

A FEW WORDS TO THE LEADER

In this episode, Nicholas is invited by his friend Louis to attend the latest horror movie, but Nick's parents refuse to grant permission. Their concern for what Nick lets into his mind sounds like unfair repression to Nicholas and he sounds off in protest, resulting in being grounded.

Louis encourages Nicholas to sneak out and go to the movie anyhow. The boys devise an elaborate escape plan and make it to the theater with McGee in tow. However, the movie disgusts Nick and McGee. Then, when Nick gets home he finds that his absence had been discovered. Nick's parents make sure he will remember their warning to be careful what he allows into his mind.

One of the poignant moments in the story comes when Nicholas and McGee bemoan the difficulty in avoiding mental pollution. Nick says to McGee, "You gotta help me! That kinda stuffs all around." McGee replies, "Yeah, it's tough making the right choices."

McGee is right about the difficulty a child faces in making the right choices of what to see and read. There are many obvious attractions for a child in the media's offerings. Action, sound, color, technology, special effects, and fascinating people capture a child's interest. The influence of friends adds to the appeal. Sometimes the awareness that something is not approved by parents or teachers increases the intrigue.

This session provides a valuable opportunity to help children learn to avoid undesirable films, television, books/magazines.

KEY VALUE

Our minds are powerfully influenced or good or evil by the words and images we see and hear through films, videos, television, books, and magazines. Children today are surrounded by garbage media that can affect them negatively. This session is designed to help you communicate to children the value of guarding what goes into their minds.

Materials Needed:

- "The Not-So-Great Escape" Video.
- Lamp without a lampshade, low watt light bulb
- Chalkboard and chalk or poster board and markers
- Wastebasket, paper, pens/pencils
- Printed activity pages from the end of this lesson.

NOTE: Older Children (grades 3-6) tend to be more fearful of being called sissy than they are of late-night fright. Watching a scary movie becomes a badge of honor, and any suggestion that something might not be good for them to see or hear is viewed as an effort to treat them as "little kids." Younger Children (grades 1-2) often respond immediately when confronted with something negative. It is common for a child to cover eyes or ears, or even to leave the room, when something unpleasant is shown. Young children commonly decide whether or not to watch something on the likelihood of it causing "bad dreams." Only as children grow older is momentary enjoyment worth the risk of a nightmare.

Unfortunately, neither younger nor older children are able to recognize the long-term impact of the media. Children of all ages need adults to carefully supervise what they watch, listen to, and read.

This session will not only help children identify the harmful ways in which they can be influenced by what they see, it will also help them learn to make better decisions about the things they see.

KEY BIBLE VERSES

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think." Romans 12:2a

"Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others." Philippians 4:8b

"Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God; for all these worldly things, these evil desires — these are not from God. They are from this evil world itself. And this world is fading away, and these evil, forbidden things will go with it, but whoever keeps doing the will of God will live forever." 1 John 2:15-17

SESSION OBJECTIVE

As a result of this session, children will understand the importance of avoiding unwholesome movies, videos, TV shows, books, and magazines.

“BURNED-IN IMAGES”

Bring a lamp without a shade and with a low watt light bulb. Place the lamp on a table in front of the room. Turn on the light and tell everyone to stare at the bulb for twenty seconds. Turn off the light and have them close their eyes. Ask what they see. Then have them open their eyes and look around the room. Ask what they see now.

NOTE: In both cases, they will still see the image of the light bulb. With younger children, use a flashlight and turn off the other lights.

Explain that the image of the light was "burned into" their eyes for a short time. Fortunately it will go away. But what we see or read can be burned into our minds for a long time.

“INPUT”

Ask: *What TV shows don't your parents want you to watch? Why?*

Alternate activity: Divide into two teams and see which team can remember the most television advertising slogans. The teams should alternate giving the slogans aloud.

Explain that what we see affects what we think and even how we act. Then introduce the video.

NOTE: The TV slogan contest will not work with younger children.

"THE NOT-SO-GREAT ESCAPE"

Preview the video before showing it to the children. Introduce "The Not-So-Great Escape" episode of McGee and Me! by saying something like: *"In this story a boy named Nicholas and his cartoon friend McGee get into trouble and learn some very important lessons about not putting garbage into our minds and about learning to follow our parents' instructions."*

SHOW THE FIRST PART OF THE VIDEO.

ACT ONE: Nicholas and his friend, Louis, talk about a new horror movie which is being heavily advertised on "TV. Louis invites Nick to go to the movie with him and Nick agrees, but then his parents won't let him go. Nick feels they are being unfair, gets angry, and gets grounded. Even some imaginary horseplay with McGee doesn't make Nick feel any better.



**VIDEO PRESENTATION -
15 MINUTES**

ACT TWO: Nicholas and Louis, imitating their heroes on a TV adventure show, engineer a daring escape from the house and an ingenious ruse to keep family members from discovering Nick's absence. However, Nick's contraptions malfunction and his disappearance is discovered. Meanwhile, Nick and McGee, bothered by guilt, find the movie disgusting.

STOP THE VIDEO AFTER THE MUSIC AS NICK RETURNS HOME FROM THE THEATER AND ENTERS THE FRONT PORCH.

"LET'S TALK ABOUT IT"

Ask children to respond to the following questions to help them evaluate Nick and McGee's actions:

- 1. Why did Nicholas want to see the movie?***
- 2. Why do you think his parents did NOT want him to see it?***
- 3. Why do you think Nick got so angry when told he could not go to the movie?***

4. *How would you have responded?*
5. *What are some ways Nick has already been influenced by things he has seen on TV?*
6. *For those of you who haven't seen this before, what do you think happens next in the story?*

NOTE: For younger children, eliminate questions 4 and 5.

If children's comments indicate any misunderstanding about some facet of the story, clarify what really was said or done. Avoid the temptation to add "editorial" comments or to derive conclusions during this discussion. The objective at this point is to draw out what the children are thinking about what Nicholas has done, to nudge them to try to evaluate his behavior.

If children express conflicting ideas, simply accept the diversity with a comment such as, *"We don't know for certain how Nicholas felt, but your idea could be an explanation of why he decided to disobey his parents' rule."*

After taking a few answers to the last question, say: *"Let's find out."*



"THE NOT-SO-GREAT ESCAPE"

SHOW REMAINDER OF VIDEO.

**VIDEO PRESENTATION-
10 MINUTES**

ACT THREE: Nicholas returns home and faces his parents who explain their sadness that he saw the movie. His dad says, *"By going to see it, you've allowed something to come into your mind—to pollute it, to dirty it. It's bound to affect your life. It's garbage in, garbage out, Nicholas."* The story ends with Nicholas working out his punishment, and talking with McGee about how hard it is to make the right choices when surrounded by so much garbage.

"WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?"

Write the following verse on the board: *"Fix your thoughts on what is true, and good and right. Think about things that are gross and ugly, and dwell on the rotten, bad things in others."*

Ask what's wrong with the verse and have volunteers come to the board and fix one word at a time. Each time a word is changed, ask why.

Then ask: *"What's true, good, and right in the world? Give me some examples."* Underline "true," "good," and "right" on the board.

With younger children, don't ask the question about what is true, good, and right in the world.

"TRUE, GOOD, AND RIGHT"

Conclude this session by helping children think through positive actions that would apply the Bible verse in specific situations. APPLICATION— Point to the words "true," "good," and "right" on the board as you 15 MINUTES say: *"Right now I want you to think of what is TRUE, GOOD, and RIGHT for you. What are good, true, and right things that you can do?"* Take a number of suggestions. Possible answers could include: read the Bible, bake a cake, play soccer, help Mom, call a friend, sing, watch good TV shows, etc.

"DOING IT"

Hand out paper to everyone and provide pencils, felt-tip pens and/or crayons. Tell the children to draw a picture of themselves doing something that is good, true, and right.

"WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?" (6 minutes—grades 3-6)

Take the following situations one at a time and ask the children what they should do.

- You are watching TV at a neighbor's house when a bad video or cable show comes on. (What if your friend says his or her parents don't mind?)
- You are watching one of your favorite television shows at home when the story becomes dirty. (What if it's a really good show and you're into the story?)
- Your friends invite you to go with them to see a movie that you know is not good. (What if you really want to be their friend, but you don't think you should go to the movie?)
- A friend in school shows you a gross or dirty joke book. What if he or she starts making fun of you for not looking at the book?)
- You are walking by yourself in the park when you find a dirty magazine. (What if no one is around—no one is looking?)
- You are at a friend's house listening to music. The radio is tuned to a popular rock music station, and a song about sex comes on. (What if you think they'll get mad at you for changing the station?)

"PLAYING THE GAME WITH PRIDE"

Explain that you will give the children a series of situations where McGee is accomplishing something. Each time they should tell you what McGee might say if he is honoring himself. Then they should tell you what McGee might say if he is humble and friendly. Here are the situations to use:

- *McGee scores a goal in a soccer game.*
- *McGee gets 100% on a spelling test.*
- *McGee is chosen to sing a solo in the school concert.*
- *McGee's friend wins "artist of the month " at school and his pictures are on the bulletin board.*

NOTE: You may want to give sample McGee comments (negative and positive) to prime the pump and keep them from giving pat answers. For example, in the soccer game, McGee might say: "What a great shot!" (negative) or "It was a team effort—we all worked together. Thanks for the great assist. " (positive). With his artist friend, McGee might say: "I should have won!" (negative) or "Congratulations. I really like your pictures. " (positive).

MEMORY VERSE

Use the following verse for the class to memorize: ***"For everyone who tries to honor himself shall be humbled; and he who humbles himself shall be honored."*** Luke 14:11b. Ask for suggestions of gestures the children could make or postures they could take to visualize honoring one's self and humbling one's self. For example, honoring could be visualized by standing proudly, with nose stuck in the air. Humbling could be visualized by bowing to someone and saying, *"After you."* Choose two actions from their suggestions. Explain that whenever you say "honor" or "honored, " they should do the "pride" gesture or posture. And whenever you say "humble" or "humbled," they should do the "humble" gesture or posture. Read the verse slowly aloud, making sure that everyone does the right motions. Next, have them say the verse with you as they stand, sit, etc. Go faster and faster until everyone is laughing. Read the verse one more time very slowly, with everyone saying the verse and doing the motions in slow motion. With younger children, go very slowly

"GARBAGE" (7 minutes—grades 3-6)

Place a wastebasket at the front of the room, then give everyone a sheet of paper and a pen/pencil. Tell them to list the TV shows, movies, books, and magazines that they shouldn't see. After a few minutes, say something like: *"There are lots of things that we shouldn't see because they fill our minds with garbage. On your list you probably included shows, videos, movies, magazines, and so forth that your parents don't approve of. They have said no for you. But there are also times when you have to make the choice for yourself. That's when you need the courage to turn off the set, change channels, walk away, or just refuse to get involved. Don't mess with garbage. In fact, there's only one thing to do with garbage like this. "* Then have them crumple their sheets and throw them into the "McGee garbage can" (the wastebasket you placed in front of the room). Next, hand out clean sheets of paper and have them each list one or two GOOD television shows, movies, books, and/or magazines. Then, one at a time, have them read their lists aloud and tape them to the board.

NOTE: Because rules and standards will vary among families, some kids may list as "good" what others have listed as "bad. " If this happens, don't let kids argue over their lists. Instead, comment on how each family has to decide their own standards and how important it is for all of us to think about how we fill our minds.

"PUZZLE" (5 minutes—grades 1-2, 3-6)

Beforehand, print the Philippians 4:8b puzzle that can be found at the end of this lesson. Cut the puzzle into 6-12 pieces. See how fast the group, individuals, or teams can put the puzzle(s) together.

"WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?" (5 MINUTES—GRADES 3-6)

Distribute 8-1/2" x 11" sheets of paper with a number of 2 x 3 boxes on them and Philippians 4:8b written at the top (copy from duplication pages). Make available pencils, felt-tip pens, and/or crayons. Tell everyone to write or draw something in each box that is good to think about instead of polluting his or her mind with evil thoughts.

“PHILIPPIANS 4:8b WORD PUZZLE” (7 minutes-grades 1-2, 3-6)

Print copies of the Philippians 4:8b word puzzle included at the end of this PDF file.

Distribute the puzzles and pencils and see who can find all the words to Philippians 4:8b.

They should circle the words. Explain that the words may be written forwards, backwards, vertically, horizontally, and at an angle. And letters may be in more than one word. Also, be sure to tell them that the puzzle contains the WHOLE verse. In other words, "and" appears four times, and "on" and "things" each appear twice.

It may be difficult for kids to find all the words. Have a time limit and see who finds the most.

NOTE: For younger children, write the verse on the board before having them begin. Also, point out several of the more difficult words to find, as an example of what they're looking for.

PUZZLE KEY:





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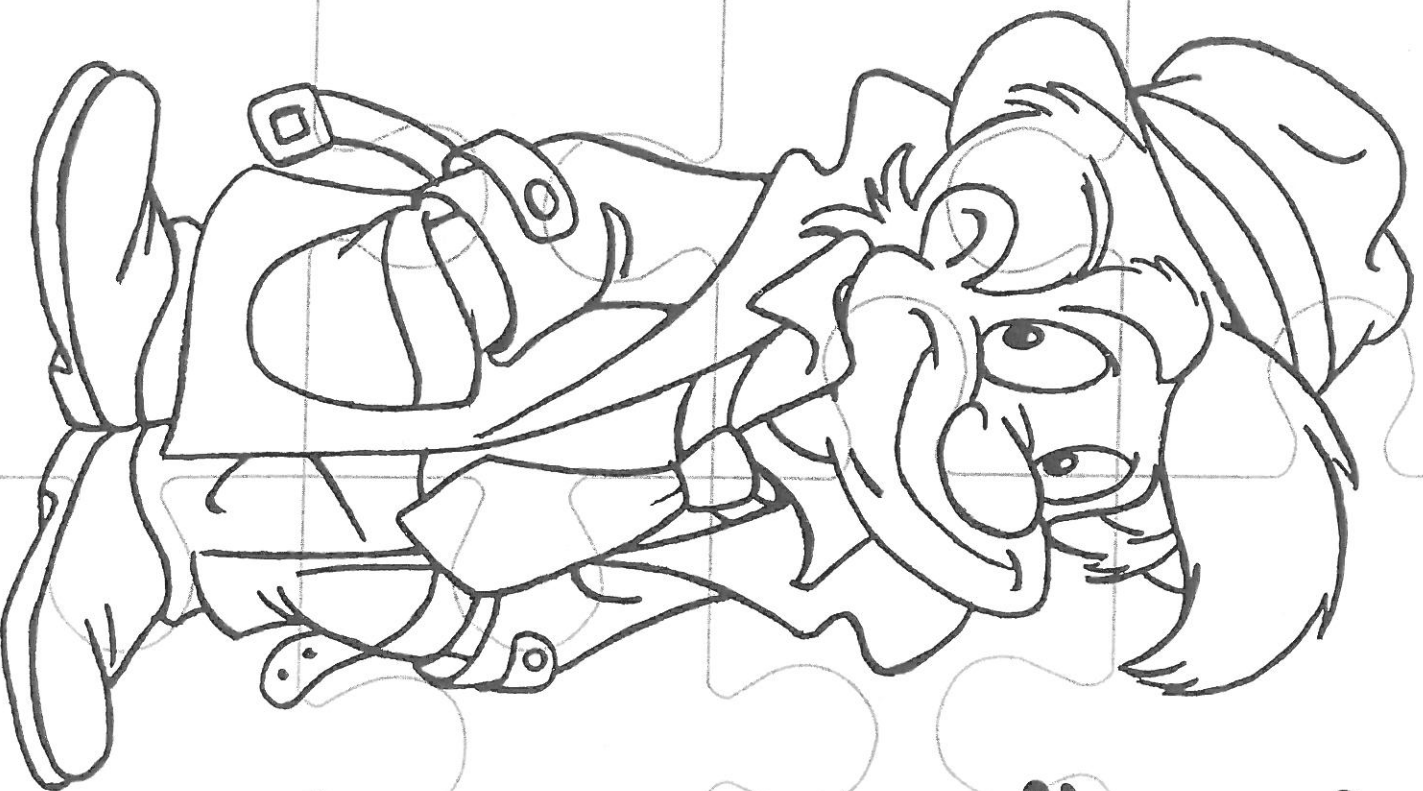
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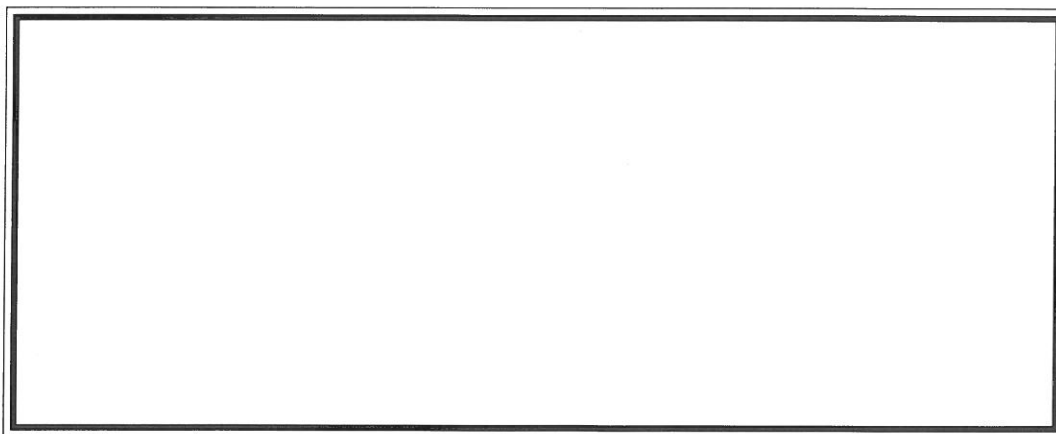
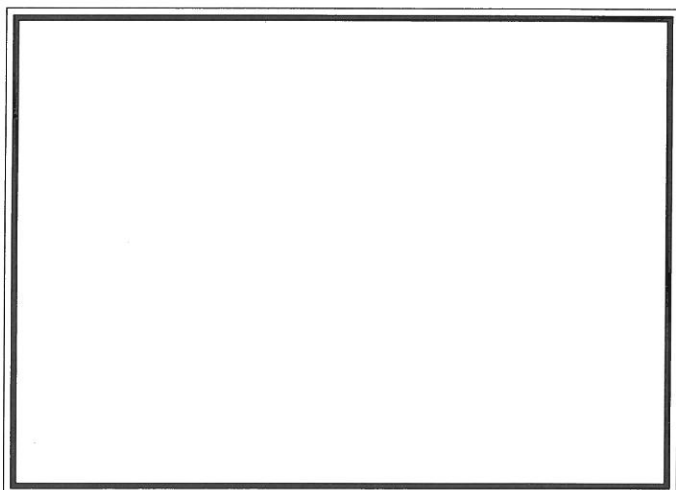
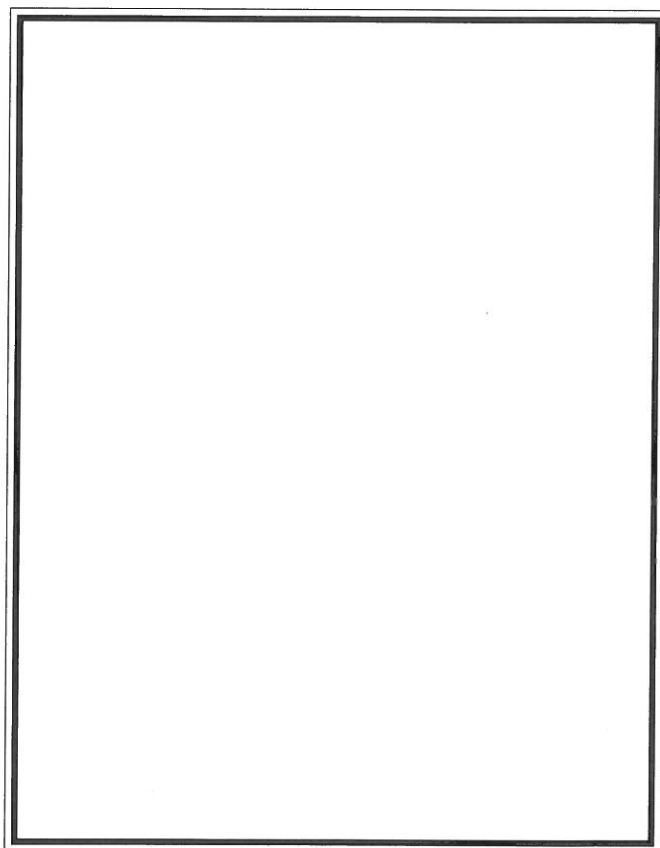
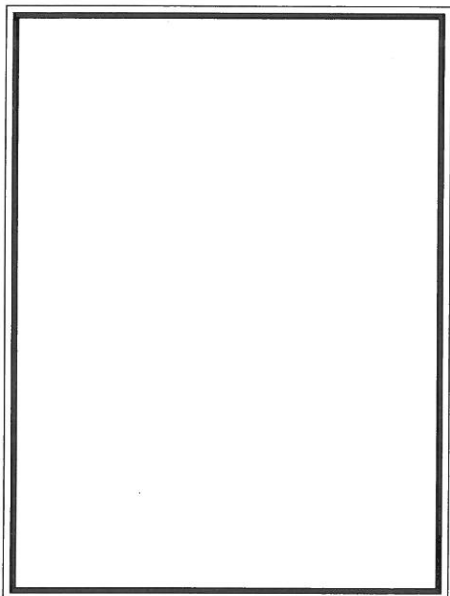


“Fix your thoughts
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PHILIPPIANS 4:8b

“Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others.”

- *Write or draw something in each box that is good to think about.*



PHILIPPIANS 4:8b

“Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others”



F A B C D D N A R E
G D W E L L E N I F
H T H A T H I N G S
G A I B Y D N A H J
O H L O V E L Y T K
O W U U N T G O O D
D R I T I H X N T N
L E S G N I H T H A
P U R E F N T H E M
N R A N D K O A R E
P T H O U G H T S Q