Philippians 2:3-4 | Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility... |
| 1 Peter 3:8 | Finally... have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another... |



DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET™ #11

▣ *Leader Page* ▣

Discussion Goal

Boundaries are learned through relationship and interaction within the realm of the family.

Background

The Ten Commandments are one way that boundaries can be defined. Commandments are about relationships. The commandments are boundaries that help us live within relationship with God and in relationship with other people. Psalm 133:1 cites the important goal and blessing when living in unity as family. Unity can only be accomplished when clear boundaries and expectations are defined and understood. When boundaries are crossed or broken it is the relationship that is hurt. Youth learn the importance of staying within the defined boundaries and when they are crossed there are consequences, some of which are and hurts from broken relationships.

Asset #11 states, "Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts." The asset is also best understood in the context of relationship.

Being in relationship requires limitation and care. If rules and consequences are learned and lived out within family, children grow up with the advantage of carrying the same ideals and understanding into all other relationships.

Proverbs 13:24 is often cited in discussions on discipline. This verse is often misunderstood. It is important to note that the rod was a tool of a shepherd. It was never used to beat or hit the sheep. It was used to guide, to protect and to separate the wool to find infections or injuries so they could be treated. Likewise, the rod is a symbol of discipline that helps guide, protect and heal. Never should this verse justify hitting, spanking or other abuses.

Motivate

Give each individual a sheet of paper and some crayons. Have people draw a picture of something that their parents wouldn't let them do as very young children (cross the road, etc.). Be sure to explain that it should be something that was done for a reason. Discuss why their parents wouldn't allow that action. Emphasize the sense of care and love that the boundary was created from.



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