



LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades 1-4
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Facing TV Violence: Consequences and Media Violence

Overview

In this lesson, students explore the absence, or unrealistic portrayal, of consequences to violence in the media. The class begins with a “what would happen if…” discussion of consequences to violent acts that might occur in real life. Students then complete work sheets where they compare TV depictions of violent acts to what would actually happen in real life. Students also begin to question depicted consequences of media violence based on feelings, responsibilities, injuries and results of actions.

Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate:

- an awareness of the different types of violence that appear in children's television programs.
- an understanding of the unrealistic portrayal of consequences to violent acts in the media.
- an understanding of their own reactions to various types of violence.

Preparation and Materials

- Tape a portion of a television show or cartoon that features physical violence, destruction of property or a car chase involving lots of crashes and 'near misses'. Superhero cartoons would be a good source of this type of activity for Primary grades.
- Photocopy *Happily Ever After?* and *Consequences* worksheets.

The Lesson

Guided discussion

Ask your class:

- Do you ever play video games where people fight?
- What happens in these games? Do you get to use weapons? Have special powers?
- How do you win? Does someone die?



Imagine that you are playing a video game. (Students might volunteer to perform this scenario as a skit.) In your game, you have chosen two characters to fight against each other. You play until one of your characters dies and the other character wins. Then, because you really like these two characters, you select them again, and play another game.

- How is this video game fight different from real fighting? (You can hurt or even kill a character, but, with the press of a button, the person comes back to life and isn't even injured.)
- What would happen to you, if someone started to hit you? (You might cry, you could be injured, you might have to go to the hospital, you could even die.)

In real life, when something happens, there are consequences. But when people are attacked in video games, they are always able to come back and play again because there are no consequences – no one has to go to the hospital; no one is upset; no one has to pay for everything that has been destroyed; and no one is put into jail.

TV programs don't usually show the real consequences, or effects, of violence, so it's easy for you to assume that punches don't hurt and bullets don't kill. (If punches don't appear to hurt, you may be more likely to punch too.) Instead of spending weeks in a coma followed by months of recovery, a TV victim is cured and back in time for next week's show. TV fights go on much longer than real fights would; in real life, one punch to someone's face could break the puncher's hand and knock the victim unconscious. (Source: *The TV Book, The Kid's Guide to Talking Back*, by Shelagh Wallace. Annick Press, 1996)

Where else can you find violence with no consequences? (Movies, comic books, MTV, videos.)

Activity

- Hand out *Happily Ever After?* worksheet for students to complete.
- Review their answers, and encourage students to brainstorm other scenarios.

Discussion

When you see violence on TV or in movies or video games, think about the consequences of what you see. Ask yourself:

- How do the people involved in the conflict feel?
- What are the responsibilities of the people who have acted violently?
- What injuries have occurred?
- What are the results of the violence on others?

Activity

- Distribute *Consequences* worksheets to students. (For younger children, these points could be reviewed orally.)



- View the taped excerpts. After each excerpt, ask your students to consider the questions on their *Consequences* sheets.
- Review the students' findings and have the class decide how realistically the program has dealt with consequences.

Evaluation

- Worksheets



Happily Ever After?

Name: _____

Sometimes, TV and video games don't tell the whole story. Violent events occur, and then everyone seems to recover very quickly and live "happily ever after." What do you think would *really* happen in the following situations?

In a video game...

When you hit someone so they bleed, you get points and win the game.

In real life.....

On TV....

When you have a car chase, cars crash and sometimes explode. But no one ever goes back to remove the crashed cars or take care of injured people. Often those in the crash get out, and continue the chase on foot!

In real life.....

In a rock video....

Kids have a party and wreck the house. No one has to clean up the mess or pay for the damages.

In real life....

In a movie....

The hero can destroy property and kill people, but never has to go to jail or pay for what was destroyed. In fact, people still admire the hero even though this has happened.

In real life....



In a movie....

The hero gets shot, but keeps chasing the bad guy.

In real life....

Can you think of other examples?

Adapted, with permission, from *Beyond Blame, Challenging Violence in the Media* by the Center for Media Literacy.



Consequences

When you see violence on TV or in movies or video games, think about the consequences that would result from this violence in real life. Ask yourself some of the questions below:

Feelings	Responsibilities	Injuries	Results
Who will be sad?	Who will pay for the damages?	Who will have to go to the hospital?	What will happen to the victim's families?
Who will be scared?	Who will clean up the mess?	How long will they stay in the hospital?	Who will be left alone?
Who will be angry?	Who will fix everything that was broken? How much will it cost?	Will they fully recover from their injuries?	How does this affect other people?
Who will be embarrassed?	Who will pay the hospital bills or the fees for the funeral?	Will their lives go back to normal?	If someone dies, who will attend the funeral?
Who will be left out?			

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