

# Do I Hafta?

By Sister Kieran Sawyer, SSND

(Edited by Rebecca Moczulewski)



## Purpose

In this session, middle school participants examine the motivation that guides their daily choices and are encouraged to make personal decisions based on positive character-based values and virtues.

**Component:** Faith Learning

## Session at a Glance

6:15 - 6:20	Gather	5:00 - 5:05
6:20 - 6:25	Welcome and Opening Prayer	5:05 - 5:10
6:25 - 6:30	Announcements	5:10 - 5:15
6:30 - 6:55	Teaching the Three Levels of Motivation	5:15 - 5:40
6:55 - 7:10	Reflection Exercise	5:40 - 5:55
7:10 - 7:20	Scripture and Prayer	5:55 - 6:05
7:20 - 7:30	Announcements and Refreshments	6:05 - 6:15
7:30 PM	Good Night!	6:15 PM

## Materials Needed

- Nametags & Sharpies
- Bibles, one for each participant
- Newsprint or whiteboard
- Half-sheets, one for each participant
- Pens or pencils, one for each participant
- **Handout 1, Three Levels of Motivation**, one for each participant
- Table, cloth, Bible, candle, light stick

## Prepare in Advance

1. Study **Handout 1, Three Levels of Motivation**. For the session to be successful, you need to thoroughly understand the concepts contained there. You will be creating a shortened version of this chart on a sheet of newsprint as you lead the session.  
*Note from Sister Kieran:* I consider this chart and its concepts to be a central component of all of my work with teenagers. Their spiritual and moral development depends upon their growing ability to think and choose on the third level.
2. Prepare a sheet of newsprint with the following statement:

When I get to do whatever I want, I \_\_\_\_\_.

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3. Prepare four students for the reading of Luke 2:41-53: one to play the boy Jesus, one to play Mary, and two narrators to read every other verse.
4. Prepare a prayer focus by covering a table with a cloth, Bible, and candle. Have a light stick nearby.
5. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. **Hospitality is important!** As the leader, spend the arrival time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

### **Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)**

As the participants arrive, invite them to make a nametag. When all have gathered, welcome them to tonight's session. Make any needed introductions.

### **Presenting the Three Levels of Motivation (25 minutes) Rebecca & Small Groups**

Note that part of this section will be done in your small groups. (Small group portions of this session appear in BLUE and are highlighted for easy reference.)

#### **Large Group: Rebecca**

Pointing to the sheet of newsprint with the statement you prepared in advance of the session, ask several youth to finish the sentence. Then change the word DO to EAT, and ask for several more responses. Continue until you have heard from every participant at least once, changing the key word to GO, WATCH, LISTEN TO, WEAR, and PLAY.

Then say:

Tonight, I am going to teach you a simple psychological system that will help you to understand why you do what you do. I hope the lesson will help you to make better choices and decisions in you day-to-day life. The system divides our decision making into three levels or categories.

Begin to create on a sheet of newsprint a chart with three columns.

We have just been talking about the first category, which we will call the **WANTA's**. Write the word **WANTA** at the top of the first column.

Psychologists call this the "child level," [write **CHILD**] but that doesn't mean we only act on this level when we are children. Everyone does and should be a child sometimes. On this level we do whatever is **FUN, EASY, EXCITING, LAZY, SPONTANEOUS** [write the words as you say them].

When I act on this level I only think about ME and what I want right NOW. [Write **Me & Now.**] I don't think about how my decisions might affect other people, or about the long-range consequences of my actions. Like a little child, I do whatever I FEEL LIKE doing. I call this the **M & N** level [write] to stand for ME and NOW.

Write **HAFTA** at the top of the second column, and say:

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You are going to talk about this section in your small groups. Now let's think about the second level, the HAFTA's. As you are well aware, we don't always get to do what we want to do. Sometimes we hafta do the haftas.

### Small Group Activity (5 mins)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Using the half sheets of paper on your tables, please make a list of all the things you **hafta** do every day. Start with "I hafta go to school." Start every item on your list with the words "I hafta." You may share ideas with members of your small group, but each person should make their own list.

**Note to SGLs:** As the young people are working at their lists, give them a few clues as to what the "hafta" rules in their lives might be: school rules, family rules, chores, church, teachers, civic responsibilities, etc. Then call on individuals to name some of the things on their "hafta" lists, and invite everyone else to add to their own lists any haftas they don't already have.

Large Group Discussion- Rebecca

When everyone has a sizable list, say:

Let's think about these "haftas" in our lives. What is it that makes us feel we **have to** do certain things and not do other things? Who are the people in our lives who have the **POWER** to make decisions for us and to tell us what to do and what not to do? Who are the #1 Rule Makers?

The participants will say **PARENTS**; write it, then continue.

And it's an interesting coincidence that many of the other power people in our lives start with the letter P.

With input from the group, add to your list: **PRINCIPAL** (which includes teachers and the whole school system), **PASTOR, POLICE, POPE**, the employer who **PAYS** you.)

Sometimes the "haftas" take the form of **PAIN** or **PUNISHMENT** [write]. Sometimes they come from our own peers in the form of **PEER PRESSURE**, or **PUT DOWNS**, or a desire for **POPULARITY**. [Add these words to your list.]

What is important about the haftas is that **someone else decides** what we are going to do, someone who has the power to make us feel like we have to do what they say, "or else..." I call this the **P & P** level [write] to stand for Power and Pressure.

Refer back to your first two columns on the board, and say:

So we have seen there are some things we **WANTA** do and some things we **HAFTA** do. We like doing the "wantas" and we usually object to doing the "haftas." Now let's see if we can figure out what the third column might be.

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*Note to Leader:* In this part of the session, you are carrying on a public dialogue with individual participants, helping them to see that they already act on the third level more often than they realize. Ask questions that will help them to see this. Listen for the positive motives they give, and write their words on the list—words like RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, doing what is RIGHT, KINDNESS, CONCERN, FAIRNESS, personal GOALS, FAITH, LOVE, GRATITUDE, understanding of the RULES, awareness of CONSEQUENCES.

Select one of your participants who is fairly articulate, and carry on a dialogue something like the following. Your aim is to get the young person to name the third level responses which he or she undoubtedly lives by, at least sometimes.

[Name], do you hafta go to school? If your parents said it was up to you, would you continue to go? Every day? Why?

What if I took away all school rules, how would you behave? Why? Would you continue to do your homework? How would you treat the teachers? Would you run in the halls? Would you throw food in the cafeteria?

Select a youth who is an athlete, and ask:

Do you hafta go to football/basketball/soccer/track practice?  
Carry on a dialogue about why he/she goes to practice, plays by the rules, how he/she treats teammates, coaches, the opponents, reacts to losing, reacts to winning.

Select a participant who is in drama or band and ask:

Do you hafta learn your part (or memorize you lines)?  
Carry on a dialogue about his/her motivation for joining, practicing, for doing his/her best.

Select other participants, and talk about family rules:

Do you hafta help with dishes?  
Do you hafta call home if you're going to be late?  
Do you hafta thank your mom for making dinner?

Select other students and talk about civic rules:

Do you hafta pay for the CD you just picked out at the mall?  
Do you hafta pick up trash you see on a sidewalk?  
Do you hafta help little old ladies with their groceries?"

Summarize the interviews by saying:

We have been listening to each other telling us about this third level of decision making, which I am calling the **CHOOSE TO** level [write]. Another name for this category is the level of **CHARACTER** [write]. As we mature, we learn to do the right thing just because it is **RIGHT**, not because we feel like doing it, and not because someone in authority says we have to do it. I like to call this the **R & R** level, [write]

because the main reasons for acting on this level are **RESPECT** and **RESPONSIBILITY**. [Circle those words if they are already on the board.]

### Small Groups - Reflection Exercise (15 minutes)

Invite the young people to enter into a period of reflection by saying:

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Direct the youth with these or similar words: "Please look again at the paper with your hafta list. Turn it to the backside and write: 'I **choose to** go to school because...' and write at least three character-level reasons for **you** to make this choice. Think about this seriously. The reasons you list should be positive—and they should be **yours**."

Then select **at least five more haftas** from your list and turn them into "choose to" statements. Give one or two positive personal reasons for each choice. We will be sharing some of our choices during our prayer time.

### Prayer (15 minutes)

Invite the participants to bring their "**Choose To**" lists and gather in the chairs around the prayer table. Have the four readers sit together. Give each person a Bible and ask everyone to open to Luke 2:41. Say:

There is something very special about the passage we are going to read. It is the only place in Scripture which talks about Jesus when he was your age. In Jesus' time, it was the custom for families to go to Jerusalem every year to celebrate the great feast of Passover.

Everyone in the village would go in a big caravan, walking all the way, singing, stopping to eat, and sleeping along the way. It was like a three-day picnic. The men would walk along, guiding the donkeys loaded with sleeping mats and food, telling jokes and laughing. The women would walk together, taking care of the little children and babies. And the children your age would run back and forth, playing games along the way. Once in Jerusalem, they would all go to the temple, where they would pray and listen to the teachings of the elders. Let's listen to how Luke tells the story:

The prepared readers proclaim Luke 2:41–52. After the reading, say:

Jesus is very much a young teen in this story: beginning to think for himself, wanting to make his own decisions, impressing the adults with his serious and thoughtful answers, but not always thinking about how his actions might affect his parents and family.

And his parents are very much like ours: they want us to make good decisions, they want us to be ourselves, they let us spend some time away from them, but they worry about us, and they don't always understand what we say and why we do the things we do.

But notice verse 2:51: When the story is all over, Jesus goes back home with his parents and is **obedient** to them. And he continues to grow in age and wisdom and grace before God and people.

Please close your eyes and spend a few minutes talking to Jesus in your own heart. Tell him about the conflict in your life between being obedient and respectful to your parents and making your own choices and decisions. Ask him to help you to grow in wisdom and grace before God and people.

Allow a few minutes of silent time, then say:

One of the ways you can grow in wisdom and grace is to learn to be a person of character, a person who **chooses** to do the right thing just because it is right, not because someone in authority says you hafta.

Please select one of the items on your "Choose To" list, one that you are really serious about. We will go around the circle and read these aloud. When it is your turn, read the statement and the reason(s) why you are making this choice.

When all have read a statement, say:

Let's join hands now and pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. Remember that Jesus promised that he would be with us whenever we gather to pray. Let's imagine him here as the young boy he was in the Scripture story we read. As we pray, let's think about how these words call us to grow in wisdom and grace before God and people. Our Father..

As the youth are leaving, give them a copy of **Handout 1, Three Levels of Motivation**, and ask them to take it home and explain it to their parents!

### **Refreshments (5-10 minutes)**

Thank the young people for their participation in tonight's session. Invite everyone to enjoy some refreshments.

This session was written by [Sister Kieran Sawyer, SSND](#), author and national speaker. Sr. Kieran is Director Emeritus of the TYME OUT Youth Center, Stone Bank, Wisconsin. She can be reached at [sawyerk@tymeout.org](mailto:sawyerk@tymeout.org). She would love to hear from you and/or your students about your experience of the lesson. [Fr. Roy Shelly, Ph.D.](#), Director of Formation and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Monterey, served as theological consultant on this session.

## Three Levels of Motivation

<u>M &amp; N Level</u>	<u>P &amp; P Level</u>	<u>R &amp; R Level</u>
<p>All I care about is <b>ME</b> and <b>NOW</b>.</p> <p>I do what is SPONTANEOUS, FUN, EASY, LAZY, EXCITING.</p> <p>I respond to events as the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HAPPY child</li> <li>• PLAYFUL child</li> <li>• CURIOUS child</li> <li>• NAUGHTY child</li> <li>• HURT child</li> <li>• ANGRY child</li> <li>• REBELLIOUS child</li> <li>• MEAN child</li> <li>• BORED child</li> </ul>	<p>I do what I “HAFTA” or else.</p> <p>I act under the influences of <b>POWER</b> or <b>PRESSURE</b> from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PARENTS</li> <li>○ PRINCIPAL</li> <li>○ PASTOR</li> <li>○ POLICE</li> <li>○ PEERS</li> <li>○ “PEOPLE”</li> <li>○ PAY</li> <li>○ PREJUDICE</li> </ul> <p>I respond to (or use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain</li> <li>• Punishment</li> <li>• Put downs</li> <li>• Pushing around</li> <li>• Popularity</li> </ul>	<p>My actions are based on my personal CHARACTER.</p> <p>I do what is <b>RIGHT</b> just because it is <b>RIGHT</b>.</p> <p>I act according to principles of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RESPECT</li> <li>• RESPONSIBILITY</li> <li>• the RIGHTS OF OTHERS</li> <li>• RELATIONSHIPS, caring, kindness, forgiveness</li> <li>• RULES, understood and accepted</li> <li>• REASONABLE thinking</li> <li>• RESULTS, intrinsic consequences</li> <li>• RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS</li> </ul>

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