MADE IN HIS IMAGE
A SAFE ENVIRONMENT CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

MADE IN HIS IMAGE is focused on the fundamental belief that each person is made in the Image of God and therefore deserves to be respected. The curriculum is rooted in a Catholic understanding of the human person (including human sexuality) as taught by the Magisterium. Educators using these materials must form themselves according to the principles taught by the Church.¹

MADE IN HIS IMAGE proceeds from the conviction that parents are key to the safety of children and youth. When children are younger, parents are called to take on a very active role in providing a safe environment for their children, in discerning risks involved in any given situation or relationship, and in assisting their children in discerning the various challenges they are presented with as they grow and develop. As children mature and proceed into adolescents the role of parents, although different, is still essential. While attempting to offer insights and information to adolescents, MADE IN HIS IMAGE also seeks to promote the sacred relationship between parents and their children, encouraging both parents and children to develop, maintain and deepen communication between them. MADE IN HIS IMAGE is intended to supplement the education provided by parents, and to assist parents in their task of educating and protecting the children entrusted to their care.

MADE IN HIS IMAGE follows a set pattern and strategy:

1. Information for Parents

Each lesson is proceeded by a letter sent home to the parents.² Intending to respect their role as primary educators and protectors of their children, this letter informs parents about the topics being addressed, providing the scope of the content covered, and offering them the opportunity to withhold their children from this instruction if they so wish. Explaining that classroom activities are only intended to serve as a supplement to the primary education in this area that takes place at home,³ the letter also serves as an invitation to parents to embrace their role as primary educators and protectors of their children by providing additional information and resources that they can use to instruct their children, and engage them in dialogue in this delicate area.

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¹ See Guiding Principles from Church Documents for Addressing Sexuality and Sexual Abuse from the Diocese of Steubenville Safe Environment Program.
² “It is clear that the assistance of others must be given first and foremost to parents rather than to their children” (The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, 145).
³ See Guiding Principles from Church Documents, 48.
2. Prayer and Catechesis

Each lesson begins with prayer which is followed by a catechetical lesson that seeks to instill in the students a greater sense of God’s love for them, and the inviolable dignity that each and every person enjoys since they are made in the image of God. MADE IN HIS IMAGE is, in essence, a catechesis on the Church’s vision of human dignity with very practical implications about the choices that we make.

3. Moral Formation

Each lesson seeks to assist students in understanding the importance of making good choices, as well as the consequences that follow from the decisions that we make. Students learn the basic concept that virtuous living leads to freedom whereas sin leads to unhappiness.

4. Safety Information

Following the discussion on making choices, and flowing from it, students engage in activities that seek to instill basic safety guidelines in them. They are encouraged to make choices that protect their safety and the safety of others, and to reach out for help when they have experienced abusive behavior or feel unsafe.

5. Health Friendships and Relationships (Grades 4 – 12)

Formation in healthy friendships and relationships is an integral component of MADE IN HIS IMAGE. Students explore the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships in order to become aware of negative (and possibly harmful) influences in their lives, and to promote healthy relationships that will assist them in living according to God’s design.

6. Communication

Each lesson concludes with a reflection on the role of parents. Students are challenged to see their parents as gifts from God, and to recognize that they play a vital role in keeping them safe and helping them to become who God has created them to be. Students are encouraged to work to develop and maintain open lines of communication with their parents.

MADE IN HIS IMAGE was written and illustrated by Joseph and Christine Schmidt.

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4 “In accomplishing her mission the Church has the duty and the right to take care of the moral education of the baptised” (Educational Guidance in Human Love, 108).
5 “Children, adolescents and young people should be taught how to enter into healthy relationships with God, with their parents, their brothers and sisters, with their companions of the same or the opposite sex, and with adults.” (The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, 53).
Ten action steps for keeping children safe.

1. Spend time with your children; develop open and honest lines of communication.

   Many argue that the greatest defense against child abuse is the healthy relationship between parent and child itself. Simple information is not enough. Children need the ongoing guidance of their parents to assimilate and apply the information they have learned, as well as to process and deal with the various situations they will encounter in their lives.

2. Teach your children that they are loved by God, have infinite value, and they deserve to be respected. Model respect in the way you speak and act. Visibly live out your faith.

   Children learn behavior patterns mostly by example. When parents model civil and respectful behavior by their own words and actions, children learn the proper way to treat other people, and the way they themselves should be treated by others.

3. Teach your children safety rules that you want them to follow.

   Don’t simply rely on safety programs or classroom lessons in school or youth programs. Parents need to make safety rules part of their family life. A failure in this subject is more serious than a letter on a report card.

4. Use “teachable moments” to reinforce and apply safety rules.

   Take passing opportunities to challenge your children to apply your safety rules. On a shopping trip to the mall, you might ask: “What would you do if we got separated in the mall?” or “What would you do if that man over there asked you to help him carry his shopping bags?” etc.

5. Talk to your children about the choices they face day to day. Offer them guidance as they try to make various decisions. Help them to process their thoughts and feelings.

   Patiently talking about day to day choices with your children will help them to develop good thinking skills, as well as enhance your relationship. Children are not equipped to deal with all the dangers surrounding them in our often unsafe world. They need trusted adults (especially parents) who can help them navigate through the difficulties of growing up. This is crucial when faced with potentially abuse situations.

   “There is no foolproof profile of an abuser or his strategies. Education cannot adequately prepare children for the variety of locations, strategies and approaches used by offenders. The danger of sexual abuse is far too pervasive to expect that children can be taught through child-empowerment programs to recognize and protect themselves from offenders. This is particularly obvious when considering that too often parents are disarmed by the benign appearance of the offender and failing to recognize the danger to their children, invite the offender into their home.”

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6. **Listen** to your children. **Pay attention** to their behaviors and attitudes. Be vigilant about anything suspicious that might point to a problem.

   In the vast majority of sexual abuse cases, the sexual offender is not a stranger, but rather someone who is known to the victim and the victim’s family. And whether the offender is a family friend, a relative, a teacher, or some other person, they often will try many tactics (including lies, manipulation, and force) to keep the abuse secret. Parents need to be vigilant.

   “Look and listen to small cues and clues indicating something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems. If your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm, noncritical, and nonjudgmental. Listen compassionately to their concern, and work with them to get the help they need to resolve the problem.”

7. **Be involved** in your child’s life. Know their teachers, coaches, and other adults that work with them. Know their friends. Know where they spend their time. Be vigilant and cautious about the people in your child’s life, without being paranoid or overbearing.

   Let’s face it. Children (and teens) often will make foolish mistakes. They will put themselves in situations where they can get hurt. And they can often be deceived by people that want to manipulate, use and hurt them. When it comes to safety, there is no substitute for the careful vigilance of loving parents.

8. **Be vigilant with your children’s media use.** Be sure your children know safety rules for using the internet, texting, social networking, playing video games, etc.

   The tools, devices, and services for media use have increased dramatically in recent years. While this is positive in many ways, these new methods of getting connected also pose many new threats, especially to the young. Statistics about exposure to pornography, outright sexual solicitation and cyberbullying demonstrate the need to be vigilant. The reality is that the internet is the biggest threat facing your child right now – and the access your child has to the internet is staggering. Parents need to be educated and vigilant when it comes to internet safety. The good news is that great resources are available for parents. [Netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) is an excellent source to become familiar with the risks associated with various media devices and sources, as well as the steps parents can take to ensure the safety of their children.

   Another danger that is often overlooked by parents is **video games**. Video and computer games are everywhere. Many of them involve innocent entertainment and learning. But a great number (and more than you might think) involve extremely graphic displays of violence and sexuality. In many of the most popular games the players are often encouraged (and even rewarded in the game) for brutal displays of violence, even sexual violence. Parents are strongly encouraged to learn about the dangers of video games and monitor their child’s exposure to them. [Plugged In](http://www.pluggedin.com) is excellent source for reviews from a Christian perspective of a great variety of games, movies, music and more.

9. Don’t be afraid to **ask for help** when you need it! Teach your children that it’s okay to ask for help.

10. Don’t forget to **pray!**

   Pray alone and pray together. Ask the Lord to protect your children. Ask Him to strengthen your faith and the faith of your family. Ask Him to teach you to be a good parent, and to make your marriage and family healthy and holy. **Don't underestimate the power of God's grace!**

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8 [http://www.internetsafety101.org/Pornographystatistics.htm](http://www.internetsafety101.org/Pornographystatistics.htm)
THEME:
“God made us in love. We need to act in ways pleasing to Him.
God gives us special people in our lives (parents/guardians) to help us be happy and safe.”

1. PRAYER: Our Father

2. CATECHESIS: God and Us

Objectives

✓ The students will recognize that they should be treated with love and respect because they are made in the very image of God.
✓ The students will come to a deeper understanding of God’s love for them.
✓ The students will review some examples of respectful behavior and disrespectful behavior.

Every person, from the first moment of his life in the womb, has an inviolable dignity, because from all eternity God willed, loved, created, and redeemed that person and destined him for eternal happiness. If human dignity were based solely on the successes and accomplishments of individuals, then those who are weak, sick, or helpless would have no dignity. Christians believe that human dignity is, in the first place, the result of God’s respect for us. He looks at every person and loves him as though he were the only creature in the world. (YOUCAT, #280)

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ How many of you have heard or read from the beginning of the Bible that we are made in the image of God? Have the students raise their hands. Most or all of them should. If not, begin by reading Genesis 1:24-27.
☐ The Bible teaches us that we are made in the image of God. But what does that mean? It means that God made us to be like Him: we can think with our minds, make decisions with our wills, and love with our hearts.
☐ The Youth Catechism (YOUCAT) talks about this. It asks the question: What does it mean to say that man was created “in God’s image”? This characteristic unites him with God more than with his visible fellow creatures. Man is not a something but rather a someone. Just as we say about God that he is person, so too we say this about man.
☐ Each one of you is made in the image of God. You are not a something; you are a someone.
☐ That means that no one should treat you like a thing! You deserve to be respected and loved.
☐ You are the image of God! You are a priceless treasure in His eyes. You deserve to be respected. I want you to remember this!
□ Never think that it’s okay for someone to hurt you, or say cruel things to you, or to touch you in ways that make you feel bad, or ask you to do things that make you feel uncomfortable.
□ If this has ever happened to you know that it’s NOT YOUR FAULT! Be sure to talk to your mom or dad, or another trusted adult, about this as soon as you can.
□ You are God’s treasure! God made you in His image and you deserve to be respected!

/ ACTIVITY: IMAGE OF GOD CROSSWORD – SEE PAGE 11 (See page 16 for a time-saving answer key!)

3. MORAL FORMATION: Making Good Choices

Objectives

✓ The students will recognize that we should always act in ways pleasing to God.
✓ The students will discover that we need to do what is right in order to be happy.
✓ The students will name some virtues that they should practice.

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

□ Now, since we are made in God’s image, we need to act the way He created us. God did not create us to live selfishly. He made us to live virtuously – to act in ways pleasing to Him.
□ We’re going to do an activity about some of the virtues that we should practice.

/ ACTIVITY: LIVING A LIFE OF VIRTUE – SEE PAGE 12 (See page 17 for a time-saving answer key!)

□ Give each student a copy of the activity. Have them work as individuals or teams to complete it. Once they have completed it, or a sufficient time has passed, go over the answers with them.
□ Re-emphasize the message of the activity: God wants you to be happy! Doing bad things can sound like a good idea for a while, but in the end we are never happy when we do bad things.
□ Think about it! When you do something you know is wrong, how does it make you feel deep down? Let students respond. Help the students to recognize that they feel bad, sad, or guilty when they choose to do something they know is wrong.
□ This is what sin is all about! We commit a sin when we do something we know is wrong, something that goes against God’s laws or the Church’s teachings. And when we sin, we always end up feeling bad about it. Sin might feel good at first, but it always makes us sad in the end.
□ God wants you to be happy. When we listen to God and the Church, and do what’s right, it helps us to be happy.

□ OPTIONAL: Play the Adventures in Odyssey episode entitled “No Boundaries.” This episode is a creative demonstration of the importance of parental guidelines and rules. (You can purchase CD’s and MP3 files online, or borrow CD’s from the public library inter-library loan system. Learn more about Adventures in Odyssey from www.whitsend.org.)
4. SAFETY INFORMATION: Promoting Safe Choices

**Objectives**

- The students will recognize that making good choices helps to keep them safe.
- The students will review basic safety rules.

**Teaching the Lesson** (NOTE: The text printed in **bold** can be read to the students.)

- God wants you to be happy. And in order to be happy you need to be safe!
- Give each student a copy of the activity page and ask them to answer the questions. After a few minutes, go over the answers together.

/ ACTIVITY: SAFETY MAZE – SEE PAGE 13

5. RELATIONSHIPS: Promoting healthy friendships and relationships

**Objectives**

- The students will recognize that God made them to be in relationship with other people.
- The students will reflect on the influences that other people have on their lives, helping them to follow God and be happy or hurting them and leading them into sin.
- The students will identify some of the qualities of healthy friendships and relationships.

**Teaching the Lesson** (NOTE: The text printed in **bold** can be read to the students.)

- God made us in His Image. He made us to be in relationships with other people: parents, family, friends, etc.
- Jesus gives us the best advice ever for all of our relationships and friendships: The Golden Rule – “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”
- Keep in mind this is a two-way street. God doesn’t want us to be doormats – acting in ways that appear to be loving while we let people take advantage of us. We need to respect others, while expecting (and demanding) that they respect us.

/ DISCUSSION: LIVING THE GOLDEN RULE

- Ask the students: **What are some ways you can put the Golden Rule into practice with your friends?** Consider writing their examples on the board.
- Challenge the students to recognize some of the qualities of healthy friendships by asking them: **What about when your friends don’t treat you well, or when they try to get you to do things you know are wrong? How can you live out the Golden Rule then?** Let the students grapple with this concept.
Conclude the discussion by challenging them: **We should surround ourselves with people that will help us to love God, love our neighbor, and love ourselves.**

/ **ACTIVITY: WORDS TO LIVE BY – SEE PAGE 14**

6. **COMMUNICATION: Fostering Communication with Parents and Guardians**

**Objectives**

- The students will recognize that God gave them their parents (or guardians) to love them, teach them and keep them safe.
- The students will recognize the importance of strengthening their relationship with their parents or guardians by talking to them about the things that happen to them on a day to day basis.
- The students will realize the importance of telling their parents if anything happens to them that makes them feel uncomfortable or scared.

**Teaching the Lesson** (NOTE: The text printed in **bold** can be read to the students.)

- The last thing we need to cover is the importance of your relationship with your parents.
- Hopefully each of you has a great relationship with your mom and dad, or whoever takes care of you. But, when people move into their teen years, those relationships sometimes become strained and awkward.
- Still, your mom and dad, or your caregivers, are a great gift to you. It’s so important to talk to your mom or dad, or other people who take care of you, about the things going on in your life. You should share with them the things that you are excited about and the things that you are nervous about. And you should always talk to them about anything that makes you feel scared or uncomfortable or sad.
- Your relationship with them is more important than you realize. And having an open and honest relationship with them will serve you immensely throughout your teen years. So I want to CHALLENGE you to work on developing a strong relationship with your mom and dad, or whoever takes care of you.

/ **ACTIVITY: DECODING – SEE PAGE 15** (See page 18 for a time-saving answer key!)
7. REVIEW
☐ Read the theme for the lesson to the students.
☐ Review the key points in each section.

8. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
☐ INTERNET AND MEDIA SAFETY:
  o The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has produced an excellent resource for internet and media safety: www.netsmartz.org. A variety of FREE resources are provided for students, parents and educators.

☐ START TALKING! Building a Drug Free Future
  o A new effort is underway across Ohio to prevent drug abuse. The Catholic Bishops of Ohio issued a statement about the initiative. “Start Talking is a program designed by the state of Ohio to help equip families and communities to clearly communicate the important message of drug prevention,” the Bishops said. “We support this critical initiative and we encourage Ohioans to visit www.starttalking.ohio.gov for details.”
  o Among the resources available is an email newsletter for educators. Their website explains: “Teachers are powerful influencers in their students' lives. What is shared in the classroom can positively impact a child's decision not to use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs. Teachers have an incredible opportunity to guide students toward making healthy, drug-free lifestyle choices. That is why Drug Free Action Alliance created TEACHable Moments, which are specially designed tips for educators, sent out via email twice monthly for FREE. They contain news that teachers can use to get those critical prevention talks started in the classroom.” Learn more at www.starttalking.ohio.gov/SchoolLeaders.aspx
IMAGE OF GOD CROSSWORD

ACROSS
2. All people have dignity and worth; even those who are __________ and helpless.
4. All people have dignity and worth, even the __________ baby in his mother’s womb.
6. God has created us to be ____________.
9. Our dignity and worth cannot be based on our _____________________.
11. Each and every person is made in the _________ of God.

DOWN
1. Each person deserves to be _____________________.
3. We know that God __________ each and every person He has ever created.
5. We learn about creation and our special relationship with God from the ________.
7. ________ created us in love.
8. God gave us the ___________ to teach us, guide us and give us His grace through the Sacraments.
10. All people have dignity and worth; even the __________ who may be sick and suffering.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS  GOD  RESPECTED
BIBLE  HAPPY  UNBORN
CHURCH  IMAGE  WEAK
ELDERLY  LOVES
LIVING A LIFE OF VIRTUE

**DIRECTIONS:** Unscramble each of the words, using the clue as a guide. Then, copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number to reveal the message.

**LEOV**
The greatest virtue of all, this virtue helps us to always seek what is best for other people even if it means making sacrifices for them.

**CAUGORE**
Having the guts to do what we know is right, even when it’s difficult or unpopular.

**JUTSCEI**
This virtue helps us to respect the rights of others and to do what is fair.

**SEFL–NOCRTOl**
This virtue keeps us from being ruled by anger or other sinful desires.

**PATCIEII**
Practicing this virtue will help us to tolerate other people’s shortcomings.

**KENDINSS**
If we imitate Christ’s love we will always practice this virtue when dealing with other people.

**GLENTESESN**
This virtue keeps us from being overly demanding and bossy with others.

**FAIFTHSULSN**
We practice this virtue when we follow Christ’s teaching in our lives.

If we want to be happy...

If we want to be happy...
SAFETY MAZE

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the questions correctly to find your way through the maze.

1. Your best friend just called you on the phone and asked you to come over. Before you leave the house you should ... A. Check with your parents first; or B. Assume that it's okay because it's your friend.

2. Some of the students in your class played a mean joke on a less popular student in the locker room. You felt bad about it and it bothered you all day. When you get home from school, you should ... A. Talk to your mom or dad about it; or B. Just forget about it.

3. You are in your front lawn raking up leaves when a guy pulls up to the curb. He leans over in his car, tells you he's not from your town and asks you how to get to Wal-mart. He motions for you to come over so he can talk to you. You should ... A. Try to be as helpful as you can because you want to be a good Christian; or B. Go straight in the house and ask your parents or another adult to give the person directions.

4. While you are in a chat room online you meet a really cool friend. The person wants to meet you in person and asks you to describe yourself. You should ... A. Give them a good description because you want to meet up with them; or B. Not give out personal information (even a description of yourself) without discussing it with your parents and arranging it with them.

5. Your mom ran to the store to do some shopping and left you home by yourself. The phone rings and the person asks for your parents. You should ... A. Tell them only, “They can't come to the phone right now; can I take a message for them?” or B. Tell them your parents are not home.

6. While playing games on the internet, you are asked to register as a user (or for a cool contest) using your name, address, phone number, and email. You should ... A. Show your parents and talk to them about it; or B. Give them only your name and address.

7. You are in the mall with your parents. You walk over to look at something and suddenly realize that you can’t find your parents. You should ... A. Go out to the car and wait for them; or B. Find a security guard or someone with a nametag who works at the mall and ask them for help.

**WORDS TO LIVE BY**

"Do to others as you would have them do to you."

*Luke 6:31*

**DIRECTIONS:** Jesus gives us the best advice ever for all of our relationships and friendships. Decorate the quote. Try to make it a part of your daily life. Consider cutting this out and posting it in your locker, or some other place that you would see it all the time.
DECODING

DIRECTIONS: Decode the message using the code below.

Your parents

Your parents

You should always talk to your parents about anything

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**IMAGE OF GOD CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**

2. All people have dignity and worth; even those who are **WEAK** and helpless.
4. All people have dignity and worth, even the **UNBORN** baby in his mother’s womb.
6. God has created us to be **HAPPY**.
9. Our dignity and worth cannot be based on our **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**.
11. Each and every person is made in the **IMAGE** of God.

**DOWN**

1. Each person deserves to be **RESPECTED**.
3. We know that God **LOVES** each and every person He has ever created.
5. We learn about creation and our special relationship with God from the **BIBLE**.
7. **GOD** created us in love.
8. God gave us the **CHURCH** to teach us, guide us and give us His grace through the Sacraments.
10. All people have dignity and worth; even the **ELDERLY** who may be sick and suffering.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**  **GOD**  **RESPECTED**

**BIBLE**  **HAPPY**  **UNBORN**

**CHURCH**  **IMAGE**  **WEAK**

**ELDERLY**  **LOVES**
# LIVING A LIFE OF VIRTUE

**DIRECTIONS:** Unscramble each of the words, using the clue as a guide. Then, copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number to reveal the message.

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- **LEOV**
  The greatest virtue of all, this virtue helps us to always seek what is best for other people even if it means making sacrifices for them.

- **CAUGORE**
  Having the guts to do what we know is right, even when it’s difficult or unpopular.

- **JUTSCEI**
  This virtue helps us to respect the rights of others and to do what is fair.

- **SEFL-NOCRTOl**
  This virtue keeps us from being ruled by anger or other sinful desires.

- **PATCEIEN**
  Practicing this virtue will help us to tolerate other people's shortcomings.

- **KENDINSS**
  If we imitate Christ's love we will always practice this virtue when dealing with other people.

- **GLENTESESN**
  This virtue keeps us from being overly demanding and bossy with others.

- **FAIFTHSULSN**
  We practice this virtue when we follow Christ's teaching in our lives.

If we want to be happy . . .

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DECODING

DIRECTIONS: Decode the message using the code below.

Your parents

\[ \text{A R E} \quad \text{A G I F T} \quad \text{T O} \quad \text{Y O U} \]

\[ \begin{array}{ccc} 2 & 9 & 10 \\ 14 & 18 & 12 \\ 13 & 13 & 13 \\ 23 & 3 & 15 \end{array} \]

\[ \text{F R O M} \quad \text{G O D} \]

\[ \begin{array}{ccc} 12 & 9 & 3 \\ 26 & 14 & 3 \\ 8 & 8 & 8 \end{array} \]

Your parents

\[ \text{P R O T E C T} \quad \text{A N D} \quad \text{G U I D E} \quad \text{Y O U} \]

\[ \begin{array}{cccccc} 5 & 9 & 3 & 13 & 10 & 6 \\ 13 & 2 & 1 & 8 & 8 & 8 \\ 23 & 3 & 15 \end{array} \]

You should always talk to your parents about anything

\[ \text{T H A T} \quad \text{M A K E S} \quad \text{Y O U} \]

\[ \begin{array}{cccccc} 13 & 16 & 2 & 13 \\ 26 & 2 & 22 & 10 & 11 \\ 23 & 3 & 15 \end{array} \]

\[ \text{F E E L} \quad \text{U N S A F E} \quad \text{O R} \]

\[ \begin{array}{cccccc} 12 & 10 & 10 & 24 \\ 15 & 1 & 11 & 2 \\ 11 & 10 & 9 \end{array} \]

\[ \text{S C A R E D} \quad \text{O R} \quad \text{W R I T E D} \]

\[ \begin{array}{cccccc} 11 & 3 & 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ 18 & 10 & 8 \end{array} \]

A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H   I   J   K   L   M
2  4  6  8  10  12  14  16  18  20  22  24  26

N   O   P   Q   R   S   T   U   V   W   X   Y   Z
1  3  5  7  9  11  13  15  17  19  21  23  25