



RESISTING NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

Learning to Stand

February 4, 2023

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Romans 12:2 • “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Psalm 1:1 • “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.”

(See also Judges 13-16; Luke 22:54-62; John 1:35-46; Ephesians 5:1; 1 John 2:6; additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “RESISTING NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE”

Peer pressure is a fact of life for everyone, not just adolescents. Peer pressure can be good or bad, positive or negative. Positive peer pressure can help young people excel in a certain area, introduce them to new skills and activities, broaden their circle of friends and interests. Negative peer pressure can have the opposite effect. It can stunt growth, weaken character, reduce self-confidence. The important thing for young people to learn is to pray for discernment to recognize when they are being subjected to negative peer pressure and

to learn skills that, through the Spirit's power, will deflect it. It is also important for them to be reminded of the grace that will see them through if they do succumb to the negative pressure.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH “RESISTING NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Know that peer pressure can be positive or negative.
2. Acquire strategies to thwart negative peer pressure.
3. Believe that God's grace will provide the discernment and the power needed.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) set of stickers, string, or strips of paper in three to five colors or shades (one should be a combination of two colors); (Activity B) paper, pens or pencils.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Two bowls, powdered sugar (or granulated sugar or sugar water); cornstarch (or salt or vinegar or salt water), spoons (or chopsticks or tongue depressors), enough for each student.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN BEFORE

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adult* at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Obtain a set of stickers, string, or strips of paper in three to five colors or shades. One should be a combination of two colors.

Get set • Have the students close their eyes as you circulate and place a sticker on their forehead, or tie a string around their finger or wrist, or place a piece of paper in their hands. Leave one person without anything.

Go • Tell them all to open their eyes and, with-

out talking to anyone, arrange themselves in the groupings that they consider best, or with which they are most comfortable. Give the students a few minutes to arrange themselves. Observe their groupings, then debrief.

Debriefing • Ask: Why are you in the group that you are? (Because someone led me here; I felt comfortable here; it seemed like the logical place to be; I don't know; I thought we should be grouped by color.) **How did you decide to be with this group? How much did others influence you to be here?** (a little; a lot; not at all) Ask the persons with two colors how they decided to be with the group they are with (or why they are still not with a group). **How did it feel to be different/left out?**

Say: Part of the reason you did what you did is peer pressure. Others in the class wanted you in the group, so you went along with them. Today we will talk about peer pressure.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Lay paper and writing utensils on all the chairs. Stand in one corner of the room.

Get set • Without speaking, smile at the students who sit on the side of the room you are on. Ignore the students who sit on the other side. Do this until all the students have arrived.

Go • Debrief when everyone has settled in.

Debriefing • Ask: Why are you sitting where you are? (Because you seemed to want us to sit there; because everyone else was sitting there.) **Why didn't you sit on the other side?** (You didn't seem to want us to sit there. No one else was sitting there.)

If some students did sit on other side, **ask: How did you feel sitting on the other side?** (weird, left out, not a part of the class; cool, the best)

Say: You are sitting where you are because

of peer pressure—and a little teacher pressure. Nonverbally, I indicated to you where I wanted you to sit. You then influenced your classmates to sit there. Not wanting to feel left out, they did. Peer pressure can be hard to detect unless you think about it. We'll talk about that today.

(Note: Be prepared for a different result, and a different debriefing. Perhaps a popular kid will decide to sit on the "other" side of the room and others will follow. The point can still be made, particularly that the "peer" pressure was stronger than the little bit of teacher pressure.)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Have two students ahead of time ad-lib a skit in which one tries to convince the other to do something wrong and the other talks them out of it.

Debriefing • Ask: What just happened here? Do you know the term for it?

Say: Peer pressure is people your own age trying to influence how you act. Peer pressure can be positive or negative. The way you deal with it determines which it is.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Have the students read **John 1:35-46**.

Present the following ideas in your own words:

In this passage we see Jesus' first disciples were originally followers of John the Baptist. Because John endorsed Jesus (see verse 36) and the disciples knew John, they decided to follow Jesus when He asked them to (verse 43). Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from the same hometown so there was a connection there too (verse 44). Then Philip found Nathanael and told him about Jesus (verse 45). When Nathanael objects,

Philip says, "Come and see" (verse 46). This is a good example of peer pressure.

Remember, peer pressure is defined as the influence of someone who is like you in some way. The first four disciples were all from the same town and about the same age. Jesus offered them something positive, and they decided to respond. It was easier to respond because their peers were responding too. This is a good example of positive peer pressure.

Peer pressure can be negative too. As citizens of the kingdom, you will want to exert positive peer pressure on your friends to follow Jesus while at the same time resisting negative peer pressure that will keep you and others from following Him.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Read or ask someone beforehand to read the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Ask: What do you think about Margaret's response? What would you have done in her place? Have you ever been in a position like this? Explain. Why do you think Margaret went along at first even though it did not seem right to her? (Her friend was insisting/pressuring her.) **What did Margaret learn from God's answer to her prayers that helped her stand up for what was right?**

Have someone read **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**.

Say: The verses we just read and Margaret's experiences remind us of God's power to help us resist negative peer pressure and of the importance of being a positive influence on those around us. Friends—or peers—can help you up or bring you down. **Pray daily for God's help to resist negative peer pressure and determine to always have a positive influence on your friends.**

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

Your parents have dropped you off at an

all-day youth rally at your school one Sabbath. After they drive away, a few of your friends say, "That new singing group is giving a free concert at the mall at lunch time. We can take the bus over there and be back here before the rally is over. Our parents will never know. Are you coming with us?"

Ask: What will you say? (I know Jesus would not accompany me to that concert. I don't do things like that on Sabbath. I cannot cause my parents pain and worry by breaking their trust in me; they expect me to stay here.) What will you do? (Participate in the activities and program of the youth rally.)

Say: Knowing who you are and whose you are, knowing that you can turn to God for wisdom and strength, will help you to make the right choice in tough circumstances. Praying for wisdom, fortifying yourself with Bible verses (honor your parents; remember the Sabbath; do not lie) and reflecting prayerfully before you make a decision can help you resist negative peer pressure.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Have the students sit in a circle. Place two clear bowls in the center. In each, have a similar-looking but different-tasting wet or dry substance* such as the following: for bowl one—either dry powdered or granulated sugar or sugar water; for bowl two—cornstarch or salt, or water with salt or vinegar. Give each person a spoon (or chopstick or tongue depressor).

Say: Every day we have to make decisions. It's tough trying to make good choices. Let's practice making a decision right now.

Ask the students to look at the bowls' contents and then decide which one they want to taste. **Say: We'll go around the circle, and you can take as little or as much as will fit on**

your spoon. Wait until everyone has a spoonful, then we'll all eat what we've chosen.

After everyone has tasted their selection [expect some outcry], debrief.

Debriefing • Ask: What did you think about your choice? How was this experience like decisions you make in life? What advice would you give to someone when it comes to making the right decisions?

Have a volunteer read aloud **Ephesians 5:1** and **1 John 2:6**.

Ask: What do these passages tell us about making decisions? (God has to help us. If we imitate Him, we won't go wrong.)

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. When did you resist negative peer pressure? How did you get the strength to resist?
2. What do you say when someone says, "Come on; no one will ever find out"?
3. If you have given in to negative peer pressure, how do you keep it from happening the next time? What do you say to friends who remind you that you have done wrong before?
4. How can you exert positive peer pressure on others? Talk about a time you did.
5. Who are some Bible characters that resisted negative peer pressure and had a positive influence on others in spite of the negative influences around them?

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

“You are My witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and My servant whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 43:10). Remembering that we are God’s wit-

nesses and citizens of His kingdom is one way of remembering where the power is to resist negative peer pressure. Starting from that idea, we know that our job is to exert positive influence on others and encourage them to follow Jesus and with His power to choose to do the right thing. We should pray for wisdom to know what to say so that we will be ready when temptations come.



STUDENT LESSON

RESISTING NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

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Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 7, The Nature of Humanity:** “God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 91-93.

LEARNING TO STAND

One day Margaret went to visit her friend Lisa. After the two friends talked for some time, Lisa suggested that they watch a movie together. Margaret hesitated for a moment. However, because her friend insisted, she agreed. Pretty soon, however, Margaret regretted that she had consented to such a passive endeavor. She realized that they could have spent quality time together instead of watching the movie. As Lisa proceeded to set up the devices to play the movie, Margaret started to pray silently, saying, “Dear Jesus, if You don’t want me and Lisa to watch this movie, please don’t

let it work. Thank You! In Jesus’ name, amen.”

When Margaret finished her silent prayer, Lisa was still trying to get the device to play. After a few moments of trying in vain, Lisa concluded that perhaps the wires were not connected properly, so she called for her neighbor, who was a mechanic. Meanwhile, as Margaret continued praying, a well-known Bible passage came to mind: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The mechanic was unable to fix the problem, and Lisa could not play the movie. This experience strengthened Margaret’s confidence to resist negative peer pressure with God’s help. The two young women found a more constructive activity for their afternoon.

Years later Margaret moved away. As a Christian she was often confronted at school with difficult situations that forced her to take a stand publicly. Yet it was those very situations that helped strengthen her trust in God.

One time a teacher decided to show a movie that featured life in the suburbs. To Margaret’s disappointment, the language in the film contained lots of swearing and using God’s name in vain. Margaret knew that it was not sufficient to disagree inwardly with the content of the movie. She felt that by watching the whole movie she would appear to consent to what was being presented. Margaret stood up to leave and walked over to her teacher, careful not to disturb the

rest of the students. Quietly she told her teacher that she could not watch the rest of the movie because the language used was very offensive. The teacher nodded and gave Margaret permission to leave. That evening Margaret felt at peace.

During the following class period Margaret was in for a surprise. The teacher apologized in front of the class for playing a movie that used offensive language. She specifically directed her apology to Margaret and gave her the opportunity to speak to the class. Margaret quickly thought about what she should say. The Holy Spirit inspired her to use this opportunity to point the attention of the students to the Word of God. Margaret talked to the class about God's law and specifically about the third commandment. She explained that it grieves God when people break His law and take His name in vain. Listening passively to swearing that includes God's name also dishonors God, who is holy. A hush fell over the class as the students listened to Margaret.

What a different outcome would the story have had if Margaret had decided to stay and watch the whole movie and remain silent about her convictions. To this day she is grateful that the Lord gave her the opportunity to be a witness for Him.

A group's influence along with the desire to belong can lead young people to yield to negative peer pressure. However, some decisions made to go along with the group can result in a lifetime of regret. It is very important to be constantly aware that as a son or daughter of God you are His representative. If you take a firm stand for God and the teachings of His Word, the Holy Spirit will help you to resist negative peer pressure. Remember God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 and pray for His help to remain faithful to Jesus.

Sunday **RESPONDING**

- » Read Proverbs 1:10.
- » Suppose that you are invited to a party at

which alcoholic beverages and unclean foods will be served, at which there will be loud music and dancing until late at night, and at which most of the entertainment will not be suitable for Christ's followers. How will you respond to such an invitation?

Monday **BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE NATURE OF HUMANITY**

- » Read Genesis 3; Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Peter 5:8-10.
- » Man was made in God's image. Humanity was given free will and the ability to make decisions. When Adam and Eve sinned, they became subject to sin. Satan uses any means he can to get us to sin, and that sometimes includes our friends putting pressure on us to do something wrong. It is only through Christ that we are forgiven and reconciled back to God. It is necessary for us to study the Scripture and, like Jesus, be ready to say "It is written" when tempted to do wrong.
- » What can you do to stay true to God and to His Word when someone entices you to do something wrong?
- » How can you set an example and help a friend who is heading down a wrong path?
- » "Build a wall of scriptures around you, and you will see that the world cannot break it down. Commit the Scriptures to memory, and then throw right back upon Satan when he comes with his temptations, 'It is written.' This is the way that our Lord met the temptations of Satan, and resisted them" (Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, April 10, 1888).
- » Write the person's name next to the item(s) they were tempted with. Some Bible references are given to help you.

1. Bread _____
2. To doubt God _____
3. Idols _____
4. Worldly riches _____
5. Tree of knowledge of good and evil _____
6. King's food _____
7. To doubt God's promise _____
8. Presumptuous protection _____
9. To follow his own will _____
10. To lie to God _____

Eve	Samson	Meshach	Ananias
Michael	Daniel	Azariah	Jesus
Abed-Nego		Adam	Abraham
Sapphira		Shadrach	Hananiah

Genesis 3 Judges 13-16:30
 Daniel 1:8-17 Daniel 3 Matthew 4:1-11
 Acts 5:1-10

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Judges 13-16; Luke 22:54-62.
- » When your grandparents were teens, most people around them probably believed that the Bible set the standard for what was right and wrong, even if they didn't follow it themselves! Today more and more people today believe that the truth is something that comes from inside you. People question the authority of the Bible and of God, and look to other sources or to themselves for truth. A lot of the old standards of right and wrong don't seem to apply anymore. How do you make decisions about what's right and wrong when it seems there are more choices than ever before?
- » Though we need to respect others who make different choices, as Christian young people we still need to stand firm on the Bible as our authority.
- » It doesn't change. Basing your beliefs and your actions on God's Word will give you solid ground to stand on in a world in which

everything seems to be changing so fast, it's almost impossible to keep up with it.

- » "Yielding to temptation begins in permitting the mind to waver, to be inconstant in your trust in God. If we do not choose to give ourselves fully to God then we are in darkness" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 92).

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks using the Bible references and the words below. All Bible passages are taken from the New King James Version.

"Create in me a _____ heart, O God, and renew a _____ spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

"_____ is the man who walks _____ in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1).

"Therefore _____ to God. _____ the devil and he will _____ from you" (James 4:7).

"That is, that God was in Christ _____ the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we _____ you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:19, 20).

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you _____; and may your _____ spirit, soul, and body be preserved _____ at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

blameless blessed clean completely
 flee implore not reconciling resist
 steadfast submit whole

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Romans 5:12-17.
- » Review the memory verse.
- » Peer pressure is a fact of life. Even adults have to deal with it. It never really goes away. The important thing is to know whose you are. You are a child of God and a citizen of the kingdom. As such, you have to adhere to a high standard and be faithful to God.
- » Surround yourself with people who know Jesus personally, who put their beliefs into practice and encourage you to do the same. Practice resisting peer pressure. It's easier to say "No" when you've done it a number of times!
- » "God calls for strong, brave Christians, whose influence is always exerted for the right. His cause needs men and women whose every word and act draws those around them to Christ, binding them to Him by the persuasive force of loving service" (Ellen G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, October 21, 1903).

Friday APPLYING

- » Read Jeremiah 17:9.
- » "There is not an impulse of our nature, not a faculty of the mind or an inclination of the heart, but needs to be, moment by moment, under the control of the Spirit of God" (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 421).
- » Formulate a Christian response to the following situations. Remember to include prayer for strength and guidance before, after, and all the way through the steps.
 1. Your teammates want you to skip church to play in an exhibition game for charity. The winning team gets to name the amount of money that will go to help orphaned children. Your teammates say they can't win without you; besides, it's for a good cause.
 2. Your cousin invites you to spend the night at her house. Her parents call to say that they will be late returning home from a meeting because they have some issues with the car. Your cousin invites some friends from the neighborhood as well, although she knows she isn't supposed to have guests when her parents aren't home.

