

**Modesty**  
***Developing Dress Codes***  
*Parent Meeting Packet Contains:*

Promotional Poster



Teaching Plan



General Information Sheet



Parent Worksheet



True North Living Sheet

# Modesty

## *Developing Dress Codes*

### Teaching Plan (1 hour)

**Time:** 20 Minutes

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

**Plan:** Present the *Modesty General Information*. The parts in bold red are the answers to the blanks on the Modesty worksheet. Allow plenty of time for any discussion and/or questions.

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**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Equipment Needed:** A copy of the *True North Living information* for each parent.

**Plan:** Talk parents through the meaning of True North Living. Spend a few minutes on each of the three components of the self-examination. Ask the parents which of the three they struggle with the most. Talk about the difference between a Value and a Virtue and think of some examples in society, which reflect this difference. (Example: Homosexuality – Society is moving toward accepting homosexuality as a lifestyle of value. Does this acceptance make homosexual behavior virtuous?) Talk to parents about pursuing *virtuous* lives.

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**Time:** 10 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.

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**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Plan:** Prayer. Have a time of concentrated prayer on the issues covered in this lesson. Have parents pray in groups for the following:

- That their children would learn the virtue of modesty.
- That their children would be moldable and open to discussion on the subject of clothing.
- That their children would form positive peer friendships.
- That their children would seek to honor God with their lives.
- That as parents they would model True North lives for their children.

# Modesty

## *Developing Dress Codes*

### General Information



The present American culture is virtually dedicated to outward appeal. Our students want to dress to impress, because they believe image matters to their peers. Parents want their children to be “in-style,” but not shameless. The question then becomes, “How can I help my child dress fashionably, but appropriately?” “And how can I get my teen to see the value in dressing modestly?”

As fashions become more revealing, the call to Christian modesty becomes increasingly important for us to communicate to our teenagers.

First, we must define modesty. According to Webster’s Dictionary, modesty is from the root word modest, which means, “behaving, dressing, speaking, etc. in a way that is consider proper or decent.” Modesty then, is more of a lifestyle than a way of dress. However, our way of dress speaks volumes about our lifestyle because of the social emphasis on outward appearance.

The key issues or questions, which need to be addressed on this subject, are:

- What does the Bible say?
- Does the way I dress really have anything to do with my witness?
- Where do I draw the line on what is appropriate attire?
- What are some helpful guidelines?

### What does the **bible** say?

Paul addressed the issue of modest dress in 1 Timothy 2:9-10. *“Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.”* Many people have used these verses to create many a homely woman, but Paul was not condemning these elements of dress as much as he was condemning their message.

Some commentators suggest that the tone of this instruction is "sexual," Paul's intention being to discourage women from dressing in a way that would distract men in the worship service. But perhaps the more acute problem was that of insensitive women flaunting their dress, jewelry and hairstyles in a way that hurt the feelings of the poor and disturbed the church. The kinds of adornment mentioned (*braided hair . . . gold . . . pearls . . . expensive clothes*) all belonged to that culture's critical caricature of wealthy women. (*IVP New Testament Commentary: 1 Timothy*)

So Paul’s instruction could have been meant to address modesty on several levels.

- **Sexual** – We shouldn’t dress in a way which reflects a lack of purity. (1 Thess. 4:7)
- **Material** – We shouldn’t dress in a way, which tends to make others feel less important or inferior. (1 Timothy 6:10-12)

- **Spiritual** – We shouldn't dress in a way, which communicates that outward appearance is more important than Godly inner qualities. (1 Samuel 16:7)

## Does the way I dress really have anything to do with my witness?

Yes!

Name something that *doesn't* affect your witness. We are witnesses of Christ and His **righteousness**, holiness, and **purity** in everything we say and do as His beloved children. Paul said as much to the Roman faithful when they struggled with the appearance of things as particular practices offended them. (Romans 14) He ultimately suggested, "It is a noble thing not to eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that makes your brother stumble."

In regard to dressing modestly, Paul's advise would be to dress in such a way as to cause no offense. Well, what does that mean?

The most common problem for girls in this regard, is dressing in such a way, which causes a guy to look at her **lustfully**. Most girls will be quick to point out that lust is the guy's problem, and she shouldn't be liable. This is because most girls don't understand how guys are wired. Guys are, initially, sexually stimulated **visually**. They are quickly moved by what they see to begin dwelling on an **eventual outcome**. Girls, on the other hand, are generally, stimulated by **touch**. Since she doesn't commonly experience the same process of stimulation, she often isn't cognizant of the signals or messages she is sending to the opposite sex. Most teen girls can dress in tight outfits, short hemlines, low necklines, or items that expose the midriff and just feel **cute**, but that is not the **message** she is sending. It is our duty as followers of Christ to recognize these gender differences and processes and be careful not to cause others to stumble.

The most common problem for guys is a **general apathy** about modesty. Guys will sag their jeans, that is, wear their jeans or pants low along their waistline, so their underwear is exposed. Guys also are notorious for wearing shirts or other items of clothing with inappropriate messages on them. Each of these offenses stem from guys failing to recognize or care about what is appropriate. Their failure is not so much, that in a desire to look good they **tempt** the opposite sex, but rather in not caring how they look, they **cheapen** their **character**.

Both sexes sometimes dress in such a way as to make others around them feel inferior or "out of style." None of the above characteristics communicate a desire to portray Christ as the priority of a person's life. It would be better to dress **out of style** and to offend the codes of fashion than to be right in step with the latest attire and offend the **cause of Christ**.

Consider these quotes:

"Christian modesty is the inner self-government, rooted in a proper understanding of one's self before God, which outwardly displays itself in humility and purity from a genuine love for Jesus Christ, rather than in self-glorification or self-advertisement. Christian modesty then will not publicly expose itself in sinful nakedness." Jeff Pollard, *Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America*

"[In today's society]...nudity is not supposed to move us. We are asked to behold without shock, without even surprise, the nearly total exposure of every conceivable shape and size of physique. But I don't want to look at nudity without emotion. I want it reserved to enhance, not exhibited to destroy, the depth of individual experience.... Modesty was a system of protection. But the alarms have all been disconnected. The house is wide open to plunder." Elisabeth Elliot, *Let Me Be a Woman*. (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1976), 167.)

## Where do I draw the line on what is appropriate attire?

Perhaps a strict adherence to any particular mandate is not in order. Any agreed upon list of appropriate and inappropriate items of clothing would need to be updated every other day as trends shift. So, use the following as a partial list of clothing items or trends, which easily could be offensive. (By the way, many public schools have banned these items from their hallways.)

### Girls

- Strapless shirts or dresses
- **Spaghetti** straps
- Bare midriffs (exposed waistline)
- Plunging necklines (exposed breasts)
- Off-the-shoulder shirts
- Skirts and/or shorts less than six inches above the knee
- Bare-back shirts
- **Shear** apparel
- Long T-shirts which come past the shorts
- Tight-fitting tops, pants and other apparel
- Wearing **boxers** as short pants
- Shirts, hats or other apparel displaying inappropriate messages or pictures

### Guys

- Sagging jeans or pants (exposed underwear)
- "Tank T's" (Tank-top t-shirts worn as outer wear)
- Shirts, hats or other apparel displaying inappropriate messages or pictures

## What are some helpful guidelines?

One of the best options may be to sit down with your child and determine the requirements for anything they may choose to wear. In cooperation with one another, make a list of guidelines, which will shape your selections and purchases of clothing.

Such as:

- Does the clothing cause others to see me as an object of **desire** or as a person of **worth**?
- Is it **fashionable** and **attractive**, but modest?
- Would wearing this clothing cause others to feel **inferior**?
- Is there message on this clothing, which **compromises** my **integrity** and walk with Christ?

# Modesty

## *Developing Dress Codes*

### Parent Worksheet

#### What does the \_\_\_\_\_ say?

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- \_\_\_\_\_ – We shouldn't dress in a way which reflects a lack of purity. (1 Thess. 4:7)
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#### Does the way I dress really have anything to do with my \_\_\_\_\_?

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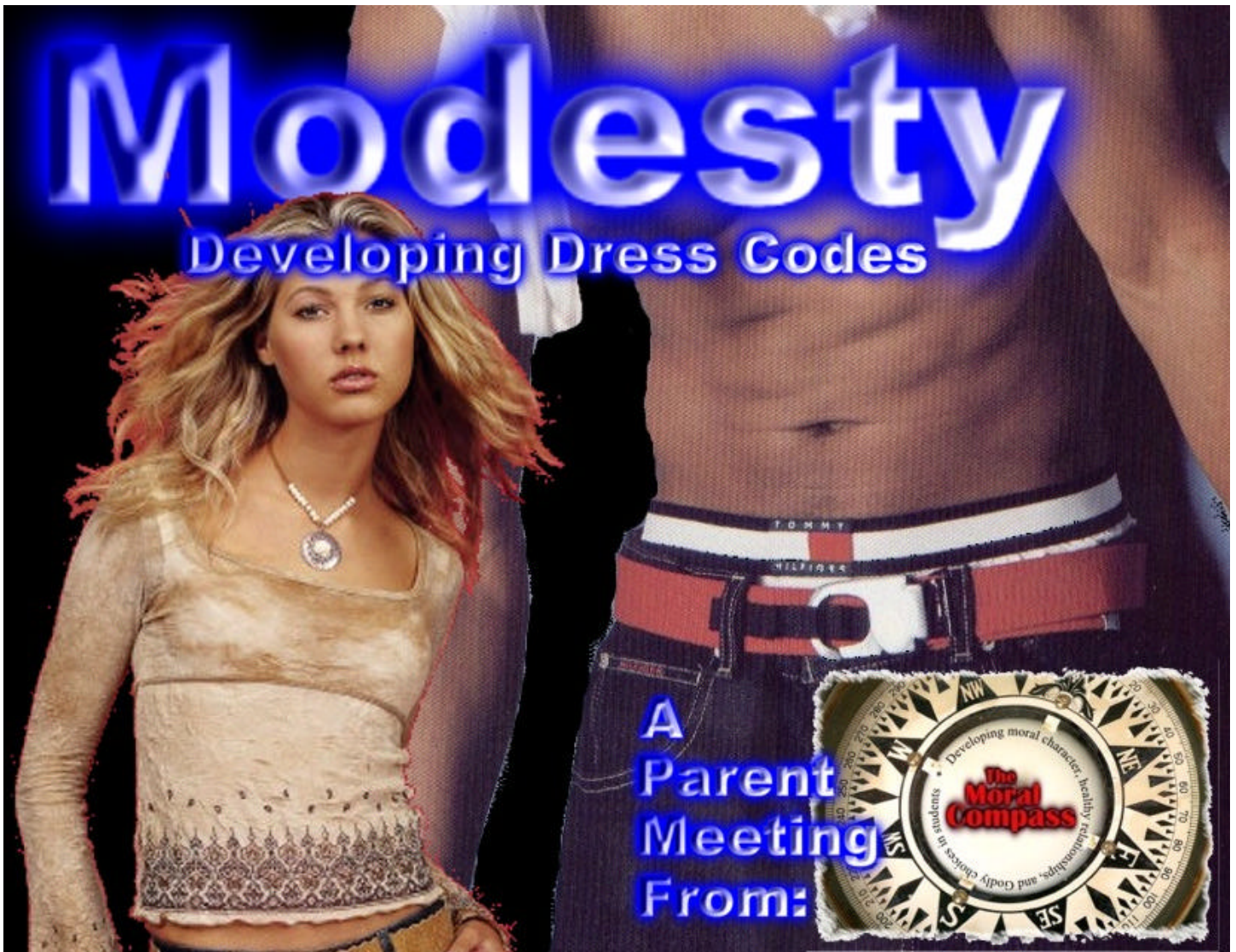
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- Is there message on this clothing, which \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_ and walk with Christ?





FOR: Parents of Youth

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

# TRUE NORTH LIVING

One of the key components of The Moral Compass is the principle of True North Living. Parents are asked to live True North lives in front of their children and to pass along the principles of True North living to their children.

All of us have a “true north” to our lives — a magnetic pull of certain priorities, beliefs, and **values**. Working with others to remain morally pure requires a distinct set of true north **virtues**. The following self-assessment is a reminder to check the direction of our true north **virtues**. True North Living for the Christian is a following of God's perfect guidance as outlined in His word.

## *A Self-Assessment to Stay True North*

### **Keep the first commandment.**

Loving God is a passion that requires cultivation, discipline, and renewal. (Matthew 22:37-38) We must be dedicated to loving God above all else. If He is to be exalted in my life, it will require a passion for His word, a learner’s heart, and a moldable spirit.

### **Stay focused on a vision.**

A shared vision or mission keeps me focused on what is important and that which ultimately bears lasting fruit in my life. (Ephesians 4:1) If we are to live in a manner worthy of Christ, we must focus on *His purposes* in our life and become faithful to pursue and fulfill them.

### **Live in community.**

I need help for true north living. I will find a friend or friends who will keep me accountable to stay on true north. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) We want our children to have good friends who encourage them in their walk with Christ. We must have the same type of relationships ourselves. Living true north lives and morally educating our children is a task, which when shared in common, is accomplished with wisdom and security.

### **The difference between a value and a virtue:**

Values may shift. If society deems a particular activity as acceptable, then whatever that activity may be, becomes an accepted value of that society. Virtues do not shift. They remain constant despite the shifting mores of society.

We must set our sights on unchanging virtues and pursue the moral excellence to which God has called us.

