

Time Limits

Setting Curfews

Parent Meeting Packet Contains:

Promotional Poster



Teaching Plan



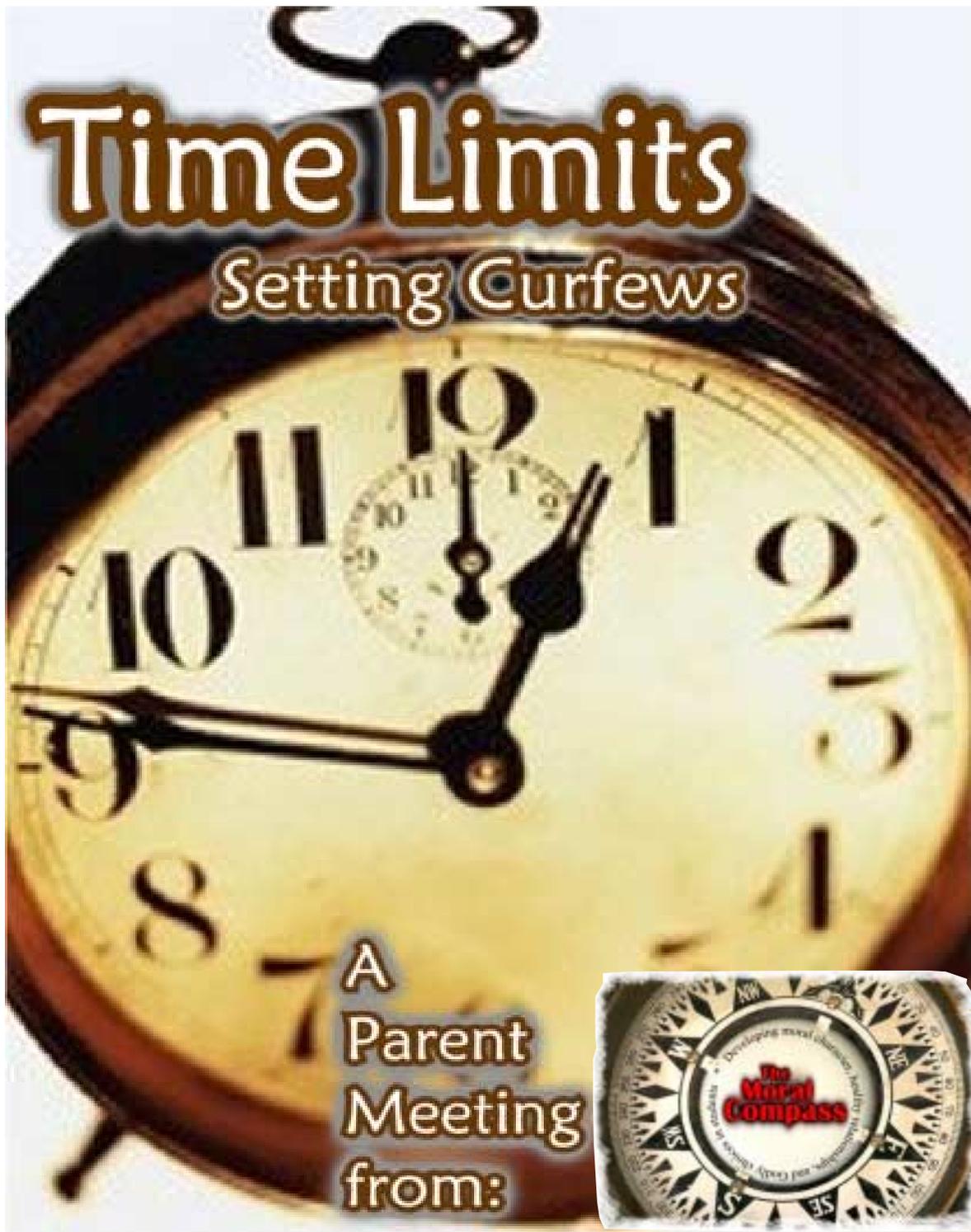
General Information Sheet



Parent Worksheet



Breaking Curfew Scenario



FOR: Parents of Youth

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

LOCATION: _____

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Teaching Plan (1 hour)

Time: 20 Minutes

Equipment Needed: One copy of the Setting Curfews worksheet for each parent present; pens or pencils for each person

Plan: Present the *Setting Curfews General Information*. The parts in bold red are the answers to the blanks on the Setting Curfews worksheet. Always allow time for any discussion and/or questions, but keep things moving.

Time: 15 Minutes

Equipment Needed: A copy of the Breaking Curfew scenario for each group of 5 or 6 parents; an alarm clock or timer set for 5 minutes; pencils or pens for each group of parents

Plan: Invite parents to work together in groups of 5 or 6. Tell them they will have 5 minutes to review the situation and make some recommendations. At the conclusion of the 5 minutes have each group of parents talk about their recommendations.

Time: 15 Minutes

Equipment Needed: None

Plan: Use this time for general questions and answers. Parents will need this time to process information and begin asking questions specific to their children. Don't give all the answers. Allow other parents to respond. Be a facilitator during this time.

Time: 10 Minutes

Equipment Needed: None

Plan: Prayer. Have a time of concentrated prayer on this specific issue. Have parents pray in their groups for the following:

- That their children would learn responsibility from such parental exercises as curfews.
- That their children would be obedient and careful to avoid troublesome situations.
- That their children would form positive peer friendships.
- That their children would seek to honor God with their lives.

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General Information



During the 1990's one-fourth of the nation's largest 200 cities imposed curfews. These curfews were imposed in response to growing concerns about teenage crime and mischief.

Parents have long struggled with the issue of curfews. The need to treat your child as a responsible person comes in conflict with your fear of all that happens after dark. Carousing, drinking, unsupervised parties all become a temptation for teenagers. Besides the general mischief is the violent crime, which often occurs after the setting of the sun. Two-thirds of all rapes of those under the age of 18 occur between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

The questions surface:

- ✓ Should a parent impose a strict, all-circumstances, all-events curfew?
- ✓ Should the curfew, instead, be based on the situation and/or the activity?
- ✓ Is a curfew even necessary and if so, how does a parent go about arriving at one?

Setting Teen Curfews

According to a survey of 13-to-17-year-olds, **71 percent** live in a household with curfews. The big surprise in this poll of 1,000 teens was that three-quarters of the teens **agreed** with the rules.

When it comes to curfews, keep these points in mind:

- Teens **want limits**. Boundaries are reassuring because they say you care.
- Teens are loathe to admit all this. Do not expect your young adolescent to utter hooray when you say what time to be home.
- Curfews for teenagers should be calculated on several issues:
 - How much **sleep** does your child need?
 - What are the average curfews for his or her friends?
 - Are these **reasonable** in your view?
 - Are you in a **rural** or an **urban** setting?
 - How well **you know** the people they will be with that night?
- Let your teen know that abiding by a curfew shows **responsibility** and **maturity**. The more of this you see, the more lenient you become in the future.
- Do not be **sexist**. Give girls fair curfews too. Sometimes we allow boys more freedom, thus sending a message to girls that they are **less competent** and trustworthy.

- Create a **contract**. One of the easiest ways to find the "middle of the road" regarding curfews is for parents and teens to compare and compromise on what they both want and expect. "There should be clear guidelines that detail the responsibilities and also the consequences if a teen violates these guidelines," says Gary Chapman, the author of "Five Love Languages for Teenagers." "The teen should be in on the decision of setting up these guidelines and the process should begin in the early teenage years. When it's done this way the teenager accepts it as being more fair -- because they had a part in it -- and it keeps the parent from overreacting when the teenager gets into trouble or breaks one of the guidelines." Rather than acting **emotionally**, parents can employ the consequences they all originally agreed upon, he says.
- Setting the **time**. Actual time guidelines depend upon the teens themselves. If a child is more acceptable to rules and responsibilities, they may be able to handle the responsibility of a later curfew -- such as 11 p.m. or midnight. However, a teen who avoids responsibility or who has a history of "getting in trouble," may require an earlier curfew to prevent any further incidents and to offer evidence -- to both parents and themselves -- that they are capable of handling the extra responsibility. "Teens mature at different rates," Chapman says. "Parents know their teens best and should use their best judgment in setting time guidelines. However, teens should be involved in the **final decision** and should be allowed to 'speak their case' before a final decision is made."

- Expect **conflict**. "We tend to ease our way from childhood to adolescence," Chapman says. "We don't have any conversation about it. As a result, the parents have one set of ideas of what they expect of the teenager and the teen has other ideas, depending upon what their friends are doing. So it is inevitable that they are going to run into conflict over these issues." And all that arguing usually leads to the parents losing their influence over their teenager. "My son is always late coming home," says Laura Hess, a mother of four from Minneapolis, Minn. "I have tried grounding him, taking away the phone, computer and television, but nothing works. I always end up giving in. I know that I shouldn't, but what teen wants to be stuck in the house on a Saturday night or wants the embarrassment of not being allowed to talk on the phone? I wouldn't and I guess that makes me feel guilty."



But setting curfews for your teen does not have to become a battle. Involving him or her in the process -- which allows them to know what is expected of them as well as what happens if they do not live up to their end of the bargain -- can prevent unnecessary arguments or power struggles. "Deal with curfew and all the other related areas by working out the guidelines together ... and both parents and teens will be moving in the same direction and will be on the same page," Chapman says.

Terrie Bittner, in her article, *Setting and Enforcing Curfews*, says to consider the following guidelines when negotiating and enforcing a curfew with your teenager:

1. If you don't know the people you are with quite well, the curfew is **earlier** than if you are with old friends we know and trust.
2. If you are **late**, you lose the **freedoms** you have earned.
3. If we learn you are not where you said you would be, you lose freedoms. (We have our ways of finding out!)
4. If you are **uncomfortable** about the circumstances of this outing, **call** and we will come and get you. If we know you will do this, we feel safer.
5. Your parents will not **sleep** until you are home. We are old and need our sleep. Act accordingly.

With these guidelines in mind, we have had very few problems with curfews. Time away from the family is a **privilege**, not a **right**. Few teens are willing to risk spending the next several months being chaperoned by a parent, so they will be unlikely to disobey

the rules if you are consistent in following them. That is the key, however. You can't let up, even once. If your child is late, and does not have a valid excuse, you must enforce the rules immediately and firmly. Back down even once, and you will lose all **credibility** as a parent.

These are the basic rules for teen curfew enforcement:

1. Be **reasonable** in setting the curfew. No sixteen-year-old will tolerate a nine-o'clock curfew on weekends. Set it according to the **age** of the child, the **activity**, and the **people** he is with.
2. Agree in **advance** what the consequences will be for violating curfew.
3. Provide **money** for a phone call or two and **insist** on getting one if your child will be late.
4. **Follow through** on any needed punishments. Punishments should fit the crime, which means that a child who misses curfew stays home or is chaperoned, because he can't be trusted to come home on his own.
5. As the child **proves** his ability to be responsible, give him more freedom over his schedule-but always make him tell you **where** he's going, **who** he is with, and **when** he will be home.

Information gathered from:

"Watching the Clock; How to negotiate and enforce curfews," by Carmen Haley

"Setting Teen Curfews," by Margaret Sagarese, coauthor of *The Roller Coaster Years* and *Parenting 911*.

"Setting and Enforcing Curfews," by Terrie Bittner, published October 7, 1999

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According to a survey of 13-to-17-year-olds, _____ live in a household with curfews. The big surprise in this poll of 1,000 teens was that three-quarters of the teens _____ with the rules.

When it comes to curfews, keep these points in mind:

- Teens _____. Boundaries are reassuring because they say you care.
- Teens are loathe to admit all this. Do not expect your young adolescent to utter hooray when you say what time to be home.
- Curfews for teenagers should be calculated on several issues:
 - How much _____ does your child need?
 - What are the average curfews for his or her friends?
 - Are these _____ in your view?
 - Are you in a _____ or an _____ setting?
 - How well _____ the people they will be with that night?
- Let your teen know that abiding by a curfew shows _____ and _____. The more of this you see, the more lenient you become in the future.
- Do not be _____. Give girls fair curfews too. Sometimes we allow boys more freedom, thus sending a message to girls that they are _____ and trustworthy.
- Create a _____. One of the easiest ways to find the "middle of the road" regarding curfews is for parents and teens to compare and compromise on what they both want and expect. "There should be clear guidelines that detail the responsibilities and also the consequences if a teen violates these guidelines," says Gary Chapman, the author of "Five Love Languages for Teenagers." "The teen should be in on the decision of setting up these guidelines and the process should begin in the early teenage years. When it's done this way the teenager accepts it as being more fair -- because they had a part in it -- and it keeps the parent from overreacting when the teenager gets into trouble or breaks one of the guidelines." Rather than acting _____, parents can employ the consequences they all originally agreed upon, he says.
- Setting the _____. Actual time guidelines depend upon the teens themselves. If a child is more acceptable to rules and responsibilities, they may be able to handle the responsibility of a later curfew -- such as 11 p.m. or midnight. However, a teen who avoids responsibility or who has a history of "getting in trouble," may require an earlier curfew to prevent any further incidents and to offer evidence -- to both parents and themselves -- that they are capable of handling the extra responsibility. "Teens mature at different rates," Chapman says. "Parents know their teens best and should use their best judgment in setting time guidelines. However, teens should be involved in the _____ and should be allowed to 'speak their case' before a final decision is made."
- Expect _____. "We tend to ease our way from childhood to adolescence," Chapman says. "We don't have any conversation about it. As a result, the parents have one set of ideas of what they expect of the teenager and the teen has other ideas, depending upon what their friends are doing. So it is inevitable that they are going to run into conflict over these issues." And all that



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1. If you don't know the people you are with quite well, the curfew is _____ than if you are with old friends we know and trust.
2. If you are _____, you lose the _____ you have earned.
3. If we learn you are not where you said you would be, you lose freedoms. (We have our ways of finding out!)
4. If you are _____ about the circumstances of this outing, _____ and we will come and get you. If we know you will do this, we feel safer.
5. Your parents will not _____ until you are home. We are old and need our sleep. Act accordingly.

With these guidelines in mind, we have had very few problems with curfews. Time away from the family is a _____, not a _____. Few teens are willing to risk spending the next several months being chaperoned by a parent, so they will be unlikely to disobey the rules if you are consistent in following them. That is the key, however. You can't let up, even once. If your child is late, and does not have a valid excuse, you must enforce the rules immediately and firmly. Back down even once, and you will lose all _____ as a parent.

These are the basic rules for teen curfew enforcement:

1. Be _____ in setting the curfew. No sixteen-year-old will tolerate a nine-o'clock curfew on weekends. Set it according to the _____ of the child, the _____, and the _____ he is with.
2. Agree in _____ what the consequences will be for violating curfew.
3. Provide _____ for a phone call or two and _____ on getting one if your child will be late.
4. _____ on any needed punishments. Punishments should fit the crime, which means that a child who misses curfew stays home or is chaperoned, because he can't be trusted to come home on his own.
5. As the child _____ his ability to be responsible, give him more freedom over his schedule-- but always make him tell you _____ he's going, _____ he is with, and _____ he will be home.

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Breaking Curfew

Josh, a 17-year-old high school junior, and his parents had agreed to an 11:30 p.m. curfew on Friday and Saturday nights. Saturday night had been the annual Central High School Winter Festival, a carnival-type activity that lasted from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Josh had swung by and picked up his friend, Dave, on the way to the Festival. Dave was a new friend and Josh's parents didn't know him very well, but he seemed to be a good kid. The carnival finished a little early, so Josh and Dave hung around a few minutes talking to some girls. Josh noticed that his curfew was nearing, so he told Dave they had to leave.

Dave had told a couple of the girls that he and Josh would give them a ride home. Josh knew this would make him late, but agreed to do it. Josh's parents had given him a cell phone, but when Josh got in his car to start taking people home, he found the battery was dead on his phone. Figuring he couldn't call, he hurried as quick as he could, but arrived home at 12:10 a.m. His mom met him at the door and wasn't happy. Josh started explaining what happened, but his mom didn't want to hear it right then. She told him this was the second time in the last two months he had broken curfew and that tomorrow they would discuss his punishment.

Questions to consider:

- What could Josh have done to make his situation better?
- Is an 11:30 p.m. curfew too early or too late for a 17-year-old?
- How much would Dave's role factor into your punishment of Josh as his parent?
- Should the curfew have been "flexed" for the event?
- What would your punishment be and how could Josh win back your trust as his parent?