

### Module 3

**Class Title:** Eyes, Hands and Mouth

**Aim of Lesson:** A visual display of three types of relationships: above, around & below. To see how important it is to have all these relationships in our lives.

**Category:** Interpersonal Skills

**Lesson Format:** Activity & Discussion

#### Activity

##### Materials Needed:

4 Volunteers

3 Bandanas or blindfolds

Small table and chair

Towel

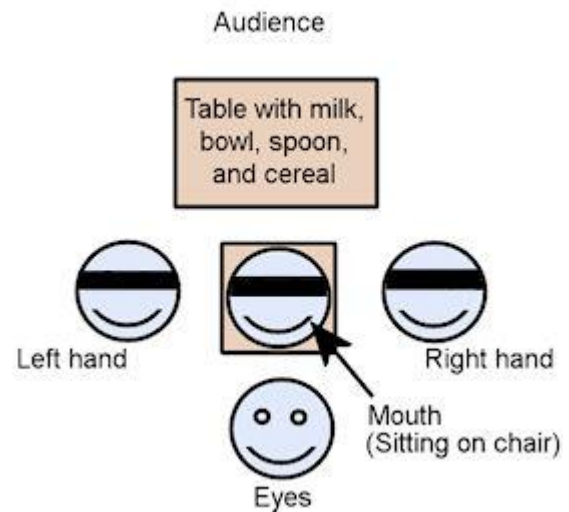
Cereal

Milk

Bowl and spoon

##### Duration:

Approximately 20 minutes



##### Preparation:

Before the start of the class, arrange the table and chair, as indicated by the diagram above, in a place where the class can easily observe the illustration. Place the bowl, spoon, and the other items on the table.

##### What you will do:

First, assign people to the roles of EYES, RIGHT HAND, LEFT HAND and MOUTH.

Place a blindfold over the eyes of the students playing the parts of LEFT HAND, RIGHT HAND, and MOUTH. Then have the volunteers take their places as indicated by the diagram above.

The object is for the EYES to direct the Left and Right HANDS to find the milk and box of cereal, open them, pour them into the bowl, and feed the MOUTH. Placing a towel on the person who plays MOUTH would be wise.

Let the volunteers struggle through the exercise but make sure the task is getting done. Don't let it drag on for too long.

**Note: Do not reveal the topic of discussion during the activity**

## What you will say:

(Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*  
(*Ta'awwuz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*  
(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*  
(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

The teen years is a stage of life that is full of changes, both physical and mental. All of these changes stir up many questions. Many important decisions must be made during this period. A huge problem teenagers face is the lack of trust they seem to have with older adults. This forces teenagers to rely on their peers for advice, even for those decisions that can affect the rest of their lives.

We need people ABOVE us, we need people AROUND us and we need people BELOW us.

### **Above:**

Think about the HANDS in our exercise. What if one hand would have asked the other hand, "Where is the milk?" It is obvious that neither of them could see where it was. That is why they needed the "EYES" to guide them.

The EYES are people that have been through what you are going through now and have "made it." They are usually older people who have proven themselves to show wisdom in the way they live. It does not necessarily have anything to do with schooling.

Find people who you can trust and talk to about the issues that matter to you. You will find that people that are ahead of you in life will give you a new insight and a different perspective on the challenges and decisions that you face.

### **The Generation Gap**

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

ليس منا من لم يرحم صغيرنا و لم يعرف شرف كبيرنا

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever fails to show mercy to our children and honor to our elders is not one of us." [*Sunan al-Tirmidhî* (1919)]

The Generation Gap is a continual source of pain and confusion for every successive generation.

It is often seen as the difficulties and struggles represented in the attitudes and experiences of older people and how they interpret the attitudes and behavior of young people.

The generation gap occurs when

- older and younger people do not understand each other because of their different experiences, opinions, habits and behavior.
- there arises a lack of communication between one generation and another, especially between young people and their parents, brought about by differences of perspectives, tastes, outlook, ...

In the midst of all the confusion and conflict amid feelings of self-righteousness, a lot of generalizations are made and injustice is done.

Older people usually assume they know everything and younger people usually assume that older people don't know /understand anything.

### **Prophetic Example of Bridging the Generation Gap**

In the life of our beloved Prophet (pbuh), we find the strong emphasis he placed on recognizing that a gap between generations **will** exist and that it **must** be bridged.

The Prophet (pbuh) became a prophet at the age of forty and therefore, it is well-known that a sizable majority of his companions were much younger than him. Throughout his life, he maintained a most perfect balance between appreciating and respecting the wisdom and experience of the elder companions such as Abu Bakr Siddiq (ra) and appreciating and respecting the dynamism and the sharp insights of the younger companions such as Ali ibn Talib, Aishah, Abdullah ibn Abbas (ra).

Among the companions were elders who had entered Islam very late in their lives and in contrast there were younger companions who had been born into Muslim households and knew only Islam as their way of life.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) taught us to bridge the gap through physical acts of intimacy and love.

The young often feel intimidated by the old, authoritative members of their family or community.

- Rasul Allah (pbuh) led by example when he kissed his grandchildren at a time in Arabia when such intimacy was not common. We learn from Abu Huraira (ra) that, "Allah's Apostle (pbuh) kissed Hasan bin Ali while Al-Aqra' bin Habis At-Tamim was sitting beside him. Al-Aqra said, "I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of them." Allah's Apostle cast a look at him and said, "Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully." [Bukhari & Muslim]

Perpetuating fear and feelings of intimidation only widens the generation gap because the youth will never get close enough to the elders to be comfortable, to be at ease, and to learn. And at the same time the elders will not have direct contact with the youth to grasp their generation's

culture. Merely drawing in the youth through handshakes, embraces, and kisses reduces the physical distance and helps to minimize any feelings of fear or intimidation.

- In another instance, Prophet (pbuh) gave authority to Khalid ibn Walid (ra) to command a unit sent to fight against the tribe of Bani Jadhima. Khalid was much younger and had accepted Islam much later than most of the other companions but the Prophet (pbuh) chose Khalid because of his superior military skills.

He (pbuh) teaches us that just because one is older does not necessarily mean that one has the skills or the specific experience that will allow him or her to serve well in a particular position or situation.

Quite often, young people are not given important tasks and their input is never sought on matters of importance in families and even in schools. And very often, young people resent that.

Young people are agile, motivated, dynamic, and have sharp analytical skills which when tempered by the wisdom and the lived experience of the elders can yield powerful results in helping resolve whatever issues before us.

Khalid ibn Walid, who before becoming a Muslim was an avowed enemy of Islam and a brilliant military strategist, will forever be in the history books because elder companions who had entered Islam long before him actually accepted him as their unit commander.

Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd: There was no name dearer to Ali (r) than his nickname Abu Turab (the father of dust). He used to feel happy whenever he was called by this name. Once Allah's Apostle (s) came to the house of Fatima (r) but did not find Ali in the house. So he asked, "Where is your cousin?" She replied, "There was something (a quarrel) between me and him whereupon he got angry with me and went out without having a midday nap in my house." Allah's Apostle (s) asked a person to look for him. That person came, and said, "O Allah's Apostle! He is sleeping in the mosque." So Allah's Apostle went there and found him lying. His upper body cover had fallen off to one side of his body and so he was covered with DUST. Allah's Apostle (s) started cleaning the dust from him, saying, "Get up, O Abu Turab! Get up, Abu Turab!" [Bukhari, Vol. 8, #297]

What just happened? Rasul Allah (pbuh) showed that the interactions between the youth and the elders need not be dry, almost lifeless, filled with a false sense of awe that the youth are expected to show towards the elders.

In the situation described above, at work are so many societal expectations of how cousins of different generations should interact, of how a son-in-law should interact with his father-in-law and above all, how a companion should interact with the Prophet (pbuh).

The wisdom of Rasul Allah (pbuh) is such that he diffuses a volatile situation involving essentially two youths (his daughter and his son-in-law), with humor. He does not sit in one

place and demand that Ali (ra) be brought to him. He does not become upset with Fatima or ‘Ali for arguing with each other - it was an argument between spouses.

Instead, what he does is - the Prophet of Allah, the father of Fatima, the cousin of ‘Ali, the father-in-law of ‘Ali actually asks around for help in locating ‘Ali and then finds him sleeping in the mosque. In a joking manner, the Prophet refers to ‘Ali as "*Abu Turab*," or "*Father of the dust*," and lessens the tension of the moment drastically.

Among the lessons we can extract from these examples are bridging the generation gap is not only critical but it is a worthwhile endeavor.

You are the younger generation. How do you think you can bridge the gap between yourself and your parents, your teachers and other elders in your life?

**(Note to teacher:** brainstorm here)

Respect is the key. That is what we learn from the Prophetic example.

Some people are easy to love and respect because of their characteristics and behavior; while with others you have to dig a little deeper to find the goodness that may lie hidden under mounds of shyness, aggression, defensiveness, hostility, aloofness, or fear. But if you care to be patient and spend some time, you'll surely find that buried treasure that will enrich your lives.

Even if you think some elders above you are “unreasonable” or “demanding” – stick to giving them respect and then see what happens.

Imam Abu Dawood reported as a fair Hadith that Abu Mūsa Al-Ash’ari (RA) stated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: ‘Part of paying homage to Allah (swt) is to respect an elder whose hair has turned gray, or a regular reader of the Qur’an, or a just ruler.’

This desired behavior towards elders is so important that the Prophet made it a part of respecting and venerating Allah (swt).

Imam Muslim reported that Ibn Mas’ud (ra) said that the Prophet (pbuh) said: ‘Let your wise and mature pray immediately behind me, then those who trail behind them, and then those who trail behind them.’

So another thing to remember is that those “above” us are not necessarily “older in age” only. They could be more learned, more pious, wiser etc.

### **Around:**

In order to grow in life, we also need relationships with people who are on the same level. This is like the relationship between the right and left HANDS in our exercise. Think about the excellent team work our HANDS represent. They can do all sorts of things because they match each other. In the same way, our peers add value to our lives. We create special memories with people our same age. They understand the ups and downs of our lives. They like the same things

we like.

Narrated Abu Hurayrah (ra): The Prophet (pbuh) said: A man follows the *deen* of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend. {Book 41, Number 4815 : Sunan Abu Dawud}

### **Below:**

There is one more level of relationships. A relationship that reaches DOWN. The only reason the MOUTH got to taste some yummy cereal is because the HANDS were willing to do the work for it. As you find people who guide you through the tough moments of life, you should at the same time try to do the same thing for someone else.

Look for people who look up to you. Maybe teenagers who are 1 or 2 grades below you. Develop relationships with them and try to help and advise them when you can. Your efforts will always be remembered by them. They will appreciate the fact that you went out of your way to be there for them.

Simple examples in school could be, sharing your books and notes from the past year or being kind to younger kids at break time. What else? (**Note to teacher:** brainstorm here)

Your younger siblings are also below you and most certainly look up to you. Be their friend. Take time out to hang out with them and share your experiences with them. For them – you are the ‘elder’, you are ‘above’ – so follow the example of Rasul Allah (pbuh) and be kind, affectionate and loving to them. This is where **you** get to bridge the generation gap from ‘above’! It is not the “thing” to treat those younger to you like cockroaches!

We see that in schools. Bullying younger kids, particularly new admissions – is shockingly common.

People who are weaker than you are also ‘below’ you. Like those people who work for your parents – maids, drivers, *chowkidars* (watchmen). The disadvantaged section of society – the poor, the beggars, the destitute – also fall in this category. We see that in our country (Pakistan) there is such need for reaching out to the needy. Allah (swt) has blessed all of us sitting in this room with so much. Should we not reach down?

### **Lessons from this activity**

What did we learn here with this activity? (**Note to teacher:** brainstorm here)

- Our relationships should be in all directions – above, around and below. Not just around.
- This is what makes our lives more productive and interesting!
- Prophetic example of reaching ‘up’, ‘around’ and ‘down’ is there to guide us.

Du’a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati ‘amma yasifun wa salamun ‘alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil ‘alameen*  
(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*