

Youth Group Lesson Outline

Peer Pressure

Teaching Teens How to Deal with Peer Pressure

Three Lessons Total



Lesson #1

Topic – “Peer Pressure”

Today, we are going to discuss and learn about peer pressure. I am sure that we are all familiar with this term, but hopefully we can take the time to really find out what it is and how it affects our lives everyday.

First, who can tell me what a “Peer” is?

Peer – one belonging to the same group, especially based on age and grade

Now, let’s define “Pressure.”

Pressure – the application of force to something by something else that is in direct contact with it

When you put those two words together, you get “Peer Pressure!”

Peer Pressure – A peer, someone belonging to your group, putting pressure, or force, on you to behave a certain way.

Talk it Over

Anyone and anything that you hang around for any significant amount of time influences you in some kind of way.

- Name a TV commercial that you have seen that made you want to purchase what it was selling.
- Name a book that you were reading that made you want to try what you read about.
- Name an authority figure in your life that influenced you to do something good that you normally would not have done.

Let’s read about an example of this in the Bible. **Let’s read Acts 2:1 – 15, 40 – 41.** Peter was able to influence the entire crowd by the words that he spoke. The crowd thought that the people that were praying in tongues were drunk, but Peter shared with them all about the power of God and the Holy Spirit, and many believed and got born again and baptized after he spoke.

This is an example of how we can be influenced by what others do and say around us. Next time we meet, we will learn more about how we are sometimes influenced to do negative things and ways we can overcome bad pressure from our peers.

Lesson #2

Topic - Bad Peer Pressure

Today we are going to talk about “bad” peer pressure. Does anyone have an idea of what we would consider to be bad peer pressure? (Let a few children give examples).

What is it?

Bad peer pressure would be one of your peers influencing you to do something that is wrong or something that you do not want to do. Has this ever happened to anyone?

Sometimes it is hard to make decisions on our own, but, it gets even harder when we have others influencing us in a bad way. Let’s look at an example of this in the Bible. Jesus had just been taken into custody before His crucifixion. Let’s read about what Pilate did in **Matthew 27:11 - 26.**

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Pilate knew that Jesus was an innocent man, but he let the crowd persuade him into letting Barabbas go instead of Jesus. We all have done this at one time or another – allowed someone else to pressure us into making a decision we knew was wrong. How can we avoid this in the future?

1. **Choose Good Friends** - You should want to choose friends that desire to make good decisions. If you are hanging around people that want to do what is right, most likely, you will do what is right too!
2. **Practice saying “NO!”** If you know you are about to be in a situation that may put you in the position of doing something you don't want to do, practice how you will say no before you get there. When you are by yourself, play out how you will address the situation. For example, if you know someone is going to try and make you lie to your parents, you can practice your response by saying something like, “You know, I lied to my parents before and it didn't turn out too good. I think I will just stick to the truth this time.” When you practice this alone, you are more prepared when you have to face it in real life.
3. **Be the “Leader of the Pack!”** - Most of the time, if you are in a group of kids and there is someone trying to influence others to do something wrong, there are more kids beside you in the group that don't want to do it. If you stand up and say, “No, I think I will pass,” you will empower other kids to do the same, and they will probably follow you! What a leader you will become!

Lesson #3

Topic – “Peer Pressure Traps – Self Image and Acceptance.”

Peer Pressure Traps

Even though we learned ways to overcome bad peer pressure, there are some traps to negative pressure that we can put ourselves in if we are not careful. Sometimes, the things we feel and do make us more vulnerable to sway towards the leading of a more negative crowd. Let's learn about some of these traps today.

Bad Self Image – What is a self image? Our self image is how we see or view ourselves. When we have a bad self image, this makes us more likely to sway to the thoughts and opinions of others in order to feel accepted. Your self image includes things like¹

- What you think you look like
- How you see your own personality
- What kind of person you think you are
- What you think others think of you
- How much you like yourself or you think others like you

If you feel bad about any of these items, then you may look to others to validate who you are by going along with the things they want to do. This does two things to you:

1. Continues to make you feel bad about yourself
2. Keeps you from developing into the person God has designed for you to be

Let's see what the Bible has to say about this. **Let's Read Psalm 139:12 – 16.** As you can see, when God made you, He made you wonderful. There were no mistakes. What you look like and your personality is how He fashioned you.

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When you don't feel good about these things, then you look to others to make you feel good about them. This can lead you to making poor decisions – ones that you would not normally make if you were alone. Here are some things you can do to improve your self image.

Focus on what you do well. Find out what it is you excel in and direct your interest there. Develop that talent or skill; get involved in activities that allow you to utilize it. Maybe you like playing an instrument, singing, drawing, acting, dancing, sports, etc. Find a class or a group that you can become a part of. This will make you feel better about yourself and put you around others that appreciate what you do!

Work on what you don't like. If you don't like the way you dress, your weight, your hair, etc, are there things you can do to work on these areas? Can you talk with your parents about getting different clothes that better suite your style but fit in the family budget? What about your mother helping you out with combing your hair in a way you like better? If you want to lose weight, maybe talk with your parents about things you can do as a family to help you achieve your weight goals. There are always things you can do to help build your confidence in yourself. You just have to be willing to do them!

Don't compare yourself with others – be who you are! You cannot achieve what God has for you in life if you spend your time comparing your gifts, talents, skills, and looks to someone else. God created you for His purpose and He cannot use you if you are trying to fulfill someone else's purpose. Decide to like who you are. Decide to focus on your strengths and abilities. Let God unfold how He wants to utilize them in His kingdom and how He can use them to bring you happiness and fulfillment in your life!