



TEMPERANCE

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



yahad.mt

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ABOUT THIS SESSION

This session speaks about temperance. Our society tends to live in excess, and so this session aims to teach young people about this virtue, and help them practice it in their own lives.

GOAL

- To teach young people the meaning of temperance.
- To encourage young people to practice temperance in their own lives.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Jenga (optional)

SCRIPTURE

- Luke 4:1-4

TEMPERANCE

Summary & Team Overview

Welcoming & Opening
Prayer

Game (Jenga)

Session Content

Discussion
(Speed dating)

Final discussion
(Traffic Lights)

Closing & Prayer

SEE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Opening activity (15 mins)

Jenga is a good game to start this session with. If you get your hands on a giant Jenga set, it is quite a crowd pleaser!

Our world

On the 2nd of March 2020, Miriam Pace was dug out from under the rubble of her own house. What was supposed to be a place of safety and comfort became a tomb. Various court proceedings are still ongoing to determine the culpability of the persons involved. But what is certain is that Miriam was a victim of injustice and unbridled greed.

JUDGE

Teaching (15 min)

Video: Is Self-Control a Virtue? https://youtu.be/ByDqzk41t_0

Temperance is one of the four cardinal virtues

- The other 3: Prudence, justice, fortitude
- Existed before Jesus did - ancient Greek philosophers recognised there as the 4 cardinal virtues
- There are also the theological values of faith, hope and charity.

Temperance is the moral virtue that **moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods**. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honourable.¹

Temperance is a virtue because excessive behaviour proves to be a destructive force in all areas of life. Someone who is excessive abandons himself to the rule of his impulses, offends others by his inordinate desires, and harms himself.²

- Temperance concerns the good things of the earth, such as food and drink.
- Temperance is about regulating our desires wisely and finding the middle ground between desires running wild and denying them.
 - It's easy for us humans to allow our desires to get the best of us.
 - The desire to eat is important - it keeps us alive.
 - Temperance is about recognising the desire and eating the right amount and type of food which is good for us, and not indulging in gluttony.
- The fact that it concerns good things makes it harder to find the middle ground, to have self control and discipline.
- It's a habit, something which we build over time
- It's not about just saying "no." Sometimes it's harder to find perfect moderation than practising abstinence.

¹ CCC, 1809

² YOUCAT, Question 304

- For example, with regard to technology: tempering our use is making sure we don't use it all the time, and we use it well.

Temperance is often praised in the Old Testament:

"Do not follow your base desires, but restrain your appetites." Sir 18:30.

In the New Testament it is called "moderation" or "sobriety."

We ought "to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world." Titus 2:12.

Opposite vice: intemperance (or overindulgence).

- Leads to sins like drunkenness, lust & gluttony.

"To live well is nothing other than to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul and with all one's efforts; from this it comes about that love is kept whole and uncorrupted (through temperance). No misfortune can disturb it (and this is fortitude). It obeys only [God] (and this is justice), and is careful in discerning things, so as not to be surprised by deceit or trickery (and this is prudence)." St. Augustine

More about temperance: <https://youtu.be/9BU1zMipFcA>

Story of a Saint (5 mins)

Ahead of the session, ask a few young people to research and learn about the story of St Augustine, looking particularly at the difference between his life before and after his conversion. Invite them to prepare a presentation to share with their peers.

Invite the young people assigned this presentation to share with the group.

Discussion (25 min)

Speed Dating:

- Have participants form two concentric circles.
- Each person from the circle on the inside is paired with someone on the outside. They are to stand/sit facing each other.
- The leader asks a question to the whole group and pairs discuss their responses with each other, for a set amount of time (for example 3 minutes).
- When the time is up, the leader signals the young people to rotate: Those in the outside circle move one or two spaces to the right so they are standing in front of someone new.
- Have the new pairs discuss the same questions.

Questions

- Where in our lives are we making excuses? Where are we overindulging?
 - Netflix/YouTube, social media, food, alcohol.
 - The point isn't to demonise everything but using good things well.
- What desires are good that we look at suspiciously?

After a few rounds, have the group highlight the most common answers shared during the one-to-one discussions.

ACT

Ask young people to think of one scenario where they need to exercise more temperance (this should come naturally after their previous conversation). Encourage them to commit to practising temperance for the coming week. Young people can also be paired up to keep each other accountable throughout the week.

Coming up with a strategy for when they feel a desire for something good but want to use it poorly is also a good idea. You can help young people to come up with their own strategy or share with them the simple traffic light system.

SEE: Name the desire and recognise your feelings.

JUDGE: What is right or wrong in this situation?

What can I do to be temperate?

ACT: Take action.

When 'doing the right thing' feels too difficult, ask for God's help: "Christ, you need to help me here. Teach me self-control."

With things like spending too much time on TikTok or watching Netflix, you can help young people to come up with practical solutions such as setting app timers on their phones.

Closing Prayer (2 mins)

Reflection from YAHAD Lent Resource

In our society it is much easier to say "is that all?" than "thanks". But today's Gospel, says no to more prestige, power and possessions, thus inviting us to rediscover the values of simplicity, sacrifice and sobriety.

Correctly understood, temperance and sacrifice are never an end in themselves. They are counter cultural values which lead us in the direction of happiness, greater freedom and care for others on a personal and communitarian level. When we distinguish between our wants and our needs, we can overcome that limitless greed and "idolatry of money" which leads to the disintegration of our social fabric and which leaves in its wake countless victims.

However, even when faced with grave environmental threats, many refuse to live simply so that others may live. Such a response betrays not only an irresponsible short sightedness, but also an insensitive unwillingness to pay a price to stand in solidarity with those who will suffer the most from the devastating effects of climate change.

As Christians, we should be at the forefront in agreeing to respect the limits imposed by our love towards others and our common home. When denying the urge to always have more and be more, we are guided by the hope that one person living temperately gives a good example. A community living temperately represents a political force which can change a society for the better.

