

TEACHER PREPARATION

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Our dreams about finding a life mate should motivate us to become the kind of person with whom someone would want to build a lifetime relationship.
2. Involvement in premarital sex lowers our chances of having the kind of marriage we hope to have.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. List the qualities that they think are most desirable in a future life mate.
2. Reconsider the kind of person they would want to marry.
3. List the qualities they should possess in order to attract a future mate.
4. Identify various problems resulting from premarital sexual activity that could cloud their ability to choose a compatible mate.

MATERIALS / PREPARATION

In the Box: Grandmothers' Letter and an old key (as large as is feasible).

This lesson is the first of a five-lesson unit on male-female relationships. This unit will help students explore the choices they have and the probable consequences of their choices in light of their quest for a meaningful and happy life. This unit is included in this curriculum because, along with decisions about drugs and alcohol made during adolescence, decisions about sexual choices can be dream makers or dream breakers with life-long consequences.

- Lesson 16 (this lesson) is about marriage – how good it can be and how bad it can be – and how the experience of marriage is influenced by the choices an individual makes about sexual activity during adolescence.
- Lesson 17 will present some of the physical consequences of premarital sex, especially the dangers of promiscuity.
- Lesson 18 will present some of the emotional consequences of premarital sex, with the hope that students will be able to evaluate the risks of premarital sex more realistically and have some worthwhile reasons for waiting until marriage to engage in sexual behavior.

- Lesson 19 will focus on misconceptions about sexuality and whether a student will control his or her sexual impulses or be controlled by them.
- Lesson 20 will challenge your students to make a commitment to value their sexuality enough to save it for the person they will eventually marry.

Note: Please carefully review lessons 17 and 18. They are designed so teachers in many different countries can use this curriculum. Most teachers will be comfortable teaching these lessons, but some may not.

If you are hesitant to teach this unit, here are several possible alternatives:

- You could substitute more acceptable terms for those that you find uncomfortable and adapt the lesson so you can teach it yourself.
- You could divide your class along gender lines and ask a teacher of the opposite gender to teach the other half of the class.
- You could invite a Health Sciences teacher to teach these lessons for you.
- You may choose to skip lessons in this unit that you believe would be too controversial, too advanced, or too explicit for your students. You may want to look closely at lessons 17 and 18. Even if you skip one or more lessons, you could teach the remaining lessons in this unit with only slight adaptations on your part, and still conclude with the Personal Journal activity at the end of Lesson 20.

LESSON

BEGINNING THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

Throughout this course, we talk about things you can do to help you reach your dreams (dream makers) and things you should avoid that might hurt or kill your dreams (dream breakers). Most young people have as a part of their dreams that someday they would like to find that one special person of the opposite sex, fall in love, marry, and live happily together for the rest of their lives. Even if that is not a major part of your dream right now, it's pretty likely that it will be in just a few years.

In this unit on male-female relationships, I want to help you improve your chances of seeing this part of your life-dream come true. So before we hear today's story, let's spend a few minutes thinking about this aspect of your future life.



IDEAL MATE DESCRIPTION CLUSTERS

ABOUT 20 MINUTES

List these categories on the board:

- Personality
- Looks, Physique
- Family
- Social Skills
- Work Ethic
- Intellect
- Morality
- Beliefs
- Goals and Dreams
- Skills

In this first activity, you are going to have a chance to identify characteristics of your ideal mate. I am going to write some general categories on the board. Then, we will fill in the specifics together.

[Write the category words randomly on the board with as much distance from each other as possible in order to be able to add the students' suggestions. Once you have written the categories on the board – tell the students the following:]

Let's work as a class to fill in specific information under each category. For example, if you suggest a sense of humor or friendliness, I'll write it in the personality cluster.

[If your students slow down in their suggestions, you might add some of the following:

Near the "family" cluster, you might mention how he or she treats the other members of his or her family or whether the family is supportive of the person. Near the "social skills" cluster, add suggestions like "treats other people well" or "respects authority". Be sure to suggest drug and alcohol statements, such as "doesn't use drugs", "doesn't get drunk", etc. The "work ethic" cluster should reflect whether the person works hard or goes to work every day. As your students make suggestions, write them on the chalkboard under the appropriate categories.]

Have students write in their journals:

“Top seven characteristics I want for my future mate.”

Carefully consider these characteristics. Now, on a blank left page of your Personal Journal, list the top seven characteristics you want in a future mate. As with most other entries in your Personal Journal, you do not have to show this list to anyone.



= 21 minutes



STORY

ABOUT 4 MINUTES

[Read the following story, “It’s Too Heavy for You”, adapted from the writings of Corrie ten Boom.]

“What happened?” asked Natasha.

“Ah, nothing. Someone locked the secondary lock on our apartment door and it jammed — took me 20 minutes to un-jam it,” said Sasha. “That’s why we never lock it!”

“Is there anyone who hasn’t run afoul of a locking mechanism!” declared the teacher. “Glad you were able to free yourself. You’re just in time for today’s lesson from your grandmothers.”

Tatyana Alexandrovna opened the box and produced a large old-fashioned key with a tag attached to it.

“I’d love to see the lock that that key opens!” said Sasha.

“I’d like to see the door that could hold such a big lock,” countered Dima.

“I’d love to see what’s so valuable that it would need such a lock,” smiled a smug Natasha.

The teacher laughed, “I see you’re all ready to explore the territory your grandmothers have charted for you today.”

“Funny thing about this key; no one knows what it is for. Its purpose is long forgotten,” said Tatyana Alexandrovna. “Says so right here on the tag — key to who knows what.”

“We have a whole drawer full of keys that don’t match anything!” said Dima. “I think it is a family trait — collecting useless keys. Great-grandpa Eugene always said, ‘Soon as you throw a key away, you’ll come across the lock it was meant to open and there you are — stuck.’ ”

“What did your great-grandpa do for a living?” asked Natasha.

“Well, great-grandfather was a locksmith before he got into politics. Eugene was said to be something of a Renaissance Man,” replied Dima.

“Huh?” said Sasha. “What’s a Renaissance Man? Sounds like some sort of prehistoric caveman.”

“Actually, a Renaissance Man is someone who is experienced in a broad number of things — an inventor, dreamer, and doer. After great-grandpa was a locksmith, he worked his way up to plant manager and then to some kind of politician. Kinda famous, to hear grandma tell it,” continued Dima.

“Grandma used to tell us stories about keys she’d heard from her father, Eugene. Did you know that in ancient Egypt the slaves used to carry keys across their shoulders because they were so big? Some kind of status symbol.”

“Now I understand why she told you she had a ‘magical’ device for passing through walls — her front-door key,” said Sasha. “Bet her dad used that one on her!”

“I think your grandmother had a very special dad, Dima,” said Tatyana Alexandrovna. “I think she has been saving the lesson in this letter for just this moment.”

Dear Ones,

We each learned things from our fathers – some good and some bad. Of the three of us, I was definitely blessed with the kindest father. He never tired of letting me perch close by while he worked on some lock or cut another key, filing away the rough edges. He had an eye for detail, honed over the years by his work with small interlocking bits of metal.

One night, he was sitting quietly in his big chair, half-listening to my big sister and her cousin talk about boys. Their conversation was undoubtedly sexual in nature, but they were talking around the issue. I was only five or six at the time and couldn't follow the subtleties of their conversation. I had no framework to understand. Still, the curiosity of my five-year-old mind filed their words away, along with my questions.

The very next day, my father invited me to travel with him by train to some job site. He put his case of tools and locks on the overhead rack of our train car. As the train rocked its way across town, I began to ask my nagging questions from the night before.

He listened to every word – words that carried only confusion and mystery to me. It could have become our facts-of-life talk, the birds and the bees – an uncomfortable lecture at an elementary level – on the nature of sexual intimacy between a man and a woman. It didn't.

He never said a word. By his nod, I knew he'd heard me. But for the first time in my life, he didn't offer a ready answer. His silence seemed so strange. He closed his eyes, and I thought I saw his lips move – as if he were praying or something.

*The train pulled into our station, and as we gathered our coats to depart, he said, “Olga, would you please get my tool case for me?” I looked up at that high shelf and big box and said, “Papa, I can't. It's too heavy for me. I don't even think I can reach it!” He smiled and said, “You're right. It is too heavy for you. If you tried, it would only hurt you. And I would never really ask you to do such a thing. The answers to the questions you've been asking are like that tool case – they're too heavy for you to carry right now. The time will come soon enough for you to carry those answers. But I love you too much to burden you with them now. Can you trust me to give you those answers when the time is right?”**

It is the wisdom of his words that we offer you today. There is a season for everything. A time to speak and a time to be silent; a time to taste and a time to abstain; a time to question and a time to accept; a time to open and a time to leave closed.

The keys of life unlock many things – don't be in too big of a hurry to open them.

Some are too heavy to carry at your stage of life. They could break you if you opened them too soon – we know; we've needlessly picked up things before we were ready – to our regret.

Your Grandmother,

Olga

*This story is an adaptation of a true story that happened between Corrie ten Boom and her father many years ago. You can find it in many of her books.



= 25 minutes

EXPLORING THE LESSON



HEAVY THINGS ACTIVITY

ABOUT 10 MINUTES

DISCUSSION

Accept suggestions and write them on the board.

If they have trouble thinking of some, you could suggest some of the following:

- Diseases
- Pregnancy
- Memories
- Comparison to spouse
- Fear spouse will be unfaithful

In the story, Olga was only five years old when her father told her she was too young to have her questions answered. You are all more than twice that age now. One of the reasons we are dealing with sexual issues in this class is that we believe you are ready to hear a lot of the information that five-year-old Olga was not.

But that does not mean you are ready to unlock every door in the male-female area of life. What you would find on the other side of some doors would be too heavy for you to carry now. Some of those things would end up hurting you and those around you. And some could eventually crush your dreams.

What are some of the heavy adult responsibilities or consequences that go along with adult sexual activity and marriage? Or, what are some of the heavy things you might find if you open that door?

- Diseases
- Pregnancy
- Memories
- Comparison to spouse
- Fear spouse will be unfaithful

These are some of the “heavy burdens” people often find on the other side of the door of sexual intimacy. When you are mature enough physically, emotionally, socially, and financially, taking on these responsibilities can be fulfilling and rewarding. But for most teenagers, these kinds of burdens are so heavy that they never go on to even attempt their dreams. They are so heavy they can be early dream breakers.

So you might be wondering, “What can I do now so I will be ready to open these doors when I am older?” It turns out there are some very important things you can begin right now.



= 35 minutes

ENDING THE LESSON



MATCHING CHARACTERISTICS You NEED TO DEVELOP ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Please open your Personal Journals.

Let's take another look at the characteristics you want in a future mate. This next step of this exercise is very important:

On the facing, right-hand page to the page where you wrote the characteristics you desire in a mate, write a matching set of the characteristics you need to develop in order to attract this type of person.

For example: If you wrote that friendliness is important, you should be friendly. If you valued treating his or her parents with respect, write what you need to develop to match that respect. If you value a relationship with someone who does not abuse alcohol, then think about your decisions regarding alcohol. What will attract your mate to you?

Please write the matching characteristics you need to develop now in your Personal Journal.

[After they have had time to write, say:]

Now I would like you to return in your Personal Journals to your personal goals, dreams, values, beliefs, and skills you have recorded. Which of those do you think you might now wish to change, based on the characteristics you want to develop to attract the kind of person you will want to marry?

On another page in your Personal Journal, please write a one-sentence description of the change you decided to make.

[When your students have had time to consider and write, make the following point:]

I hope you will keep your Personal Journal as a reference for the days when you begin dating. The wisdom of the ages, as well as much up-to-date research, shows that people who find a mate with similar values, beliefs, goals, and dreams struggle less to keep their marriage together and fight less with each other.

In this lesson, we've considered some things that might be too heavy for us right now and how we can prepare ourselves to be ready for them later. In the next lesson, we'll continue by looking at some of the physical consequences of premarital sexual activity.

Before dismissing your students, remember to dictate the Parent-Teacher questions to them.



= 45 minutes

RESOURCES

GOING DEEPER

In this lesson, you identified several characteristics you want in a future mate. You also identified some characteristics you might need to develop to be ready for your future mate.

Nearly everyone would agree that one of the most important factors in a successful marriage is that the husband and wife genuinely love each other. We are going to look at one of the best-known and most-loved passages in the Bible. It is a description of what genuine love is really like.

[Read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-7a.]

There are at least 16 characteristics of real love listed in this passage. I've summarized each of these in one, two, or three words. As I write these characteristics on the board, please copy them in a list in your Personal Journal. You will each be doing something with this list in a few minutes. The characteristics:

[Write these in a vertical list on the board as you read them aloud.]

Patient	Forgets wrongs
Kind	Hates injustice
Not envious	Rejoices in truth
Doesn't brag	Supportive
Not proud	Loyal
Polite	Hopeful
Not demanding	Trusting
Not irritable	Unfailing

COMPARE LIST ACTIVITY

Now please look back at the previous list you wrote in this lesson – the characteristics you need to develop to attract a good mate. Compare your list with the one you've just copied from Corinthians.

Are any of them similar? If so, put a mark by the similar characteristics in the Corinthians' list.

Now look at the rest of the Corinthians' list that you haven't marked. Are there one or two of those characteristics of love

Note: There is no closing discussion section in this GOING DEEPER segment.

that you think would be especially important to develop? If so, put a mark by those also.

Now take another look at all the ones in the list you marked. Which of these could you put into practice this week, perhaps in your family or with your friends? Take a few quiet moments to write in your journal a particular person on whom, or with whom, you are going to practice one of these characteristics of love this week. Write down exactly what you plan to do or say.

PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

For Family Discussion:

1. Discuss with your adolescent some of the qualities people should develop before he or she is ready to be married.
2. Ask your adolescent to share with you one quality he or she chose in class to work on at the present time. Ask how you might encourage or assist him or her in developing that quality.