



Discussion Guide

For Adults Working with Teens

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Lesson: Chivalry: Dead or Alive?

Learning Objectives: By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify behaviors which may be considered chivalrous
- Articulate their views about chivalrous behavior
- Consider their own personal code of ethics

Materials:

- Copies of the article “**Chivalry: Dead or Alive?**”—one per student
- Index cards—one for each student and an additional nine for the sentences below.
- Scrap paper for student journals.

Preparation:

Write each of the following items on a separate index card:

- Opening a car door
- Holding a door open
- Putting the toilet seat up or down
- Paying for a date
- Allowing someone to leave an elevator before you
- Walking on the street side of a sidewalk
- Meeting the parents of your date
- Asking permission of the family to date or marry
- Asking a person’s permission before engaging in a romantic gesture or sexual touching

Facilitator’s Note: *Chivalry can mean different things to people and there may be many different views about what is considered polite behavior and the role between males and females. Sometimes these beliefs and cultural norms are so ingrained they can be difficult to see. Listen carefully for students’ values and reflect back what you may be hearing as they proceed through this activity.*

Procedure:

1. Introduce the topic of chivalry by writing the word “chivalry” on the board with a circle around it. Ask the class to come up with words that come to mind when they hear the term “chivalry.” Using their answers, draw lines away from the circle (like a sun) and write their terms at the end of the line (creating a mind map). Explain that the term chivalry was originally used to describe knightly virtues or a code of ethics upheld by noble landowners and/or knights throughout the Middle Ages, but has since come to mean different things to people (as demonstrated by the variety of concepts that the class has just brainstormed).

2. Distribute copies of the article “**Chivalry: Dead or Alive?**” and read it together with your students.
3. Ask the class, “who decides what is chivalrous?” and “where did you learn what was chivalrous?”
4. Pass out index cards to students. Explain that you are going to ask them to write down one behavior that they would consider chivalrous. You can offer examples from the list of index cards you have prepared.
5. Have students turn in their cards, then mix them up and redistribute them to the class along with the index cards you prepared, so that some students will get more than one. Have them write on their card whether the behavior on is an example of chivalry or not.
6. Lead a class discussion about their cards. With a show of hands, ask, “how many people are holding a card they consider to be chivalrous?” Then ask those people what behaviors they have and why they believe them to be chivalrous or not. Ask for opinions that may disagree or differ in perspective. Then ask for a show of hands from people who are holding a card they do not find to be chivalrous. What are those behaviors? Ask students don’t believe them to be chivalrous.
7. Follow up with a few questions for class discussion:
 - Chivalry seems to run along gender (male/female) lines, with males doing things for females. What do you think about this aspect of chivalry? Should chivalry go both ways? If so, why?
 - Do you think chivalry is dead? Why or why not?
8. Read Webster's Dictionary definition:

Chivalry:

1. Gallantry, courtesy and honor.
2. The noble qualities a knight was supposed to have, such as courage and a readiness to help the weak.
3. The demonstration of any of these qualities.
4. Explain that some might say chivalry is a choice. The choice to do the right things, for the right reasons, at the right times. Ask students to consider what their own personal code of ethics would look like. Have them consider three principles they would want to live their life by (such as to be honest, demonstrate integrity, protect the weak, etc.) Have students write these down.
5. To encourage further reflection, have students journal ways that they have and can continue to demonstrate that code. So, for example, if one of their principles is to live by the code of honor—what would honorable conduct look like? What behaviors are honorable and dishonorable? Spend the last bit of class time having students write down their thoughts about their code of principles.

Facilitator's Resource:

Scenarios USA is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to giving young people a creative forum to explore and express who they are and how they see the world, with the goal of helping them make healthy decisions about their lives. Teens, aged 12-22, address issues such as HIV/AIDS, unplanned pregnancy and violence by writing stories for the annual "What's the REAL Deal?" contest. The winners are partnered with professional filmmakers and crew, who help them produce their stories into high-quality short films in their hometown. These short but powerful videos will help trigger classroom conversation about topics affecting teenagers, lives. You can view film clips by going to: www.scenariosusa.org/movies. They are available to order online.

The Discussion Guide was created by Teri Tomatich, M.Ed., professional trainer/consultant. For additional lessons, go to http://answer.rutgers.edu/page/lesson_plans.

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