

ON THE ROAD TO THE FUTURE

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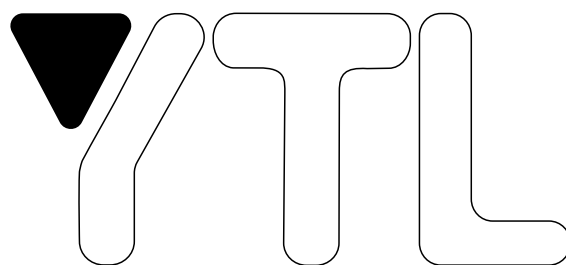
MOTIVATING GOALS



YOUTH AT THE THRESHOLD OF LIFE

TEACHER'S MANUAL

2021



YOUTH AT THE THRESHOLD OF LIFE

A program to instill self-esteem,
relationship building and character development

MOTIVATING GOALS

On the road to the future

Teacher's Manual **Volume 3**

Written and edited by:
Gábor Grész and David M. Robinson

<http://ytl.academy>

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The following people contributed to this YTL Teacher's Manual:

Members of the YTL editorial board: Gábor Grész, David M. Robinson, Béla Kenessey, Izabella Zs. Nagy, Éva Mergl, Edina Grész, Carol LaGue, Angela Ellett, and the members of Crossroads, the working group of YTL's international division.

The Crossroads lesson plans were prepared by:

Dr. Marcia Ball, former associate professor at the Department of Health Sciences at James Madison University
- <https://www.twr360.org/speakers/view/id,134>

Beverly Byers, consultant

Dr. Jennie Cerullo, professor at Department of Education and Behavioral Studies at Azusa Pacific University

Rex E. Johnson, professor emeritus at Talbot School of Theology - <https://www.biola.edu/directory/people/rex-johnson>

Dr. Alan Scholes, professor at the Department of Theology at the International School of Theology

Dr. Gary Stanley, professor at the Faculty of Communications at the International School of Theology

Contributing writers and editors:

Erin Balance, editor, International School Project

Rebecca S. Cotton, editor-in-chief, Women Today International, CCC

Christina Creutz, writer, Worldwide Challenge Magazine

Steven Grezlak, writer and editor, Worldwide Challenge Magazine

William Horlacher, editor-in-chief, writer, Director of Bridges International

Richard Morris, writer, Cross-Cultural Leadership Training

Kirsten Wilson, writer

Mary Ann Thurmond, partner, 35 years with leadership management firm

Jean Saunders, edited approximately 25 books for Dr. Jack P. Lewis, Memphis, TN

Reviewers:

Gábor Grész, co-founder and leader of the YTL program

David M. Robinson, co-founder of the YTL program

Dr. Dénes Bánhegyi, former national AIDS coordinator

Dick Day, professor at the Faculty of Human Ecology and Family Studies at the University of Malawi

Dr. Delanyo Adadevoh, PhD, William Beauvis

Moirá Chimombo, professor of Curriculum and Learning at the University of Malawi

Charlotte Day, member of the Faculty of Human Ecology and Family Studies at the University of Malawi

John Harris, president of Summer Night Communications

Daniel LaGue, former regional coordinator of YTL

Diana Langerock, South and East Africa Coordinator of YTL

Translated into English by: Gabriella Nagy, Edina Grész, Carol LaGue

Cover design and page layout: Renátó Grész

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Managing editor: Gábor Grész

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“I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything; but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.”

Edward Everett Hale

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Preface

“The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts”—C. S. Lewis writes in his truly remarkable book, *The Abolition of Man*¹. Since its launch in 1994, ***Youth at the Threshold of Life (YTL)*** has been trying to fulfill this mission to irrigate the drought of self-esteem and the relational, emotional and spiritual desert that surrounds children. This wilderness causes their souls, emotions and relationships to suffer from drought. This forces them to seek after tiny drops of water instead of the emotional, relational oasis available for their souls. These three volumes of the YTL Teacher’s Manual are here to help point children from the wilderness to many well-being resources. They are now thoroughly revised and combine the experience of over two and a half decades.

Over the 25 years of the ***Youth at the Threshold of Life*** (YTL) program at least six generations have graduated from high school. Tens of thousands of Hungarian students took part in the ‘YTL classes’ all over the country. Globally, hundreds of thousands graduated from this program as well.

The accumulated experience clearly shows that those needs that prompted the birth of this program in the first place are still present and they increasingly apply to young people today. The situation of families hasn’t become better, relationships haven’t become more stable, and the values that determine a balanced life (love, selflessness, self-sacrifice, respect, honor, honesty, etc.) are less and less present. The lack of values that characterized Hungary after the democratic transition in 1989 was quickly replaced by a very powerful and loud value system. This value system is very clearly showing its true colors—for many people, everything can be sacrificed on the altar of consumption, career and money over their relationships and families. Now there is no longer a vacuum, as family values (relationships, family, love, friendship and children) have been replaced by self-satisfying pursuits (success, money, career, sex without love, etc.).

Our task is even more difficult and important now than when the YTL program was first launched. We must stand for these values as a signpost and even toil for them ceaselessly “like a voice in the wilderness,” since individuals and society as a whole are headed for destruction without them. The devastating signs of this erosion of values are already tangible in the lives of families and children. The evidence is depressing; the institutions of marriage and family are being questioned. Divorce and violence are on the increase, as well. This erosion of values starts affecting every society.

Even if the situation seems to be hopeless at times, it is still possible to achieve thorough and lasting changes in the way young people live and think of their lives. Here are some encouraging examples:

- Sexual activity among high school age students in the US—even if not dramatically, but slowly and steadily—has decreased since 1991. Drug use in the same age group increased until 2001-2003; however, it has greatly reduced since then. There is a similar trend when it comes to alcohol consumption and smoking.
- In Uganda, which became one of the countries most severely affected by AIDS in the late 1980s, HIV prevalence was reduced by a third by 2000. The radical turn can be clearly attributed to

¹New York: Macmillan, 1965

the campaign targeting marital fidelity, abstinence and having less sexual partners. There are similar experiences in Senegal, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

- When it comes to Hungary, the effect of the YTL program on youth is very difficult to quantify. Due to our limited resources we haven't been able to carry out a scientific survey, but it would be extremely beneficial if a professional organization would do so. However, our own questionnaires—far from being scientific—show a positive reception and impact among the students. Prior to participating at our lecture series, only 5% of the students thought that it's worth waiting to become sexually active at a later age. By the end of the series, this figure increased to 60%, and 25% of the students expressed their desire to truly wait. Similarly, 60% of the students indicated after our drug prevention lectures that they will refrain from experimenting with drugs.

However, to continue to see increasing good results, we must implement up-to-date tools. The YTL program seeks to help educators, parents and youth workers with old and new tools. As problems and challenges facing youth, work and family education are on the increase, we want to share our useful tools with those who can benefit from using them.

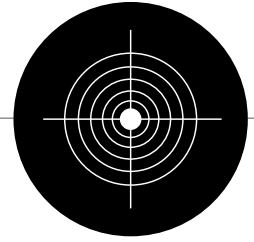
There is a huge task before us all. YTL helps us carry out the most important and valuable task for the future of mankind—namely, to shape the future through the children entrusted to our care.

Sincerely,

Gábor Grész, co-founder and leader

David M. Robinson, co-founder

Members of the YTL team



Why YTL?

Youth at the Threshold of Life (YTL) educational program and movement exists to help young people become healthy adults, gain a more meaningful complete life, and through this to contribute to a more livable society.

A ‘healthy adult’ means—beyond the obvious physical and biological health—that the following three characteristics are present in the life of a person to have a meaningful, complete and whole life:

1. **AUTHENTIC SELF-ESTEEM**—Are able to see themselves realistically; their self-observation is based on stable

foundations; they see themselves as valuable, but they don't under- or overestimate themselves; have a solid character. Healthy adults are aware of themselves.

2. **INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS**—Are able to establish mutual, equal, vulnerable and lasting relationships with others and receive and give acceptance. Healthy adults are aware of their connection to others.
3. **MOTIVATING GOALS**—Have a goal and task, a purpose in the world they live in. Healthy adults are able to set motivating goals that give meaning, hope and significance, and places them in society through their work and profession. Healthy adults know their role in the world.

These three characteristics of a healthy adult are rooted in the following basic emotional, spiritual needs we all have and want to experience:

1. **I AM VALUABLE! A SENSE OF WORTH.** It's a basic human need to feel valuable. Our sense of worth prompts us to ask existential questions like *Who are we?* and *Why do we exist?* The most basic question of life is related to defining ourselves. Until you can define yourself and discover your worth and who you are, you will not be able to find your place in an intimate relationship or in society. Since our basic human need is to know who we are, we must first understand our strengths and weaknesses. In order to realistically see your worth, you will also need a strong sense of what is good and bad. Without the ability to differentiate between good and bad, you will not be able to realistically see your strengths and weaknesses, your mistakes and virtues. If someone is not able to see and love themselves for who they are (which is very different from self-worship or self-loathing), they will not be able to love and accept others either.
2. **I BELONG! A SENSE OF SIGNIFICANCE.** 'I belong!' comes with the desire to know whether we matter to anyone. Am I acceptable and lovable? Do I belong to anybody or anywhere? In this universe everything is connected. Life wouldn't be possible without the chemical elements connecting to each other. Without connections there would be no life, not only in the physical, biological and chemical sense, but also in the emotional, spiritual and human dimension. We were created to be connected. We can experience acceptance only through our relationships and love. If someone is incapable of establishing a lasting, vulnerable and intimate relationship, they will not have a sense of belonging.
3. **I AM CAPABLE! A SENSE OF COMPETENCE.** Our need for a sense of competence makes us ask 'Is there any purpose for my existence?' 'Why do I live at all?' 'What is my role in this world?' 'Am I capable of achieving anything?' It is a basic human need to understand why we exist. We must identify our purpose in life that provides a framework for the unrepeatable and unique few decades that we spend here on Earth. Identifying our purpose in life empowers us with the sense that we have an important role to play in this world and we are capable of fulfilling this role. As we discover this purpose—in whatever work or profession—it will motivate us to maximize our abilities and develop our skills. Ultimately, this process will lead to a better, more developed society which solidifies our well-being and existence.

In order for the generation that is entrusted to our care to grow up as healthy adults, we need to help them meet these three needs mentioned above. YTL provides educators and parents with resources in this handbook that are aimed at achieving the following purposes.

OUR PURPOSES

01

AUTHENTIC SELF-ESTEEM

To develop the self-esteem of students by strengthening their self-awareness, building strong foundations on which to base their self-worth, giving them tools to understand and control their emotions (EQ) and developing their character.

In order to have an **authentic self-esteem** we need to have a good amount of self-awareness, we need to be able to **intelligently control our emotions** and we need to have a **solid character**.

- a. **Self-Awareness:** To have the right self-awareness, first we need to see ourselves as unique valuable beings; secondly, we have to realistically understand our strengths and weaknesses; thirdly, we need to accept the fact that both good and bad exist in us. To help our students with self-awareness we need to strengthen the following: their sense of worth, their sense of competence and their acceptance of themselves. If people are unable to accept themselves or they don't know themselves, they will be unable to connect to others or discover their own goals in life.
- b. **Emotional Intelligence (EQ):** Our students need to develop their ability to intelligently control their emotions. They need to be able to understand their own emotions and use them for their own advantages.
- c. **Character:** We have to help develop a solid character in the life of our students. We must teach them the difference between good and bad, useful and harmful. We also need to equip them to be able to choose the good and useful instead of the bad and harmful. It's not only our ability to choose well, but it is our character that determines who we are and how others perceive us. Our character is inseparable from who we are. Character is the ability to distinguish between good and bad and to choose what is good and not what is bad.

The **FIRST VOLUME** of the YTL Teacher's Manual discusses this topic.

02

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

To help our students grow in their ability to build and maintain mutual, impartial, and lasting friendships and intimate relationships.

This goal can be achieved by:

- a. Showing the significance of accepting and valuing others; we present the importance, hindrances and tools for building life-long **friendships**.
- b. Presenting the beauty of the committed, happy and lasting **love-relationships**, by explaining the place of sex in the mutually faithful, life-long relationship and by introducing the dangers of promiscuity.
- c. Equipping our students with the tools of effective **communication** and conflict-resolution.

The **SECOND VOLUME** of the YTL Educator's handbook discusses this topic.

03

MOTIVATING GOALS

To help our students discover their goals and find their place in society; to be able to identify and take the steps necessary to achieve those goals; and to be able to make the right decisions to avoid potential traps that could hinder them from achieving these goals.

This goal can be achieved by:

- a. Helping our students recognize that they have **a role** to play/a task to accomplish in this world. Helping them realize how to turn these roles into plans to accomplish these goals.
- b. Helping them make the right **decisions** and follow through on those decisions with discipline. For this they will need to be able to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, useful and harmful.
- c. Teaching them how to recognize and avoid the **traps** that could hinder them from reaching their goals.

The **THIRD VOLUME** of the YTL Educator's handbook discusses this topic.

SUMMARY TABLE:

BASIC NEEDS that determine becoming a healthy adult:	YTL'S PURPOSES:
1. I AM VALUABLE!	1. AUTHENTIC SELF-ESTEEM [VOL. 1]
2. I BELONG!	2. INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS [VOL. 2]
3. I AM CAPABLE!	3. MOTIVATING GOALS [VOL 3.]

A healthy individual builds healthy relationships and a healthy society.

LEGEND

The icons and signs used in the Educator's handbook mean the following:



BASIC IDEA is a reading or text that explains the foundational philosophical concept or belief of the YTL program.



MISSION is a reading or text that defines the purpose and mission of the YTL program.



READING is a text written for the educator that explains a given topic and provides background information for the processing and deeper understanding of the Lesson Plans.



LESSON PLAN provides a step-by-step, visual and clearly understandable explanation of the given topic.



STUDENT NOTES: At the end of some Lesson Plans there are student notes that can be copied and distributed to the students to facilitate their understanding.



GAMES: At the end of some sections there is a collection of games and tasks that can illustrate and help the processing of a given topic.



FILM SCREENING is a Lesson Plan that includes watching a film together and then discussing it as a group.



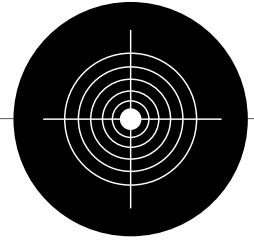
APPENDIX: At the end of the YTL manual there are additional readings and a collection of other resources.



TIME INDICATOR indicates the amount of time required for the processing of the given section in the Lesson Plans.



LESSON HIGHLIGHT shows important truths in the Lesson Plans that must be paid more attention to during the discussions.



Motivating Goals

The Purpose of this Topic

To help our students discover their goals and find their place in society; to be able to identify and take the steps necessary to achieve those goals; and to be able to make the right decisions to avoid potential traps that could hinder them from achieving these goals.

The Content of this Topic

1. REALIZATION—you must recognize that you have a task in this world and that you exist for a reason. This realization can be divided up into different goals.

2. DECISION-MAKING CAPACITY—you need to be able to make the right decisions and implement them in a disciplined manner.
3. THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE—you cannot make good decisions without the right knowledge. In order to make the right decisions, you must know the following:
 - a. The difference between right and wrong, good and bad, useful and harmful. How to choose what is good, right and useful?
 - b. The difference between desires and needs, and the importance of distinguishing between them. How do your desires prevent the fulfillment of your needs and hinder the reaching of your goals?
 - c. What traps or dangers threaten the reaching of your goals and how can you avoid them?

The reason why this topic is important

It is a basic human need to feel competent and able. This internal demand seeks satisfactory answers to the following questions: ‘Why do I live at all?’ ‘What is my role in this world?’ ‘Am I capable of achieving anything?’ ‘Does it matter that I exist?’ ‘Am I important at all?’ This awareness of your ability will determine the reason for your unique and one-time existence. You want to find the reason why you live, and it will provide meaning to your lifespan on earth. By identifying your purpose in life, you become empowered to fulfill it, to play your important role that you are the one capable of fulfilling. As you discover this purpose—be it any job or profession—it will prompt you to grow, create and maximize your skills. Ultimately, it promotes the welfare and development of society which ensures the framework for the well-being and existence of the individual, too.

There are radical, continuous and significant changes damaging the fabric of society, which impede the discovery of your sense of awareness. The erosion of common values and the ethos of society, the promotion of individual interests against communal interests dismantle the ability of the community to set common goals for itself. This happens when individual interests overrule communal values in this evolutionary war (where the stronger prevails). As society continues losing its common values, it becomes harder to identify its common goals. And the more difficult it is to set common goals, the harder it will be for the different parts, the individuals that make up society to discover their goal, which points beyond their own existence. This is how an increasingly individualized society becomes unable to fulfill the basic needs of these individuals, namely, to give them a sense of ability and capability.

As centuries-old social benchmarks and reference points are shaken, families disintegrate and the focus is on consumption—especially for young and still-emerging personalities—it makes it extremely difficult to find their way and live a life that is constructive and beneficial both for the individual, as well as the community. There is an ever-increasing gap between the traditional markers of adulthood (reaching the legal age and biological maturity) and the emotional, spiritual maturity that is required for adult life. Therefore, there are many people who are adults in a legal and biological sense, yet emotionally, spiritually and mentally they act like a child.

The youth at the threshold of adult life must have the right self-awareness, relationship building skills and embrace many goals that strengthen their sense of ability, give meaning, motivation and goals to their existence in order to find their path in an adult society.

In an era of free choice and fierce competition, every opportunity vies for your attention and decision. We are flooded by the different opportunities and hundreds of decisions that must be made every day. You make smaller or bigger decisions without even noticing it, starting with simple daily choices such as which bread to buy in the store, all the way to deciding whether you should move to another city to accept a new job. This flood of decisions is equally present in the lives of our children. Immense amounts of opportunities bombard us from the media and our surroundings.

Each decision reflects what values you hold. Every decision you make reveals what you consider to be important. How do you navigate between what things, activities and pastimes are more important and less important, constructive or destructive, useful or useless, valuable or worthless? It's only by establishing an internal value system that—as a reference point—protects the individual from making decisions that would destroy them, and instead it helps them choose what is beneficial to them. A young, still evolving person can easily get lost in the maze of decisions since their character, values and life experience are still being formed. We consider it natural that you need to reach a certain age, have regular prior training, learn certain skills and pass a driving exam before you are allowed behind the wheel. If you drive a car without acquiring these skills through external systems and trainings, and unless you demonstrate that you meet the prescribed requirements, you not only commit a criminal act, but you also endanger your own physical health and the health and possessions of others. Why do we think that our children can obtain these important and essential skills that will impact their entire lives all by themselves? You do a thorough training to learn how to drive a car, but you provide your children with no training whatsoever as to how to make important life decisions in a world increasingly full of chaos.

You acquire the skill to make the right decisions as part of a learning process. In order to make the right decisions, you need a lot of practice, external support, guidance and training. Without external assistance and continuous training, support, reinforcement and boundaries, children will not be able to distinguish their needs from their desires. The ability to distinguish between your needs and desires is an essential skill. Let us consider the small child who is told to go to bed at 8PM. He wants to play (his desire), but the parents know he needs to sleep (his need); otherwise he won't be able to pay attention in school the next day, which will affect his performance and ultimately his self-assessment. You limit the desires of your children in order to fulfill their needs. This will help them identify what they really need and they learn to separate it from their desires, which do not contribute to their development. Your desires are often contradictory to your needs. Another clear example is unhealthy eating habits, smoking and other harmful activities. You want to eat another slice of chocolate cake, but this desire goes against your very real need for a healthy life. The ability of a young person to conquer their desires and focus on their needs is essential to learning how to master decision-making. If you want to make the best decisions, it will take help from others and a lot of practice.

Making the right decision can lead to conflicts. The best choice is not necessarily the most popular or the easiest one. Sometimes the best decision comes with the greatest sacrifice in the short term. This can be easily understood when you consider studying. Studying requires sacrifice, it's tiring and not the easiest and most popular activity, yet nobody questions that it is the best investment in the long run. What if uneducated doctors were treating you and untrained engineers designed our

buildings? There would be catastrophic consequences. You must encourage your children to choose the best, even if it goes against peer pressure, results in being less popular or takes dedication, struggle and sacrifice. Truly valuable things always require great sacrifices. Why would it be different when it comes to relationships, self-awareness, personal goals or sexuality?

It is rather controversial that while we live in an era of millions of choices, broken public morality still wants to promote one single choice or solution. It sounds like this: *"You deserve to have everything you want! You must get the most enjoyment out of all situations. The unhappiness of others is not too great of a price to pay for your joy and happiness."* A person suffering under the tyranny of desires is coerced to make decisions that will result in their own destruction. If someone is freed from the yoke of their desires, they can make a balanced decision when it comes to desires and needs.

The message of the YTL program is clear. If the life and the future of our children is important to us, then we must lead by example, teaching them how to make right decisions, providing encouragement and setting boundaries for them. You can clearly see the devastating effects on the individuals, families and society as a whole when based on a value system of impulsive momentary desires.



MOTIVATING GOALS



Part 1



Reach Your Goals

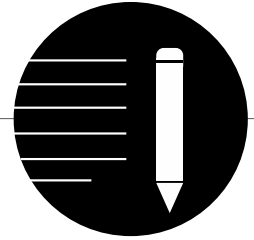


Set Goals

Make Good Decisions

Overcome the Greatest Obstacle

LESSON PLAN



01.

Motivating Goals
Reach Your Goals

Set Goals

Lesson Plan

Introduction
What is a goal?
Story
Game
How to set goals
Defining your goals
The required character
Application

The Purpose of the Lesson

In this lesson your students will look at the importance of goals and how to achieve them. They are encouraged to set goals for themselves in four simple steps and discover what they will need to persevere to accomplish them.

1. Introduction

5

Ice breaker for
the discussion

How many of you have traveled somewhere before?

Let's brainstorm and list the things that you need for a successful trip.

1. A destination—you have to know where you want to go.
2. A route—you need to find the best route to get there.
3. Preparation—you will have to carefully pack everything that you might need during the trip.

Transition:

It is more than natural to think about such issues before you go on a journey.

Life is like a big journey. It is surprising how little people think about where they want to get in life and what steps they should take to get there. Research has shown that people who have clear goals accomplish much more than those without such goals. It easy to understand why—if you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time. Today the topic will revolve around such issues. How can you set the right goals for your life, how can you make plans to achieve them and how can you avoid traps that will hinder your journey?

2. What is a goal?

5

Ask the
following
questions:

1. What is a goal? What distinguishes a goal from a pipe-dream?

[A goal is something that you want to reach in the future, but you are already working on reaching it. Pipe-dreams do not influence your actions in the present.]

2. Why are goals important?

[Without goals you will just drift without knowing where you are heading.]

3. What should you do to get closer to achieving your goals?

[You will need to define the steps that lead to these goals and elaborate further steps to implement them.]

What is a goal?

A goal is something that you DESIRE to reach in the FUTURE, and for which you are willing to work in the PRESENT.



3. Story

5

Read the story.

Erik Weihenmayer became blind at the age of 13 and he lost his mother in a car accident when he was 16 years old. Erik never allowed his passion for life to diminish because of his blindness, so he mastered rock climbing and other extreme sports. He wanted to do the impossible, to climb Mount Everest. It would be a dangerous adventure for anyone, but Erik had to face additional difficulties due to his unique situation. After all, he couldn't see where the ice passable and strong enough to hold him or he might not notice the gorges and the ravines underneath him. As he was climbing, he would always have to follow the instructions of his companion in front of him, but he would also have to do his share of the work. He managed to climb Everest in 2001, so he became the first blind person to conquer the world's highest summit.¹

4. Game

5

Pick two volunteers.

Try to imagine the hardships Erik had to encounter on Mount Everest. Two volunteers are required.

[Blindfold one of the volunteers and lead them to one side of room. Place chairs and various other obstacles on the way to the other wall on the opposite side of the room. The other person should give instructions to direct the blindfolded student to the other side.]

Discuss the following questions after the game:

1. What was Erik's desire and what did he want to accomplish in the future?
2. What obstacles did he have to overcome?
3. How did he overcome these obstacles as he was progressing towards his goals?

5. How to set goals

10

Jigsaw puzzle.

[Spread the jigsaw puzzle pieces on the teacher's desk. The students should not see the picture on the jigsaw puzzle box. Ask students to come forward to start putting the puzzle together. After a few minutes, ask them whether

¹"Erik Weihenmayer," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erik_Weihenmayer, accessed April 24, 2021.

Tell them the following:	their task would have been easier if they could actually see the image they are working on. Show them the cover of the jigsaw puzzle box.] The first step of defining goals is to imagine the future as you would like to see it. If this image is vivid and alive in you, it will be much easier to take the required difficult steps. You will also need to have clear goals because this is the only way that you can set a direction to follow. Then you have to consider the specific process that will get you to your goal. Finally, you have to set out on this path, otherwise it will remain only a wish and a dream. The following four steps can help you set an objective: 1. Imagine it—the power of an image. In your imagination, paint an image of what you desire. 2. Name it—the power of a goal. Specify your objective clearly and accurately. 3. Plan it—the power of your thoughts. Determine the specific steps that you must take for your dream or idea to become a reality. 4. Get started—the power of action. Make the first step towards your goal. AN EXAMPLE: • Imagine it—The dean of the University of Economics is giving me a handshake during my graduation ceremony. • Name it—your goal is to get a degree in economics. • Plan it—to get straight A's in mathematics and history throughout your years of study. • Get started—to buy a mathematics exercise book and do 5 math problems every day.
Give examples for these steps above.	

[You should give examples that pose a serious challenge to the children, yet they are not totally unrealistic. In certain schools talking about a university degree as a goal could be a great idea, in other places vocational training or some qualification would be sufficient.]

6. Defining your own goals

5

Tell them the following:

Now you will try to apply this method to your own lives.

1. **IMAGINE IT**—Write down three things you would want to accomplish in the future.
2. **NAME IT**—Choose one of these that you want to accomplish this year.
3. **PLAN IT**—Consider all the major steps that will get you to this goal.
4. **GET STARTED**—Finally, decide what you will do today to reach your goal.

Fun exercise

[Ask 4-5 volunteers to share their set goals with the others. Give each of them a piece of paper to write down their goal. They hand the sheets to you and you read them out loud. The class has to figure out which goal belongs to which volunteer.]

7. The required character trait: determination

5

Story:

If you want to accomplish your goals, you need to be determined. Your character reveals who you are on the inside; how you behave and what you do when no one sees you. Determination means an unwavering decision. If you are determined you will persevere despite difficulties and trials, and you will do everything possible to reach your goal.

Oprah Winfrey is a popular and successful television personality. She was the first African American woman to become a billionaire. But when she was growing up she lived in poverty, she was abandoned and had a hard life. She spent the first few years of her life on her grandmother's farm in Mississippi. At the age of six she moved in with her mother, but her family members continuously abused her physically, sexually and mentally. She ran away from home when she was 13 and then went to a youth detention center. From there she was sent to her father who treated her very harshly. She had straight A's and was admitted to a university with a scholarship. She started working as a reporter at the age of 19. Oprah Winfrey has been serving people with her TV shows and volunteer work targeting child abuse and other social problems for 25 years.²

What role did determination play in her life? Why was it important regarding her approach to difficulties?

(She considered difficulties as challenges. Whenever she managed to overcome one challenge, she set out to face and defeat the next one.)

8. Application

5

Exercises that help students to get deeper into the subject.

1. Think of a goal that you managed to achieve in the past. Did you encounter any difficulty on the path leading to this goal? What helped you to stay determined and reach your goal?
2. Now think about the goal that you set for yourself this year. What kinds of difficulties will you have to face to reach this objective?

²"Oprah Winfrey," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey, accessed April 24, 2021.

3. Select one of the expected difficulties and write down how you will tackle it.
4. Interview one of your parents or guardians. Record what they say and answer the questions also for yourself. What are the similarities and differences in the answers that you and your parents gave?
 - What were your goals when you were an adolescent?
 - What was the reason why you achieved/didn't achieve your goals?
 - How would you advise me in achieving my goals?
5. Collect stories about famous people who overcame serious obstacles as they fought hard to achieve their goals.

STUDENT NOTES



Set Goals

A GOAL IS SOMETHING THAT YOU WANT TO REACH _____,
BUT YOU ARE _____ WORKING ON REACHING IT.

The story of Erik Weihenmayer.

How should you set goals?

1. Imagine it—the power of an image. In your imagination, paint an image of what you desire.
2. Name it—the power of a goal. Specify your objective clearly and accurately.
3. Plan it—the power of your thoughts. Determine the specific steps that you must take for your dream or idea to become a reality.
4. Get started—the power of action. Make the first step towards your goal.

The required character trait: determination

Setting your own goals

Imagine it:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name it:

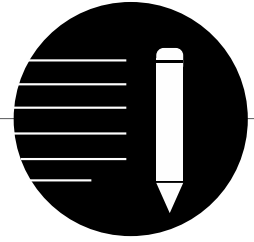
1. _____
2. _____

Plan it:

1. _____
2. _____

Get started:

1. _____



02.

Motivating Goals
Reach Your Goals

Make Good Decisions

The 5 Steps of Decision-Making

Lesson Plan

Case study:
for girls / boys

The five-step process of
decision-making

Practicing the decision-
making process

Understanding the process—
the three problems

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students can apply a methodical decision-making process for a given situation and can solve a new problem in cooperation with others using this method.

Basic ideas

1. Making wise decisions involves a five-step process. If applied consistently, this process helps you live a healthier, more fruitful and more satisfying life.
2. Mature decision-making also includes the following:
 - a. You don't make decisions based on your emotions.
 - b. You know your values and priorities.
 - c. You take responsibility for your decisions.

Background information

The ability to make good decisions is the result of applying a systematic decision-making process. Mastering this process takes a long time and regular practice. Most teenagers are prone to make decisions quickly and instinctively, based on their momentary feelings and reactions. The purpose of this lesson is to help the students learn the basic elements of logical decision-making. The lesson includes four case studies that describe situations that students can encounter in real life. By following the five-step process, the students acquire tools which enable them to apply a new approach in their problem-solving so that they can make good and healthy decisions.¹

Involving a helper

In this lesson, you will need the help of another adult. The students will be divided into two groups—boys and girls—which will be led by adults of the same sex as the participants. It means that if the teacher is female, she will need a male leader to lead the group of boys and vice versa. Start the lesson by dividing the boys and the girls into two different classrooms.

¹Nancy M. Roach and Leanna L. Benn, *Me, My World, My Future: For Junior High* (Spokane, WA: Teen-Aid, 1987).

Once the girls and the boys are settled in different classrooms, read this case study to the girls.

For the Girls

Vicky has recently been spending a lot of time with Zack. She started dating him because of his great sense of humor. In addition to being handsome, he seems to care for Vicky and her feelings. However, Vicky started questioning the relationship when she noticed that Zack drinks a lot when he goes out with his friends.

Late one night last week Zack went to see Vicky when her parents weren't at home. She immediately smelled alcohol when she opened the door for him. It made Vicky feel uncomfortable, so she stepped outside to talk. She wanted to respect the effort he made to see her. As they were chatting, Zack embraced her and started kissing her passionately. He said that because her parents weren't home, it would be a great time for them to have sex. But Vicky wanted to hold off and told this to Zack. He tried for a while to convince her, but then he finally accepted her rejection and left.

Zack has been very kind and polite to Vicky ever since, but she feels tense when he is around. He has told her a couple of times how much he likes her and that he would like to sleep with her. He is known to have had sex with some girls before. Vicky doesn't know whether he will continue to date her unless she gives in. She has been thinking of breaking up with him, but he is really nice when he is not drunk.

If she broke up with him, she would be the only girl among her friends who doesn't have a boyfriend and it would make her stick out.

- What should Vicky do? What would be the first piece of advice you would give to her?

[Ask the students about their first impressions of this situation. Ask them to write down what they would literally say to Vicky or ask of her. Leave some minutes for the answer. Afterwards ask volunteers to read their written advice out loud to the other girls. Ask them to indicate the best response and give their reasons.]

For the Boys

Once the girls and the boys are settled in different classrooms, read this case study to the boys.

Charlie is an average guy. He doesn't think he is someone special, so he mostly goes with the flow. He hangs out with the same group of people all the time. A girl called Esther recently joined their group. She started paying special attention to him. She would sit close to him and would listen without interrupting him. Charlie has never had anyone show this type of interest in him before.

He finally works up the courage and asks her to go out on a date. They finish their date by her house then she suggests kissing goodnight.

They begin kissing and continue for a long time until they can't stop. He is about to undress her when they hear someone approaching. The spell is broken, the opportunity is lost, and he goes home reluctantly. In the following days all Charlie can think of is Esther and their next meeting.

You are also a member of their group of friends and Charlie confides in you about the situation. As he is talking about Esther and this situation, Charlie acknowledges a sense of guilt for almost being caught and he is afraid that he would get her pregnant. He asks for your advice. You have every reason to believe that Esther has been sexually active for a while, but Charlie has not.

- What should Charlie do? What would be the first piece of advice you would give to him?

[Ask the students about their first impressions of this situation. Ask them to write down on their Student Notes what they would literally say to Charlie or ask from him. Leave some time for them to answer. Afterwards ask volunteers to read their written advice out loud to the other guys. Ask them to indicate the best response and give their reasons.]

2. The five-step process of decision-making

20

If the participants complain about the lack of time, remind them that in real life they would not normally spend so much time making such decisions.

Interrupt the activity once the three minutes are up. Ask which group would like to read their answers first.

[Divide the students into groups of 4 people. Ask them to determine the problem that Vicky/Charlie is facing. Note that there could be more than one problem; it could be a series of related issues. Give the students THREE minutes to discuss it.]

1. Identify the problem

- Whose problem is it? Who does the problem affect? Who should be the one solving this problem? Try to figure out everything you can about the problem.
- What thoughts or actions play a role in the problem of Vicky/Charlie?
- Vicky/Charlie is your friend and has asked for your advice. He/she bears the weight of solving the problem; you can only assist him/her.

What kinds of questions would you ask yourselves and of Vicky/Charlie if you wanted to have a better understanding of the situation? Write down all your questions in the Student Notes.

The students are now learning how to assess a situation and later they can apply this skill in other settings.

Do not get lost in the discussion on the best possible choice. The students are not to solve Vicky/Charlie's problem, but to learn a new decision-making process.

2. List all the possible solutions.

- What are the possible solutions to your problem? There are always more than two solutions, so ask for help to see other possible paths if you feel stuck.

[Ask the students to list the possible options they can discuss with Vicky/Charlie. Sometimes seemingly dumb or stupid suggestions can help you come up with better ideas that you wouldn't have thought of otherwise. This is why you have to be creative and resourceful. Sometimes the best solution is rather obvious, but even then you need some time to think it through.]

[Allow three minutes for the groups to come up with a recommendation. Afterwards ask them to share it with the others.]

3. Evaluate and assess all the possible solutions.

Consider the outcome of these different solutions. Check whether these solutions:

- are lawful;
- are moral;
- help to achieve the previously set goals;
- have a favorable effect on others;
- build and nurture the relationship.

[Adolescents are not used to thinking so methodically. They could become frustrated when they have to carefully consider the various aspects of a situation. If you see any signs of frustration, let them know that they are now working on becoming wiser. And as with all things and valuable habits, it is not easy at first.]

[One possible way to quickly consider all your options is to have each group look at only the consequences of choices they themselves have listed. The options mentioned by several groups should be distributed randomly among them.]

[Allow three minutes for the groups to evaluate the various options and choices and ask them to share their findings. Even if they had only one option, let them share.]

4. Decide on the best possible solution.

Make sure that when you make a choice, you set a goal for yourself or clarify a direction you want to go toward. It should contribute to helping you reach your goals; to really get there you will have to do something. You might have to talk to someone about this new decision, you might have to change your attitude or get rid of a bad habit, establish a new one or learn a new skill.

[Now the groups will have only two minutes to decide about the best possible solution. In the following two minutes the groups share their recommendations to Vicky/Charlie.]

5. Plan the execution of your decisions.

- How does the decision affect your situation today and your life tomorrow and later?
- Can you accept the consequences of your decision and the responsibility that comes with it?

[Give three minutes to the groups to outline a plan for Vicky/Charlie that they can follow if they want to implement the decision suggested by the group. Ask each group to briefly describe its recommendation.]

4. Practicing the decision-making process

10

Preparation of
group exercise.

Now you have one more situation where you are requested to give advice to Martin/Catherine who asked for your input.

This time you will have 10 minutes to go through the entire process. Start by appointing someone to write down the outline of the decision-making process for the group that will be handed over to the teacher at the end of the lesson.

Case study for boys

Martin is really good at sports. He is the captain of the soccer team. He also has a great sense of humor and many girls want to date him. However, he is only interested in this particular girl, Christie. There might be prettier girls in his class, but Martin doesn't find them as attractive. She always has a positive take on things, she even smiles when others see the situation as gloomy. Her laughter is contagious and she has an air of freedom about her. Martin and Christie would often have long conversations where they totally lose track of time. This afternoon Christie is coming to Martin's game. Afterwards they have a date by a nearby lake where the two of them will spend some time together.

Everyone on Martin's team knows how much he likes her. They also know that the two of them are going out after the game. They have been making fun of the fact that Martin hasn't slept with Christie yet. Most of the guys claim that they have already had sex. There is someone who hints about Christie having slept with a friend of someone. Martin is very attracted to Christie and he has thought of having sex with her. However, he wants their friendship to develop

and doesn't want to destroy their relationship by pushing her to sleep with him.

In the locker room the guys have switched gears and are increasingly teasing Martin about it. *'So what are you actually going to do after the game?'* they ask him. *'Are you going to chit chat only or is there something more exciting you want to do?'* Even during the game they pick on him by saying things like: *'What are you waiting for, man? It's time to join the men's club. Become a real man. Christie wants to sleep with you.'* At the end of the game, before Christie could walk up to Martin, the guys issue an ultimatum to Martin. *'Alright, tomorrow morning you have to report to us whether you have slept with her or not. If yes, we want to know all the details. If not, the entire school will know that you are not ready to become a real man yet. The decision is in your hands.'*

- What should Martin do?

Case study for girls

Catherine is neither particularly pretty nor is she very sociable. She doesn't have a lot of friends and she often feels lonely. So far she has only gone out with her cousin and his friends. However, he made it absolutely clear that he is only letting her tag along because their parents made him do so (her mother and his father are siblings).

Catherine is trying to catch the eye of the guys in school, but none of them seems to notice her. She heard about a big party next weekend and a casual girlfriend suggested that she should come along. She also told Catherine not to expect any invitations for a date unless she becomes a little more exciting to spend time with. Catherine knows what she meant—she is to allow guys to use her body.

She is fed up with being lonely so she promises that she will go to the party. She justifies her decision to herself by saying that she doesn't have to go all the way and do everything to get the attention she badly craves.

You are a casual friend of Catherine. She confidentially shares her plans with you regarding the party, but she also talks about her doubts. Nevertheless, she is determined to attend.

- What would be your suggestion to her?

5. Understanding the process—the three problems

5

Explanation.

Now think about the advice you gave to Martin/Catherine. If it were a real-life situation, what are the chances of their following your advice?

Summarize the answers on the whiteboard.

In the next few minutes list as many ideas as possible about why Catherine and Martin might not follow your advice.

Many of your answers fall in line with **three general problems** that often prevent us from following the advice of others.

1. Your emotions overrule your good senses.

Emotions play an important role in a decision, but you cannot rely **exclusively** on them. Emotions can conceal facts that are important aspects of the situation or problem that you are facing. Emotions come and go, which is why you have to make sure that your decisions are not based on the feelings you have at one particular moment. If you think that your emotions can prevent you from making wise decisions, you should talk to someone who is not so closely affected by the problem. It's always good to share your problems with your friends, but it could be also useful to talk about them with an adult whom you trust.

2. You are uncertain about your values or have forgotten about them.

If you know what is important to you, it makes the decision-making easier in a particular situation. For example, if you value honesty, you will immediately know that when you are solving the problem at hand, lying is not an option. If it is important for you to know what God thinks about your situation, the Bible will serve as an important resource for solving your issues and in confronting difficult situations.

3. You don't take responsibility for your decisions.

Sometimes you make good decisions and sometimes you make bad ones. Yet the fact is that these are still your decisions. You must take responsibility for your decisions and their consequences, whether they are good or bad. It means that you should be happy if you made a wise decision that has a positive effect. But it also means that you are to learn from your bad decisions in order to make better and better decisions about your life.

Questions and Answers

Question: *I often have to decide things in a rush and I don't have time to go through the five steps.*

Response: Let me give you two suggestions. First, you must clarify your values and goals in advance. Set boundaries regarding sex, relationships and other areas of your life. Your boundaries indicate what you are willing to do, how far you are willing to go and what is a clear stopping point for you. If you set invisible 'posts' that delineate your emotional, spiritual, relational and sexual boundaries, you can more easily prevent being caught up in the heat of the moment. Secondly, practice the five-step process on a regular basis. It helps to get used to the process so you don't have to think about each step all the time. And when you come under heavy pressure you can quickly think through the decision you want to make.



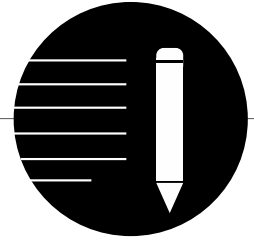
STUDENT NOTES

Make Good Decisions

What would be the first thing you would say to Vicky/Charlie?

1. Identify the problem.
2. List all the possible solutions.
3. Evaluate and assess all the possible solutions that you have.
4. Decide on the best possible solution.
5. Plan the execution of your decisions.

LESSON PLAN



03.

Motivating goals
Reach Your Goals

Overcome the Greatest Obstacle

The Hawk and the Khan

Lesson plan

The story of Genghis Khan and
the hawk

Discuss the story

Explain the major lessons we
can learn

Ending the Lesson

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of this lesson your students should be able to recognize that they can't always see the dangers which are ahead of them. They should identify the people in their lives who are trying to protect them from danger and identify the "thirsts" in their lives, always being aware of the damage these can cause if they only live by instinct.

Key concepts

1. We are sometimes endangered by threats we cannot perceive.
2. At such times, warnings or guidance from people we trust may keep us from harm.
3. Our unwise decisions will sometimes bring trouble to others, even when we escape the consequences.
4. Pursuing our desires without control can ruin the pursuit of our goals and can damage the lives of those around us. Learning to restrain our impulses is essential.

Materials

Chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers

If large sheets of paper are available, prepare one with the following questions before class begins. It must be large enough for everyone in the class to see clearly.

- a. What parallels can you see between this story and the relationships young people need to have with their friends or their families?
- b. What hidden danger was lurking in the pool above the khan? Why was the hawk able to see the danger even when the khan couldn't?
- c. Should Genghis Khan have listened to him? Why?
- d. Why should we listen to warnings from people we trust?
- e. Have you ever been a "hawk" to a friend, warning of a danger you saw that they did not? Why did you try to warn the person?
- f. We've mentioned God and the spiritual area of our lives several times in these lessons. In what way might God be a little bit like the hawk in the story. Why?

Background information

Young people commonly hold the misconception that they are indestructible. They often feel that their actions produce little or no lasting consequences for themselves or others. Through the story of "The Hawk and the Khan" students will be confronted with an image of tragedy brought about by the thoughtless act of a man focusing only on his own desires. The danger was unseen to the khan, but not to the hawk, who risked everything to save him. This opening lesson to the section regarding decisions allow us, as teachers, to remind students of the importance of heeding the warnings given to them by trusted individuals who can see a certain situation more clearly than they can, especially in the areas of their sexuality and personal relationships.

1. The story of Genghis Khan and His Hawk¹

5

Read the following story.

There once was a khan, a great and mighty warrior named Genghis Khan. When he led his armies out to war, he conquered many lands, so many that his empire sprawled from Eastern Europe to the Sea of Japan.

One day, the khan rode out into the woods to hunt. With him went his favorite hawk. The hawk would fly about in the air, circling. When the hawk's sharp eyes spotted some prey from the air, the bird would immediately swoop down for the attack.

It was a warm day, and by afternoon the khan was hot and thirsty. He started searching for a spring of water he had once seen in the woods. Finally he spotted a trickle of water dripping down the side of a rock, and he knew the spring must be above.

The water fell from the rock slowly, drop by drop. It was not much, but it was water, and the king was very thirsty. So the mighty khan took out a small silver cup and held it under the dripping water. Ever so slowly, the cup began to fill.

The khan could hardly wait to feel the cool liquid wet his dry lips, tongue and throat. So, even before the little cup was quite full, Khan pulled it out from under the trickle of water and lifted it toward his lips. Suddenly, something swooped through the air and knocked the cup from the khan's hand, spilling the precious water on the ground.

Startled, Genghis Khan looked up to see his pet hawk, flying from tree to tree and looking rather proud of himself. The khan glared at the hawk, picked up the cup and began to slowly fill it again. This time, he let the cup fill only halfway before he lifted it to his mouth. The cup was just about to touch his lips—he could almost taste the water—when again the hawk swooped down from the air and knocked it from the khan's hand.

By now, the khan was quite angry with his hawk. A third time he collected water in his cup—and a third time the hawk kept him from drinking it.

The khan's face turned red with anger. He paced back and forth, glaring at his hawk perched on a nearby branch. In his fiercest voice, the mighty Genghis Khan bellowed, "How dare you spill my water!" He bent down to retrieve his cup and then said in a quiet, but still furious voice, "If I could catch you, I would break your neck."

The mighty Genghis Khan bent to fill his cup once again, but this time the khan drew his sword from the sheath at his side. "If you knock this cup from my hand again, hawk," the khan said to his pet, "it will be the last thing you ever do!"

¹James Baldwin, "The King and His Hawk," in *Fifty Famous Stories Retold* (1895; Lebanon, MO: Yesterday's Classics, 2005).

Sure enough, as the khan brought the cup to his mouth, the hawk swooped down and knocked it out of his hand. As the hawk passed, the khan raised his sword, and with a well-timed flick of his blade, struck the bird in mid-flight. The hawk fell at the khan's feet. With imploring eyes fixed on the khan's face, it bled to death.

"It's what you deserve," said the khan and stepped over the bird to find his silver cup. But the cup had fallen between two rocks and, try as he might, the khan could not reach it.

"Well, then," thought the khan, "I will follow this trickle of water up to the spring from which it comes. I still need something to drink."

So Genghis Khan began to climb and as he climbed, he became thirstier and thirstier. Finally, he found the pool of water. The khan strode eagerly toward the pool, but at the water's edge he gasped and took a quick step back. Lying in the pool was a huge, dead, snake—a snake whose venom would kill a man with the slightest taste.

The khan stood very still. He was no longer thirsty. All he could think about was the dead hawk lying on the ground below.

"That bird saved my life," he said. "That bird was a true friend, and I have killed him."

The khan went back down the hill, half running, half sliding. When he reached the bottom, he carefully picked up the dead hawk and gently placed it in his hunting bag. Then he rode slowly home.

2. Discuss the story

25

Make sure to select a student who will feel comfortable in front of the class. Also, tell the student that there are no right or wrong responses.

Understanding the characters

[Ask for a volunteer to be on the "hot seat" as the character of the hawk in the story. Tell the student that they are to try to think like the hawk and answer the questions accordingly.]

Ask class members if they have any questions they would like to ask the hawk. If they need some help, you can help them with the following list.]

- Why did you try to save the khan's life?
- How did you know the khan was in trouble?
- How did you feel when you saw your khan about to drink the poisoned water?
- If you had been able to talk, what would you have said to the khan when he started to drink the water?

Be aware that at first your students may have a hard time seeing the symbolic meaning of the story. If so, the following questions might be helpful:

“If the hawk were human, describe its personality.”

“What kind of person was Genghis Khan?”

- Were you surprised that the khan got so angry when you were trying to save his life?
- Did you believe the khan when he said he’d kill you if you did it again? If so, why did you go ahead and knock the cup out of his hand the last time?
- Saving the khan’s life cost you your own. Would you do it again? Why or why not?

[Thank the student who has been the “hawk.” Now ask for a volunteer to be on the “hot seat” as the character of the khan in the story. Once again, give students an opportunity to ask their questions, but add the following, as needed:]

- What was your relationship to the hawk?
- Why were you so angry at your friend, the hawk?
- Had the hawk ever betrayed you before?
- Why did you kill him?
- How did you feel when you saw the poisonous snake?
- If the hawk had still been alive when you went back to it, what would you have said to it?
- What were you thinking on your ride home?

How the characters relate to us

There are many things we can learn from this story about Genghis Khan and the hawk, but right now I’d like us to consider the story in light of relationships.

On the whiteboard write:

- Genghis Khan
- Poisoned Water
- Khan’s Thirst
- The Hawk

What are some ways these parts of the story might be like us and our relationships today?

[Have your students reflect on this question for a few minutes, making notes on their Student Notes. Then call for responses.]

Discussion in pairs

In a moment I am going to have you divide into pairs. Here are some questions I want you to discuss when you get in your pairs:

The best way to make this exercise work well is to have these six questions written in advance on a large sheet of paper that you put in front of the class now.

If this is not possible, another option is to read each question to the class one at a time and allow time for discussion before moving on to the next question.

- What parallels can you see between this story and the relationships young people need to have with their friends or their families?
- What hidden danger was lurking in the pool above the khan? Why was the hawk able to see the danger even when the khan was unable to see it?
- Should Genghis Khan have listened to him? Why?
- Why should we heed warnings from people we trust?
- Have you ever been a “hawk” to a friend, warning of a danger you saw that they did not? Why did you try to warn the person?
- We’ve mentioned God and the spiritual area of our lives several times in these lessons. In what way might God be a little bit like the hawk in the story. Why?

[After the pairs have discussed for a few minutes, ask several students to share their teammates’ insights with the class. End by bringing out the key concepts arising from this story.]

3. Major lessons we can learn



Write on the white-board if you like.

There are many ways to interpret and apply stories like the one about the khan and the hawk, but one way we might understand it (as several of you have said) is like the following.

Genghis Khan	Anyone who is ruled by their desires.
Khan's Thirst	Desires for things we think we can't live without or can't wait for (love, sex, friends).
Poisoned Water	Dangers (relationships without appropriate boundaries, hurtful situations, STIs).
The Hawk	Friends; those who warn us; inner conviction; conscience; our faith.

Here are some major points to have the students consider.

- Khan killed the hawk because his focus was on his own thirst. He didn’t think through the situation beyond satisfying his own needs and desires. Sometimes we take rash actions when our only focus is on our own desires.
- Khan didn’t die, but the hawk did.



- Khan went home wishing he had stopped a moment and listened to the hawk. Do you think he would be as impulsive next time? Have you ever been in a situation where you wished you had listened to someone?
- The hawk must have loved the khan very much. He didn't give up on him. Who can you think of that hasn't given up on you?

1. **We are sometimes endangered by threats we cannot perceive.** There are times when warnings or guidance from people we trust may keep us from harm.
2. There are times when our choices—especially the unwise ones—bring suffering to other people, even though we may escape the consequences.
3. Living out our desires without control can hinder us achieving our goals. This lack of self-control can do us irreparable damage.

4. Ending the lesson

5

Throughout your life, many different people will serve as “hawks” for you: family, friends, teachers, coworkers. But there may be times in our lives when none of these people are available to warn us, or when they, too, are unable to see the danger ahead. After all, their sight is limited just as ours is. Many people have found that when no other people are around to help, God becomes most real to them. If there is a God who sees and knows everything, then He, like the hawk, could warn us of dangers none of us can see.

Personal applications

Just like the khan, you will have the opportunity to choose to be wise or foolish when a hawk warns you of danger!

- Who are the “hawks” in your life right now?
- What are some of the things you “thirst” for in your life?
- Can you think of a situation where you didn't listen to your “hawk?” Did the “hawk” get hurt? Did you get hurt?

Write down your answers on the bottom half of the Student Notes and feel free to share with anyone. You may want to tell your parents the story of the khan and the hawk. Then ask them to tell you about a time when they did or did not listen to their “hawk.”

Questions and Answers

Question: *If someone is warning me about something, how can I know if the warning should be heeded?*

Answer: It is always good to listen to the warnings and advice of others, particularly if you know the person and think that they can be trusted (such as parents, true friends or trustworthy adults). If you are in doubt about their motives, remember that it is permissible to ask *why* the person is giving you the warning.

STUDENT NOTES



The Hawk and the Khan

How do the characters relate to our lives?

Think about the following questions for a few minutes, pair off in twos to discuss your thoughts, and then be prepared to share your teammate's insights with the class.

In the story of the hawk and the khan, what are some ways these parts of the story might be like us and our relationships today?

Genghis Khan:

The Poisoned Water:

Khan's Thirst:

The Hawk:

Personal application:

1. Who are some of the "hawks" in your life?
2. What are some things you "thirst" for in your life?
3. Can you think of a situation where you didn't listen to your "hawk?" Was the "hawk" hurt? Were you hurt?



MOTIVATING GOALS



Part II



Avoid the Traps



Sex in the Age of STIs

Dangerous Embrace

Safe Embrace

Why Wait?

Games

Getting High

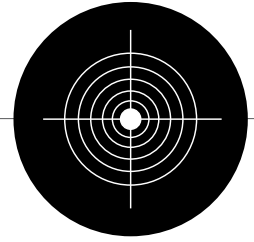
On the Road to Drugs

The Debate on Drugs

The Secret about Drugs

The Price of a Blessing

INTRODUCTION



Avoid the Traps

The journey to your goals will involve countless dangers and traps. This is especially true for young people who are not fully developed, lack experience and therefore are very vulnerable. Such dangers are called traps (because they are often invisible or look innocent) and they are divided into three groups:

1. The sex trap—it includes dangers that can deprive you of a fully meaningful and emotionally and physically healthy relationship and life.
2. The drug trap—it includes drug-use related threats.
3. The trap of the Internet—it means dangers that await you in the online world and that can deprive you of your true freedom.



Motivating goals
Avoid the Traps

Sex in the Age of STIs

SEX-TRAP

Sexuality is a wonderful, meaningful and delightful gift and experience. Life exists because of it. This is why YTL is completely pro-sex. You can clearly see from the different lyrics, newspapers, literary and art pieces that sexuality is important to us. Its importance, however, is not only to keep the human species alive, but it can also bring joy and create a connection between two committed people. The role, purpose and beauty of sexuality has already been explained in detail in Volume 2 of the YTL Teachers' Manual (Intimate relationships).

You should know—as with any wonderful thing—sexuality can also be dangerous. These dangers are not insignificant. You must present a realistic and objective picture to your

students so they can truly enjoy the gift of sexuality. Just like anything else that entails the possibility of enjoyment, sex can also cause great harm.

The era we live in encourages sexual promiscuity. It encourages people to ‘sleep with anyone because it’s good and fairly innocent; you can do it with anyone you like; if you put a constraint on yourself you are not only stupid, but you will also go crazy; you need to have sex; your sexual activity does not assume any responsibility; this is the sign of modernity and progress; you are cool and fun if you do it!’ But there is a contradicting view which says that sex can have even fatal consequences. This is a time when STIs are rampant. There are people living among us whose lives have been destroyed by sexually transmitted infections. This is the reason why sex is coupled with fear for many people. You are constantly warned that you should take care of yourself and use protection. Some people simply ignore the responsibility that comes with sex. They do not care about the emotional, spiritual and physical dangers that can ruin their lives.

How is it possible that a good and important thing like sex can become so controversial and frightening? What went wrong? In this part we will look at some facts about sex and how it can be practiced in a safe way.

Fact #1: STIs are spreading like an epidemic

The huge spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)¹ causes significant problems in society. An STI is an infection that is primarily contracted through the exchange of bodily fluids, mostly during sexual intercourse. Nowadays there are about 25-35 STIs that are the most widespread. They include deadly and relatively harmless ones, but all of them are very humiliating to have. Where sexual freedom is promoted, STIs could become an epidemic much more easily. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), every day 1 million people contract a new sexually transmitted infection. It is estimated that every year 357 million people contract either chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis or trichomoniasis². STIs are not a recent phenomenon. They are the result of the sexual revolution that occurred in the 1960s in Europe and in the USA. Teenagers could think that STIs have always been as widespread as they are today. When you consider older people who have had many sexual partners the young people could say that ‘Since they haven’t had any problem with being sexually promiscuous the chances to contract an STI are also slim for me.’ They ignore that when those older people had sexual intercourse with a number of partners they didn’t have as big of a chance to contract an STI as they do today. The immense growth in the number of people with STIs has made it particularly dangerous to be promiscuous today.

Fact #2: HIV³ has made sex—a formerly private matter—into a public issue

Free sex and regular partner changes could cause health problems (infertility, infections, etc.) even in the past, but with the appearance of HIV, have now become life-threatening. A disease appeared that is primarily transmitted sexually and it cannot be cured with a simple antibiotic treatment. In

¹WHO uses STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) instead of the formerly used expression STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease).

²See “Sexually transmitted infections (STIs),” [https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-\(stis\)](https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-(stis)), accessed April 24, 2021.

³HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the cause of a disease called infectious AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)” (<https://drimmun.com/ne-mi-betegsegek/hiv-aids-fertozesrol-reszletesen.html>, accessed January 14, 2016). In 2019, 690,000 people had died from AIDS-related illnesses (<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/fact-sheet>, accessed April 24, 2021). See also, https://www.who.int/health-topics/hiv-aids#tab=tab_1, accessed April 24, 2021.

fact, it currently cannot be cured at all, it can only be made symptom-free⁴. However, effective lifelong antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) can control the virus and help prevent onward transmission to other people. Furthermore, large sums of money must be allocated for its treatment, which impose a significant financial burden on society. The appearance of HIV changed the entire history of sexually transmitted infections. Sexual behavior is no longer merely a private matter, but it's a life and death issue with significant social, economic, health care and educational consequences. With the appearance of HIV, personal sexual habits and sexual behavior have become a social, public matter.

Since it's a social and public matter, personal decisions play an increasingly bigger role and have more serious consequences. Teenagers need to know that while they can make their own choices, these decisions will have an impact on their whole lifetime and even on society. Sex is no longer the private matter of two people since it has economic, health care and demographic consequences.

HIV is a threat to everyone who engages in an activity that involves the risk of infection. The virus does not distinguish between people, either based on gender, skin color, financial status, sexual orientation, place of residence or based on any other factor. People who engage in any activity with the risk of infection expose themselves to contracting HIV. However, those who refrain from such activities also avoid the involved threats. It is important to stress that most people are not even aware that they have contracted the disease. Therefore, they do not even know that they should protect the other person—whom they cherish—from getting infected. It provides no safety to merely assume that the potential sexual partner or the user of a needle is not infected. Obviously, the more partners someone has, the higher the risk of getting infected. However, many people contract a disease upon their first sexual encounter or first drug use.

The impact of HIV on the infected person and society

The physical effects of the infection. Following the early stage that is similar to having a cold (or there could be no symptoms whatsoever), the HIV-infected person could live without any signs of an illness for months or years. While they feel good during this long period of time, they can still pass on the virus to others. Over time, they will develop lasting symptoms such as fever, sweating, enlarged lymph nodes, diarrhea and fatigue. The HIV infection is usually diagnosed in this stage (if there was no earlier diagnosis). After a while the immune system becomes so ravaged that an increasing number of serious and incapacitating diseases will develop in the affected individual. This stage of the disease is comprehensively referred to as AIDS, that is, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. In this late stage of the disease, the patients usually require a complex therapy to help their bodies fight the various infections and to receive temporary relief for their symptoms.

The emotional effect of the infection. Besides the physical consequences, people who contract HIV must face many emotional problems, just like other people who are suffering from other chronic or fatal illnesses. Such emotional problems include depression, a predisposition to suicide, a sense of loneliness, fear and the loss of control over their lives. They often have to endure rejection from their family and friends, the loss of their jobs and even their homes. The treatment of HIV—especially if it is already in the AIDS stage—can be very costly, which adds to their sense of disaster. HIV infected people need friends who are not afraid to come around them and who turn their attention away from death towards life and living with AIDS.

⁴The WHO report on the prevention and treatment of HIV provides further information on the effective prevention of the disease and gives tips on how to live with it: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hiv-aids>, accessed April 24, 2021.

Its economic impact on society. AIDS, more than any other disease, carries the possibility of a social rift since it affects mostly people who are fertile and are active on the job market. The longer someone has been sick, the bigger the financial burden on their household and the entire society because of their advanced incapacitation. The loss of personal income is coupled with tax losses for the state, in addition to the regular medical expenses that burden both the individual and society. A lot of money is spent on medication. The patient might have to sell their family assets. In any case, the death of an adult imposes major changes on the structure of a family and society. By 2015 the number of children who lost at least one (or both) parent due to AIDS rose to 25 million. Every 15 seconds a child loses a parent because of the disease.⁵ AIDS affects even the generation of the grandparents, who either have to undertake the responsibility to raise the children or take care of the sick relative. According to UNAIDS, in 2015 between USD 22 to 24 billion was spent on medical drugs that inhibit the development of HIV.⁶ Other organizations estimate the amount spent on the treatment of HIV to be around USD 31 billion per year.⁷ It is obvious that AIDS poses a serious economic burden on society as the consequence of a careless sexual experience that was considered to be a private matter.

How can HIV be contracted?

From the very day that someone got infected with the virus, they can pass it to others, albeit not during any ordinary, everyday interaction. Apart from those rare exceptions when nursing mothers pass HIV to their infants through breastfeeding, only three bodily fluids can have a high enough concentration of the virus to transfer the infection to another person. These three bodily fluids are blood, sperm (including the pre-ejaculate fluid) and the vaginal discharge. Any activity through which one of the above discharges or liquids could be passed on to another person's bloodstream or can come into contact with their mucous membrane (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth, urethra, vagina or anus), it may result in an infection. In rare cases, saliva may contain a viral concentration that can cause an infection.

The sexual path. HIV can be sexually transmitted to any partner whether they are heterosexual or homosexual. The virus can be passed through vaginal, oral or even anal contact. Among these, it is particularly dangerous if the penetration occurs in the rectum where the probability of injury is high. In general, the risk of infection increases if there is greater frequency of intercourse with an infected partner or with a high number of partners. It must be stressed that even a single sexual engagement could result in an HIV infection and the apparent health of the partner does not diminish the threat of transferring the virus. The absence of symptoms does not mean that someone is not infected. Many infected people are unaware of their condition. There are people who know that they are infected, yet they conceal this information in order to establish or maintain a sexual relationship. It means that all kinds of sexual interactions are dangerous, except a mutually exclusive relationship between two parties who know that they are not infected.

The common use of infected needles, and women who give birth or breastfeed their babies. The virus can be transferred during drug use if the needle is used by several people and one of the drug users is HIV positive. It can also be transferred from an infected mother to the baby through breast milk. 25-30 percent of such infants contract HIV. Infection through blood and blood products does not occur anymore because of the very thorough screening process.

⁵See <https://aidsorphan.net/learn/#hiv-aids>, accessed April 24, 2021.

⁶See <https://www.aidsmap.com/news/nov-2009/global-cost-hiv-treatment-and-prevention-could-reach-35-billion-2031>, accessed April 24, 2021.

⁷See <https://www.aidsmap.com/news/nov-2009/global-cost-hiv-treatment-and-prevention-could-reach-35-billion-2031>, accessed April 24, 2021.

Fact #3: There is no intimacy without safety

The two fundamental human needs are safety and freedom. If your safety is in jeopardy, you cannot experience freedom. You are fully free to enjoy sex when you feel safe and secure. This includes both physical, health-related, as well as relational, emotional and psychological security. If your safety is compromised, you will not be able to experience the fullness of freedom in sexuality. Therefore, it's important to experience sex in a safe setting. Your sense of security rests on three pillars: a) protection—when there is no physical threat or danger; b) acceptance—when you know that you are loved and accepted as you are; c) commitment—your partner is committed to you, regardless of your performance. You will be free to fully engage in a relationship and dare to become intimate only when you experience this protection, acceptance and commitment. Intimacy means that you are willing to express and be who you really are. There is no intimacy without a sense of security. Without security, sexuality becomes all about sensuality that is full of physical, emotional and relational pitfalls. This is why it is extremely important for young people to engage sexually only in a safe setting. Of the above mentioned three conditions, let us now consider the importance of physical safety in sex.

It follows from the definition of security that safe sex can exist only in the lasting, mutually exclusive and committed relationship of two uninfected persons, like marriage, which is the only completely safe environment where the risk of infection can be excluded. Unless you are absolutely certain that your partner has no HIV infection, sexual intercourse could even be life-threatening. Good appearance, apparent health and a relatively uneventful sexual past cannot guarantee safety. Unfortunately, not everyone is willing to admit their sexual past, but even full sincerity cannot give an account of the current effects of past experiences. As the former Surgeon General of the United States, C. Everett Koop pointed out, *“When you have sex with someone, you are having sex with everyone they have had sex with for the last 10 years, and everyone they and their partners have had sex with for the last 10 years.”*

Fact #4: The safety provided by condoms is an overestimated “myth”

Some believe that a condom can create a safe physical environment for sexuality by providing a secure protection against sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy, so it is strongly believed that it should be used without fail at all times. It must be examined whether condoms can truly provide protection against STIs.

All manufacturers and research acknowledge that neither condoms nor any other contraceptive methods provide 100% protection against unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections. However, research funded by manufacturers suggests a false and exaggerated image about the reliability of condoms when they claim that it provides 98% protection. The truth is far more subtle and disappointing—condoms provide only 85% of protection against pregnancy and infection⁸. In his book *Contraceptive Technology* with its 20th edition and continuously updated publication, Robert A. Hatcher, MD, MPH, writes that based on his own research 18% of the women who used a condom as a contraceptive got pregnant within one year. Within two years, this figure has risen to 28 percent.⁹

⁸“Condoms: Little-Known Scientific Facts,” <https://www.hli.org/resources/condoms-little-known-scientific-facts/>, accessed January 14, 2016.

⁹The study was conducted with a sample of 40,000 people, in 5 countries, while processing the results of 22 major studies. Robert A. Hatcher, *Contraceptive Technology*, 20th rev. ed. (Dallas: Bridging the Gap Foundation, 2011). See also, <http://www.contraceptive-technology.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/CTFailureTable.pdf>, accessed January 16, 2016). See “Contraceptive Efficacy,” <http://www.contraceptivetechnology.org/latebreakers/contraceptive-efficacy-understanding-user-method-characteristics-play-part/>, accessed April 24, 2021.

The same study concludes that 7.1% of the condoms fall off, tear or ‘fail’ in one way or another. The use of condoms can provide effective protection against infections, but even where it was the most effective it was still far from being fully effective. In the case of gonorrhea, for example, the infection rate was 15 percent in the target group who used no condoms, and with the condom this rate was ‘only’ 8 percent.¹⁰

Being exposed to infections and fatal diseases to such a degree is not considered safe by most people. There is no workplace, free time activity or public transportation vehicle that could operate with even a 5 percent annual risk of accidents.

Moreover, the excessive promotion of condoms has a hidden message to the young people. While the main message is ‘*protect yourself*,’ the side message reads ‘*everybody does it this way, so it’s absolutely normal that you have a condom on you, because it will definitely happen, you can do nothing about it, only use a condom when doing it.*’ It makes young people think that changing partners is perfectly fine and natural, everyone does it this way and there is nothing you can do about sexual urges; we are all subject to our impulses and desires. Condom advertisements do not leave any room for an alternative. But there is a real, functioning and safe solution to experience sexuality.

Fact #5: Self-restraint and fidelity is a real, working and viable solution

Traditional ‘safe sex’ strategies seek to prevent the spread of HIV and STIs by emphasizing the following elements:

- a. limiting the number of partners;
- b. learning about the sexual history and HIV status of a potential partner;
- c. avoiding certain types of sexual intercourse such as anal intercourse that entails the high probability of tissue damage and blood contact;
- d. acknowledgment that condoms can only reduce, but they do not fully eliminate unwanted pregnancies.

Undoubtedly, if these are observed, the risk of infection during sexual intercourse is reduced, but it would be still optimistic to call this “safe” sex. Alongside the four aspects above, let us consider the following:

- a. There are some who have introduced the habit of ‘sequential monogamy,’ which means that they have a sexual relationship only with one person at a time. This is how they seek to limit the risk of HIV or any other sexual infection. However, as discussed earlier, each partner brings into the relationship the previous partners and their previous partners, etc. And even one single sexual intercourse could result in an HIV infection (or any other STI).
- b. At best, it is rather awkward when you need to ask about the former sexual partners of your potential partner, and it’s easy to forget about this topic in the heat of the moment. You can also have a selective memory or consciously want to mislead, especially if someone is very eager to take part in a sexual experience. How safe is sex with someone without any moral character? How can you know whether your partner is lying or not? People without such morals tend to lie, especially about their past sexual experiences.

¹⁰“Condoms: Little-Known Scientific Facts.”

- c. It is obviously advisable to avoid sexual intercourse that can cause bodily harm, but you should also know that HIV can be transmitted during any kind of sexual intercourse.
- d. The most promoted 'safe sex' method is the use of condoms. Yet, its effectiveness is often overvalued.

Truly safe sex can only be enjoyed by those who don't become sexually active until they commit themselves to a permanent, monogamous, mutually faithful and non-infected partner (as in marriage). Any relationship that does not correspond to all these factors cannot be considered to be truly safe, regardless whether you use a condom or not.

The government of Uganda, in face of the widespread AIDS epidemic in their country, has embarked on a special prevention strategy that is totally different from the mainstream propaganda. The strategy was named ABC from the following English acronym.¹¹

- A—'abstinence' or self-restraint. They encourage young people to become sexually active at a later stage and delay sex until they get married since this is the most effective way to avoid HIV. The program teaches them how to wait with sex and how to form new social norms.
- B—'be faithful.' The program teaches people not to engage in casual sex and to remain faithful to their spouses.
- C—'correct and consistent condom use,' which means the correct and consistent use of the condom should they fail in the first two points of the program.

The success of the program was confirmed by the following results: Between 1990 and 2001, the number of AIDS infections in the population decreased from 15 percent to 5 percent. The widespread teaching on abstinence and faithfulness not only saved many individual lives, but it also reversed an economic, demographic and public health tragedy and it transformed Ugandan social standards. Therefore, abstinence and faithfulness must be courageously and responsibly supported as the only real solution that provides real safety. It is obvious that this information comes rather late for many young people. What should you say to them?

Second virginity

This expression might sound strange, but it's a powerful principle. You can start over again. You can choose to start again and wait for sex from now until you get married. This is called second virginity. A later chapter will discuss 28 positive reasons why it is worth waiting for sex until you get married. (See the reading 'Why wait?')

Refraining from sex until marriage is not impossible, strange or unfashionable. It is not about being religious, because it's a matter of health. 'Second virginity' is a logical solution if you want to stay healthy and happy.

Josh McDowell writes: *"You have to consider not only the discipline of sexual education, but also the art of human communication and connection building, too. Man is not merely an animal. You are more than animals who only have bodies and their instincts. You also are a person, a personality. Your 'person' includes your dreams, your values, your opinion, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, your*

¹¹"Abstinence, be faithful, use a condom," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abstinence,_be_faithful,_use_a_condom, accessed January 14, 2016.

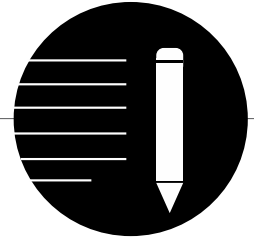
sense of justice, decision-making capacity and your will to survive. But it includes more, even your desire for success. You desire to become fully accomplished; to reach anything you can achieve.”¹²

It must go hand in hand with the respect of your own self and the respect of others. After all, this is the essence of morality, not some strange or outdated thing. Your interests are best served and it is also best if you do to others as you would have them do to you.

Sex creates a bond between two people. It is a promise to the person with whom you are having sex. The unspoken promise is the following: *“I am committed to you.”* Besides the dangers that we wrote about in this reading, there are also emotional pitfalls. Why is that? Because these unspoken promises are very often broken and people get deep wounds. In conclusion, let me share the wise counsel I was given at the age of seventeen. A boy asked me: *“The girl you’re going to marry will probably be very beautiful, won’t she?”* *“Probably, she will,”* I replied, because I didn’t really want to date someone who wasn’t beautiful. He continued by saying: *“That means because of her good looks a lot of guys would want to date her even this weekend. How would you like that guy she is seeing this weekend to relate to her?”* It became very clear where he was going with this. *“Treat the girl you are seeing tonight the same way as you would like your future wife to be treated.”*

¹² Josh McDowell, *Why Wait: What You Need to Know about the Teen Sexuality Crisis* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994).

LESSON PLAN



04.

Motivating goals
Avoid the Traps

Dangerous Embrace

In the Shadow of HIV and STIs

Lesson Plan

Game: I did not know that
I contracted it
There are two types of STIs
A deadly embrace
The greatest risk
The symptoms of infection
Is it safe or not?

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students become familiar with the most important concepts related to HIV, AIDS and STIs; they can explain how HIV and STIs are transferred; they understand the dangers of these infections; they can recognize the general symptoms of HIV and STIs; they know why their own behavior is important in the spread of these diseases.

Basic ideas

1. AIDS is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the HIV virus that is found in bodily fluids.
2. HIV slowly destroys the immune system and thus it predisposes the body to illnesses.
3. There are two primary ways for transmitting HIV and STIs: through contact with blood, or the mucous membrane of an infected person. Infection can be mostly transferred through behaviors and actions that entail the exchange of bodily fluids.
4. You don't have to be afraid of people with HIV; you only have to avoid entering into contact with their bodily fluids.
5. The greatest risk of infection is when someone becomes sexually active at a very young age, in cases where they are sexually active with several partners or they take drugs with an infected needle.

Required items

Sheets of paper about the size of a postcard are handed out to each student.

Background information

There is a lot of misinformation among students about how someone can become infected with sexually transmitted infections or HIV, which causes AIDS. The risk of HIV is often downplayed. Students are unaware that sexual activity which was started at a young age and the frequent exchange of partners can greatly increase the risk of infection. You must reinforce the understanding that these infections can lead to illnesses that can negatively affect the quality and length of their lives, cause cancer or result in infertility. The risk of infection is very real, especially because most infectious people are unaware of their condition and they show no signs or symptoms of the disease.

Beginning of the lesson

Each coin has two inseparable sides. On the one side are your privileges, pleasures and joys. The other side is responsibility and consequences. In order to experience the joy of love and sexuality you must understand the coin's other side, which – if ignored – will rob your joy.

Thieves of Joy

Ask the following questions:

What are the consequences that can rob you of your enjoyment of a sexual relationship?

[Possible answers: unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, emotional and relational pain.]

Game

This game illustrates that any infectious disease can be transmitted without the infected person being aware of their disease. The actual way of transferring an STI is not discussed in this part yet.

Today we will talk about how HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are passed on, but before that let us look at how infectious diseases spread.

[Give each student a sheet of paper the size of a postcard. Before distributing the cards, mark the back of one of the sheets with a little dot. Ask everyone to go around in the room and have their paper signed by 3 to 5 other people. Ask the students to check the back of their sheets and the one who has the dot should raise their hand. Tell this person that they have just contracted measles (do not mention AIDS) and give them a marker. This person should go up to all those students who signed this sheet of paper and tell them: "I'm sorry, I didn't know that I had measles," then mark their cards with the marker. These "marked" students should also read the names on their cards and go up to those people to mark their cards, too. Now ask the students whose cards were marked to stand up.]

Obviously, sexual infections are not transmitted by signing a piece of paper. However, your direct sexual activity with someone can result in your contracting a disease from anyone with whom your partner has been intimate. Additionally, your sexual activity can cause your disease to be passed on to anyone else this person will come into sexual contact with in the future.

Therefore, a change in your sexual behavior can put an end to the widespread problem of sexually transmitted infections.

2. The two types of STIs

5

There are over 30 different sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that can be divided into two categories: viral and bacterial infections. Before you look at these, consider the following general information:

- The pathogens of STIs usually cannot survive outside the human body.
- STIs mostly spread through sexual activity (through contact with bodily fluids or the mucous membrane), or by using an infected needle, and infected mothers can also transmit it to their babies.
- Women are generally more exposed to the dangers of STIs and they are more likely to suffer severe health problems.

A. STIs that are caused by viruses

Viral STIs are the most dangerous types of diseases.

Once the virus enters someone's body it can cause problems for the rest of their life. It is really difficult to get rid of the disease and it can also be transmitted to future partners.

B. STIs that are caused by bacteria

Most STIs that are caused by a bacteria result in severe health problems. These diseases can often be completely eradicated from the body if they are detected at an early stage and if they are treated with antibiotics. However, without treatment they will cause serious problems.

The infected person could be symptom-free, which means the bacteria can destroy the human body, even without the affected person realizing it. By the time the symptoms appear, the body has already suffered damage.

You cannot determine whether your sexual partner is infected or not simply by looking at them. At the same time, an infected person can pass on these diseases to their sex partners, even if there are no symptoms whatsoever of the infection.

Optional
task:

Give a group of students the task of conducting research and report to the others about the different diseases that are listed in the table.

Virus	Bacteria
HIV that causes AIDS	chlamydia
herpes	gonorrhea
genital warts	syphilis
human papilloma virus (HPV) that causes cervical cancer	
Hepatitis C, an infectious liver inflammation	

3. A deadly embrace

10

Assessing what the students know.

Write down all answers, with special attention paid to false statements later.

There is a well-known and widespread STI which affects millions of people and that has lethal consequences. It is HIV.

[Ask students to share everything they know about HIV and AIDS. Record every thought with a few words on the board without pointing out whether they are true or false.]

[Then write the letters of HIV and AIDS vertically on the board and use the letters to explain the meaning of the acronyms.]

H	<i>Human</i> : the virus is transferred from person to person.
I	<i>Immunodeficiency</i> : a drop in the functioning of the human immune system (which is the defensive system of your body against diseases).
V	<i>Virus</i> : a parasite that infects and destroys the human cells.

The meaning of HIV is a virus that causes human immunodeficiency.

A	<i>Acquired</i> : something that you contract or get.
I	<i>Immune(o)</i> : anything that is related to the defense mechanism of the human body against diseases.
D	<i>Deficiency</i> : HIV causes the immune system to not function properly.
S	<i>Syndrome</i> : a group of symptoms, any or all of which may occur when a person suffers from a specific disease.

The meaning of the word AIDS is *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*.

Dynamic infection

In the first stage of the infection (from three weeks to six months following its contraction), the concentration of the virus is high in all bodily fluids. In this stage the virus carrier can very easily transmit the virus. Afterwards, the body begins to produce antibodies. This antibody reflects the response of the body's immune system. The viral count decreases as the amount of antibodies increases. In this stage you are less likely to infect others. The virus eventually defeats the immune system. When this happens, the level of HIV continues to rise. Finally, the body becomes unable to defend itself against even the simplest diseases. How can you make sure that neither you nor your partner are not HIV positive?

(After two negative blood tests within six months you can safely say that you are not infected with HIV, provided you don't engage in any activity in the meantime that carries the risk of infection.)

4. The greatest risk

10

Write the answers
on the board.

- How can you get infected with HIV or any other STI?
- In which bodily fluids can you identify viruses and bacteria that cause HIV and other STIs?

There are two basic ways that HIV can be passed on from one person to another: 1. If the virus comes into contact with blood; 2. If the virus comes into contact with the mucous membrane.

Once the virus enters the bloodstream of a person, this person is infected. This is a threat if you share an infected needle.

Infection can also occur when the virus comes in contact with the mucous membrane of an uninfected person. Mucous membranes are found in the mouth, around the vagina, in the rectum and on the penis.

The most frequent ways of transferring the virus are directly related to activities that involve the exchange of bodily fluids. Such activities may include the following:

- A. different sexual activities.
- B. intravenous drug use.
- C. an infected mother can transfer the virus to her baby during childbirth or lactation.

At the end of the
conversation ask
the following:

- Who do you think is the most exposed to the risk of HIV or STIs?
- There are two activities that significantly increase the risk of STIs.

A. Engaging in sexual activity at a young age

Young women and teenage girls are more susceptible to sexually transmitted infections. There are physiological reasons for this. Columnar epithelial cells (which are particularly susceptible to infections) are present in larger numbers both on the cervix and in the vagina of young women, exposing them to greater dangers. In later stages of life, these cells withdraw to more protected areas in the human body.¹

B. Sexual intercourse with multiple partners

Adolescents tend to be more promiscuous than older generations.

The above two factors make teenagers and young adults very vulnerable to HIV infection and STIs.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/stdfact-teens.htm>.

5. The symptoms of infection

5

Note:

It must be emphasized that you have probably all experienced similar symptoms at some point, but unless you are sexually active, there is nothing to be afraid of.

However, if you have had sexual relationships and experience these symptoms, you should consult with a doctor.

- How do you know that you are infected?

All diseases have symptoms. STIs also have their symptoms, even if some of them remain asymptomatic for a long time. Symptoms of STIs may include the following:

- lesions of the skin in the genital areas such as ulcers, blisters, lumps and rashes;
- frequent urge to urinate;
- irritation, burning, stinging feeling or pain during urinating;
- itching, burning sensation in the genital area;
- pain in the pelvic area (for women);
- secretions from the genitals;
- unpleasant smell of the genitals;
- swollen lymph nodes and fever.

6. Is it safe or not?

5

Group exercise

Ask the following question: “Can you catch HIV if you live in the same household with an infected person?”

Allow time for the students to share their thoughts and then do the following exercise:

Appoint one side of the room as ‘safe’ and the other side as ‘risky.’ Ask everyone to stand in the middle of the room. First explain that you will be listing behaviors that the students must determine whether they are safe or risky to engage in if you want to protect yourselves from HIV. ‘Safe’ means activities when there is no exchange of bodily fluids. Ask them to stand on the side of the room that is in line with their opinion. Reiterate that there is no need to be afraid of people infected with HIV, only contact with their infected bodily fluids should be avoided.

- embracing each other (safe);
- any kind of sexual intercourse (risky);
- eating next to each other (safe);
- sleep in the same apartment (safe);

- shake hands (safe);
- bandage their bleeding wounds (risky);
- sit next to them in school (safe);
- share your pen with them (safe);
- use their toothbrush (risky);
- drink from the same tap (safe);
- clean up their vomit (risky);
- use the toilet after them (safe);
- kissing (risky);
- cough or sneeze in the same room (safe);
- swim in the same pool (safe);
- use the same razor (risky);
- getting bitten by an infected person (risky);
- play on the same soccer team (safe);
- travel together on the bus (safe).

Students may interpret these situations differently. Listen to their reasons why they interpreted the given situation the way they did. For example, a student may think that playing soccer with an infected person is risky because if they get injured their blood could be splashed on other people. Yet, such things happen very rarely, so playing soccer can be considered as a safe activity.

Questions and Answers

Question: *Can mosquitoes and other stinging/biting insects transfer HIV?*

Answer: According to our current knowledge, they cannot.

Question: *What about kissing?*

Answer: It is a risky activity, even though the probability of transmitting the infection with kissing is rather low. However, you should not forget that at the initial stage infectivity is significantly higher than in later stages, which means that injuries in the mouth pose additional risk.

Question: *Can I contract HIV while I'm bathing in a public swimming pool?*

Answer: No, you cannot. In such a large amount of water the virus gets highly diluted, destroyed and it is no longer contagious.

Question: *What happens if a STI is not treated?*

Answer: Various untreated infections can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, cervical cancer, paralysis, heart disease, brain damage, blindness and even death.

STUDENT NOTES



Dangerous Embrace

S_____ T_____ I_____

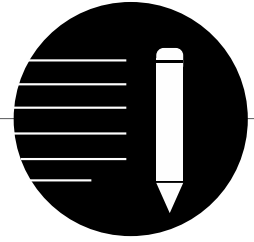
What are the two kinds of STIs?

Virus	Bacteria

H	
I	
V	

A	
I	
D	
S	

LESSON PLAN



05.

Motivating goals
Avoid the Traps

Safe Embrace

Fulfilled Joy

Lesson Plan

Story: summer vacation
by the lake

The purpose and beauty of sex

The fulfilled embrace

Why should you wait

Game: Chocolate

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson, your students learn the purpose and consequences of sex; they understand what 100 percent safe sex is; they realize the environment required for joyful sex; they can define the most important characteristics of real love; they understand why they should wait for sex.

Basic ideas

1. Sex is a wonderful gift which serves as a source of joy, procreation and strengthens the commitment level of a relationship.
2. Sex creates a bond between two people, so it requires a safe environment. Such a safe environment is ensured by real love.
3. Real love is forgiving, it can wait, it wants to give to the other person and it never runs out. Sexuality can be fulfilled in a lifelong, mutually faithful relationship.
4. Real valuable and precious things are worth waiting for.

Required items

A heart shape cut out from red cardboard. Two smaller hearts, also cut out of red paper.

Stapler and white paper strips.

A chocolate bar wrapped in a box.

1. Story: summer vacation by the lake

10

Beginning of the lesson

In today's lesson we will examine what safe sex is like; when it poses the least risk to your lives. We have already seen that sex is good, but it can surely ruin your life.

But before getting into this topic, I would like you to share your dreams. Describe in a few words where you would like to be at the age of 30.

[Once you have written their dreams down on the board, tell the students that you will come back to their dreams later.]

Summer vacation by the lake

The main character of our story is Steve. During the summer holidays, Steve goes to the lake with his friends. The weather is fantastic, the water is pleasant, the beer is flowing and the girls are beautiful. The guys are sitting on the beach and are eying the girls, checking out each one. There are gorgeous girls walking up and down on the beach. Steve spots a beautiful girl who is just coming out of the water. He cannot take his eyes off her. Steve's friends also notice his interest. They start teasing him, because they know that Steve has not slept with a woman.

"Steve, it's really lame that you are still a virgin. Here is your chance. You can prove that you are a real man if you walk up to her and pick her up." Steve gathers all his courage and he walks up to the girl. She is very kind, she shows interest in Steve and they agree to have a date later in the evening at a local bar. Everything goes according to plan. Steve walks her home from their date and she invites him in for a drink. Then they do "it." Let me now draw you a picture of what has just happened. Obviously, I'm not going to draw the actual intercourse, but I will show you how this relationship was birthed. In the drawing, the letter 'B' symbolizes Steve and the letter 'G' symbolizes this 'nice' girl.



The line meant that there is a "relationship" between them, more precisely that they had sex with each other. You could think that there is nothing wrong with it since Steve had fun and the girl also wanted to do it. They merely spent a pleasant evening together.

Dreams.
Write the words
below each
other, which
can be normally
grouped into
three categories:

Family—
child, wife, husband.

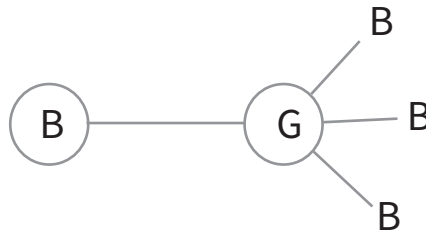
Finances—
money, house, car.

Career—
job, recognition,
success.

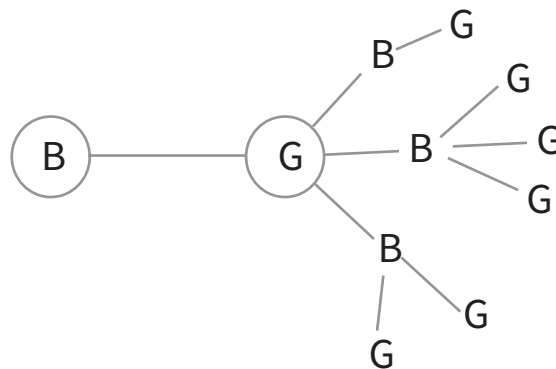
Draw this diagram
on the whiteboard,
and then continue
drawing as you are
telling the story.

However, there is a problem. This girl is a very “agreeable” girl. She has been “agreeable” with many other guys. Just this past year she has already slept with three other guys.

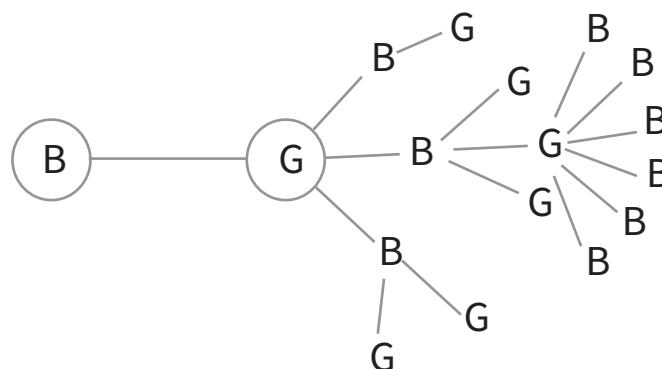
Let me draw you a picture of what happened when this girl was “agreeable” with these boys.



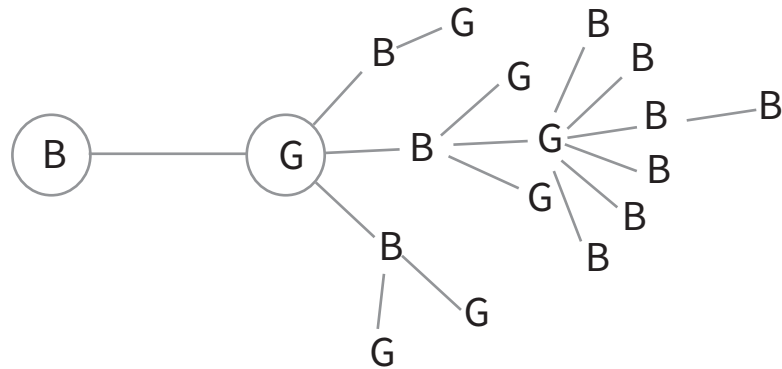
These “boys”—with whom this girl has been intimate in the past—were also with other girls that they were intimate with earlier.



Among these many “agreeable” girls, there was a particularly “agreeable” girl, whose occupation was to be professionally intimate with men, therefore she had many intimate encounters.



However, among the clients of this “professionally agreeable” girl, there was a guy who was bisexual.



Write HIV next to one of the characters.

This drawing could be continued forever. Let’s suppose that one of the participants carries HIV or another STI. What happens then? The infection could reach Steve immediately, even with only one single intimate encounter without him ever realizing it.

Dr. C. Everett Koop, former USA Surgeon General said that *“When you have sex with someone, you are having sex with everyone they have had sex with for the last 10 years, and everyone they and their partners have had sex with for the last 10 years.”*¹

2. The purpose and beauty of sex

5

If possible, bring an artificial flower as an illustration.

Sex is the expression of the love, dedication and trust of a man and a woman for each other. Let me illustrate this with a flower. What do the different parts of the flower represent?

- **The petal** reflects the beauty of the flower. It makes the flower appealing and beautiful. Sex is beautiful, wonderful and it brings joy. One of the purposes of sex is to obtain joy for both parties.
- **The stamen** entails the possibility of fertility and reproduction. Sexuality also involves the creation of new life. This is why one of the natural purposes of sex is procreation, the making of babies.
- **The stem** keeps the flower high, it provides support to ensure its survival and it also carries the nourishment required for life to the flower. It provides stability and a long-lasting connection to life. Without the stem, both the flower and the stamen perish. Sex is the expression of

¹Marc Fisher, “Surgeon General Minces No Words on AIDS,” The Washington Post, February 26, 1988, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1988/02/26/surgeon-general-minces-no-words-on-aids/13b3b578-dca0-43bc-a853-8567f8a73152/>, accessed April 24, 2021.

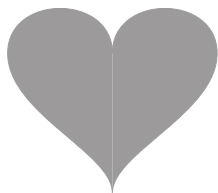
commitment, trust, intimacy and transparency in a relationship based on mutual trust, love and dedication, such as marriage. Without this durable and lasting stem, both the joy provided by sexuality as well as its life-creating potential are threatened. Just as the existence of the flower depends on the stem, sexuality cannot be fulfilled outside a lifelong, mutually loyal, committed and exclusive love relationship.

3. The fulfilled embrace

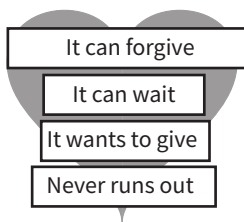
15

Take the heart cut out from the red cardboard and tape it on the board.

Listen to the responses of the students.



Stick the pre-written post-its on the red cardboard heart, one by one.



Just like every flower needs soil to stay alive and get nutrition, sexuality also needs a stable foundation that nourishes and maintains it.

The firm foundation of sex is a covenantal commitment, which develops from real love. In this love-based covenant, you are free to become completely vulnerable, be who you really are and experience real intimacy. Before talking about commitment in a covenant, you should also understand what true love is.

Real Love

It is difficult to define what true love is.

- What would be your definition? Does it have anything to do with affection?

Articulating affectionate (not romantic) love is very difficult, but discerning how affection works can take you one step further in understanding romantic love. Read one of the most ancient, well-known and beautiful paragraphs ever written about love. This is what the Apostle Paul writes in the New Testament.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails”

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Let us consider four important characteristics of love that can be deduced from this quote.

1. **Love can forgive.** Love can apologize and it can forgive.
2. **Love can wait.** Love will wait until the other person also agrees.
3. **Love wants to give.** It does not seek its own benefit, but that of others.
4. **Love never runs out.**

If you choose these values as the foundation of your love, you are likely to have a long-lasting relationship that deeply connects you with the other person.

Committed covenant: marriage

Throughout history the leaders of different nations have used covenants/treaties to ensure the protection and security of their countries. The seal of their covenant was their children who entered into marriage with the children of kings from allied kingdoms. It was the guarantee that during attack from an enemy they would help each other. A source of ancient wisdom expresses it in the following way: *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor”* (Ecclesiastes 4:9). A covenant relationship provides safety and security for both parties.

Marriage is a covenant relationship in which the partners commit to ensure the protection, security, well-being and prosperity of the other person. This covenant enables both parties to trust in each other. Without this trust, the most basic human need for security is damaged. It is only when you feel safe that you are free to be yourself and experience the fullness of your created being. This is how you can give your full self to the other person. You need this freedom that originates from safety to be able to focus on the other person. When this covenantal trust is broken, so is the sense of security and freedom. True love is exclusive and it can only survive if there is trust, commitment and security. Sexuality can only be fulfilled when it is embedded in a covenant-based, mutually loyal and committed relationship such as the safety of marriage.

Sex without a covenant-based relationship

Getting to know each other really well takes time. After a single evening that you spend together you cannot say that you know each other. The basis for getting to know each other is quality time together. Getting to know each other consists of several parts. You have to get to know how the other person thinks, what his values are, his convictions and habits. You want to know his inner being. When sex comes into the picture too early, the hormones begin to rule the relationship so powerfully that they obscure important factors and take over the emotional aspect. Basically, they prevent you from getting to know the other person properly.

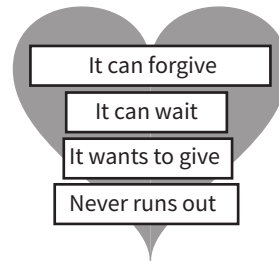
These two paper hearts represent two young people who are just getting to know each other. As they come closer to each other (just like these two hearts), they are also getting to know each other better. The more these two hearts overlap, the more they get to know each other.

It can frequently happen that after a short dating period sex comes into the picture and it ‘seals’ the relationship. Let us symbolize this by stapling the two

Illustration:
Place the two smaller paper hearts on each other to have two thirds of their surface overlap and staple them together by the side.
Then tear it apart so that the staple would remain on one heart and it would cut out a piece from the other one.

hearts together. In most cases, such fast-evolving sexual relationships end in a break-up, just like these paper hearts are now separated. A break-up obviously comes at a cost; you are hurt in the process and leave a piece of your heart with the other person. The more you get involved in such relationships, the more pieces of your heart are taken away. In the end, there is only a small piece left and that is all you can give to the person with whom you want to live for the rest of your life.

1. RELATIONSHIP → 2. LOVE → 3. COVENANT → 4. SEX



4. Why should you wait?

10

There are many reasons why it's worth waiting to become sexually active until you are in the committed relationship of marriage. Below are some of these reasons why it's good to wait to become sexually active:

1. You protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections; you don't have to worry about them and their consequences.
2. There is no unwanted pregnancy, fear of it and its consequences.
3. You are not exposed to the dangers of the different contraceptive methods.
4. You are spared the physical and psychological trauma caused by an abortion.
5. You avoid becoming addicted to sex.
6. You are not forced to marry young.
7. You don't have to worry about fulfilling constant expectations.
8. You are not burdened by comparing your spouse with your previous partners.
9. You can avoid being misled by your emotions.
10. It enhances sexual pleasure within marriage through anticipation.
11. It protects you from getting trapped in a bad relationship.

12. You don't have to undergo the trauma of giving your child up for adoption because you are too young to parent.
13. You can avoid receiving emotional wounds.
14. You can refrain from the pursuit of getting into more and more relationships.
15. It helps you develop a selfless kind of emotional openness to others.
16. It strengthens honest communication in a partnership.
17. It helps you build patience and self-control.
18. It protects the greatest treasure of true love, your virginity.
19. It helps you boost your self-esteem.
20. Sexual self-restraint is one of the challenges of real love.
21. Waiting and restraining yourself can make you a better partner.

5. Game: Chocolate

5

Wrap a piece of chocolate and put it in a nice box as if it were a nice gift. Carry out the following skit in front of the class.

I brought a gift that I want to give to someone, but only to one single person.

[Choose a student of the opposite sex, give them the gift and ask them to unwrap it.]

I hope you love chocolate; I brought it only for you. I would like you to taste it. Is it delicious? Hmm, I thought so.

Oh, I'm terribly sorry, but you know what? I have changed my mind. This gift wasn't for you, after all. I'm really sorry. Would you wrap it back up please?

[Then take the repacked chocolate together with its box and walk up to another student and give them the gift.]

I brought you a present. Only for you. I would like you to take it. It has been chewed on, but it's still delicious and edible.

I think you are starting to understand what I'm getting at. There are some intimate gifts that can be given only once and only to one person. Virginity is one such special gift.

There might be some students in the class who say it's already too late, and wish they'd heard about it earlier. Well, I have good news for you. You can have a second chance. Decide that today is the day of a new beginning. You can't undo what happened in the past, but you can give yourself the chance

for a meaningful and happy relationship. You can decide today that you will not engage in sex again until you get married.

Real love will wait

Sex should go hand in hand with the promise of mutual commitment to each other. Sexuality creates a strong bond between two people. This is why it can blossom and be very fulfilling only in the lifelong commitment of marriage. Sex is so wonderful and amazing that it is worth waiting for it.

If you really want sex to be meaningful for you, commit yourself to abstain from it until marriage regardless of your past experiences.

STUDENT NOTES



Safe Embrace

Summer vacation by the lake

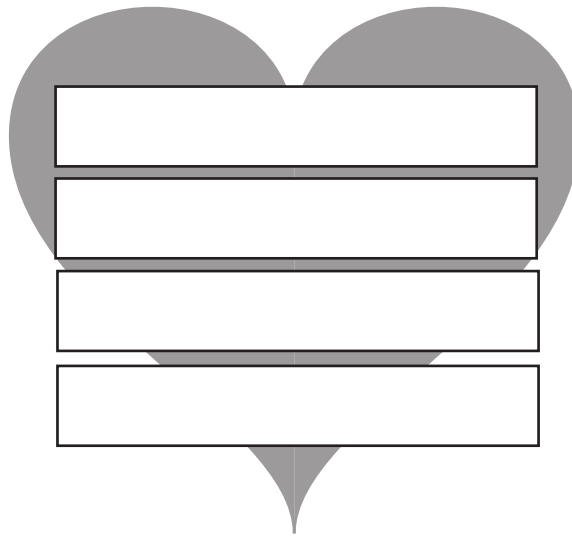
The purpose and beauty of sex

The petal:

The stamen:

The stem:

Real Love



1. RELATIONSHIP → 2. LOVE → 3. COVENANT → 4. SEX

Real love will wait

Sex should go hand in hand with the promise of mutual commitment to each other. Sexuality creates a strong bond between two people. This is why it can blossom and be very fulfilling only in the life-long commitment of marriage. Sex is so wonderful and amazing that it is worth waiting for it.



11.

Motivating Goals Avoid the Traps

Why Wait?

Sex is wonderful! It is one of the most pleasurable experiences of life. Sex is a good thing! It is necessary not just for the preservation of the human race, but it is also a great source of joy for two people who are in love and committed to each other. However, like many other things that contain the potential of pleasure, sex can be the cause of a lot of damage. We cook our food on the fire and warm ourselves beside it, but if we don't stay far enough away from it, we can burn ourselves. How can something that is capable of giving so much pleasure also be capable of causing so much pain? Is there always bad along with the good?

The writer of this lecture is indebted to Josh McDowell and Dick Day, *Why Wait? What You Need to Know About the Teenage Sexuality Crisis* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life, 1987).

Many people today say that we need not take sex too seriously. But sex is a very serious thing. Most people take it too lightly and afterwards find that they must pay an exorbitant price for it. In this article we are going to talk about the reasons why it is worth waiting until marriage to begin sexual relations and why we should consider sexual activity outside of marriage so seriously. Premarital sex is very risky business. The question is, “Is it worth the risk?” We often fail to consider the consequences of sex before marriage. It is easy not to think about the potential results of our actions when we feel so good about things the way they are. The fact is that how we feel about something we choose to do cannot change the consequences of our action. We find, however, that how we feel about what we did can change dramatically when we are forced to face those consequences.

Rules Protect Us

Imagine a swimmer who is well trained, with the benefit of many years of experience who is competing in the Olympics. When the time comes for the race, the swimmer steps up to the starting block and realizes that some of the starting blocks are at the other end, some of the competitors are already in the water, some are starting from the other side of the pool, there are no lane markers, everyone is jumping into the water at different times and there is total chaos. Is this how a race should look? Of course not! Certain requirements must be met in order for a swimming competition to take place. There must be a starting point, a stopwatch and a finish line, to name a few. Without them, there can be no competition.

Rules and regulations can cause negative feelings in many of us. But rules and discipline can have positive effects, too. In a swimming race the rules, the lanes and the start time all ensure that the swimmers have a fair race. A car’s brakes are not there to frustrate the driver, but to stop the car. When many people encounter boundaries or limits they react like a certain fish in an aquarium which, when he saw the world outside, felt like he was missing out on life. He said, “I want to get out. I don’t want to stay here!” and jumped out of his fishbowl and onto the ground. It didn’t take him long to realize that the outside world was not what he thought it would be and life had been better in the aquarium where he had been all along. Now it was too late for him to realize that the aquarium, which appeared to him to be a barrier to his life, served as protection for his life. Rules and limits can be to our advantage and can serve to protect us. This article examines the foundational rule of sex: that we should wait for marriage.

What do we need to be protected from? Is it really so bad outside of the aquarium? What are some of the reasons for sexual abstinence. They can be divided into four groups and, like the four walls of a fortress, they can protect us from outside attack. Each reason is either for our protection or to provide something for us.

First Protective Wall—PHYSICAL REASONS

The fact that we wait for marriage before beginning a sexual relationship protects us in many physical ways.

Physical Reason #1: Protection from hurting our own bodies

Our bodies carry our emotions, our physical make-up and our intellect. We need to take care of our bodies by treating them correctly. Sexual promiscuity destroys our emotions, clouds our understanding and our ability to make good decisions.

Physical Reason #2: Protection from an addiction to premarital sex

Many modern views of man maintain we are nothing more than primates in tennis shoes; beings whose physiology is no different from any other mammal. Science often equates our sexuality with animalistic instincts; this is where the concept of “sex drive” comes in. Sex is seen as a primitive instinct required for survival, just as we need food and water for survival. If human beings are only smart monkeys and our sexuality a primal urge we cannot control, sex could legitimately be considered an instinct. Such a view robs man of the dignity and value of life.

To understand human sexuality and how it differs from the sexuality of other creatures, one must have an understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of man. If man does not have choice, he has no freedom, sexual or otherwise. This perspective assumes that man, like the animals, is directed by his instincts. These instincts need to be satisfied regardless of personal emotion. In this case, our partner simply becomes the object of our desire and a way for us to meet a physical need. If this is true, it means that whoever you are in love with now is nothing more than an object that provides you with the means of personal satisfaction. You, too, are no more than the object of their desire. It is like saying, *“To me you are nothing more than a sandwich; when I get tired of this sandwich I’ll just switch to another (partner).”*

We are far more than primates. We are not merely flesh. We are full of spiritual and emotional needs that cry out to be fulfilled in order for us to live happy and full lives. Often people look for fulfillment in physical relationships. They take the psychological or emotional need they sense within themselves and mistake it for a physical need. Once they proclaim sex as a basic desire or simply a physical need, they allow themselves the freedom to fulfill it, as often and with as many people as they wish; after all it is just a bodily function!

The result is emptiness. They are trying to fill a psychological or emotional vacuum with physical pleasure. Rather than search for the answer to their real needs, they become swallowed up in their sexual pursuits. The sexuality that started out as a desire now becomes the master, demanding to be sated at all costs.

Premarital sex carries with it the wrong internal attitude by suggesting that physical solutions can provide the answers to our psychological and emotional needs. Consider the need to feel secure that some women have. They think that if they sleep with a man they can hold onto him and that he will stay true to them, giving them a sense of security. Unfortunately, the foundation of the relationship is based on the wrong thing. If a man only stays with a woman so he can sleep with her for his own satisfaction, then the whole relationship is based on selfishness. What kind of security can be expected from a situation like that?

Abstinence until marriage protects us from trying to solve our psychological and emotional problems in an erroneous way. Waiting teaches us to face up to these problems and work through them. It helps us to grow deeper in our relationship with our spouse. It teaches us to put sex into its proper place and protects us from being a slave to our own desires. Only within marriage can a sexual relationship strengthen the other person’s dignity and individuality. Waiting for sex until marriage radiates patience, maturity and understanding.

Physical Reason #3: Protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

The philosophy of “if it feels good, do it” isn’t really the best choice because it has some seldom acknowledged, negative consequences. “Free sex” does not just demand a psychological and

emotional price, but a physical one as well. One of the most destructive and permanent consequences of premarital sex is acquiring a sexually transmitted infection (STI). We hear more and more about teens suffering from the effects of these infections. Medical experts never dreamed that sexual freedom would usher in a devastating epidemic of STIs. People are paying the price for abusing their bodies and using sex as a form of entertainment.

The best place for sex is within the intimate commitment of the marriage relationship, an environment in which we can experience true sexual freedom. True sexual freedom is the ability to let down all barriers, to be completely vulnerable to our partner, knowing we can trust them without reservation. It means that a couple has nothing to fear when they participate in sex. This is possible in marriage and only in marriage.

Many people think sexual freedom means sleeping with as many people as possible, as often as they want. They think that choosing with whom and how much is up to the individual. This attitude automatically excludes intimacy and honesty from a relationship. It is impossible for someone to be free and vulnerable around a person they do not know very well, and whose sexual history is an unknown threat. It is possible to physically enjoy the relationship, but to also have it cause emotional bondage internally. Remember what Dr. C. Everett Koop said, *“When you have sex with someone, you are having sex with everyone they have had sex with for the last 10 years, and everyone they and their partners have had sex with for the last 10 years.”*

Everyone who has sexual relationships outside of marriage puts himself or herself in danger of contracting an STI. STIs are becoming an alarming problem the world over. These infections mean great difficulties and large financial burdens on national medical systems. Not long ago, experts knew of only five types of STIs; today there are more than 35. Among these the most dangerous is AIDS. (You will find more information about AIDS in the reading “Sex in the Age of STIs”).

Will there ever be such a thing as safe sex? According to many STI researchers, the use of vaccines against all known STIs is still a long way off. It seems that the best protection against these infections is to return to the old-fashioned safeguard of monogamy.

Second protective wall—EMOTIONAL REASONS

The second wall of our fortress provides protection from the negative emotional ramifications of premarital sex.

Emotional Reason #1: Protection from having our acceptance based on our performance

Many sexually active people suffer from comparison and performance syndrome in relation to how well they perform in bed. Debora Phillips, author of “Sexual Confidence” and director of the Princeton Center for Behavior Therapy in New Jersey, states, *“Due to the instant sex of the sexual revolution, people perform rather than make love. Many women can’t achieve a sense of intimacy and their anxiety about how well they perform blocks their chances for honest arousal.”*¹

When people are put on a performance basis (which means they are accepted only when they act or do something the way another person expects), their value and dignity are trampled on. They are not considered important because of who they are, but rather because of what they do. Unfortunately, this is characteristic of the “free sex” in our society.

¹Debora Phillips, *Sexual Confidence* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).

Without the committed bonds of marriage, sex is inherently a selfish act done for personal gain. As soon as one partner no longer lives up to what the other wants, the relationship is in trouble. The partners are kept in a state of perpetual insecurity living with unspoken fears, like the fear of rejection. They are afraid that they need to perform well so that their partner will accept and love them. Fear of inadequate sexual performance is the major cause of sexual dysfunction. For sex to be healthy there needs to be secure emotional, intellectual and spiritual fellowship in which the partners know that they can make mistakes, that they are not judged on their performance, and where they know that they will always experience acceptance and security. These bonds can be found only within marriage.

Emotional Reason #2: Protection from guilt

Guilt is one consequence of premarital sex that may haunt a person longer than any other. If not dealt with, it can be a great hindrance to psychological growth and emotional well-being. Guilt is an indicator of when we have overstepped the boundary between good and bad.

Emotional Reason #3: Protection from misleading feelings

The most common reason teenagers give for why they slept with someone is the confusion between love and sex. Premarital sex can take a person who may actually have had a legitimate understanding of love and confuse him or her terribly. When sex comes to the forefront of a relationship everything becomes topsy-turvy and the couple's emotions are confused to the point where they even misinterpret their feelings. When we mix sex and love, we have confused the simple concepts of giving and taking. Love always gives and always seeks the best interests of the other person. Premarital sex always seems to take, especially when it occurs among young people.

Each individual has a goal when it comes to having sex before marriage. The problem is, the taking can sometimes look like giving. A younger woman may give a young man what he wants and it looks as though she is giving to him in love, but what she really wants is security and care from the guy. Perhaps she even wants to be popular among her peers. Her giving is actually a form of taking. Her emotions are misleading. Colleen Kelly Mast, the author of the book "Sex Respect," points out that premarital sex can fool us into marrying the wrong person. *"Because sex is so powerful, it creates very strong emotional bonds between partners. These bonds can make us believe the relationship is deeper than it really is, that we know our partners much better than we actually do."*²

Emotional Reason #4: Protection from the hardships of breaking up

Many people have said, *"When I walked away from that relationship, I left a part of myself behind."* Sex creates a bond that remains no matter what the rest of the relationship is like. Even if communication has broken down and emotions are strained, sex forms an almost unexplainable bond between two people. The longer the relationship goes on, the harder it is to break it off.

Emotional Reason #5: Protection of our self-esteem

Without a healthy self-image, people are insecure. Insecure people reach out for some kind of boost or tool in which to find security. Sex is one of the most common tools used. An insecure young man may try to be macho and prove to himself and others how masculine and attractive he is by getting a young woman to go to bed with him. An insecure young woman may either try to hold a young man's attention by giving him sex, thus making her feel secure, or be sexually appealing to a lot of young men, thereby proving to herself she has value in their eyes. Sex should be an activity that

²Colleen Kelly Mast, *Sex Respect: The Option of True Sexual Freedom* (Manhattan, IL: Respect Inc., 1997).

takes place between two people who experience the perfect security of marriage, where there is no need to prove oneself and when the negative consequences of insecurity do not exist.

People place terrific expectations on sex. They think sex in itself can work miracles, giving them a better view of themselves, making them look better in another person's eyes. One of the greatest expectations people have about sex is that of establishing intimacy. Many people have low self-esteem because they feel unable to establish intimacy with someone. They feel unloved and incapable of giving love to anyone. They hope that through physical intimacy they can find emotional intimacy and feel better about themselves as a result. The truth is that when they are alone, after the physical unity, rather than experiencing emotional intimacy, they recognize how empty they are.

Emotional Reason #6: Provides for the richness of maturity

One of the marks of maturity is the ability to delay immediate gratification. Nonetheless, we live in a society that insists on instant pleasure, and which devalues the virtue of abstinence. What does maturity mean? Maturity is a process that needs time, experience, knowledge and wisdom. Maturity does not develop from one moment to the next; it is a process. As we wait, our character develops and we become more mature. The mature person is capable of controlling himself, his passions and desires, and is also capable of building a good, stable marriage and family.

Emotional Reason #7: Provides an affirmation of our dignity

We are valuable. We are not chemical accidents. We are not monkeys who have learned to use tools. Sexuality is a reflection of humanity's dignity, provided that it is carried out at the appropriate time and in the appropriate context (marriage). When we are impatient for sex, when we fill our minds with pornographic images and dwell on them until we are moved to action, when we act immaturely and demand instant gratification, then we are degrading ourselves and the calling we have been given here on earth. If we allow someone to use us for their own desires and satisfaction and we also use others in the same way, then we are saying that the other person is just a sexual piece of meat, whose job is to satisfy our hunger and desire.

Third protective wall—RELATIONAL REASONS

The third group of reasons can be listed as relational reasons.

Relational Reason #1: Protection from communication breakdowns

We all want to love and be loved. Sex is merely the physical expression of that intimate love we seek, not the source of it. This is why premature sex will shortcut a developing relationship. Sex in this case tries to express something that does not yet exist. When we delay physical involvement until its proper time, we allow the relationship to grow and mature. Once the relationship has developed into a lifelong marriage commitment, sex can become meaningful, constructive and beneficial to the relationship. Until that commitment is sealed, however, the couple needs to spend time discovering each other, finding out what it is that makes the other person unique and attractive to them.

Premarital sex short-circuits this process by making it impossible for the couple to concentrate on each other's character, intellect and emotions, because they are too occupied with each other's bodies. As a result, communication breaks down and the sex act takes on primary importance. In one survey of 730 sex therapists and counselors, 85 percent said the number one complaint they hear from their patients is regarding poor or no communication in relationships. This same survey asked

30,000 women about their choice of husbands. Most of them said they had chosen their mates based on sex appeal, but 80% said if they had to do it over again, they would choose a husband based on his ability to communicate. Waiting until marriage to have sex forces a couple to develop the emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of their relationship, giving them time to develop character traits necessary to sustain a successful, long-term, committed relationship.

Relational Reason #2: Protection from developing distrust

Premarital sex makes dating more difficult. During dating, self-control demonstrates and builds trust in the relationship. We illustrate how important another person is to us by the strength of our desire to build trust in the relationship. If building trust is given priority over our own (or our partner's) sexual desires, the relationship deepens. Premarital sex undermines such trust by unveiling our partner's real priorities and proving that they are not in control of their sexual desires, but instead are controlled by them. This awakens the suspicion that in the future, if their desires are awakened by someone else, they will again allow their feelings to dictate what they do. This can cause insecurity to arise between them.

Once a couple begins a physical relationship, it easily becomes the focus of their time together. In this case, it is common for passion to rule the relationship. Focusing on sex can severely reduce the couple's ability to communicate and learn about each other. Their knowledge of one another can become limited to the area of sex. This hinders the couple from developing the relationship in the social, intellectual, emotional and moral areas, even though these are the very areas which would help build a solid foundation for a long-term union.

Relational Reason #3: Protection from an involuntary comparison of former sexual partners

The power of sexual interaction is a force a person may have to deal with for years after the actual sexual contact. Psychologists say that many of their patients are able to remember exact details of sexual experiences that may have happened decades ago, even though they do not even remember the sex partners' names. Scientists have shown that because of the total involvement of mind and body in the sex act, the experience is of such intensity, that it remains in our memory for a long time. When our body produces a lot of adrenalin, and especially when our emotions play an important role, the memory stores the experience in exact detail. Sex is such an experience. All five of the senses are active during sex. Since our memory plays such an important role, we can see that our mind is our most important sex organ.

Since we remember our sexual experiences so clearly, we carry them with us throughout our lives. When you sleep with your spouse, you will bring these memories and images with you from the past. Many men undergo the following experience as written by Josh McDowell in his book "Why Wait?": *"A young man came to him and said, I used to be sexually involved and looked at a lot of pornography, and it has messed up my marriage. I got so hooked on being turned on by those pictures that I still have to have them. When I go to bed with my wife and have sex with her, I can't even have an orgasm without an actual pornographic image next to her head on the pillow."*³

When a partner undergoes comparison with a former experience, they are immediately forced into competing. This leads to insecurity, fear and envy, all of which destroy true sexual intimacy.

³McDowell, *Why Wait?*

Relational Reason #4: Protection from damaged family relationships

People who cannot control themselves before marriage will have a hard time controlling themselves after marriage. Robert J. Levin reports that a study of 100,000 women, proves: *“Premarital sex...does not necessarily lead to extramarital sex, it simply increases the odds that it will.”*⁴ We know that at least 3/4 of all unmarried people today are sexually active. Statistics indicate that more than half of all husbands and more than a third of all wives have been unfaithful at least once.

Why is it that premarital sex increases the odds of extramarital sex? When people are used to using sex as a solution to their problems, they continue this same strategy within marriage. But in marriage they will have to face up to many more problems than they had before: financial, parenting, job worries, etc. Many of these difficulties cannot be solved by sex. While as a teenager sex may have seemed to provide a solution, within marriage sex no longer offers a remedy. Since a person like this solved his problems with substitutes, he is incapable of solving difficulties which occur in the family and must be dealt with head on, therefore the marriage breaks down. On the other hand, the lack of self-control before marriage leads to doing whatever you want within marriage. These two inabilities have led to the current high rate of divorce and disintegration of the family.

Relational Reason #5: Provides for a special relationship found only in marriage

God does not want our wedding night to be just another occasion for sex. This should be a unique and special occasion. Sex in marriage expresses emotional, spiritual and physical unity. Virginity is something that can only be lost once. We cannot change what has happened, however much we would like to. Our virginity has value. When we lose something we know is valuable, we feel regret. There is no chance of regret when our first sexual experience is with the person we will spend our lives with. Sex in marriage is designed to be a loving act of giving and not an act of taking.

Fourth wall of protection—SPIRITUAL REASONS

The fourth wall of our fortress of protection deals primarily with reasons which have to do with how God views this area.

The last group of reasons can be listed as spiritual reasons. Sex is God’s fine art! We should feel very uncomfortable if we treat it as something very common and ordinary. Casual sex, as sung about in today’s music and seen in today’s media, is like using the real Mona Lisa as a birdcage liner. God is pro-sex. He invented it—he thought it up. He created it to be enjoyed by two people in a mutually faithful marriage relationship. He created sex with three purposes: (1) For the physical expression of the intensity of a couple’s love; (2) As a way for a couple to bring pleasure and joy to one another and; (3) To produce children (see the session titled “Safe Embrace”). These purposes also include a limitation—moral laws.

God did not create gravity to punish us, but if I decide to jump off a ten-story building, I will die. It would be unavoidable. You can test the law of gravity, but not without danger. The same is true of God’s moral laws. The restriction of “sex within marriage” is not meant as a punishment or something to keep the fun out of our lives. It is true that if we choose to break the rules, we will suffer the consequences. That is the law of God and nature.

⁴Enid Nemy, “Survey of Women Indicates Striking Shift in Sexual Mores,” The New York Times, August 21, 1975, <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/08/21/archives/survey-of-women-indicates-striking-shift-in-sexual-mores.html>, accessed April 24, 2021.

Spiritual Reason #1: Protection from consequences

The Bible paints a clear portrait of God as being just. As a just God, he must act when his unarguable laws are broken. However, his discipline comes out of his love for us. God created us with value and dignity. He gave us freedom, but also a framework, a value-system within which we are to make our choices. When we break out of this framework (commit sin), there are consequences. He gave us his laws for our protection and provision. Every time we break his law, there is a consequence. When we have sexual relations outside of marriage, we are breaking God's moral law.

Spiritual Reason #2: Provides purity

Sexual purity is also a way to show our respect for others and to confirm their dignity and value as human beings. Patience, the action of waiting for something, builds excitement. The longer we wait for something, the more we value it when we get it. When we remain sexually pure until the commitment of marriage, we save ourselves for the person with whom we will spend the rest of our lives. This purity in the relationship gives it more strength and expresses more love to our partner than anything else we could do. It is like saying, *"I kept myself for you because I loved you even then and I was committed to our relationship even before I knew you."*

Spiritual Reason #3: Provides a stronger love

When two people are able to overcome all the forces that would drive them apart, and devote themselves wholeheartedly to one another throughout life, it is evident that there is something really powerful occurring. This kind of relationship, in effect, goes against all that is selfish and natural to us. There is a bond of love even greater than this—the love Jesus Christ has for people. God wants every person to have a personal relationship with him. Once this relationship begins, he will never remove his love from us, never turn away from us and never leave us. Only our relationship with God can fulfill all of our deepest needs. God totally accepts us and loves us as we are. He makes us capable of loving and accepting others. (We recommend visiting the everystudent.com website.)

The most common counterarguments

How do we know we are compatible unless we sleep together before marriage?

Many people say *"I wouldn't buy a pair of shoes without trying them on; it's the same with sex; I need to try it out before I pay the price (make a commitment)."* It sounds logical. They assume that if their sex life works fine, then the rest will just follow in line. If a couple's sex life is "incompatible," they assume that there is no future to their relationship and they move on to someone else. People with this attitude are trying to do two things. One is they are assuming that compatible sex guarantees a good relationship and the other is that they want to find out whether marriage will work before they get married in order to decrease their chances of divorce. Is this good logic? We think not.

We cannot compare marriage to buying a pair of shoes; rather it is like buying a toothbrush. When someone buys a toothbrush they are not able to try it out and then put it back on the store shelf without buying it. They are also not likely to lend it to someone else. This is a device that is personal and belongs only to us, no one else.

The male and female bodies were created to complement each other. In a biological sense there is no possibility of incompatibility. The question is rather, what if I want sex in one way and my partner in another way? Just like every other part of married life, sex is an area in which we are continuously

growing and developing. For both partners sex is a process of learning, understanding and growing in sensitivity to one another. If you really love your partner, then you will want the best for them. You will learn to express your sexual likes and dislikes to them and listen and accommodate theirs. As a result, the relationship will deepen in intimacy.

Sexual compatibility does not guarantee a happy marriage. Sex alone is not able to maintain a relationship. Great sex does not equal a good relationship, but a bad relationship can soon lead to bad sex. Those who look for sex to solve their problems will soon find that sex does not provide a solution. The problems are still waiting to be dealt with, even after great sex.

The primary criterion of marital compatibility is not sexual compatibility, but emotional, communicational and intellectual compatibility. If a couple has good communication skills and is emotionally compatible, they will be able to overcome any sexual problems they encounter in their marriage.

When people try to benefit from the advantages of marriage without a commitment to marriage, their only motivation can be self-interest. The goal in this kind of relationship is always getting and not giving.

“I’ll go crazy if I don’t sleep with someone!”

Undoubtedly, sex is a pleasurable experience within and outside of marriage. God designed the human body to enjoy sex. If not for the pleasure and excitement of it, people might not do it. Sex is not primarily a physical act, but rather an expression of permanent, committed love. We are not animals that react to their most insistent urges without thinking. We are intelligent beings created in God’s image. We have value, dignity and an important role to play. We are not slaves to our nature. Love is not just a feeling, it is also an act of our will. Love chooses the happiness and well-being of our partner over our own. Since sex is an act of love, our most important sex organ is not below our belt, but in our head. This is the very place where we make our decisions.

By saying that sex is a mere instinct, we deny our ability to make decisions. Sex is not so much an instinct, but rather a desire. We can say “no” to it. We are not at the mercy of our sexual urges. When we fill our heads with wrong thoughts about sex, then our decisions will reflect these thoughts. If we accept that sex is a mere instinct and we fill our thought life with sexual fantasy, then we are boosting our sexual desires to a very high degree. We end up at the mercy of our thoughts.

If sex outside of marriage is natural, then so is AIDS, emotional instability, divorce, devastated self-perception and the use of others for our personal desires. These things go hand-in-hand with sex outside of marriage. If these are unnatural, then so is sex outside of marriage. The things that you desire at the moment may seem good, but their consequences could be quite the contrary.

Momentary feelings disappear with time. They cannot tell you whether the resulting actions would be the best for you or not. The intelligent thinker must consider the consequences of his actions. This is the essence of personal maturity and character.

Our momentary feelings cannot give a reliable picture of the situation. Ernest Hemingway said: *“A moral act is something that you feel good about afterwards, an immoral act is something that you feel bad about afterwards.”*⁵ The question is how long afterwards? An hour? A day? A week? A year? Is an orgasm moral; does it become immoral when you realize that you have caught herpes? Is a boy moral

⁵Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon* (New York: Scribner, 1996).

who feels like a man after having sex, but a girl immoral when she realizes that she is pregnant and decides to have an abortion? Is it moral for a man to rape a woman when it gives him the feeling of dominance and “coolness”? How does the woman feel in this situation? In the same situations one person feels good, the other bad! It is not our feelings that decide what is right and what is wrong!

How can we cope with sexual pressure?

A key to successfully coping with sexual pressure is to determine the principles and standards to which we want to adhere before we get into a relationship. It is also wise to consider how we plan to respond to various situations before they happen.

Principle #1: Set standards beforehand

Remember, the time to look for a fire escape is before the building catches on fire. Set limits for sexual activity. If a person waits to set his or her standards until their hormones are aroused, they will probably go too far. We suggest that teenagers determine ahead of time what they are willing and able to do with a clear conscience, and what line will not be crossed. Young men need to be reminded to treat the young women they are dating the same way they would want some other guy to treat the girl they will someday marry! Once a person has determined what their limits in a relationship are, it is wise to share them with the person they are dating so they will know what the other's standards and expectations are in the relationship.

Principle #2: Be accountable

A friend can be a great help when we are in a relationship with someone. By sharing our standards with a friend and then being accountable to that person, we allow them to see into our relationship and give them the opportunity to help us stay accountable to the standard we have set up for ourselves. This is a valuable way to strengthen our self-discipline and control our sexual desires. Accountability to someone involves sharing honestly and regularly the areas of our dating life where we have difficulty maintaining the standard we have set for ourselves. This kind of accountability is not for the purpose of giving the other person control over us, but is rather based on their acceptance and desire to help us stay true to our own standards.

Some couples choose a more experienced married couple with a good relationship to assume this role. The young man talks to the husband, the young woman to the wife. The more experienced couple not only can help with accountability; they can also be good counselors for the young couple.

Principle #3: Avoid sexually orientated media

Avoid pornography in every form of media that sexually excites and emphasizes premarital sex. What you read, watch and listen to is important; be selective. Don't forget that when an image is impressed on your mind, it stays there.

Principle #4: Choose companions carefully

Whether we like it or not, we become like the people we spend time with, therefore it is very important to have friends who value the things that we value. Seek out others who like the things you like and who spend their time the way you like to spend your time. As your circle of friends develops and grows, you will have greater opportunities and freedom to find the kind of person with whom you would like to develop a long-term relationship.

Principle #5: Seek others' wisdom

A person develops his or her world-view largely as the result of the modeling influence of parents and peers. Even though we eventually become independent adults, we never cease having a need for good advice and counsel from others. It is very important that teenagers have good role models to follow, respect and from to ask advice. These role models should be people of integrity, worthy of respect and love and who accept the teenager.



Motivating Goals Avoid the Traps

1. Collage

Supplies

- Glossy magazines
- Scissors
- 2-4 large cardboard sheets
- Glue
- Markers, crayons and pens

To the teacher

Ask the students in advance to cut out images of men and women, along with words and sentences, and photos of different objects from newspapers that they can use during the lesson.

The guys and the girls should form separate groups. Each group must create a poster on the ideal woman or man. Allow 20 minutes for the groups to finish the task. They should present the posters afterwards. The groups should list what characteristics they considered to be the most important.

2. What is the opposite sex seeking?

For the teacher

Have the guys and the girls form separate groups and discuss the list of statements. Do they consider the different statements to be true or false? Would they add anything?

The whole class should then discuss what the opposite sex must be aware of. It's good to remind them that the purpose of dating is to get to know each other better.

Girls:

1. It is much more exciting for guys if they have to work hard to get a girl's attention. Guys like it when the situation is not obvious or easy, so don't give in too easily.
2. A girl has the right to expect a guy to respect her and express this by asking permission before holding her hand, kissing or hugging her.
3. It is not right for a girl to win over a guy by making him jealous, because this will just cause heartache for everyone.
4. If you love someone, you should also be willing to let them go. If they are truly meant to belong to you they will come back. If they don't return, they were never really yours.
5. Do not make anyone feel like an outsider if there is a third person present in your company. You might be dating, but you don't have to continuously kiss and embrace. Instead, involve this third person in your conversation.
6. No matter how the guy behaves, unless he expressly said that he is committed to you, you should not assume that he is.
7. Girls must behave like a real lady under all circumstances. Act with dignity, don't push yourself on a guy and avoid making a scene.
8. It is worth waiting for the right one; do not settle and give yourself to someone who is not worthy.
9. You must know that you are worthy to be loved.
10. Don't rely on drawing the attention of a guy only with your looks.

Guys:

1. Learn how to be a gentleman (always hold the door for girls, carry their heavy bags and walk on the outside of the sidewalk, etc.).
2. Tell the girl in advance (at least two days earlier) if you want to take her out on a date.
3. Girls will respect guys who can initiate and lead.

4. Be well groomed!
5. Treat the girl as you would expect your buddy to treat your future wife.
6. Girls are not to be used as locker room conquests to get attention from your friends. Do not take advantage of them!
7. Intimacy does not mean sex. Girls love to hear what you think, how you feel. This is intimacy for them.
8. Do not make promises that you cannot keep.
9. Regularly (not just once a month) have conversations about what stage your relationship is in. For example, are you still only friends, is it more than just friends, are you dating, are you a couple, etc.

3. Useful tools

- Plan some activities that will help you to get to know each other better.
- Pay attention to how your date relates to his/her parents, to how they relate to one another and what you like and dislike about their responses. Consider what you would have done differently in their place.
- Ask a close friend or a trusted teacher about the areas where you can develop and how you can communicate better and make friends more easily.
- Form small groups and list the components of a good marriage. What makes a marriage really good?
- For 5 minutes the students should pair up and discuss how they can identify Mr. or Mrs. Right. The whole class will discuss the question together afterwards.
- The guys and girls should form two separate groups. Give both groups the same questions. Once they have had enough time to discuss them, each group should share their conclusions with the other group. (Possible questions: What does it take for a marriage to be good? What are the responsibilities of a husband? What are the responsibilities of a wife? Who should manage the couple's money? Should both of them work? Should they be on the same budget or should they keep their salaries to themselves? Who should have the last word when it comes to making decisions? Why?)

4. Trust

To the teacher

This exercise helps students to have a new experience when it comes to the expression of trust. Pick a student to be blindfolded. Ask this person to fold their arms, stand straight and start leaning backwards until the other student catches them. Make sure to choose a capable student who will let

them lean and actually begin to fall before catching them. The key to this exercise is that the student falls enough before being caught that they have a chance to doubt.

Let everyone in the class have a turn “falling” if they’re willing. If you have enough time the whole class can participate.

Afterwards, discuss what it felt like to lean back and feel uncertain whether anyone will catch you or not.

- How did you feel when they finally caught you?
- What makes you feel blindfolded in a relationship? What makes you uncertain?
- How can you get rid of these feelings?
- What makes you feel safe in a relationship?
- What can you do in order for the other person to feel safe in the relationship? (You can express in words how you feel about them; you can talk about and resolve your conflicts, misunderstandings and when you hurt the other person; you can learn to communicate better, etc.)

Finally, explain that trust grows as you learn to better communicate with one another.

5. Useful tools

- Explain the different levels of communication. (Level 1 – Clichés and small talk: the weather, traffic, when papers are due, etc.; Level 2 – Facts: your age, where you live, how many siblings you have, etc.; Level 3 – A few thoughts and common interests: communication of ideas and opinions; Level 4 – Feelings: opening up fully, sharing your deepest thoughts and secrets). Ask the students the following, “How many friends can you have at the different levels? Why?”
- Take risks in order to deepen your relationship with your best friend. You should try to communicate one level deeper than before.
- Choose what you would like to improve in terms of communication and start working on it.
- List questions that enable you to get to know someone better. When you meet someone for the first time ask these questions.
- In pairs, try to define true friendship in 5 minutes.
- Talk about the meaning of intimacy for 5 minutes in small groups.
- Form two or three groups and list the potential problems that can occur when a couple is only sexually intimate.

6. Small Group Discussion

To the teacher

First, allow some time for the students to silently consider their answers. Then they should formulate their answers as a small group (guys and girls in separate groups). After some discussion,

the small groups should share their results with the whole class. Summarize what has been said. Emphasize that the best environment for sex is a loving marriage relationship that makes both parties happy.

- What is the point of sex?
___ Pleasure ___ reproduction ___ leisure activity
___ it determines whether two people are compatible
___ an action driven by instincts
___ other: _____
- Sex is
___ beautiful ___ disgusting ___ frightening ___ nothing special
___ other: _____
- What is the role of sex in a relationship?
- When is the right time to become sexually involved?
- What is the connection between your sense of security and sex in a relationship?
- Why should you wait for sex until you get married? What are the reasons to wait or not to wait?

7. Useful tools

- Describe in your own words the benefits of not having sex before getting married.
- Let the students decide for themselves what role sex should play in a relationship and decide to live according to it.
- Have them list all the responsibilities that come with sexual intimacy.
- The students should form small groups (guys and girls separately). They should determine the ideal situation for sex (including the levels of emotional maturity, commitment and communication, etc.) The guys and the girls should share their conclusions with each other and discuss the differences.



Motivating Goals Avoid the Traps

Getting High

DRUG-TRAP

The following is an emotional letter from a drug addict to his parents. Although parts of his letter are confusing, the cry of his soul is clear. Understanding him can provide insights for those who want to help young people. Some teens simply need to recognize the dangers of drugs. Others need to escape addiction like this guy. Is his greatest need to find “a power that is stronger” than his addiction, as he suggests at the end of his letter? If so, why has he not yet discovered it within himself? Is this power imparted to a person? Or is it found abiding within?

Dear Mom and Dad,

I’m a drug addict. How come you haven’t noticed? I will run until I see myself in the eyes and hearts of others. I’m asking for help because drugs are of no use anymore, I cannot hide from

myself any longer. I don't want to be alone. The withdrawals aren't worth it anymore, I want to be free from this vicious cycle and live for myself and others.

Help me with your love and trust. Do not solve my problems for me. If you were to do so, I would lose what little self-respect I have left.

Don't undermine my dignity, don't lecture me, don't preach at me, scold me, blame me or argue with me. Maybe it would make you feel better, but it would only deepen the distance between us.

Don't believe any of the promises I make because I cannot keep them anyway. But know that when I say it, I do mean it. Making promises is the only way for me to delay the expected physical and emotional pain of withdrawal.

But if we do agree about something, you must persevere and stick to it.

Don't lose your patience. It would only hurt you and me. Don't drive me crazy with your worries, let me do what I have to do. Don't believe everything I say. Often I don't even know myself what the truth is. Don't baby or overprotect me from the consequences of my actions. And above all, stay grounded in reality, because I have lost that compass. My addiction is becoming worse and worse.

Let's think about and plan the path of healing NOW, let us find a specialist who could help. I need your help, I need help from a doctor, a psychiatrist who can work with me so I can be freed from this power that is much stronger than me.

Your suffering and loving child.

Sadly, drug abuse is a permanent part of the world we live in. Why? Drugs do something that is perceived as positive by many involved in drug use. It is attracting countless numbers of our youth today! Why is it attracting so many? It's because drug use is attractive. The altered state produced by drugs creates a perceived effect that is difficult to compete against. One of the major problems in the modern world resides in the power given to drugs by potential users who become convinced that drugs can achieve whatever they "promise."

Drugs are a substance with a voice filled with deceptively eloquent words that influence in a powerful way. This voice promises much! It promises the feeling of instant happiness, escape from sorrow or difficulty and immediate solutions to multiple problems without the struggle of personal effort. It gives hope that important relationships will improve. Drugs lift you up and make you fly away from this reality into another world—a pseudo world of pretend. Drugs assure that happiness can be experienced independent of our family and friends, regardless of our financial situation or personal health. The life promised by drugs is attractive to young people, even those who are not experiencing difficulty of any kind.

Why, then, should we fight against it? Is there a chance to overcome it? Is there anything we can offer in its place? These are not easy questions, and the answers are even harder.

YTL's foundational premise

Our goal in the YTL program is to deal constructively with the problem of drugs. It is important, however, to share a few of the principles related to drug abuse and drug prevention we view as foundational.

1. It is hopeless and impossible to attempt to try to keep people who want to try drugs or who already regular users of drugs from taking them with a single lesson, reading or YTL class period. There is no talk or lecture—even if it comes from the heart and is given with great conviction and the best of intentions, which would keep a young person already struggling with drugs from taking them.
2. The only thing that could keep anyone from taking drugs is a relationship in which they can experience love, acceptance, attention and care. Young people in a relationship that provides happiness, loving and wise instruction and a worthy life-model will be in little danger of drug abuse. Thus, in this sense, a lesson or reading from this manual will not be of any help on its own. Yet, to the one who is in a position to help, the YTL manual can provide great insights and resources to aid in the process of assisting young people in understanding the dangers of drugs. Determination is not necessarily the best solution of prevention. Love is the solution that offers them the most protection.
3. We acknowledge that drugs hold an attraction for young people. The attraction is contained in the hope of experiencing feelings of instant happiness and joy, without any kind of strain. And, whether we like it or not, that is attractive!
4. Regardless of the above, there remains a significant percentage of youth who have never tried drugs. It is only when a teenager succumbs to curiosity or to peer pressure (the overwhelming desire to belong to the group) that they become willing to try the “stuff.” Information about drugs and about results of drugs can be helpful for them and for those who are not yet addicted. They have to know that the road that starts with happiness and rapture ends in bitterness, agony, pain and, sometimes, in death. In showing the fuller, more complete picture of a life with drugs, it is vital to offer other alternatives to young people.

Due to the reasons cited above, the YTL program does not deal with specific drugs and their effects. Ample information regarding specific drugs can be obtained from a variety of sources, including those listed in this section. Our primary goal is to point out that the real problem lies elsewhere. Young people involved in drugs experience a variety of problems in areas such as: low self-esteem, lack of values, lack of personal character, lack of meaningful and helpful relationships, the disintegration of families, the inability to develop true friends, seeing friendships end and the inability to deal with interpersonal conflicts. If we can help the youth in these areas, then we can take a great step forward in protecting them from drug abuse.

For this reason, the drug prevention material within YTL emphasizes building a healthy self-esteem, learning to communicate and build friendships and the importance of ethics, values and character. The way we approach drug prevention is based on these observations and the convictions and practical solutions that have surfaced from our experience with working with over 100,000 Hungarian youth and millions of youth worldwide. Herein are the strengths, the uniqueness and the limitations of the YTL drug prevention material.

Main reasons—why do they start?

One of the keys to prevention is understanding the reasons why young people begin to experiment with drugs at all. Why do they start? What makes them want to take drugs? If we can grasp the reasons,

we can take preventative measures to protect them and find cures beyond the symptoms of drug abuse. It seems obvious that the reasons for drug abuse are actually the unmet needs of the individual.

Unmet needs cannot be fulfilled or properly responded to through only a lecture. To adequately meet the needs that accompany the reasons for drug abuse we must make some very serious commitments. We must be willing to invest much more of our time in today's youth. This time must be filled with determination, love and patience. Young people need mentors and guides to help point the way and to warn them of dangers on the path of life. This is the only way we can have the hope of offering alternatives that are competitive with the initial, yet wickedly deceptive, satisfaction and happiness provided by drugs.

We can group the reasons for drug abuse into two categories:

- Those that young people recognize and articulate as causes for their own drug use. (What do they say and feel?)
- The underlying reasons for their drug use that are found in their background and their subconscious.

The most common reasons young people gave for initial drug use

Drug abusers do not start out trying to ruin their lives or die; they usually begin because they want to be happy. Most of them started with simple curiosity, they just wanted to try it. Ninety percent of drug users go through the experimental phase, which means they occasionally use drugs.

The other group of reasons (depression and happiness) can be traced back to unfulfilled emotional needs. These needs can also be called “emotional frustrations.” They are difficult to separate from the relational reasons. Dr. Katalin Gaál writes, *“Most often emotional confusion is the root cause for drug abuse. This is primarily seen in an individual being unable to deal with strong feelings. He has not learned how to deal with strong emotions like great joy, great disappointment, hate, revenge, dissatisfaction...”* The study mentioned above determined that 58% of drug abusers suffer from emotional disturbances, 25% are immature, and 17 % suffer from personality disturbances. Therefore, the reasons mentioned by drug abusers as to why they began using drugs are primarily rooted in relational and emotional issues. What are the causes behind these reasons?

There is a certain kind of crisis, which is a natural part of a person being young. *“A young person lives a life of deep searching and questioning. This is a period of time when a person needs guidance because during this period there are likely to be many misunderstandings which come up”* (Kenya Department of Education).¹ It is increasingly difficult for young people, who are often standing alone, to find their footing in an unstructured moral climate. If we fail to give them principles to guide them and role models for them to evaluate and on the basis of which they can develop their own lives, they will experience insecurity and confusion throughout their entire lives. If they are not capable of developing close relationships with others, they will remain lonely.

What is it that makes a person incapable of developing relationships as an adult? Why do so many people battle with their emotions? Why are there so many young people without inner strength who are easy to influence with the destructive behavior of the drug lifestyle? The primary, but not the only area responsible, is the home and family. Does the child experience security, love and acceptance while he is growing up? How do children view and value themselves? What kind of values do children

¹The Ministry of Education in Kenya website: <https://www.education.go.ke/>

have? What does a child think is true about himself? How do children feel about their relationships? Are they confident enough to develop friendships? Can they carry on conversations for the purpose of building relationships?

The circumstance that determines the answers to these very important areas of life is first and foremost the home—our families. The parent–child relationship plays an especially important role in the emotional life and development of the child’s self-perception. If we examine the family life of drug abusers, it is evident that at least 75% have dysfunctional family backgrounds. Outwardly, the family may appear as if everything is fine (with both parents residing in the home); however, the parents may not be fulfilling their roles satisfactorily. When that occurs, what appear to be the ideal surroundings that are necessary for a child’s healthy emotional and social development can turn out, instead, to hinder or even damage it. It is not the state of the family that matters, but the attention given to the child by the family.

Dan Korem, in his book “Streetwise Parents, Foolproof Kids,” writes that the results of a survey conducted jointly by several dozen other organizations concludes that the primary reason kids get involved in drugs is an unstable family background. He writes the following: *“If we would devote at least as much effort to putting our families in order as we do to drug prevention, then our country would unquestionably be on the road to healing. I am not saying that we need to deify the family, but we do need to protect it...that’s why we can consider the best prevention is to teach our children the difference between wrong and right and to help them learn how to handle stressful situations and do everything in our power to strengthen the family.”*

The Bible states that *“a man reaps what he sows.”*² Our society has reflected a negative picture in the area of family and marriage for decades upon decades. Movies, music and the media all portray anti-marriage images. We have new generations of children growing up on their own and being bombarded by this negative depiction of marriage and family. They are lonely, confused and hurting because they have no place to go where they feel cared for and can learn what they need to know about life. There is no firm foundation on which to build their life.

The following poem was written by a heroin addict and reflects a thirst for life which could not be quenched by the drugs that apparently enslaved him. Notice how he feels about himself and the misery he experiences.

Stupid Little Fool

I step out of the house trembling
On the dawn of this virgin day,
I feel like it is over forever
This is not the first time.

I lie to myself again
And I know it very well,
In my pocket is my sooty little teaspoon
I grab onto it like reality.

²Galatians 6:7.

The light of the sun hurts my eyes so
Maybe I don't even have a heart anymore
The pleading voice in my head begins to wail
And of course the answer is: "Yes, yes."

My body trembles
As I drag it across Pest.
The wind tears my skin apart.
People's eyes speak of my death.

It is evening again.
My mouth has gotten so dry.
Here in the warm twilight
I have a god—I have a homeland

In this motionless space
Maybe I am the moon itself
The voices are silent but
I lie exactly like one
Suspended

My cradle trembles as it rocks
For this tomorrow virgin at its dawn
The thin little fetus of yesterday
Has miscarried again.

I need the sunlight so much today
I don't know why
But I'll find out the reason soon
I need the light so much, because
My being—I can feel it—wants it so much
Cuddle me, life, I am begging you
My spirit will soon die within me.

Tibor Pap, 1998

Personal Viewpoint and Experience

It is interesting that he seeks light, yet “sunlight” hurts him so. The light he seeks is totally different than any light he has encountered thus far. If it does not exist he will “soon die.” Light gives security to the one in darkness—relieving fear. It helps point the way to one who is lost. Light reveals where we are and provides a reference point when we are confused.

Jesus once said, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*³ Perhaps, Jesus can help provide the way, the truth and the power for a new life to those who want freedom from the bondage created by drugs. The following is the personal story of Dave Robinson, the co-author of this manual.

“This happened to me. I was in despair, wanting to be free from addictions to marijuana, hash oil and a life quickly entrapped by speed. Darkness enveloped me. I could not see. I could not find the way. The fog of confusion surrounded me. Yet, in making a wager with God to prove Himself to me, I made the commitment to turn to Him to study His words and see whether or not He was ‘alive from the dead’ as others proclaimed He was. This is what I sought for myself—life. I felt dead.

As I turned to Him, His light descended and my fog lifted. Peace came. Fears left. Power was given for me to do the thing I longed to do more than any other thing. What was that? I wanted to do the right thing—that which was good for me, unlike drugs. New power surged inside me. Truth was making a difference. Lies and deceptions lost their grip upon me. The light of a new life dawned upon me.”

Jesus said, he who *“practices the truth,”* who longs for it, will come to the light. Maybe the vacuum the soul feels is caused by doing everything else but coming to the light—coming to Jesus.

Vilmos Prekopa shares the following from his experience. After walking in the darkness of heroin addiction for many years, he was freed and began to walk in the light that the “Stupid Little Fool” so desperately seeks.

A true story—set free from heroin

My name is Vilmos Prekopa.⁴ I was born in 1970. My parents were divorced when I was 4 years old, but later my mother remarried. I am sure that my life story was greatly influenced by these things.

When the teenage years arrived, rebellion hit my life full-force. I rebelled against everything, which was acceptable to the so-called “normal person.” I criticized all older people, including my parents. At sixteen I began to sympathize more and more with the punk-rock culture and later its ideological background. I had a great desire for justice and freedom. I spent more and more time loafing around and met many like-minded teens. I joined a punk gang. At that time this was a pretty serious deal and the police often harrassed us. These many hidden or overt injustices created a strong hate for the police and the establishment among us. Our ideology was that every system is bad, including its rules and personnel. We claimed to be anarchists.

My relationship with my parents disintegrated during this time, as well. All the loafing around and frequent incidents of coming home drunk or half-drunk had its effect. Increasingly, day after day, one or the other of my parents would decide that it would be better if I moved away from home.

³ John 8:12.

⁴For a more detailed story in the author’s own words, see <https://youtu.be/HJkbtmTvKv0>, accessed April 24, 2021.

After finishing trade school I started working, but I was never anywhere very long. I thought that the working class should go ahead and work, but I was born to be free, so I would often go with my friends out to the Square and drink with them instead of going to work. There was a guy in the group who didn't drink, but sniffed glue instead (inhaled glue fumes from a bag). Of course, out of curiosity I also gave it a try, but I didn't get hooked because it smelled too bad and when its effect was over I got really depressed.

Its effect on me was hallucinogenic. But even as a teenager I was very sympathetic towards drugs. I saw a few films that strengthened my sympathy. I liked the film of the musical *Hair* and the way the hippies lived, thought and felt in the film. I still like the film today from an artistic viewpoint, but I can no longer agree with the value system it portrays; but then I was an "alternative thinker." We heard somewhere that one could travel to West Berlin real cheap and that you could get many types of drugs easily and that the young people live just like the hippies in the film. We raced there pretty fast and we got our first gram of hashish from a friend of a friend. The first inhaling came in like a "happy kick." We laughed for about half an hour about everything and we couldn't stop and then like someone had hit us with sledgehammers, we all fell asleep.

The second time wasn't that great; I inhaled too much. In spite of this, I liked it. I felt like I had found what I was looking for: freedom, parties and good company. Drugs brought another level of consciousness and the world offered by drugs was a lot more colorful, interesting, and exciting than reality. Now, in looking back, I see that drugs temporarily filled a void, a need in my soul that was really the need for love and acceptance.

When I was under the influence of one of the drugs, I felt like I became a different person; I didn't have as many inhibitions as I had without drugs. I felt peace and joy when the stuff was in me. But after a while this got to be boring, and hashish or grass could no longer provide the joy that so often came at the beginning. Instead it would cause horrible fears, I was afraid of people, and so often I wouldn't do either drug in the company of others, because totally paranoid feelings would overtake me.

But the lifestyle and the rebellion remained; as a matter of fact, hashish made me even more antisocial and I felt like I saw the world more clearly than those who do not take drugs. We "sowed the seed" wherever we went that hashish and grass are even less dangerous than alcohol and that you can't even get addicted. There was a time when I took a lot of LSD. One cannot get addicted to this drug, because a person goes crazy if he takes too much. But there were a few years when I took it often. I viewed it as having similar effects to hash, only stronger. I partied a lot. I was at almost every big concert and party. I drank a lot then and this is also when I first tried speed. This is really a stimulant as it speeds a person up. I would snort it and when it took effect I immediately speeded up; all my feelings of tiredness went away and I became very communicative. Following my friends' examples, I began to inject speed into my veins, saying that the effect is even more immediate. I felt like I lived more in a short period of time than others. The world really did speed up for me.

I piled on the good feelings drugs offered me. During this time I began to feel that life without drugs would be empty and meaningless, so I pumped more and more, larger and larger doses into my system. This, of course, had a negative effect on my whole being. Speed totally ruined my nervous system and it could no longer provide the pleasure it did at the beginning.

I always rejected the thought of intravenous drug use, especially heroin and opium. But in spite of that, I began to use intravenous opium more and more frequently. This drug really got a hold of me and provided the most pleasant experience up to that point; later heroin took its place. Its effect was

the opposite of speed. When I was “loaded” I felt love and peace instead of being a nervous wreck. But I quickly experienced the suffering of withdrawal, which to that point I had not experienced from any previous drug. I had become an opium addict.

With great difficulty I broke the addiction by getting involved in sports. But this freedom from addiction did not last long, because I soon became acquainted with people who offered me heroin, saying its effect is the same as opium. I tried it and it really was like opium, only better. Of course, withdrawal symptoms came along with it, but these I could not overcome.

I quickly realized that heroin was stronger than me. Those beautiful words, dreams, mottos that I had preached years earlier went up in smoke and I saw how empty those words really were. But it was too late; I was enslaved to heroin. First I sold everything I had; then came the borrowing and the stealing. My friends left me...I could only make friends with other heroin addicts. Morally, I hit bottom; I became a person with no character whatsoever and I was only interested in getting the “stuff” almost to where it didn’t matter at what cost I got it. I faced reality: my life had become a big trash heap.

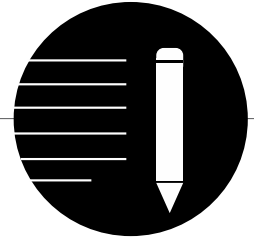
I tried in my own strength to quit, but by the next day I couldn’t stand the unbearable suffering of withdrawal. Withdrawal from heroin is horrible, that’s why most addicts go back to it after a week. I decided to enter a drug rehabilitation program. When I entered I was “high,” but the third day I had some “stuff” brought to me. But then I decided I wouldn’t “shoot up” and took a bunch of sedatives instead. I think the doctors had done everything they could to heal me, but the drug was way more powerful than the doctors’ strength.

I am convinced that drug addiction has a multifaceted cause. With heroin the physical withdrawal symptoms are the worst, but after that part is over the harder part comes: emotional withdrawal and healing. It seemed that everyone had given up on me: parents, girlfriend, buddies. I was full of chains that no one could tear off of me, as they were invisible chains in my heart. I was lonely and terribly lost. But I encountered more and more people who said that God is the one who loves me, even in this state and that Jesus came to set the captives free and that He can do that even today. I received this information quite unbelievably and cynically, at least that is the way it looked on the outside.

But in my heart a wonderful feeling began to come to life and this was hope. After a while I got to the point that I felt—rather, I was convinced—that this Jesus had something for me, too, but I didn’t want to speak about it because of my pride. At the same time I began to drink a lot while I was still at the drug rehab center. Twice the nurses had to put me to bed totally drunk, but by some miracle they did not kick me out. But the fifth week I got drunk again and the doctors became aware of it and I had to leave the hospital. I had no place to go and it was a sure thing that I would fall back into heroin addiction. But then a wonderful thing happened: my uncle took me into his home along with his 5 children. They are Christians and I went with them to church where I gave my life to Jesus.

God’s answer to this was that He filled my heart with His love and joy, put my burned-out, shattered soul back in order, changed my way of thinking and attitude toward life. This was 6 years ago. Since then I’ve gotten married and have a great workplace. My relationships with my parents have been repaired and I have gained peace with myself, as well. I have found the freedom, acceptance and love I was seeking and am striving to pass it on to others. I have been going into high schools for four years to share with classes my experiences. Outside of that I teach the Youth at the Threshold of Life material. I am convinced that drug prevention starts here; drug use is just the fruit of the lack of a value system or a poor self-image. It is a very good thing to live drug-free and not escape from problems.

LESSON PLAN



06.

Motivating Goals
Avoid the Traps

On the Road to Drugs

Lesson Plan

Conversation: Why do people
take drugs?

A letter from a drug addict

Another letter

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students understand why so many people start taking drugs, learn what path leads to drug addiction, become aware of the pains and difficulties caused by relationships, and write a letter to their parents about what they think their parents should know about raising them.

Basic ideas

1. Difficulties at home can sometimes make life unbearable.
2. Sometimes escaping seems to be the only viable way out of difficult situations.
3. Communication is the best solution.

Background information

Before you start your preparation on this topic, consider the following:

- Always tell the entire truth. While peers only talk about the advantages of taking drugs, adults always emphasize prohibition and use deterrents. Provide a real and complete view on the topic. You will be more credible if you mention the positive side of drug use and that it can be a pleasant experience for an hour or two, but afterwards it has terrible consequences.
- Be outspoken, honest and confident when talking about this topic.
- Participants may be more informed on the subject than you are and this is nothing to be ashamed of.
- Reassure the participants that you are happy to discuss this subject whenever they need it.
- Remember that you are a role model for the students. Your behavior and words will always convey a message about your values. Be an example that is worth following that could deter them from bad behaviors.
- Take every opportunity to talk about drugs and educate them about this topic.
- Teach your students to say no to peer pressure.
- Understand what is happening in their lives at school, at home and among their friends.
- Get to know and keep in touch with the parents of the students.
- Don't be afraid to set boundaries and rules. Make these boundaries clear and stick to them.
- Learn to recognize the signs that may indicate drug use or drug possession.
- Do not hesitate or wait if you suspect that a student is taking drugs. Contact a counselor.
- Remember that the power and influence of the parents and the teachers are greater than peer pressure.

1. Conversation: Why do people take drugs?



Beginning of the lesson

Today we are going to talk about drugs. It is a very complex and difficult subject. Drugs are present everywhere—in clubs, house parties, on the streets

Question:
 Allow several participants to answer the question. Write the answers on the whiteboard. Summarize the responses in a few minutes and emphasize the following three points:



and even in certain homes. I would like you to get a realistic picture of drug use. Some of you might have already tried certain drugs. Others could be thinking of trying them. There could be others who are not interested in the topic at all.

Let's gather all the available information to examine this topic from every possible angle. I'm personally not an expert, but I do know that this is an important topic today, therefore we have to deal with it in class.

Why do you think young people use drugs?

1. There are not enough challenges and excitement in their lives.
2. There weren't adults who were willing to listen to them.
3. They were not prepared to handle disappointments in life.

2. A letter from a drug addict

25

Read the letter to the participants.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm a drug addict. How come you haven't noticed? I will run until I see myself in the eyes and hearts of others. I'm asking for help because drugs are of no use anymore; I cannot hide from myself any longer. I don't want to be alone. The withdrawals aren't worth it anymore, I want to be free from this vicious cycle and live for myself and others.

Help me with your love and trust. Do not solve my problems for me. If you were to do so, I would lose what little self-respect I have left.

Don't undermine my dignity, don't lecture me, don't preach at me, scold me, blame me or argue with me. Maybe it would make you feel better, but it would only deepen the distance between us.

Don't believe any of the promises I make because I cannot keep them anyway. But know that when I say it, I do mean it. Making promises is the only way for me to delay the expected physical and emotional pain of withdrawal.

But if we do agree about something, you must persevere and stick to it.

Don't lose your patience. It would only hurt you and me. Don't drive me crazy with your worries, let me do what I have to do. Don't believe everything I say. Often I don't even know myself what the truth is. Don't baby or overprotect me from the consequences of my actions. And above all, stay grounded in reality, because I have lost that compass. My addiction is becoming worse and worse.

Let's think about and plan the path of healing NOW, let us find a specialist who could help. I need your help, I need help from a doctor, a psychiatrist who

Small group discussion.

Have the participants form several small groups. Give a copy of the letter to each group and ask them a couple of these questions.

Give the groups 10 minutes to answer the questions which they will have to present to the rest of the class.

can work with me so I can be freed from this power that is much stronger than me.

Your suffering and loving child.

What was this drug addict trying to say?

“I will run until I see myself in the eyes and hearts of others.”

- What does that mean? Did the author of the letter make the right decision? What would you have done if you were him? Is there any other solution to deal with his situation besides drugs? If so, what are these possible solutions?

“Do not solve my problems for me.”

- What kind of problems could he be talking about? What are the problems young people have that their parents want to solve? What can young people expect from their parents when they have a problem? What should parents do if they really want to help?

“If you solve my problems, I would lose what little self-respect I have left.”

- Is it true? If so, what is the reason for it? Why do you think a parent would do such a thing if they knew that it made you feel like that? What could be other reasons why a parent wants to solve issues that their children are having?

“Don’t undermine my dignity...”

- How can a parent do this? How should a parent behave so they would not undermine the dignity of their children?

“...don’t lecture me, don’t preach at me, scold me, blame me or argue with me.”

- Do you agree with this statement? What should a parent do instead of these things? How can a parent help their children to keep on the right path?

“Don’t drive me crazy with your worries, let me do what I have to do.”

- Do you agree with this statement? What concerns could a parent have? What concerns should a parent show to their children?

“Don’t baby or overprotect me from the consequences of my actions.”

- Do you agree with this statement? In what situations and in what form can parents show overprotection? Why would a parent do something like that? What can a young person do about it? How can you convince your parents that you don’t need this overprotection?

Question:
Ask the following
questions after
the groups give
their reports:



“And above all, stay grounded in reality, because I have lost that compass.”

- What is he trying to say with this sentence? Why would a young person ask the parents to “stay grounded in reality”?
- How typical are the feelings described in this letter? Would an average teenager also feel the same? What can they do about it? What solutions (other than drugs) could be recommended to a young person who is struggling with issues that could lead to drug use?

Among the reasons for drug use, mention the lack of relationships, disappointment in the parents or in adults who are important to the young person. Communication is the best tool that you should turn to instead of drugs, in order to clarify these misunderstandings.

Communication is the best solution!

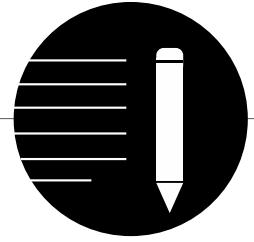
3. Another letter

10

As we discussed the feelings described in this letter, you may have had similar thoughts about your own lives.

The best application of today’s lesson would be for you to write a letter to your parents or another important adult in your life. Think of a person who is interested in what’s going on with you and how you can help them to understand you better. It’s very difficult to share these feelings and thoughts in person, but it’s probably easier to write them down. Do you want your parents or other adults to respect you and know your feelings and thoughts? Then take the time to write down your feelings and thoughts.

LESSON PLAN



07.

Motivating Goals
Avoid the Traps

The Debate on Drugs

Lesson Plan

Reflection
The debate on drugs
Ending the lesson

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students learn to recognize the dangers of drug use and learn to say yes to lifelong commitments at the expense of fleeting pleasures.

Information and statements required for the debate

1. Drugs make you feel really good.
2. It's worth everything (all physical, emotional and psychological consequences) to experience the pleasures only drugs can provide.
3. Drugs help you feel better at parties.
4. Drugs help you concentrate and work better.
5. Drugs help you to get more work done in a given time.
6. Drugs don't have as many negative effects as claimed.
7. Trying drugs once will not make you an addict.
8. Even if you take drugs regularly, you can stop whenever you want.
9. Regular drug use has no physical consequences.
10. Huffing (inhaling volatile vapors from solvents) is a way to take drugs without health consequences.
11. Weed is like drinking a bottle of beer or two.
12. Taking lite drugs does not necessarily lead to the consumption of hard drugs.
13. Only emotionally burdened people shoot heroin.
14. After prolonged use of hard drugs the users experience the following:
 - a. They lose their friends because all they care about is getting high.
 - b. They become alienated from their families because they live in their own world; they steal and cheat to finance their addiction and their families become hopeless.
 - c. They skip school, because they are only interested in drugs.
 - d. No one understands these people, only other addicts, but because their situation is even worse, they can't help them.
 - e. They feel trapped in a deeper and deeper pit that is impossible to climb out of.
 - f. They end up on the street lonely, totally alone with nobody there to care about them or listen to them.

1. Reflection

5

Beginning of the lesson

[Ask the participants whether they delivered the letter they wrote last time. What was the reaction? If the letter was received badly or rejected, help the students learn how to handle their feelings of rejection, disappointment and disillusionment. Encourage them by saying that they have taken the first step, and that's very good. Remind them that a letter won't change everything in one day. Even though there seems to be no effect right now, over time they may experience some changes in how these people communicate and relate to them. A mature, healthy adult can communicate about their difficulties with other people. Congratulate the students for writing and delivering this letter to the recipient. It is an important step in becoming a mature adult. Reassure the students that there are adults who care about them, who are interested in what's happening to them and want to help them become who they need to be. This person wants to be a friend and role model for them and give them good advice and encouragement.]

2. The debate on drugs

35

Group exercise

[Divide the class in half. Allow enough time for both groups to prepare for the debate. One group must collect arguments for drug use while the other half should prepare to argue against drugs. Give each group the list of statements found on the previous page. Encourage the students to collect as much information as they can on their own and prepare charts and graphs that they can use to support their arguments. They should appoint a spokesperson who will give a convincing opening and closing statement.

Write down on the whiteboard the number of statements to be discussed. You will take notes on which group is better at supporting their statements.

As an official start to the exercise, each spokesperson gives their opening address and continues with the discussion of the statements. Read the first statement and ask one group to give their reasoning. Afterwards give the other group a turn. Evaluate which team gave better reasoning. If neither team could convince the other one, it's a "tie" and they should move onto the next statement.

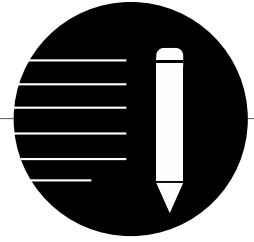
You don't have to discuss every statement during the lesson. Arrange the questions in the order in which you would like to discuss and leave the least important ones to the end.]

3. Ending the lesson

5

[Summarize the arguments and emphasize that drugs offer both positive and negative aspects, but the negative ones dominate. Encourage students to think carefully about this topic and be ready to make a decision. Tell them that now they have all the required information to make the right decision and to live with the consequences as adults. Challenge them to use the information they have received wisely.]

LESSON PLAN



08.

Motivating Goals
Avoid the Traps

The Secret About Drugs

Lesson Plan

Introduction
The story of a boy
Vicious circle
Who will become an addict?

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students will learn to recognize the signs of drug addiction and the high risk involved in occasional drug use.

Supplies

- Small paper circles (used for counting), as many as there are in the class.

1. Introduction

5

Write the answers of the students in two columns on the whiteboard.

It is important to clearly define what is considered to be a drug.

[Ask students to give a definition for drugs and explain their answer. They are likely to list several illegal and legal drugs. They might even argue about alcohol and smoking.]

Clarify that drugs are substances that have an effect on the central nervous system of the body. This is how they change the mood, thinking and perception of the drug user. Any substance with such an effect, regardless of whether legal or not, is a drug.

There are two important conclusions that can be drawn from this definition.

#1: With regard to the lesson, “drugs” also includes those that are taken without medical supervision or the recommendation of a doctor.

#2: What classifies as a drug (or any harmful substance) is never defined by the opinion of politics or other peers, but is based on the reaction of the human body.

2. The story of a boy

10

First, tell them only the ‘yes’ part of the answer. Give time to react and add his explanation.

There is a young 22-year-old guy who spent \$70,000 from his inheritance, as well as stolen money for drugs, in the course of 4 years. He is asked to give advice to some young people who have not yet tried drugs.

[Before sharing his response ask the students to guess his answer.]

His advice was the following:

— *Never touch any drugs at all!*

Then he was asked:

— *If you could go back and start again, would you try drugs in light of where they put you?*

[Once again, listen to the answers from the students first.]

He gave the following answer:

— *Yes, I cannot imagine my life without them.*

Why do you think he said this? Drugs had taken control over his life to such a degree that he is now incapable of living without them.

Different scenes.
Point out that it is hard to identify the exact moment when drugs took control over your life. Students are mistaken to think that they can succeed in keeping their drug-use under control.

One day before the teacher's presentation ask two students to rehearse the following scene and present it to the class.

One of them will represent the drug itself (Mr. Drug), and the other person will come into contact with the drug.

Scene 1 One student is standing; Mr. Drug Man is kneeling in front of him (as if he were proposing to marry). In a very kind and willing tone, Drug Man says the following: *Hi! My name is Mr. Drug. I'm happy to help you with anything you want. Are you a little depressed and feeling disillusioned? There is a solution for it. Take an Ecstasy pill and all your troubles are gone. Things have been rather hectic; would you like to kick back and relax? I've also got a solution for this. Here's just a little weed to calm everything down. And you know what, I will give it to you, FOR FREE! I will serve your every need, just trust me.*

Scene 2 Mr. Drug is now standing next to the student on a chair and he is leaning on the student's shoulder. He is now looking at the student in a calm and malicious way: *"When was it that you last used me? Wasn't it yesterday? Hahaha! And here you are today, needing me again. You can't live without me. You say you have no money? Then steal some money, sell yourself on the street, but hurry up or else I will torture you. Do what I say! Do it NOW!"*

Ask the students to answer the following questions based on the scene(s):

- Where was the turning point when the humble servant became a cruel tyrant?
- How can you stop this from happening?

The danger of becoming a drug addict

Drug addiction has several medical criteria, but here we will be looking at the three characteristics that already signal addiction.

Craving: You think about it more and more, and you constantly desire it.

Withdrawal Symptoms: When the drug is not consumed, it leaves the person with unpleasant physical and psychological symptoms such as sweating, tremors in the hands, anxiety and nervousness.

Level of tolerance: The body gets used to the regularly taken drug, therefore over time larger doses (up to multiple times the former doses) are required to achieve the same effect.

What about smoking and vaping?

Ask the following questions and request specific answers:

1. Is there a craving for vaping or smoking a cigarette? If so, what are the signs?
2. Are there withdrawal symptoms when you stop vaping or smoking? If so, what are these symptoms?
3. Is this level of tolerance applicable for vaping or smoking? If so, what are the signs?

Let the students draw their own conclusions. Even though it is socially approved, vaping and smoking cigarettes are also drugs. They cause an addiction early on and they manifest the typical characteristics of a drug addiction.

Refer to the beginning of the class when you talked about legal drugs and that the definition of a drug and drug addiction is not subject to politics, but to biology.

4. Who will become an addict?

15

Game of interpretation

Give everyone in the class a small paper circle. Mark one of the circles with a small dot in advance. Have the student with the dotted circle stand up. Ask this person the following:

- Did you know that you would have this dotted circle? (No)
- What were the chances of you receiving this dotted circle? (In a class of 30 students it is approximately 3%)
- Did you choose to have the dotted circle? (No)
- What are your chances now of having this dotted circle? (100%! - see below)

If there is one person out of 30 occasional drug users who becomes an addict, it means a 3% risk. This usually seems to be insignificant; this is why people are willing to risk it.

But of all the people experimenting with drugs, no one can tell for certain whether they would become an addict or not. You will know it only afterwards.

Conclusion

Let us recall what you learned today:

1. The use of hazardous substances also includes the consumption of legal substances such as vaping, smoking and alcohol.

2. You cannot be certain that you will not become an addict if you occasionally take drugs.

And finally, remember what the addict said at the beginning of the lesson:
“Never touch any drugs at all!”



IV.

Motivating Goals Avoid the Traps

The Price of a Blessing

The Gift and Cost of the Internet

INTERNET-TRAP

In our globalized world that is driven by technological development, children must grow up in an environment and face challenges that are unprecedented in human history. It means totally new difficulties and challenges, not only for the children, but also for their parents and teachers. Children must be equipped and prepared to tackle all the problems that we are leaving behind as a legacy for them.

Never has a single generation had to grow up in the crowded, yet isolated setting of an information jungle, and mostly without healthy and intact families. They are threatened by global problems, their future is blurred, uncertainty prevails everywhere and fundamental values are absolutely lacking.

They have no support since the adult society is mostly dysfunctional. General forms of support—available for previous generations—are now gone.

One of the sources and drivers of these social trends is the internet, which has become a building block of indispensable systems. It carries tremendous benefits and blessings while it fundamentally rewrites everything that defined human communication and the environment for thousands of years. The internet fundamentally influences human communication, conflict management and connection building habits. Your abilities, emotional intelligence, values, learning habits and even your sexuality are influenced heavily. With a single click you can become ‘friends’ of a previously unknown person who grew up in a completely different culture, yet you can share your life with them almost immediately. We see that the internet destroys the cultural, ethnic, social, gender-based and value-driven boundaries that have separated people until now. This also brings people closer together. Nevertheless, this sudden openness, diversity and opportunity could be a pitfall for someone who is unprepared and/or immature. It can lie about a reality that does not exist (for example, having virtual friends instead of real ones).

The internet basically rewrites what it means to acquire knowledge. For thousands of years to acquire knowledge a person had to dedicate time and become engrossed in books, natural processes and in the human soul, which has mostly been replaced by the unorganized and uncontrolled data mass that is available with a single click. The way in which knowledge is acquired, organized and applied fundamentally influences human development and character. Nicholas Carr writes in his book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*¹ that “The gifts of the internet are very real. But these gifts come with a price.... The internet nourishes the human thought, but it also shapes the way a person thinks.” People increasingly rely on the internet to acquire and recall knowledge and information. The brain adapts to the immediate gratification provided by the internet, which can deprive you from the character-shaping work that acquiring knowledge offered for thousands of years. The problem is not that information is available and can be stored, but that our approach has changed. The internet can become a substitute for real knowledge and it can lure you with the false illusion of actually possessing knowledge. “Computers have changed the way people process information in themselves for good. Information is no longer something you know, but it is something that exists in a remote location as an independent entity. Information that used to be ‘carried’ in the heads no longer requires your body to exist,” a professor of post-modern sciences, Katherine Hayles, writes.²

In 2016, an average Hungarian aged between 15 and 24 spent about 407 minutes, i.e., 6.8 hours (28%) of their day consuming some kind of media, mostly on the internet. Globally, teenagers spent 6.5 hours a day on the internet. 77% of 12-15 year olds go online 47.5 hours per week in the U.K. Young people in that same age bracket dedicated only 40 minutes per day to reading books. Almost without exception they all have profiles on some social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) and on average they have about 500 “friends”—only 10% of whom they actually know in person.³

¹ Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (London: W. W. Norton, 2010).

² H. Katherine Hayles, *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

³ *Hungarian Youth 2012: A Collection of Essays* (Budapest: Kutatópont Research Center, 2013).

The cost of the Internet #1. It can distort human relationships and it can hinder the development of your connection building capabilities

The internet can make human communication superficial and impersonal, it can alienate people from normal (flesh and blood) relationships and thus weaken people's emotional intelligence, conflict management capabilities and healthy tolerance levels. It can obstruct the birth of happy and valuable human relationships, and it can easily lead to depression. In the online world you don't need to learn how to express your feelings face-to-face or learn how to handle conflicts. This is how it hinders the development of skills required to build lasting and meaningful relationships. In the virtual world, body language has a decreasing role; this fine perception that allows you to sense the subtle reactions of the other person remains undeveloped. Virtual connections can be easily ended, just as easily as they were formed. The breaking up of a relationship is much harder in the physical reality; it requires much more courage than a single click on social media. It therefore changes the value of relationships. Young people do not have to struggle with awkward conflicts and they do not need to become vulnerable anymore. They can relieve their external pain and loneliness, but it deprives them of the inner work that would enable a relationship to enter a deeper stage. It is rather easy to hide information in an online, impersonal relationship where you can reveal only what you want. The danger of getting exposed is negligible, unlike in real life, personal relationships where your emotions, anger, joys and sorrows are much harder to hide. It damages the process and the reality of getting to know each other. Students can hide in a closed emotional bubble they consider to be safe and protected.

Similarly, if internet connections are the predominant form of relating to others, it can distort the role of emotions in relationships and hold back the development of emotional intelligence. With the emergence of keeping in touch through social media, 'emotional incontinence' is increasingly more prevalent. It is nothing more than the release of emotions without control and proper timing. Traditional human relationships that are personal and involve the close interaction of people in the same space are being replaced by virtual relationships that make the expression of your current emotions less restrained. An important stage in the development of emotional intelligence is to learn to perceive, understand and control your own emotions and the effects of your communication as you receive feedback from others. This is confirmed by the fact that while people are increasingly connected online and there is no way of avoiding the relational network of others, yet it is the loneliest and most alienated society in history. You hear about the 'atomization,' the breaking up of society, at the same time you get to 'know' more and more people.

People seek intimacy and genuine connections since we were created for that. You need intimate relationships in which you can be real and reveal yourself without the risk of rejection. Intimacy in a relationship is created by commitment. You can only be your true self when you are certain that the other person will accept and love you no matter the circumstances. There is no intimacy without this commitment. However, this intimacy cannot be found in superficial online relationships. For example, 90% of Hungarian teenagers received a message from someone they did not know.⁴

⁴Digital 2019 at hwsu.hu. See also Flora Medve, April 30, 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1114146/hungary-teenagers-messaged-by-strangers-on-social-media/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20majority%20of,someone%20they%20did%20not%20know,> accessed 5-24-21.

The cost of the Internet #2. It leads to low self-esteem and a confusion of values

The internet has undeniably become a value-shaping instrument. Along with values, however, it also shapes self-esteem. Even adults obsessively share pictures and posts on social media that could be humiliating to them.

Many people are compelled to share every moment of their lives. They are driven by a desire for recognition and attention. This is why they share these mostly unimportant, uninteresting and sometimes embarrassing posts.

Social media becomes a place of emotional gratification. Your value system, self-esteem and inner convictions will be shaped by the place where emotional gratification occurs (where people listen to you, where you can share your thoughts unconditionally and without the risk of rejection). This is how it works in everyone's life. You will ask for the advice and opinions of people that you tell your problems to without the risk of being rejected. You were created to be connected. It is in relationships that people are shaped, changed, developed and get hurt, as well as receive healing.

For teenagers, it is particularly important how they relate to their peers. It is through their peers that teenagers become independent from their parents, get their value system shaped and find their place in society. Acceptance or rejection from peers fundamentally determines how teenagers feel. In the past they received feedback on their looks, behavior and performance from people they were directly connected to. At times, it was difficult enough to accept and process this, simply because of the personal and direct nature of the feedback, however, these responses were much more moderate and controlled. Today teenagers can get feedback; from thousands of people about their appearance, performance, feelings, behavior and opinions. The vast majority of this feedback is impersonal and remote. If they share a post that gets many likes, they are satisfied. On the other hand, if they receive less positive feedback than a friend of theirs, it can easily push them into despair and depression. People's appearance, performance, opinions and decisions have become numerically measurable and comparable to that of others. It makes their self-esteem subject to a calculation. The number of likes shows how much more fun, popular, pretty, and smart they are in comparison with their classmates. Or to the contrary, how much uglier, stupid or rejected they are than them.

In the past only school performance was evaluated with grades. Today outward appearance, emotional expressions, opinions and thoughts have also become measurable in numbers. These evaluations are mostly given by people with whom the young people have no daily contact. The number of "likes" they get for their thoughts, fashion, hairstyle, make-up or shared emotions can easily drive them to an endless race and urge to meet the different expectations. The comments on posts and numbers of "likes" do not lie. One person becomes more beautiful, uglier, more popular or unpopular than the others. An evolving personality without a strong and stable self-esteem and values will not be able to adequately rank these feedbacks, evaluations and rejections/confirmations that they receive from online social platforms. Therefore, such feedback can fundamentally influence their self-esteem and value system.

False behavioral and self-esteem patterns transmitted through the internet can often distort the value system and self-esteem of people. Following patterns and role models play a very important role in everyone's life. This is supported by the increasingly uniform and monochrome world where global fashion makes everyone wear the same outfit, makes you mirror the same habits and makes you use the same communication patterns as everyone else. Flocks of people often follow boring patterns

that lack any imagination. This alone would not cause huge damage, but celebrities and influencers elevated by the mass media convey values through their personal example that do not enhance, but actually destroy the building blocks of society.

We no longer respect and follow the examples of self-sacrificing heroes; they have been replaced by idolized, insignificant and fleeting celebrities and influencers. Their behavior, habits, clothing, opinions, style, and value systems set the trends to be followed. Role models presented and deemed to be followed by the adult society form the values and convictions of the emerging generation.

Significant external media pressure can make a still evolving personality want to become someone who they are not, because it sets the media standard regarding which people and what values are to be followed. Anyone considered to be worthy of attention will pass on their values and behavior to society and the younger generation. And because these are not examples of working and studying hard, fighting for successes, being committed to relationships, making sacrifices or being selfless, loyal and honest, there is a significant shortage in these values.

“There has been a gigantic increase in depression and anxiety for American teenagers which began right around between 2011 and 2013. The number of teenage girls out of 100,000 in this country who were admitted to a hospital every year because they cut themselves or otherwise harmed themselves, that number was pretty stable until around 2010-2011, and then it begins going way up (CDC sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). It’s up 62% for older teen girls (age 15 to 19). It’s up 189% for pre-teen girls (girls age 10 to 14). That’s nearly triple. Even more horrifying, we see the same pattern with suicide. The older teen girls (15 to 19 years old), they are up 70% compared to the first decade of this century. The pre-teen girls (10 to 14) who have very low rates to begin with, they are up 151%. And that pattern points to social media. Gen Z, the kids born after 1996 or so, those kids are the first generation in history that got on social media in middle school. How do they spend their time? They come home from school and they are on their devices. A whole generation is more anxious, more fragile and more depressed. They are much less comfortable taking risks. The rates at which they get drivers licenses have been dropping. The number who have ever gone out on a date or had any kind of romantic interaction is dropping rapidly. This is a real change in a generation. And remember, for every one of these, for every hospital admission, there is a family that is traumatized and horrified. ‘My God, what is happening to our kids?’”⁵

You become the person you follow. You follow the person you spend the most time with. If young people spend a third of their day on the internet, they will become whom they follow online.

The cost of the Internet #3. Real sexual intimacy can become compromised

The internet has made all kinds of pornography available to all generations and at any time. For earlier generations buying a Playboy magazine required great effort. Today the most extreme pornography is available with a single click, even for school children, even on the phone in each of their pockets.

Damon Brown, author of *Porn and Pong* writes the following: “It seems so obvious: If we invent a machine, the first thing we are going to do—after making a profit—is use it to watch porn. When the projector was invented roughly a century ago, the first movies were not of damsels in distress tied to train tracks or Charlie Chaplin-style slapsticks; they were stilted porn shorts called stag films. VHS became the dominant standard for VCRs largely because Sony wouldn’t allow pornographers to

⁵ Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Vintage, 2013).

use Betamax; the movie industry followed porn's lead. DVDs, the internet, cell phones. You name it, pornography planted its big flag there first, or at least shortly thereafter.”⁶

The spread of internet pornography has been consistently confirmed by rather frightening statistics. There are many sources that demonstrate that a major part of internet traffic consists of visiting sex-related pages. Most searches are done on this topic and a significant percentage of all content is made up of pornography.⁷

Why is internet pornography so dangerous?

How is internet porn different from pornography previously available in the newspapers and in adult cinemas? 1. It is constantly available without much effort and it can be easily kept in secret; 2. You can select and filter the content and watch it simultaneously on several open tabs; 3. It has an endless novelty effect, which drives you to always want more and more. Watching porn on the internet provides the brain with newer and newer images, thereby continuously releasing newer doses of dopamine. Today a young guy may see more pornographic images in 10 minutes on the internet than his grandfather would have in over 5 lifetimes.

1. Porn conditions sexual behavior

It is extremely easy to condition sexual habits during the critical period of sexual development in all mammals. The type of impulses a brain receives will determine the neural pathways built in it. Early sexual experiences carve sexual habits, desires and expectations in the brain. Exploiting the natural sexual genetic qualities of men, porn teaches men a new kind of sexual behavior. While there is an increasing amount of dopamine⁸ produced in the brain, watching porn online develops the behaviors and practices as follows:

- a. the person watching the porn is alone
- b. they get into the habit of peeking and stalking
- c. easy click and search
- d. there are several tabs open at the same time
- e. a desire for continuous novelty
- f. the need for being shocked and surprised

On the contrary, sexual involvement with another human requires the following:

- a. being together
- b. touching the body of the other person directly
- c. smelling the other person
- d. pheromone is secreted/excreted
- e. there is emotional connection with another real person

⁶Damon Brown, “PCs in Ecstasy: The Evolution of Sex in PC Games,” *Computer Games Magazine*, November 23, 2009. See also, Damon Brown, *Porn & Pong: How Grand Theft Auto, Tomb Raider and Other Sexy Games Changes Our Culture* (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2008).

⁷Since statistics get published and updated frequently, no detailed research results are provided here. Instead, we provide a summary of trends going back several decades that also serve as a forecast for the future.

⁸Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in the brain's reward cycle as well as in the sensation of joy and in the development of addictions.

Many young guys report that their sexual desires and attitudes have considerably shifted towards extreme sex or deviant behavior due to pornography.

2. Porn leads to erection problems and it desensitizes you

The constant availability of new pornographic images can rewrite your natural desires. The brain becomes increasingly insensitive and it yearns for newer and newer dopamine doses that will not be produced if you only look at the previously watched porn scenes. It will require ever wilder and more perverted ones. Pornography is the reason for most erection problems that cannot be traced back to physical causes. As soon as men stop watching porn, their erection is restored within a few months.

3. Porn reprograms the brain; it leads to addiction and it adversely affects your brain performance

Internet pornography reprograms the brain. Watching porn causes physical and measurable changes in the human brain.⁹ High-speed internet pornography makes particularly big changes in the brains of teenagers and young men.¹⁰ “Modern science enabled us to understand that the addiction and dependence underlying pornography is chemically identical to that of heroin addiction.”¹¹ By using the already well-known reward cycle of our brain, high-speed internet porn with its newer and newer images and videos can get you addicted to porn. The process is the following. Experiencing joy makes the brain excrete dopamine. In this exuberating state a protein called DeltaFosB¹² accumulates in the brain that has the following three effects: 1. It turns off control; 2. It demands even more dopamine because it becomes insensitive to the previous levels. Therefore, a higher dose is required to reach the same experience as before; 3. It builds new neural pathways in the brain that will determine how the brain functions.¹³

All addictions are based on the same chemical mechanism and follow a similar process. When the addiction is developed, porn consumers start to exclude everything else from their lives and they show enthusiasm only about pornography. As the new neural paths are formed, there are physical changes in the brain that are coupled with the weakening of the person’s will. The president of the *Italian Society of Andrology and Sexual Medicine*, Dr. Carlo Foresta correctly says that “Online pornography destroys the sexual abilities of young boys.”¹⁴

Internet porn is particularly destructive to the brains and sexuality of teenagers. It is much less probable that a 50-year-old man becomes a porn addict, because his erection can be restored sooner if he stops watching porn compared to a 20-year-old. How is this possible? Most likely the 50-year-old has been watching such content for a much longer time, has a much lower testosterone level and there was less dopamine produced in his body; his vascular system and his body is also 30 years older. The difference comes from the following. A teenager today has his sexuality developed watching

⁹Carla Clark, “*The Truth about Porn Shrinking Your Brain*,” <https://brainblogger.com/2014/06/03/the-truth-about-porn-shrinking-your-brain/m>, accessed July 21, 2016.

¹⁰“Adolescent Brain Meets Highspeed Internet Porn (2010),” <https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/videos/adolescent-brain-meets-highspeed-internet-porn-2013/>, accessed July 21, 2016.

¹¹Jeffrey Satinover, “Jeffrey Satinover Statement to Congress on Pornography,” May 9, 2008, <https://www.scribd.com/document/44914401/Jeffrey-Satinover>, accessed April 24, 2021.

¹²DeltaFosB is a protein also known as the “molecular switch for lasting addiction.” For more information, see <https://www.pnas.org/content/98/20/11042.full>, accessed July 21, 2016.

¹³There are hundreds of scientific research papers that support this view. See the following website: <https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/>, accessed July 21, 2016.

¹⁴Carlo Foresta, “Too Much Internet Porn May Cause Impotence,” <https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/porn-induced-sexual-dysfunctions/experts-who-recognize-porn-induced-sexual-dysfunctions-along-with-relevant-studies/too-much-internet-porn-may-cause-impotence-urology-professor-carlo-foresta-2011/>, accessed April 24, 2021.

porn on high-speed internet. The 50-year-old grew up differently. The young brain conditions and adapts itself to the porn available on the high-speed internet. A man who was an adolescent in the 70s masturbated at the sight of a lady in a swimsuit he saw in a glossy magazine or the classmate who accidentally touched him in school. Today a young guy will see hardcore porn and it will prompt him to masturbate, but he will be alone in front of his screen, he will be peeking and stalking, seeking novelties all the time and there will be several tabs open on his screen that will bombard him with wild content. This is how he becomes sexually wired. Compare it with the 50-year-old man who hardly saw a female breast in his adolescence. Nowadays a teenager encounters multiple amounts of these sexual triggers just with a single click.

There is another factor that contributes to this. The brain of a teenager is completely different from the brain of an adult. The power-balance is somehow tipped in their brains. The brain of a teenager produces much more dopamine than the brain of an adult. It is much more sensitive to dopamine. New and novel things will make the dopamine level skyrocket in young people. Their brain produces more DeltaFosB chemicals that are responsible for building a 'roadmap' in the brain and for conditioning the person sexually. Younger men are much more exposed to addictions for these reasons. Furthermore, the development of their frontal lobes has not been completed yet (this process is reached at the age of 25), and their distress signals are also weaker. The frontal lobe is responsible for controlling impulses and urges and it reminds you of the consequences of improper and dangerous behavior. This is the explanation of why young people are prone to engage in risky activities. A teenage brain is like installing a racecar engine into a rusty old car without brakes. It can have devastating consequences if you continuously stimulate it in the reward cycle with newer and newer doses of dopamine without a fully developed frontal lobe that could provide some control. This cycle is like an explosion; there are many new neural pathways formed, which become cemented afterwards. This is the time when habits, abilities, memories and adaptation practices are formed. The neural paths that are used at this time will become connected. Young people who watch porn online can become conditioned for harsh sex scenes and constant novelty, even before their first kiss.

"It is among teenagers that pornography does the most destruction. The reason for it is that their brain processes information still without the screening and analytical assistance of the frontal lobe."¹⁵

"Pornography is inherently a poison. It destroys the one who is watching it. It destroys the one doing it, together with the spouse and children of both the spectator and the porn film actors. It has a toxic effect on sexuality and relationships. The more you watch it, the more toxic it becomes and the harder porn or at the younger age you watch it, makes you all the more vulnerable."¹⁶

The above parts were written not to induce fear about the use of the internet. You simply need to know about the potential dangers, because this is the only way to protect yourself and your children from its effect. The problem is not with the internet per se. It's not the internet that must be held accountable, but the person who abuses and misuses it. Tools themselves are great, but you can use them for the good and for the bad. The solution is not prohibition.

Our children will grow up in this world and they must learn how to use the internet properly so that it would help and build them, instead of destroying or taking them captive. They need guidance

¹⁵Andre Mayza, "The Optimization of Brain Improvement in GKBI Intelligence," Sudirman, Jakarta (10-9-2009), <https://tipsandtrickhealth.blogspot.com/2009/09/pornography-lower-intelligence.html>, accessed April 24, 2021.

¹⁶MaryAnne Layden, Judith Reisman, Jeffrey Satinover, and James B. Weaver, "Brain Science Behind Pornography Addiction and the Effects of Addiction on Families and Communities," U.S. Senate Hearing, Sub-committee on Science, Technology & Space, November 28, 2004, <http://www.obscuritycrimes.org/Senate-Reisman-Layden-Etc.pdf>, accessed December 8, 2009.

and boundaries to be able to do this. These rules and boundaries provide an opportunity for victory and the joy of freedom, they will guide them about how to prosper as an adult. Children can safely break rules within the family, but as an adult there is a higher price to be paid. Many parents make the mistake of setting rules without having a connection with their children. It's like you want to withdraw money from a bank account where you never made any deposits. First, you need to build trust with your children so you could take money out of it in the right moment. Every rule makes a deduction from this 'trust account,' since it requires trust from the child to accept it. You should openly discuss the rules for using the internet and decide about them together. These boundaries (time limit and content restraint, as well as the use of content filtering programs) provide freedom to act. However, the violation of these rules must have consequences that were agreed upon in advance. The trust of a child is heavily undermined if the parent is unpredictable, impulsive and creates ad hoc rules and punishments out of anger. With such a parent the child never knows where they stand, because the parents themselves have no clear understanding of boundaries.



MOTIVATING GOALS



Part III



Resist the Pressure



Relational Pressures

Pressure from Peers and Society

Pressures from the Media

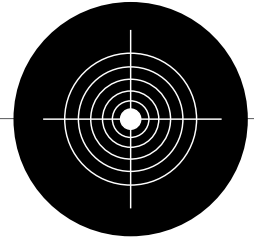
Be Unique

The Art of Saying “No”

I Made a Mistake. How to Restart?

Which Way Are You Going?

Personal Development Plan



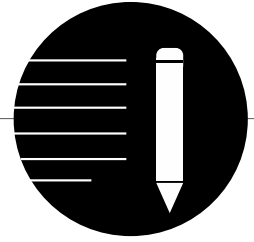
Resist the Pressure

As you work on reaching your goals you will not only encounter traps on the way, but there will also be situations and people who will want to sidetrack you. You will have to stand your ground and fight against pressure from your environment, society, peers and also from your relationships. There will be many loud 'voices' that will want to oppress that clear, gentle and quiet inner voice that you must follow. If you want the next generation to reach their goals, you should draw their attention not only to the traps, but you should also teach them to resist the pressure coming from the shouting voices around them. In this part the topics that will be examined are as follows:

1. **Relational pressures**—how to become free from pressure experienced in your relationships.

2. **Pressure from peers and society**—how to become liberated from the pressure of flawed and dangerous customs that have become the social norm.
3. **Pressures from the media**—how to identify the pressure coming from the different media platforms.
4. **The art of saying “No”**—how to kindly, yet firmly, draw your own boundaries.
5. **Start again**—how you can have a new beginning, even after a bad decision.

LESSON PLAN



09.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

Relational Pressures

Lesson Plan

Introduction
Three different types of
pressure
Infatuation or love?

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students will understand what guys and girls expect from a relationship, what kind of pressures a relationship can come under and also learn the difference between infatuation and love.

1. Introduction

20

Small group discussion.

We have been talking about your goals. If you consider your life goals, most of you must have also thought of how you relate to the opposite sex. Human relationships greatly influence how and whether you reach any of your goals. Today the topic will be relationships between the opposite sex.

Divide the class into groups of 4-5 people of the same sex, boys and girls separately.

Find an answer to the following questions in your groups.

Groups consisting of boys:

- What are boys looking for in a relationship?
- What are girls looking for in a relationship?

Once they are done in their small groups, the boys and the girls should listen to each other's answers.

Groups consisting of girls:

- What are girls looking for in a relationship?
- What are boys looking for in a relationship?

Share your answers with each other. Basically, you have to look for matches between what you wrote down about the opposite sex and what they wrote down about themselves. The team that scores the highest from the list of the group 'wins.'

Group discussion together.

Now that you have clarified the expectations of the opposite sex, discuss two other important questions:

- What are the factors that enable a healthy relationship to develop? What do you need for a healthy relationship?
- How is the relationship affected if you confuse sex with love and become sexually involved too early?

2. Three different types of pressure

10

You have probably already noticed that most movies, novels and dramas revolve around love. Obviously, love is not a simple thing. The following quotations identify three common pressures that relationships come under.

[Ask a girl, then a boy and thirdly, a girl, to again read the sentences for each trap. After each one, the class together should figure out the missing words.]

The Emotional Trap

"I wanted to find acceptance and value through relationships with the boys..."

Words to be substituted:	If you seek to fulfill your emotional needs through relationships, you will probably _____. If you expect your emotional needs to be fulfilled from a relationship, it will be important for you to see what you can _____ and not what you can _____ to the other person.
GET	_____ and jealousy are often present in relationships that are
DISAPPOINTED →	only based on fulfilling your emotional needs.
GET →	
GIVE →	
SELFISHNESS →	The trap of passion
Words to be substituted:	<i>"I was really crazy about that girl... I felt that this was real love, but about a month afterwards we had a huge fight and we broke up... I was totally crushed."</i>
LOVE →	Infatuation is often confused with _____. When you fall in love
EMOTIONS →	with someone, suddenly there are strong _____, but this can
QUICKLY →	_____ end.
TIME →	Only _____ can tell whether there will be a serious relationship from the initial attraction.
	The trap of sex
Words to be substituted:	<i>"I thought that sex was the same as love... so, if we have sex then we are surely in love with each other. I was emotionally involved, but he wasn't. I had to pay a huge price to learn that sex does not necessarily go hand in hand with emotional commitment."</i>
LOVE →	Physical attraction can be easily confused with _____. If
SEXUAL	the relationship is limited only to _____ it will prevent
ENJOYMENT →	the relationship from becoming deeper in the other areas. Relationships that
LAST →	are based exclusively on sex normally don't _____.

3. Infatuation or love?

15



"Couples come together because of their differences, but they stay together because of their similarities."

You are at the age when people tend to fall for someone merely because of their looks, some words they said or because they have an attractive feature. It is not uncommon for a reserved, quiet and serious guy to be crazy about a very lively girl who is always up for some fun. Experience tells us that there is much wisdom in the proverb that goes like this, "couples come together because of their differences, but they stay together because of their similarities."

This test will help you to determine whether your current relationship is truly based on love or whether it is only an infatuation. Fill in the test for

Fill in the
'Infatuation or
Love' test.

yourselves. This is something that we will not discuss together as a group. If you are not dating anyone right now, think of a previous relationship when you fill in the questionnaire. If you haven't had a serious relationship, it could be worthwhile to consider the answers to these questions.

[See the test on the next page. Make enough photocopies and hand out the sheets to the students. Allow at least 5 minutes to complete the test.]

Conclusion

In today's class we discussed what girls and boys want from a relationship. What did we discover?

Then we talked about the three traps that you can fall into during dating. What were these traps?

Infatuation or love?

The following test will help you decide whether you are experiencing real, lasting love or your current relationship is only a temporary, romantic infatuation. Mark which one of two statements better describes your relationship.

	Infatuation	Love
Time	We have been dating for less than a year.	We have been dating for over a year now.
Getting to know each other	I only know how I feel, but I don't know much about my partner.	I know the goals, background, character and likes or dislikes, etc.
Exclusivity	Every now and then I am interested in others.	For some time there has not been anyone else I would be interested in.
Trust	I'm jealous when they spend time with others.	I trust them and I am not jealous.
Priorities	I am interested in how this relationship affects me.	I enjoy that I can focus on the benefit and happiness of the other person.
Problems	There have never been any problems in our relationship.	We have had some problems, but we managed to solve them together.
Time apart	We spend a lot of time together and have never spent longer times away from each other.	We have been away from each other for a longer time, but it only deepened our relationship.
Attraction	Attraction is the most important element of our relationship.	We find each other attractive, but that is not the primary reason why we date.
Each other's company	We only want to spend time alone.	We enjoy being just the two of us, but we also enjoy spending time with others.
Family	My family and my best friends have not met my loved one yet. If they did, they would not be overly impressed.	My family and best friends know my loved one and they are happy about our relationship.
Total:		

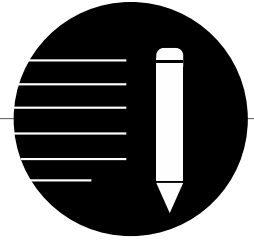
Scores based on the "Love" column:

8-10 – There is a good chance that this is the beginning of REAL LOVE.

5-7 – Anything can come out of it; give it some more time.

0-4 – It is probably only a crush. Be careful.

LESSON PLAN



10.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

Pressure from Peers and Society

Lesson Plan

Introduction: a story
“Four corners” exercise
The sources of pressure
Homework

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students learn to recognize the various forms of peer and societal pressures that want them to turn their back on responsibility and respect, and that urge them to seek instant sexual relationships.

1. Introduction

10

Story

This is a true story.
The names and
some details have
been changed to
preserve privacy.

Last time we heard the story of *The Hawk and the Khan* and learned how important it is to listen to the voices of those who can see more clearly the issues we face. One way we can do this is by listening to the experience of those who are now a bit older.

So I'd like to begin today by reading you a true story.

Kate and Kevin were 15-years-old and in love. They had not had sex yet, but they were constantly thinking about it. Many of their friends talked about sex and wanted to experience it. Finally, Kevin told Kate that since they loved each other, they should have sex. Kate knew deep in her heart she didn't want to have sex with Kevin, but she couldn't think of a good reason not to, so she said "yes." They made plans for that Friday night after a school sporting event. However, the Tuesday before the game, they both attended a meeting where the speaker said some things Kate had never heard before. She left the meeting thinking, "I am special. God loves me and is concerned about my life and my relationships." That night, Kate decided to remain abstinent until she got married. She told Kevin the plans for Friday night were off. Kevin was very disappointed and stopped seeing Kate.

But Kate's best friend, Monica, had a crush on Kevin, and Kevin knew it. Before long Monica and Kevin began seeing each other and soon started having sex. After a while Kevin and Monica broke up. When she saw this, Kate was so glad she had not given in to Kevin's wishes. Both Kevin and Monica went on to have many other sexual partners.

Thirteen years passed. During that time, Kate worried about her friend Monica who continued to put herself at risk with many partners. Today Kate says, "I have dated some wonderful men, but I have kept the promise I made to myself and God, and I'm glad for it. I know that when I marry someday, I will have a precious gift to give to my husband and to myself."

Introduce exercise:

Create five large wedges of equal size – one for each of the four corners, plus one additional wedge which is to be used later in the lesson when the concept of the whole person is pulled into the discussion.

In this story both Kate and Monica faced various kinds of pressures to have sex. The story didn't tell us all the reasons Monica went ahead and had sex with Kevin. But we could probably guess some of the things she might say if she were trying to explain it to one of her friends.

What we are going to do today is look at four different areas where we face pressures to be sexually active before we find a marriage partner. The four areas are the Physical, Mental, Social, and Emotional areas of our lives. Then in later lessons we will discuss practical ways to deal with these pressures. In a minute we are going to divide into four groups, one for each of the categories, and in each group I want you to answer two questions:

1. In your assigned area, what reasons might a sexually active person (such as Monica) give you to explain why he or she chooses to be sexually active? What are they getting out of it?
2. If, like Kevin, you were trying to have sex with someone, how could you put pressure on them in this category?

Try not to overlap into another group's wedge (category). Focus on your own group's category.

2. "Four corners" exercise

10

Start exercise:
If too many students
end up in one
corner, you may
have to re-assign
them to another.

Now we're going to take a look at the four different ways we react to outside influences or situations:

PHYSICAL

MENTAL

SOCIAL

EMOTIONAL

There is a wedge in each corner of the room, representing one of these four aspects. Choose one that you would like to explore and go stand in that corner now.

[When your students are all in one of the corners of the classroom, ask them to work as a group to list three responses to each of the questions above. Circulate among the groups to keep the discussions on track and appoint a student facilitator for each group. If one group needs help, you can show them the following answer examples.]

Here's an example in the Physical realm:

1. Answer: The person may say they are sexually active because they are fulfilling their "natural" desires.
2. Answer: Touch them in areas which make them feel aroused and excited.

In the Mental realm:

1. Answer: They think they will gain a better understanding of who they are in relation to others.
2. Answer: Tell them that it's smart to explore all the possibilities in life.

In the Social realm:

1. Answer: They think they will gain acceptance from their peers.
2. Answer: Tell them that "everyone is doing it."

After 5 minutes, give each group, one at a time, the opportunity to read its list. Ask them to take down their wedge and bring it to the front of the classroom when they read their list. As each group comes to the front, place each wedge side by side to begin to make a circle.

In the Emotional realm:

1. Answer: They think they are “in love.”
2. Answer: Tell them that if they loved you, they would do it.

Sometimes we are influenced in ways we don’t realize. There are many factors which may try to influence you to engage in premarital sexual behavior. The mixed messages you receive from the media, your friends and your culture/community make it hard to be sure what is best.

3. Sources of the pressure

20

It’s most important that students realize that there are several sources of pressure to conform their behavior to the expectations of others.

Let’s explore three pressure areas – culture, peer, and media.

[List the three pressure areas and ask the students to share specific examples of how these pressure areas influence them. Write their responses on the whiteboard.]

Pressure from your culture

The idea that society encourages sexual activity or other harmful behavior may seem unusual. But let’s consider some possible ways that these factors could affect you.

Teenage boys are encouraged to try to become “men” by engaging in sexual activity. Girls then feel pressure from boys to engage in sexual activity; however, in most cultures, girls who engage in sexual activity are usually judged by a different standard than the boys. This may set up a conflict that continues well into marriage.

In addition to a double standard between boys and girls, some adults do not model the behavior they ask of their children. For example, having sexually explicit material (internet without any filter) in one’s home not only allows children and adolescents opportunities to view the material, but it also conveys a message that sex is a commodity and people are objects. Other examples include adult use of illegal drugs or excessive use of alcohol.

Some adults may have “sleep over” friends. It is confusing when adults expect teens to control their sexual feelings, but the adults are not doing so themselves.

Classroom Interaction

Older brothers or sisters who are sexually active may influence a younger sibling to believe “this is what I’m supposed to do.” They may also go to parties where drinking or drugs are used and expected.

The most important part of culture to any individual is one’s family. A successful family shares commitment, love, communication, trust, and responsibility. Life within the family is filled with opportunities to care for, reach out to, and truly help others. Successful families are not formed by immaturity, selfishness, or thoughtlessness, but rather by well-considered plans worthy of dedication and effort. Children and parents are all part of a family, and each must share in the responsibility of achieving a successful family.

[Ask the boys how they would feel about their sisters being sexually pressured. What about their future wife? How would they want her to be treated right now, before they meet her? Encourage them to explain their answers. Reverse the question and ask the girls to respond.]

It is apparent that you would all like to end up in relationships where there is acceptance, commitment, and trust. It is extremely difficult to have that kind of relationship with someone who has previously been in a relationship that resulted in guilt, fear, and distrust. So, doesn’t it make sense to treat each person with the same respect you would like your future husband or wife to be treated?

Pressure from your peers

Peer pressure is something you all live with every day. The most important thing for you to remember is that you choose the peers that you will allow to influence you. You will also determine how much you will allow them to influence you.

Class Exercise

Exercise: Barrier

[Select one student to stand outside the classroom while the remaining students quickly create a maze within the room. They may overturn chairs or desks, use books, wastebaskets, etc. Blindfold the student who stepped outside before bringing him back into the room, and then lead him to the beginning of the maze.]

[Station five students at various positions around the maze. They will be giving the blindfolded student verbal directions to navigate through the maze safely. Tell some of them to give the blindfolded student directions that are helpful, and others to give directions that are wrong. The students who are giving good directions may also reach out and physically help the blindfolded student as he passes by them.]

[Tell the blindfolded student that he must carefully listen to the directions he is receiving and decide who to listen to in order to reach the other end safely.]

As we can see from this experience, some of the directions given by the students were good and some were bad. Likewise, there is negative peer pressure and there is positive peer pressure. Negative peer pressure can influence you to become sexually active by attending certain types of parties, drinking, using illegal drugs, disobeying family rules, and associating with people who encourage sexual activity as a sign of maturity or belonging.

Many teens are not as sexually active as they would lead you to believe. Even if they were, choosing sexual activity because “everyone is doing it” is not a responsible decision.

Don’t think that all peer pressure is inevitably a negative influence.

You can choose a positive peer group that has good life goals and a healthy lifestyle, i.e., friends who are also trying or have made a commitment to developing good character. In addition, peer pressure is not just something that is done to you—it should also be done by you. You have the ability to influence and challenge your friends to be responsible and build character.

Pressure from the media

The media is one of the most powerful sources of how to act. It implies that “everyone is doing it” and becomes the value system for what is accepted or expected. Content creators and advertisements show how “cool” people look and act. Quite often this includes sexual activity outside of marriage and other harmful behaviors. Rarely, if ever, do we see these “cool” people suffer the consequences of real life: loss of reputation, a broken heart, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, or pregnancy. Each one of these consequences is potentially suffocating and yet they never show that side of it on screen.

Class Exercise

“Media Models” Exercise

[Break the students out into groups of five. Have each group select a popular media series or movie and compare the characters and their values with the qualities that might be expected to be found in a caring, nurturing family. Another option is to use social media content or song lyrics and have the students evaluate these against the qualities of a healthy family.]

4. Homework

5

Class Activity

Give the students the following project options for homework. Ask them to choose one of the three pressure points (culture, peer, media) that was just discussed; choose an activity (listed below) and come prepared to share their projects with the class during the next class session.

1. Podcast

Prepare a 4-5 minute podcast to be read to your classmates that makes peer pressure obvious and challenges them to be free to make a difference in the world.

2. Advertisement

Develop an outline for an advertisement. The advertisement exposes the deception in media and is marketed to young people.

3. Travel video

Your group is to design a travel video to attract people to visit a culture that values character, healthy bodies and healthy relationships, responsibility, respect, and moral boundaries, including sexual abstinence till marriage.

Produce a rough outline of the video, including its major ideas. Use your imagination to make it as attractive to tourists as any video you have seen. Prepare to describe it to the rest of your classmates. You will have only five minutes to show your video. Remember, they are used to seeing videos that appeal to immediate gratification of impulses.

Ending the lesson

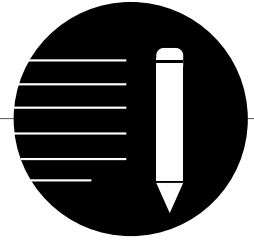
As you think about what we have discussed in this lesson, realize that there will be pressure on you from all sides to forgo caution and go with the flow.

Remember that there is a motive behind anyone pressuring you. What motives do you suspect are behind the messages you see on every screen and every streaming platform? What are the motives behind pressure from your peers and from your culture?

Often others' motives are in their own interests and have no concern for your health and well-being. Perhaps your parents have shielded you from many of these pressures as you grew up. But now you are having to become responsible for yourself and your own health. Keep your eyes open.

In the next lesson we will continue to look at how you can stand strong in the face of these kinds of pressures.

LESSON PLAN



11.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

Pressure from the Media

Lesson Plan

Introduction
The impact of the media
What is important?—
according to media platforms
The trap of porn

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson, your students will understand that the media often exerts immense pressure on teenagers to become sexually active; (especially) girls can fall victim to wanting to look desirable and that is followed inevitably by disappointment if they don't succeed in this; there is a real danger (mostly) for boys to get addicted to pornography.

1. Introduction

10

Response:

1. Low self-esteem:

You want to earn recognition and acceptance through sex.

2. Fling,

infatuation:

They think the relationship is much more serious than in reality.

It has been mentioned several times that sexuality—which is a great thing in itself—could pose many dangers unless you exercise it in the right setting.

List some of these dangers.

We have also spoken about the internal reasons that could make someone engage sexually with their partner, even in spite of their concerns and doubts.

Can you recall these reasons?

However, most often people are drifting towards sexual engagement not for internal, but for external reasons. This is why we consider the media in this lesson, and next time we will look at how you can resist external pressures and stay true to your values.

Start by asking the following questions:

1. What message does the media convey about sex?
2. What can a girl do to be “super hot” and what price does she have to pay for it?
3. How does watching porn shape views and expectations regarding sex?

2. The impact of the media

10

Here are some scenes from an imaginary show. Read each paragraph and determine what kind of false messages it contains, and then correct them to be true.

Scene 1:

Jane had a terrible date. The boy left her when she said that she would sleep with someone no sooner than the third date.

False message: Sex is to be taken lightly, it is not a big deal, and you can do it on a casual basis.

The reality: Even occasional sex can have severe consequences; it can cause emotional problems, infection and even pregnancy.

Scene 2:

Jane goes over to Carl's where there are a bunch of people. They are chatting and watching television. As George flips between channels he accidentally

comes across a porn movie and the boys are glued to the screen. Tammie tells them that if they watch porn they will start seeing women as objects. The boys all say that porn has no effect on their relationships whatsoever.

False message: Pornography has no effect on how boys look at girls.

The reality: Under the influence of porn, boys tend to consider girls as objects.

Scene 3:

George tells the others that he got to know a girl in the gym, but they never got far because he didn't have a condom with him. The boys start teasing him and start listing the many ways he could have convinced her to have sex without a condom.

False message: Sex without a condom is not particularly dangerous or risky.

The reality: Sex without a condom is much more dangerous, but it is also risky with a condom.

Scene 4:

The girls have had enough; they leave the place and go over to Tammie's. They decide to get drunk to help Jane forget about her terrible date. Karen starts boasting that she is now together with Carl. The desperate Jane claims that she could also seduce Carl. She makes a bet that she sleeps with him within a week. Karen is game.

False message: Sex equals love.

The reality: Sex can exist completely free from the emotional, intellectual and social commitment that real love entails. However, in sex without commitment, a high price is to be paid on an emotional, relational, psychological and possibly even physical level.

3. What is important?—according to media platforms

10

Read the list to the side and see how each line is similar to headlines teenagers see in media platforms aimed at them today.

- *"Looking fit and sexy!"*
- *"The sexiest prom dresses."*
- *"Become a cover girl!"*
- *"Are you 14 and still a virgin?"*
- *"Beauty makeovers like the stars!"*

- “From friends to being lovers? How to seduce the guy.”
- “Dreams & Boys”
- “Spring beauty cleansing.”

What messages do these headlines convey to teenagers about sex, love and breaking up?

(The conveyed messages could include the following: Sex is a natural part of the life of teenagers. It does not have any negative consequences. Love happens at first sight, it only involves feelings and it always leads to an enjoyable relationship. Sex and love cannot be separated from each other. Breaking up is only painful in the short run; it does not have any lasting consequence.)

What messages does media for teenagers convey about the role of the body and beauty?

(The more beautiful you are, the more and better sex you will have, the cooler you become, so ultimately you will be a lot happier.)

Role play: divide the class into two mixed groups. Each group should appoint a spokesperson.

The situation: For many years 15-year-old Lisa White lived with her parents in a rural place in Africa, so she had no idea about the world of American (or even European) teenagers. Now that they have moved back to their Western country, she asks for your advice to tell her how she can be happy and satisfied in the new setting. The first group should give her advice that comes from the media platforms for teenagers. The second group should explain to her why she should not listen to media. The groups have three minutes to prepare, then the spokespeople have one minute each to convince Lisa about their view. Attention: regardless of your personal opinion, argue for the assignment of your group.

4. The trap of porn

15

A true story:

Read the story of Richard.

“I’m struggling a lot with pornography. It started when I was in middle school. I used to watch porn rarely, but today I watch it online all the time. Since I know it’s right there, it’s really hard to resist and not to think of continually. When my girlfriend learned about it she got angry with me. She thinks I want her to behave like a porn star now when we are together. She feels that she is no longer a real person to me, only a piece of “meat.” I realize I might look at girls differently because of the porn, and my conscience is nagging me about it... I would like to stop, but I still end up watching it.”

— Richard, age 16

- What effect does porn have on Richard’s life and on his image of girls? *(It permeates every area of his life, and he looks at girls as objects.)*

Discuss:

- How does it affect his relationship with his girlfriend? (*The girl feels that Richard is not paying enough attention to her; he is only projecting his fantasies on her.*)
- What effect do you think pornography has on girls? (*They feel the boys are not paying attention to them and they are not loved for who they are, but they are only used as objects.*)
- Why can't Richard stop watching porn? (*Pornography is addictive, therefore it is not easy to quit.*)

The cycle of developing an addiction

Getting addicted to porn takes place through the so-called reward cycle in the brain.

1. Initially you may start watching porn only occasionally, out of curiosity. The brain is triggered to produce dopamine, which generates a sense of pleasure.
2. In the second stage whatever seemed exciting initially is now becoming less exciting. The brain gets used to the amount of dopamine that is released.
3. In the third stage, as the brain gets used to this amount, you will need wilder scenes and harsher visuals for the produced dopamine to trigger the same level of pleasure and joy. You will need something more exciting and erotic to evoke the same level of excitement as before.
4. In the fourth stage, addiction takes control over your thinking and life because your mind is always obsessed with your next porn watching experience. The ever-increasing dopamine levels contribute to the formation of new neural paths. This is why you need constant visual stimuli.

It is a vicious and endless cycle and addiction gets so embedded in your life that it becomes almost impossible to quit; you will probably need the help of a specialist. Porn addiction can be so destructive that it can cause even a young person to become impotent.

The difference between online sex and real sex

Online sex develops the following behaviors and practices:

- Privacy. Stalking. Clicking and searching across multiple tabs all at once. The urge to always find something new to watch. The need to be shocked and surprised.

Sexual involvement with another human requires the following:

- Physical intimacy. Touching. Smelling. Emotional connection. Conversation.

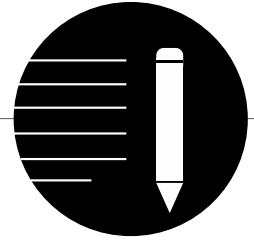
Many young boys report that their sexual desires and attitudes have considerably shifted towards extreme sex or deviant behavior due to watching porn. Sex in a porn movie is not real, because it is just a collection of video clips. It only shows the heights of the most extraordinary and extreme moments that there could be in a sexual relationship.

Homework

The girls should write down the possible effects if fashion influencers are taken seriously by a teenage girl who does not fit in with the image showcased online.

Boys should write down in whose interest it is for young people to have their lives revolve around sex, as implied by the media.

LESSON PLAN



12.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

Be Unique

Lesson Plan

Introduction: Dare to
be unique

Your decisions are
what make you unique

How close is too close?

The 12 points of
sexual freedom

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students understand that they don't have to go with the flow (with the mainstream view, pressures from their peers or the media), which expects them to become sexually active at an early age; they also learn how to resist external and internal pressures that are at work to destroy their uniqueness; they learn to identify the 12 attributes they would like to acquire; they also understand that rules, boundaries and norms have an important role in experiencing freedom.

1. Introduction: Dare to be unique

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Every day you come under various influences that make you behave in a certain way and prompt you to follow a certain set of values. Culture defines the norms of acceptable conduct. Peers seek to persuade you to follow their example and media. In most cultures, this tends to create and promote its own values.

These external pressures want to force everyone to be uniform: to have certain types of habits, follow specific values and fashion, or engage in relationships in a specific way. Our culture exerts huge pressures on young people as to how they should think about sexuality. Anyone who behaves or wants to live differently is labeled crazy, outdated and narrow in their way of thinking. It is very easy to go with the flow and become exactly what this external pressure is forcing you to be. Only people who are strong, courageous and have a solid character can resist such pressure coming from the masses. They are the ones who dare to be unique. They are the ones who know exactly what makes them happy, what their goals are, what they want to achieve and what kind of relationships they want to have. These are the ones who do not want to be exploited, burned out, unhappy, or drift from one relationship to another. They want to experience meaningful, balanced and joyful relationships. Today we examine what it takes to stay unique and not to give in to peer and mainstream pressure.

Group discussion

First, let's discuss the following questions:

- Have you ever felt that someone is trying to exert pressure on you—that you should have acted, dressed according to certain expectations or should have crossed certain boundaries against your will? How did you deal with this situation? What helped you to tackle the problem?
- Is it possible to say no in a way that expresses love and respect towards the other party? If so, how?
- In addition to the external factors already discussed, can you mention internal factors that can also put pressure on you?

The factors of internal pressure could be the desire to meet certain expectations, infatuation and hormones.

Today the topic will be how YOU can decide what you will get into and how far you want to go (whether it is sex, drugs or any other question). We will discuss how you can persevere and stick to your OWN decisions. Once these steps are learned, you can apply them to other areas of your life and you can more easily resist external and internal pressures. 1. You have to decide what you want to be like. 2. You have to set your boundaries. 3. You have to articulate and express your decisions. 4. You should flee from anything that might distract you.

2. Your decisions are what make you unique

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Individual task.
Distribute the photocopies of the student notes to each person.
Write the following sentence on the whiteboard:

A. Decide what you want to be like

You can pay proper attention to your character development if you:

- create an image of the future you want to reach;
- do what will get you to this future; and
- avoid people and behaviors that can sidetrack you from this path.

You must have imagined your future or at least part of your future. You must have dreamed of certain things that you want to happen. Now try to think of the day when you get married. Look at the words on the paper that you received as a handout. What words would you love to hear from your beloved on your big day? What would you like them to think of you? Choose ten attributes from the list that you consider to be the most important.

“Before you start, decide where you want to end up.”

[Before starting to work with the handouts ask the students to tell what the sentence means in their opinion. Let them say freely what they think. After a couple of minutes, ask them how they think this sentence relates to the handout.]

The steps to develop the desired character

Consider each of the qualities that you have circled, and write them in the designated section. Write one thing for each word that you can do now in order to develop this characteristic in you later. If your circled ‘honesty,’ you may write down that ‘I will not lie’ or ‘I don’t cheat on exams.’

B. Set solid boundaries

Why do we have such rules? Are they there to restrict or to protect? Predetermined boundaries, rules, norms and barriers ensure protection in situations when you do not have enough clarity to make the right decision.

The following story is a good example of why you need to set your boundaries in advance.

Reading a story

“Nicky joined her class recently in November and she hasn’t found many friends yet. This is why she was very happy to be invited to a New Year’s Party organized by one of her classmates. Initially, she felt awkward, but then she started chatting with a somewhat older guy named Walter. It was the first time they met, but he was very kind to her. They danced, had some drinks and when she had a headache he gave Nicky a pill that immediately made her feel much

better. After midnight, Walter told her that he was going to another party and if she wanted she could join him. Nicky thought for a moment about going home, but in the end she quickly said yes. During the 20-minute ride she became rather sober and she felt very weird when she ended up in a remote cabin with half a dozen total strangers and a very drunk guy.”

Discuss: Why do you think Nicky made that decision, which she resented soon afterwards?

(She wanted to make friends, she acted under the influence of alcohol and the drug, she suddenly had to make a rushed decision, she wanted to look more grown-up than she was, etc.)

Obviously, in such situations it is very difficult to make a wise and balanced decision as there are many factors to consider. Nicky should have made some decisions earlier, like before her first drink (but definitely before her second drink) or, even better, when she first accepted the invitation.

The steps to make boundaries

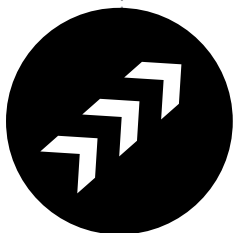


STOP! Don't allow your mood or emotions to decide for you. Stop and give yourself some time to make the right decision.



CONSIDER!

1. Consider your goals that you want to achieve with this decision.
2. What are your options?
3. Benefits—what are the benefits of each option?
4. Disadvantages—what are the disadvantages and risks involved for each option?
5. Choice—which option best suits your set of criteria?



GET GOING!

Be determined and persevering and set out to realize the best option.

Discuss in mixed groups (4 to 5 people) what Nicky should have done when Walter asked her to go with him to the other party. They should pay special attention to points 1-5 of *Consider!*

Hand out the “10 old tricks—10 powerful responses” sheets to the students.

Ask a boy and a girl to do the role play.

C. Decide to say it out loud

We experience a lot of pressure when we are being persuaded to do something we don’t want to do and are caught off guard with not knowing how to reply. Therefore, it’s very useful to have smart, clearly expressed, and sometimes witty answers available to use.

Below are 10 old tricks you often hear. In your small groups find some clever answers to these.

[When the groups complete the task, they should share their answers and everyone should vote for the best one.]

These witty responses can be very effective if you just want to get rid of someone, but they may not be helpful in building your existing relationship. This is why you will now learn another method that can help you give confident answers when you are asked to do something you don’t want, but you also want to keep the relationship going. The method is called YES-NO-YES method.

The yes-no-yes method.

Say yes—Say something positive about the other person or about what they said to you.

Say no—Explain why you don’t want this thing.

Say yes—Suggest another option.

For example:

“Would you like to come over after the party on Saturday? We could have some fun... my whole family will be away, we would be alone.”

YES: *“I really like being around you...”*

NO: ... *“Well, I wouldn’t necessarily trust myself if the two of us stayed alone because I don’t want to cross the boundaries that I set for myself...”*

YES: ... *“How about going bowling or inviting Lily and John to do something with us?”*

For your words to be taken seriously, you have to learn to be confident. Desires can be expressed in three different ways.

Confidently: You can respectfully tell others what you want and how you honestly feel, but with conviction.

Passively: This is when you don’t express your feelings, you say nothing, you are uncertain with your wording or give the impression that it’s easy to persuade you or to change your mind.

Aggressively: You are nasty, rude, demanding or hurt others in order to get what you want.

You must be aware: your spoken words are only a tiny fraction of the whole message that you communicate. Meta-communication consists of the bigger picture—it's your voice, your facial expressions, your gestures and body posture. Unless these are in line with the words you are communicating, your message becomes confusing and it can be misunderstood. It might even have the opposite effect of what you actually want to say.

The tools of meta-communication:

your voice and tone,
your facial expression,
your posture,
your gestures,
and how you move around.

Scene.

Ask:

In the worst case
scenario which

body part

can you use to insist
on your decision?
(Use your legs—
you can always
escape, and if you
need to—RUN!)

[A girl with good acting skills should be asked to say the following as if in a romantic situation:]

"Oh, honey, stop it!"

[In the meanwhile, her body language should communicate the very opposite.]

[Ask two boys and a girl to say in a confident, passive-aggressive tone the following:]

"No, I don't want to spend the evening at your place. We don't know each other well enough for that."

[They should agree among themselves who will do which style and in what order. The rest of the class must figure out who presented which style.]

3. How close is too close?

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Story.

Icarus and the wax wings¹

King Minos held captive and cruelly imprisoned Icarus and his father, Daedalus. Daedalus was a clever handyman and inventor, and the king commanded him to invent all sorts of wonderful things for his entertainment.

¹See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icarus>, accessed April 24, 2021.

This famous myth of the ancient Greeks comes from a time when people believed that the atmosphere of Earth reached all the way to the Sun. Today we know that as you progress upwards in the atmosphere, the temperature decreases, not increases, but the moral of the story – that it is dangerous to disregard warning signs – is still valid today, just like 3,000 years ago.

Daedalus decided to escape from the tower flying together with his son, Icarus. He gathered all his handyman skills and started to build two pairs of wings. It took a long time, but he managed to collect enough different sized bird feathers. He joined and reinforced them with some yarn, which he then glued together with wax. In the end he produced two large pairs of wings just like the wings of a seagull. Daedalus tied the wings to his shoulders, and as he swung his arms he was taken up high in the air where he used the air currents to rise and float.

He gave the second pair of wings to Icarus and he taught him how to use the various currents in the air and how to circle upwards and fly on the wings of the wind. They practiced until Icarus was ready for the trip. Finally, the day came and even the winds were just right. Father and son attached their wings and got ready to fly back home.

“Remember all that I told you in advance,” said Daedalus. “First of all, remember not to rise too high so the sun will not melt the wax causing your wings to fall apart. Stay close to me and you will be all right.”

So father and son ascended in the air. At first, both Daedalus and Icarus found the journey rather terrifying, but they gradually got accustomed to riding the clouds and they were not afraid anymore. Icarus felt that the winds were charging his wings with power; he kept soaring higher and higher and he experienced a sense of freedom like he never had before. He looked down at the people and the islands they left behind with great delight; he marveled at the gigantic blueness of the sea below and the sail boats beneath them looked like tiny white spots. As he kept soaring higher and higher, he absolutely forgot about his father’s warning. He forgot about everything and was lost in the joy of flying.

“Come back!” Daedalus shouted desperately. “You are rising too high! Think about the sun! Come down! Come down!”

But Icarus would not listen in his euphoria. He wanted to get higher and higher. As he reached closer to the sun, his wings were slowly beginning to loosen. His feathers began to fall out one by one. Soon the wax had completely melted and Icarus started falling. He began flapping his arms as quickly as he could, but there were no more feathers to keep him in the air. He cried out to his father for help, but it was too late. With a loud scream he fell from the great heights and disappeared in the waves, forever lost to the sea.

* * *

People tend to think that they can exercise self-control and stop an activity in time before they go too far. Unfortunately, when you get too close to these boundaries in real life you sometimes burn yourself. When life is on the line, wise people will not want to test their boundaries.

4. The 12 points of sexual freedom

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For discussion
in pairs or for
individual reflection.

Read the list “*12 Points of Sexual Freedom*” handed out in the Student Notes. Consider the following questions:

- Which of the twelve freedoms means the most to you? What is the reason for it? Which one do you disagree with?
- Why is breaking up so painful when you have already been involved sexually?
- Is it possible to establish intimacy without sex? Why is it possible or why not?
- How can early sexual involvement cause harm in other areas of your relationship?
- What two things would help you the most to resist external pressures to engage sexually?

Questions and Answers

Question: *I believe I understand where the boundaries are, but I need help to be able to tell someone what I like and dislike. How should I do it?*

Response: It is often difficult to communicate your boundaries to others. You are afraid of their reaction—they may get angry or feel hurt. Here are some recommendations. First, carefully consider the exact boundaries you want to set. Secondly, communicate these without any anger or outbursts. Thirdly, ask a friend to help you practice expressing your intentions. Fourthly, you might want to ask someone to accompany and support you in communicating your boundaries with this specific person.

Question: *I don't want to get sexually active before getting married, but I'm afraid that I will not be able to hold to my decision. Is it worth it to try to refrain from sex?*

Response: It is possible that you make a decision that you find you can't keep. You should remember that you are not committing yourself to being perfect, but essentially say the following: “*The right thing to do is to keep sex for marriage. I commit that I, with the help of God and others, will do everything not to have sex before I get married.*” The strength of such a commitment is that it serves as a reminder when the temptation comes. And if you seek help from others, you'll be much stronger than relying only on your own strength.

STUDENT NOTES



Be Unique

10 old tricks — 10 powerful responses

1. “Come on, everybody does it.”
Response: *“Then it will not be that difficult to find someone to replace me.”*
2. “You are such a coward!”
Response: *“Are you talking about me? To the contrary, I’m courageous enough to go against the flow.”*
3. “It will be really good, you will see.”
4. “It will make you feel like a real man/woman.”
5. “If you don’t sleep with me, I will break up with you.”
6. “Prove your love for me.”
7. “There won’t be a problem; I have a condom with me.”
8. “I know you want it, too.”
9. “I have long-term plans with you.”
10. “I thought this relationship was important to you, too.”



STUDENT NOTES

Be Unique

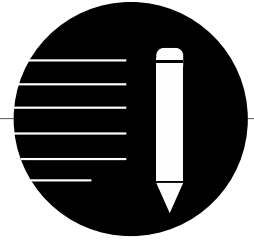
Select 12 attributes that you most want your future spouse to say about you. Write in the boxes below.

patient jealous caring hopeful cheerful	kind energetic proud responsible loving	angry healthy joyful generous wise	respectful possessive pushy sensitive smart	optimistic helpful loyal conscientious polite	popular honest self-confident fair enthusiastic

The 12 points of sexual freedom:

1. You are free from sexually transmitted infections.
2. You are free from the fear of pregnancy or the consequences of a pregnancy.
3. You are free to give life to children.
4. You are free to never experience the trauma of an abortion.
5. You are free from the pressure to marry before you are ready for it.
6. You are free from harmful relationships.
7. You are free from the deep emotional wounds caused by unhealthy choices regarding sex.
8. You are free to focus your energy on setting and achieving your life goals.
9. You are free from guilt.
10. You are free to experience the special relationship that can be found only in marriage.
11. You are free to enjoy your teenage years.
12. You are free to have greater self-respect.

LESSON PLAN



13.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

The Art of Saying “No”

Lesson Plan

Introduction: a scene
Saying “no” with your
body language
Saying “no” with your words
When all else fails, run!

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students learn to express their decisions in words and with their body language regarding what they want and what they don’t want. They learn to say yes to a relationship, while saying no to a certain type of conduct or behavior.

1. Introduction: a scene

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Group exercise

Choose fairly expressive students to be your actors in this exercise. You may want to prepare a list of suggestions to give to them of some of the different ways they might deliver their lines, especially the “no” line (for example: say it like you’re annoyed, say it like you don’t really mean it, say it like it’s funny and say it like you’re angry).

Questions:

Today we are learning a skill that will help us maintain the decisions we have made. Today we are going to learn some effective ways to say “no.”

I need several students to volunteer to help act out a short scene with a simple script. Who would like to help?

[Select two boys and two girls. Have them come up to you and give each pair of students (boy and girl) a piece of paper with their instructions written on it. Each piece of paper should have the same BOY and GIRL dialogue, but the situation is different.]

The dialogue:

BOY: Come on, let’s do it.

GIRL: No. I don’t want to.

The situation:

1. Going to a party where there will be drinking.
2. Trying drugs together.

[Tell them that they are to use these lines only, and that each boy is trying to convince his partner to get involved in that activity. Have the boy and the girl repeat the scene several times, saying the same lines in as many different ways as they can think of (varying the tone and volume of their voices, posture or gestures, etc.). After they have repeated it several times, have the boy and the girl switch roles and act it out again. Tell the other students what each pair is acting out after they are done and before the next couple begins. After all the actors sit down, ask the class to evaluate what they have seen. Ask them the following questions and record their responses on the whiteboard.]

- What were some of the different ways our actors said “no” to each other?
- Did you always believe them when they said “no”? If not, why not?
- When did you believe that the other person wouldn’t be able to talk them into it? What did they do that made you believe that they really meant “no”?

Respect, responsibility and boundaries

If our actors had been trying to get their partner to become sexually involved with them, do you think they would have responded any differently?

Get some reaction from the class and then ask, “How would it have been different?”



Questions:

An important part of respect is recognizing each person's values and never pressuring them to compromise those values.

We have the responsibility to develop healthy boundaries for our lives, and part of that is learning to say "no." A healthy boundary says, *"This is who I am, and this is who I am not" or "This is what I want, and this is what I do not want."*

- Do you think it is important to know how to communicate your decisions to other people who might disagree with your point of view? Why?
- Do you know how to say "no" to something you don't want to do when other people are pressuring you to say "yes"? How do you do that?
- Can you state your decision in such a way that people will believe you really mean it? How?

When we respect ourselves, we will say "no" to any activity that will harm us. When we respect others, we don't ask them to compromise their values.

After we decide where our boundaries are, we need to be able to communicate them very clearly to people around us. How well our "no" is received by a person is affected by both our body language and how we use our voice. First let's talk about body language.

2. Saying "no" by using body language

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Body language is defined as non-verbal communication through facial expressions, posture, gestures, or touch. Even without words, we can still use our face and body to express happiness, anger, acceptance or surprise.

If we want to say "no" through our body language, we all need to come to agreement and understanding about what body language boys believe say "no" and what body language girls believe says "no." In other words, are we all "talking" the same language?

- Boys, what body language from a girl communicates to you that they are saying "no"?

You may want to ask these questions to help get the discussion moving ahead:

- Does it make a difference how they stand or sit?
- Does what or how a person wears something make a difference?
- What do their facial expressions say to you?
- Do gestures make a difference to you?
- How would the tone of voice and its volume affect you?



You may want to have your students stand up and practice/demonstrate different types of body language as you talk about this.

- What are they saying if they walk away from you?
- Would you be convinced if they began pushing you away and protecting themselves?
- Girls, would you agree with the guys about what your body language is saying to them?

Give them a chance to respond and interact, then ask:

- Girls, what body language from a boy communicates to you that they are saying “no”?

Make use of the list above as needed.

A person’s body language communicates a lot about how confident they are in a decision, and how willing they are to stand behind it—or be talked out of it.

If you want to communicate a decision confidently, pay attention to your posture, to your facial expressions, to your gestures, to your tone of voice, and to your touch.

List examples on the whiteboard from the list the students generated in the opening exercise and in the above discussion to give examples of body language that communicate confidence. You may want to begin this list at the beginning of class and add to it along the way. Your list should include the following examples:

- Standing or sitting up straight
- Serious facial expression
- Using gestures to emphasize your point
- Serious tone of voice, perhaps slightly raised in volume
- Walking away if needed
- Pushing the other person away or protecting yourself (when all else fails)

3. Saying “no” with your words

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If you don’t want to do something, all you should have to do is say “no.” Unfortunately, many people will press you for more than a simple “no.” Sometimes they pressure you because they are being selfish. Occasionally they pressure you because they are afraid that if you say “no” to an activity, it means that you are saying “no” to the relationship. When you say “no,” make

Use the provided lines or create some of your own. You might also consider allowing students to create lines to which the other students could respond. You may need to adapt this list for your own cultural situation.

Unfortunately, some girls (and perhaps some boys) like to “tease” by saying “no” when it becomes obvious they really mean “maybe” or “yes.” This is an unwise practice. Sometime in the future she may find that she tries to say “no” (when she means it) and will not be believed.

Question:

Class exercise

an effort to communicate that you do value the relationship, but you do not choose to do a particular action.

People who are not willing to accept when others are saying “no” to them, are not respecting other people’s boundaries, desires, will and decisions. Such people have a tendency to abuse others and step over them. It’s a warning sign in a relationship when one party is not respecting the decision of the other and is trying to convince the other to comply.

Here are some verbal strategies you can use:

- Come up with a better idea—I’d like to spend some time with you. Why don’t we play some basketball instead?
- Give a reason and stand by it—I won’t be able to do that. My parents won’t let me stay out that late. Or, I really like you, but I’ve decided that I don’t want to have sex until I’m married.
- Crack a joke—I just can’t. I have to take my pet goldfish for a walk tonight.
- Act surprised by the suggestion—You really want me to do that? That doesn’t sound like you at all! You usually have really good ideas.
- Take the offensive instead of the defensive—That sounds like a really stupid thing to do!
- Repeat yourself as often as you need to.

[Ask the students how they might respond to each of these strategies. Which ones do they think would be most effective? Least effective?]

- Pose the question, “When does a ‘no’ really mean no?”

For the one who is being told “no,” a simple no should be enough. But for the one who is saying “no,” it is not safe to assume it really is a “no” until you have reinforced it well enough that the hearer really believes you mean it or until you have gotten out of the situation!

In other words, if a girl is saying “no” to a boy, the boy should accept the first “no” as really meaning “no.” But the girl is not safe to assume he understands until he give evidence he has (like changing the subject) or until she is safely out of the situation.

Practice saying “no”

Not everything you decide to say “no” to is illegal or dangerous or immoral. Sometimes you will decide to say “no” to something because it would distract you from a goal you have or perhaps you simply don’t feel like it. Now we are going to take a few minutes to practice saying “no” to some of the more risky situations you might have to walk away from.

[Divide the class into groups of four or five students each. Give each group several of the following lines that they may hear at some point. Ask the

groups to develop responses to the lines by using the verbal strategies that were discussed. Have them develop at least two different types of responses to each line they are given.]

- My parents won't be home tonight. We could do whatever we want and not worry about someone walking in on us. Why don't you come over?
- If you really loved me, you would sleep with me.
- Come on, sleep with me. Everyone else is doing it.
- You don't really mean "no." I know that you want to do it, too!
- My parents won't be home tonight, and I know where they keep their alcohol. Why don't you come over tonight and we'll get drunk?
- I found a shirt that I really love at the store, but I don't have the money to buy it. Will you come distract the salesperson so I can take it?
- You've never tried smoking? Well, here, why don't you try it?
- Oh, I heard the most amazing story! You won't believe who had sex last week! Do you want me to tell you what I heard?
- Don't say "no" to making love yet. We'll just kiss for a while. Then, if you feel comfortable, we'll go farther.
- I found a copy of tomorrow's test in the teacher's trash can. Let's use it to study. We won't have to study as long, and no one will ever know.
- Don't worry about STIs and all that stuff. Those are just scare tactics. Nothing will happen.
- I know your parents want you home by 10:00pm. But they're just trying to keep us from having fun. You can stay out a little later.
- Let's all drive to the top of the hill and get drunk. I know it's stupid, but so what? Life wouldn't be fun if we didn't take any chances.

Have each of the groups report a couple of the responses they felt would be the most useful or effective. Affirm your students' efforts, and encourage them to remember the responses they developed so that they can use them when they need to.

4. When all else fails, run!

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Even with the best responses there can come a time when a different course of action is needed. Listen to this story about a man named Joseph.

Story:
This story is told in
Genesis, chapter
39 in the Bible.



Joseph, a Jewish exile, lived in the land of Egypt and worked for a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was no ordinary man. He was an officer in the Egyptian military under Pharaoh, who led the entire country and was the captain of his bodyguard. His authority and power were well respected in the land.

Joseph began his duties as simply one of Pharaoh's household slaves. However, when Potiphar noticed that God had given Joseph success in whatever he did, he made him as his own personal servant and gave him leadership over his entire house. Joseph managed everything that his master owned so well that Potiphar didn't have to worry about anything.

Joseph was a handsome man, and eventually his master's wife came to him and wanted to have sex with him. But he refused. *"With me in charge,"* he told her, *"my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"*¹

Now, day after day Potiphar's wife did not cease to speak to Joseph about sex. After a while there came a time when Joseph came into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house were inside. Potiphar's wife then caught Joseph by his clothing saying, *"Have sex with me!"* Joseph slipped out of his clothes to get away from her, leaving his clothes in her hand, and ran outside.

- Do you think that Joseph made the right decision?
- What would you have done in this situation?
- What do you think happens next in the story? Let's find out.

Potiphar's wife became angry that Joseph had refused her so she lied and said that Joseph had tried to have sex with her. Potiphar was so angry when he heard this that he took Joseph and threw him in prison. But even though Joseph had been falsely accused, he still became successful while in prison. He was even given charge over all the prisoners during his stay.

Two years later Joseph was freed from prison and made an advisor to Pharaoh. Joseph proved to be such a good advisor that by the time Joseph was 30 years old, Pharaoh made Joseph the highest ruler in all of Egypt, next to Pharaoh himself.

- Do you think that his ability to make firm decisions helped him gain a higher position with Pharaoh?
- Why do you think he was able to so firmly say "no"?

If you find you are in a situation or a relationship that you feel will prove to be too much pressure, the best choice is to run.

¹Genesis 39:8-9.

Sometimes we wait until the timing is perfect, or we get bogged down in “not wanting to hurt the other person.” If you realize you are in a situation that is harmful to you, you need to get as far away from it as possible and not look back.

Sometimes when we are too close to a situation, we do not see it clearly. That is true for all of us, even adults. If you feel that you are involved in a relationship or a situation that is too much for you to handle, talk to someone you trust—a parent or teacher would be best.

Remember, though, that in the end, you are the one responsible for making and communicating your own decisions.

Questions and Answers

Question: *What if they won't take “no” for an answer and begin to force it?*

Answer: First of all, listen to your intuition about someone. If a person makes you feel uncomfortable for any reason, you should avoid putting yourself in a situation where you are alone together. However, if you somehow end up in a position inadvertently where someone forces themselves on you, make your refusal very firm, both verbally and with your body language. Then turn your back so that you break eye contact and confidently walk away with your shoulders back and eyes straight ahead—don't look back.

Question: *What if I really like a person, but don't want to have sex with them? If I say “no,” I might lose the relationship.*

Answer: Yes, you might. But what would be worse? To lose the relationship before you become sexually involved, or after? Both situations are painful in their own way, but it would be far better to avoid the emotional and physical involvement of sex and the subsequent hurt that it would cause. Also, if the relationship is based on love and respect, the other person will not force the issue of having sex and pressuring you to compromise your values. The person who knows your values and still insists on having sex is not your friend.

STUDENT NOTES



The Art of Saying “No”

Body Language: non-verbal communication through facial expressions, posture, gestures, or touch.

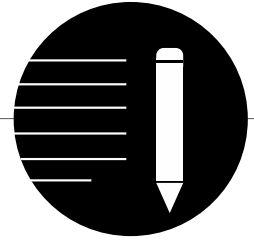
List some examples of body language that would communicate confidence in your decision:

Responses that you can use to say “no” to someone who is pressuring you to do something you don’t want to do:

- Come up with a better idea.
- Give a reason and stand by it.
- Crack a joke.
- Act surprised by the suggestion.
- Take the offensive instead of the defensive.
- Repeat yourself as often as you need to.

Write the “lines” given to your group here and record your group’s responses:

LESSON PLAN



14.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

I Made a Mistake How to Restart?

Lesson Plan

What can you learn from a
paper clip?
The story of forgiveness
The network of forgiveness
The path for a new start
How new is this new?

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students learn to believe that they must not be captive by their former mistakes. They learn that forgiveness is a process when they are released from past burdens and it makes a new beginning possible.

Background information

Most of your students have already experienced the pain of making poor decisions and living with the consequences. For some students, these mistakes will be relatively minor in the scheme of things. For others, their mistakes will have lifelong consequences. Young people need to be introduced to the process of forgiveness that will give them the ability to work through the pain and hurt in their lives—whether caused by a decision they have made or someone else’s actions. Once initiated, forgiveness is actually a simple process, but has far-reaching ramifications. When we forgive someone who has hurt us, it releases us from the recurring pain of their actions. It has been said that bitterness is a chemical that destroys the vessel it is stored in. Refusing to forgive actually hurts us more than the other person. The ultimate forgiveness came to us from God through his son Jesus Christ who offers himself for his enemies. When we accept this forgiveness, we want to forgive others.

1. What can you learn from a paper clip?

10

Introduction

This series of lessons has been all about decisions. Let's look back down the road we have traveled together and review where we have been and what we have learned.

We have talked about abstinence as a lifestyle, a choice we make and a plan we can implement. You have been given tools to make that decision and maintain it. We have also talked about the pressures that will either keep you from making this decision or cause you to be sidetracked after you have made the decision to remain abstinent. You have been given many ideas to help you stay on the right track.

But what happens when we do go off the road? What happens when we make a decision that take us away from our journey to be the best we can be?

I have an illustration with paper clips that will help answer that question.

[Have two or three students come to the front of the classroom. Give each of them a paper clip. Tell them that they have twenty seconds to make the paper clip as straight as possible using only their hands. Start the time and see how well they do. When the time is up, pass the two paper clips around to the class. Take a class vote on whose is the straightest! Next, give the paper clips back to the individuals and give them another twenty seconds – this time to put it back like it was before. When they have finished, pass the paper clips around the class again and include a fresh paper clip so they can compare them. Have the group decide who did the best job restoring his or her paper clip to its original shape.]

The major point we want to make with this activity is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to put things back as they were before. The paper clip still resembles a paper clip, it is still very useful, but it is not exactly the same. Some consequences of our decisions cannot be completely mended and we must live with them. However, while we cannot erase the past, we don't have to continue to be controlled or hurt by it.

2. The story of forgiveness

5

Introduction to the story

Even when we are seeking to do our best, we sometimes make mistakes. What happens then? Do we just give up on ourselves and stop trying?

Fortunately, as we learned in the last lesson, millions around the world have experienced that there is somebody who always wants and accepts us no matter what shape we are in—God. Christians believe that even when we

have gone off the road and landed in a ditch, we can look up and see Him standing at the edge of the road with His hand extended, waiting for us to reach out and accept His help to get back on the road of His best for our lives.

But the healing power of forgiveness goes beyond just believing that God has forgiven us. Often we need to take a further step to forgive ourselves and forgive others who have hurt us. Listen to this true story.

She didn't feel young

She was extremely young, but she didn't feel young.

It seemed like such a jump—from the age of twelve to the much more exciting age of thirteen.

She really loved being “older.”

He was older than her and extremely popular. He was always the center of attention. She was thrilled when he started to pay attention to her. Other girls would have died for the chance, but he picked her for his girlfriend.

One day he told her, *“I love you.”* She didn't say anything—she didn't love him. She liked being popular because of him. Everyone said *“Hi”* to her and wanted her for a friend.

He kept telling her that he loved her, and then one day, he told her that he wanted to show her how much he loved her. She said no.

A few days later he told her that he had been with another girl, but he really wanted to be with her because, he said, *“I love you.”* She didn't say anything.

She had never had so many friends before. So many people wanted to talk with her. In fact, she noticed that boys were paying a lot more attention to her. But, she stayed with him...because he loved her.

Then he told her that it had happened again. He had slept with another girl, but he didn't really “love” her. He even told her who the girl was. She felt threatened. But he told her, *“I love you.”* She looked down and said, *“I love you, too.”* He told her, *“If you love me, you'll show me.”* She didn't want to lose him, so she did.

A few days later, he was “in love” with someone else.

She was extremely young, but she didn't feel young.

3. The network of forgiveness

10

This is a very sad story. Obviously she is wishing she could turn back the clock, but none of us can. But this lesson is about how we can have a new start, even if we feel like this girl does.

If it's needed, divide the class into small groups when you have the discussion about forgiveness.



Let's spend some time thinking through this story using the Student Notes. Please fill in the chart as we discuss the story.

- Which of the people in this story needs forgiveness?
- Who do they need forgiveness from and why?
- What are the consequences for each of these people of being forgiven?
- Of not being forgiven?

Each of the people in this story needs forgiveness—the girl, the boy, and the other girls. They need forgiveness from each other and from God. They also need to forgive themselves. Without forgiveness, they will continue to live lives of guilt and pain and will struggle with their self-worth and goals for the future. With forgiveness, they can turn from their past, make the decision to behave differently, and face the future with hope.

We must forgive ourselves and each other. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, but it does mean agreeing to not hurt the other person in return. Forgiveness, however, does not mean that we have to trust the person who hurt us again. Trust and forgiveness are two separate things. Trust must be earned. Forgiveness must be given “freely.” When we forgive, we will also be free.

4. The path for a new start

15

Divide the class up into groups of five or six students and have them brainstorm ways to start over again with a new resolve not to stay or become sexually active.

After we have God's forgiveness, can we expect that we will never be tempted again? No, the temptations will come again; the pressures will be there. There are ways, however, to start again with a clean heart.

For example, if someone has been sexually active in the past, but has resolved to maintain abstinence, what can they do to keep that decision?

If they need ideas, give them some hints from this list to help get them started:

1. End the relationship in which you are sexually involved and resolve to change your behavior to an abstinent lifestyle.
2. Understand and assume responsibility for the past. Even if you were pressured into a sexual relationship, you ultimately made the decision to participate. Take responsibility for your part in that decision.
3. Avoid temptation. If you know you are tempted by certain movies, media, people or situations—stay away from those things! Don't go near them, and the temptation will be significantly reduced.

4. Establish accountability. Find a close friend who will help and encourage you in your decision to remain abstinent. This should be a friend of the same sex who has also decided to remain abstinent until marriage.
5. Expect testing. As we said, expect that your decision to remain abstinent will be tested. You will be tempted to enter or return to relationships that are not in line with an abstinent lifestyle. Be strong and talk to the friend to whom you are accountable.
6. It's never too late. Sometimes you may have feelings that it is too late for you; you have already been in a sexual relationship, and there is no going back. This is a myth! Don't give in to feelings of worthlessness. Remember you have been forgiven and keep moving ahead.
7. Keep focused on your plan. Make a plan on how you are going to renew your commitment to abstinence and stick with it. Maybe there are certain parties you shouldn't go to or certain people you know you should avoid. Don't get detoured from your plan.
8. Find good friends. Have friends who share your same values and views on abstinence. Be examples for each other to stay on the road to abstinence.

5. How new is this new?

5



Obviously, like the paper clip, some things will never be exactly the same. Some physical things cannot be restored to their original condition. A person who has been sexually involved will not have his or her virginity restored.

However, you can re-commit to a new lifestyle.

This describes the state of mind of a person who has become committed to not having sex again until marriage. The past cannot be undone, but the course for the future can be set with abstinence. From that point on, then, an abstinent lifestyle has been restored, forgiveness obtained, and that person experiences a “new start.” This “new start” can be something beautiful.

Ending the lesson.

Nobody is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes. Forgiveness is the way we can come back to a new starting point and try again. Forgiveness, however, is not the eraser that removes the pain of our mistakes from our life. We will still have to take responsibility for our past, and perhaps there will be consequences that we will have to live with, but we don't have to be controlled by our past or keep on repeating the same mistakes. Forgiveness opens the door for that.

Questions and Answers

Question: *Does forgiving someone mean I let them continue hurting me?*

Answer: Forgiveness is not forgetting what someone has done to hurt you, but it is agreeing not to hang onto the hurt or use what they have done to hurt them back or get revenge. It doesn't mean that you have to continue to put yourself in a position to keep getting hurt. You should take a stand against what the person is doing, but still forgive the person. Forgiveness is bringing our pain to the surface and letting God deal with it. Forgiveness costs us something. But it will cost a lot less if we forgive instead of being bitter.

Question: *You stated in this lesson that, "Even if you were pressured into a sexual relationship, you ultimately made the decision to participate." What if someone was raped? Are you saying it is their fault as well as the fault of the other person?*

Answer: Definitely not! If someone has been raped, a violent crime has been committed against them. It is not their fault. Under no circumstances should they feel responsible for being the victim of a violent crime. It is also very important for rape victims to receive qualified, professional help to deal with the physical, emotional, and psychological trauma that has occurred.



STUDENT NOTES

I Made a Mistake
How to Restart?

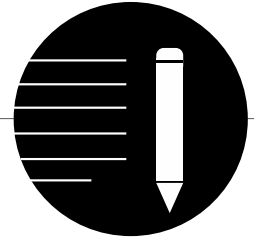
The forgiveness network

Who needs forgiveness?	Who needs to forgive them?	Why?	Consequences: Being forgiven	Consequences: Not being forgiven

If you want forgiveness, forgive!

Ways to make a new start:

LESSON PLAN



15.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

Which Way Are You Going?

At the Threshold of Life

Lesson Plan

Consequences: group game
The spiritual center of life
Preserving a good start

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students will understand that their decisions have consequences and that a decision in one area will affect all the other areas of their lives. They will also make important decisions and strengthen key commitments.

Motto:

If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in person.

When there's beauty in person, there's harmony in the house.

If there's harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation.

If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

(Chinese proverb)

1. Consequences: group game

25

Introduction:

I want to start this lesson with a new game. The idea is to remind you of everything you have learned from this curriculum and help you reconsider the consequences of your actions. This is why this game is called:

Consequences

At the end of the game I want to give you the opportunity to look at your lives in a new way so you can see how all the different pieces fit together.



Appoint three participants to be the judges.

The students should form groups of (approximately) 7 people.

The decisions you make in one area of life will have an impact on all the other areas. All the aspects of your lives are affected by how you care about yourself and how you treat others.

For this game we need three people as judges. The players will try to predict the consequences of the decisions that they are facing. The judges will evaluate the predictions of the different teams and give five points to the team that best described the expected outcomes. (It's applicable if there are five teams. If there are only four teams, the highest score is 4, etc.) The second best description will earn one point less and so on, until you reach the score of 1. The judges will make their decision together—as the teams are thinking about the consequences of the next 'crossroad situation' in life—and they write down their scores on the whiteboard.

The game is played with teams of seven people. Each team should appoint a spokesperson.

In this game your path leads through a city that is full of intersections. At each of these intersections there are two or more possible directions to take. As a team, you have to decide on the consequences if you choose one direction over the others. You will not have a whole lot of time to think, and you have to specify the expected outcomes of each of the possible directions in that given intersection. Therefore, if possible, form smaller teams within your group that will discuss the possible outcomes for each of these options. There is one more rule: **YOU CAN NEVER RETRACE YOUR STEPS.** Once you have taken a road, you cannot turn back.

I'm going to show you the first crossroad/intersection and you have 2 minutes to assess the consequences if you decide to go right or left. Afterwards I will ask the spokespeople to tell us the predictions of their teams. As you are thinking about the consequences of the next crossroad, the judges will score your predictions. The team that scores the highest will win in the end.

At the first crossroad write **QUALITY** and the most important sights of this street, then continue by doing the same with **USEFUL**.

Keep these reports very short and do not let the spokespeople reflect on comments from the other students.

As the teams are thinking about their answers, help the judges to rank the solutions.

First crossroad

- The street on the left is called **QUALITY**. On this street you can visit the Unique Store and Beautifully Built Café along with the Much Loved Restaurant.
- The street on the right is called **USEFUL**. On this entire street, almost until the next corner there is The Comparison Market. On The Comparison Market street everything and everyone has a price tag, depending on how useful the item or the person is to someone.

Now think for two minutes about the consequences of turning left or right.

Once the two minutes are up, the teams stop. Ask the spokespeople to report to the others what the consequences will be if you turn left or right.

Second crossroad

- **To the right** you will find the street called **CHARACTER**. Here you will be responsible for your decisions and you must treat others with respect.
- **By turning left** you will find the street called **DEPENDING**. Here you don't have to take responsibility for what you do and you don't have to show respect; you can go wherever you want and do whatever you like. In this street everyone does whatever seems to be best for them.

Stop the teams when their three minutes are up. Ask the spokespeople to report to the others what the consequences will be if you turn left or right.

Third crossroad

At this intersection you have to decide between three possible directions to follow.

- If you turn right, you reach the alley **WITHOUT PROTECTION**. There are many pretty people here; they are all very friendly and simply want to enjoy themselves. They don't want to worry about anything because they expect everything to turn out OK in the end.
- If you turn left, you will end up on **CONDOM** street. The people are also very friendly here; they are trying to reassure others. They proclaim that as long as you are protected, you can do whatever you want.
- If you take the direction straight ahead, you will find yourself on the avenue of **ABSTINENCE**. The people here are nice, but they are less eager to meet the expectations of others. They say that it is important to live in a responsible way and respect others. They are convinced that a safe future can only be reached if you respect your own body, emotions and soul as well as the body, emotions and souls of others, and if you only want to experience sexuality in a mutually loyal and lifelong relationship.

Remind the judges
to remember to
score the answers.

After five minutes, the teams stop. Ask the spokespeople to report to the others what the consequences will be if you turn left, right or if they continue straight.

Fourth crossroad

- If you turn **left** here, you will end up in the street called **DAMAGE**. There is a sign under the street name that reads, "If you have made a bad decision in your life, that's it; you are stuck and there is no hope for a better future."
- If you turn **right**, you will find yourself in the street called **NEW BEGINNING**. The sign under the street name reads, "Start again and take responsibility. Character is a great legacy."

Wait for four minutes, then the students stop their activity. Ask the spokespeople to report to the others what the consequences will be if you turn left or right.

While the judges decide about the scores, ask the other participants at which crossroad it felt the most difficult to predict the consequences.

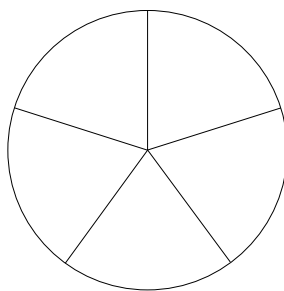
After hearing some answers, ask the students to talk about where they find it most difficult to predict the future and the consequences of their decisions in their own lives. Ask them to write their answers on the Student Notes.

By now the judges have completed the calculation of the total scores and you can announce the winning team.

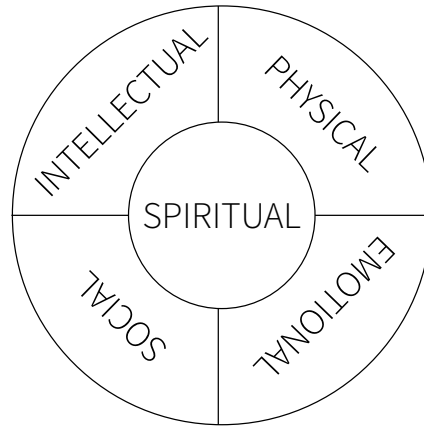
2. The spiritual center of life

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We usually divide life into the following areas: physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual aspects. These areas are believed to be slices of an entire cake. Let me illustrate this with a drawing:



There is a drawing that represents the various areas of our lives in a more accurate way. It gives a more realistic image about how these areas are connected to each other.



Our spiritual life is the center to which the other areas connect.

Your spiritual reality influences everything in your life. It will determine your values, it will influence your relationships, form your habits and character and it will affect your emotions. Spiritual happenings completely transform a person. It is this process in your soul that will determine who you are becoming. It is therefore very important what you do with your spiritual reality. Your soul not only affects all the other areas, it also enables you to connect with God, the One who created you. It is your antenna that connects you with the Creator of life and toward whom we are all heading.

You can learn more about the restoration of your spiritual life by reading the short articles *Who is Jesus?* and *The Traces of God* at the end of this volume.

You simply cannot live a full, balanced and meaningful life without preserving the healthy status of your soul. For your soul to be healthy, it must recognize and reconnect with the One who created it and gave life to it. The message of the Bible is not about religious appearances, but about restoring this relationship with the Creator. Blaise Pascal rightly said the following about the human soul, *“What is it then that this desire and this inability proclaim to us, but that there was once in man a true happiness of which there now remain to him only; the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present? But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable Object, that is to say, only by God Himself.”*¹

¹Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (Boston: E. P. Dutton, 1958), 113.

3. Preserving a good start

5



We have been working on this curriculum for a long time. Together you have learned some important principles. We have discussed life, love and relationships, sex and sexually transmitted infections, taking responsibility, respect, abstinence, God, forgiveness and receiving a new beginning.

It is our hope that you made some decisions regarding your life, and committed yourself to abstinence and to values to help you overcome the moral dilemmas that will await you in life. In a couple of minutes your task will be to write down everything that you already have committed to or would like to commit to starting now. And for those who have already been sexually active, remember the commitment to “second virginity.”

According to research, it is great to have someone to support you when your promises and commitments are tested. And you will definitely be tested in these decisions that you have made as we studied and discussed in this material. It is important to have people around you who care for you in the midst of these challenges.

Setting out in a good direction starts with a decision that continues with many other decisions when you opt to remain disciplined, continue to live according to your values, exercise sexual abstinence and resist the pressures you encounter. It is easier to stick to the right decisions and remain faithful to your commitments if your family and/or a group of like-minded peers help you in this process.

On the Student Notes there is room for you to write down everything that you have committed yourself to during the course or that you want to begin to undertake now as a commitment. Feel free to keep this sheet to yourself; you don't have to show it to anyone, unless you really want to.

Now you have a couple of minutes to write down some of the promises you want to make to yourself so they can serve as a reminder of the topics and things you considered to be important during this course. You may decide to share these promises with your parents, God or friends later, but only if it's something that you want to do.

These are your decisions for your own life.

STUDENT NOTES



Which Way Are You Going?

MY COMMITMENTS—MY DECISIONS:

1.

2.

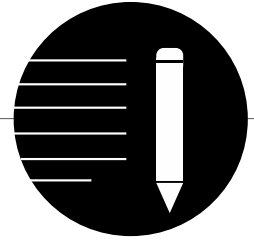
3.

4.

5.

6.

LESSON PLAN



16.

Motivating Goals
Resist the Pressure

Personal Development Plan

Lesson Plan

Boyatzis' theory

The need: In what areas
should you develop?

The goal: Your ideal self

Learning schedule

The Purpose of the Lesson

By the end of the lesson your students will understand what areas of their life need improvement; and they learn to prepare a realistic plan with clear goals for their personal development.

1. Boyatzis' theory¹

15

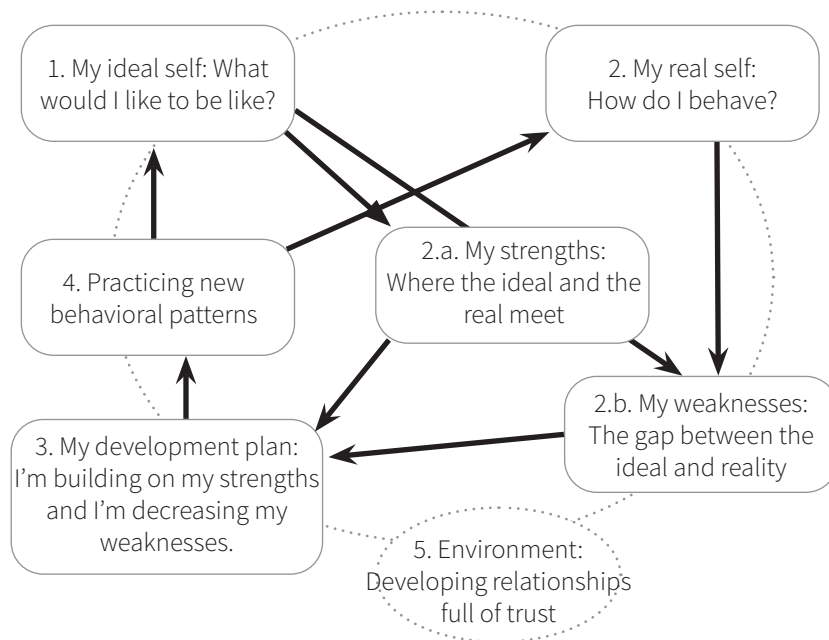
A careful plan is a great help to personal development.

1. Your personal development plan helps you focus on those areas that are most relevant and important at a specific stage in your life.
2. Your set goals serve as road signs in your life.
3. Your personal development plan is like a map that will take you to your goals.

The students should study the graph on self-directed learning.

Describe the flowchart. For continuous development it is essential to form relationships that are based on trust. You should emphasize that constant change is difficult, yet it is necessary to your continuous development throughout your lifetime.

The process for the Personal Development Plan:



This personal development chart is just a tool in the process. In the remaining time we will look at the different steps of this development process and learn more about this specific tool.

2. The need: In what areas should you develop?

10

You cannot change every element of your character all at once.

¹Richard Boyatzis, *The Five Stages of Intentional Change Theory*, <https://www.keystepmedia.com/intentional-change-theory/>, accessed April 27, 2001.

Describe the process of planning. Everyone should select 1-2 strengths and 1-2 weaknesses.

- Choose 1-2 strengths that will help you become a more mature person if you continue developing them.
- Select 1-2 weaknesses.
- Write the selected weaknesses in the **Need** column of your *Personal Development Plan* chart.

3. The goal: Your ideal self

10

The students should identify one or two positive goals where they want to develop and improve. They should also determine how they will measure these goals and how they want to achieve them.

Your ideal self is the compass of your life. It determines in what direction your life is heading. The goals serve as road signs on this journey. These goals must be achievable and you should be able to monitor them.

Imagine what it would be like if there were a significant change in your weakness that you wanted to develop? What would it look like and what would it take to have a noticeable improvement in this area in the next 6 to 12 months?

- Which areas would you like to develop?
- What would you like to achieve?
- How will you know that you reached your goal?
- What are the obstacles that you need to overcome?

4. Learning schedule

10

Make a list of the practical tasks and steps that the above questions prompt you to consider.

How can you build your strengths as you decrease your weaknesses?

- What practical steps should you take?
- Who could help you in this?
- Who could be an example for you?
- What are things that hinder your development?
- What changes could show your progress?

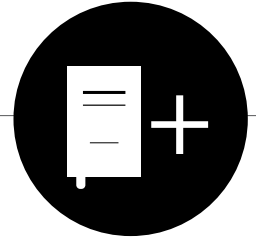
The new behaviors and planned goals must be practiced, whether they are your ways of thinking, behaviors or even emotions. You have to practice until they become second nature. In this process you will definitely need a supportive environment, friends and role models that will encourage and accept you. Consider where you can find such relationships. Who are people in your life that could play an encouraging role?



STUDENT NOTES

Personal Development Plan

Need	Goal	Obstacles	Steps
Which areas would you like to develop?	What would you like to achieve? How will you know that you reached your goal?	What are the obstacles that you need to overcome?	What are the things that you still need to learn? What resources do you need? What will you do and when? Who will help you?



Who is Jesus?

By: Dr. William R. Bright

Who do you think has been the most outstanding person in history? The most remarkable leader? The greatest teacher? Who has done the most for mankind? Who has lived the holiest life?

You may go into any corner of the world and start talking with people of different religious backgrounds. No matter how committed they are to their own religion, if they are aware of the historical facts, they have to acknowledge that no person has ever lived on the face of the earth like Jesus of Nazareth. He is the most extraordinary person of all time who changed the course of history.

His coming was prophesied

Centuries before the birth of Christ, the Scriptures recorded the predictions of the prophets of Israel who foretold His coming. The Old Testament—written by many individuals throughout a period of about 1500 years—contains over 300 prophecies concerning the details of His coming. All of these have been fulfilled just as predicted—including His miraculous birth, His unblemished life, His numerous miracles, His death and resurrection.

His life, miracles, words, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension all prove that He was no mere man. He was more than that. He said, *“I and the Father are one”* (John 10:30), *“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father”* (John 14:9), *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6).

His life and message result in change

Try to trace the life and influence of Jesus of Nazareth in history. You will see that His person and His message have always brought about great change in the lives of people and nations. Wherever His message and influence have reached, they have resulted in many changes for the benefit of mankind.

The lives of individuals have gone through major changes as well. Lew Wallace, the famous general and author was known to be an atheist. For two years he was ransacking the libraries of Europe and the United States to collect information for a book that he was going to write to overthrow Christianity. When writing Chapter Two he fell on his knees and cried out to Jesus, *“My Lord and my God!”* On the basis of the solid, irrefutable evidence he could not deny any more that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Later on he wrote his book, *Ben Hur*, which is one of the most remarkable novels written in English about the age in which Christ lived.

In like manner C. S. Lewis, the former agnostic—who was a professor at the University of Oxford—denied the deity of Jesus for years. However, after studying the undeniable evidence of the deity of Christ he trusted Him as his Lord and Savior.

Lord, liar or lunatic

In Lewis’ famous book, titled *Mere Christianity*, he makes the following statement: *A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about him being a great moral teacher. He has not left that alternative open to us.*¹

Who is Jesus of Nazareth to you? Your answer to this question will effect your life on earth as well as in eternity. Most religions have been founded by human beings, therefore, they are built upon philosophies, rules and performance set by man. If we took these founders out of the religious practice established by them, no significant change would take place in the religion itself. But if we take the person of Jesus Christ out of Christianity, it does not make sense any more because biblical

¹C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1943), 56.

Christianity is not only a philosophy of life, a code of ethics or the performance of religious rituals. Genuine Christianity is based on a personal relationship with the risen and living Savior.

A risen founder

Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, buried and in three days he rose from the death. There is no other religion that would claim that its founder rose from the dead. Christianity is unique in this sense. Any argument for the validity of Christianity stands or falls based on whether Jesus of Nazareth was risen in reality.

Throughout the centuries the greatest scholars who took the evidence of the resurrection into consideration believed and believe that Jesus lives. The late Simon Greenleaf, professor of the Law Faculty at Harvard University, after examining the evidence of the resurrection recorded by the authors of the gospels, came to the following conclusion, *“It is impossible that the apostles would have insisted on confirming the truths claimed by them unless Jesus really rose from the dead and unless they were certain of this fact as much as of any other fact.”*²

John Singleton Copley, who was considered to be one of the greatest British lawyers, wrote the following, *“I know very well what evidence is, and I say that such evidence as that of the resurrection has never been overthrown.”*

If you could know God personally

Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws which govern your relationship with God:

Law 1: God LOVES you and offers a wonderful PLAN for your life.

God's Love: *“God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”* (John 3:16 NIV).

God's Plan: [Christ speaking] *“I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly”* [that it might be full and meaningful] (John 10:10).

Why is it that most people are not experiencing the abundant life? Because...

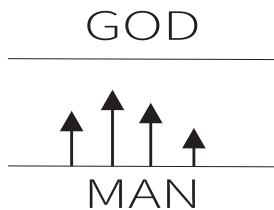
Law 2: Man is SINFUL and SEPARATED from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.

Man Is Sinful: *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

Man was created to have fellowship with God, but because of his stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

Man Is Separated: *“The wages of sin is death”* [spiritual separation from God] (Romans 6:23).

²Bill Bright, *Who Is This Jesus?* (Los Angeles: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1991), 3.



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and man is sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that man is continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion—but he inevitably fails.

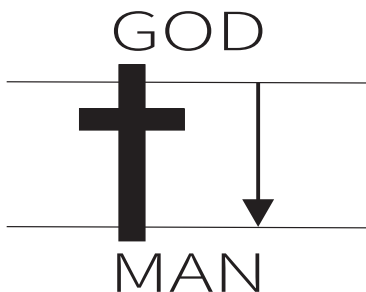
The third law explains the only way to bridge this gulf...

Law 3: Jesus Christ is God’s ONLY provision for man’s sin. Through Him you can know and experience God’s love and plan for your life.

He Died in Our Place: *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

He Rose From the Dead: *“Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred...”* (1Corinthians 15:3-6).

He Is the Only Way to God: *“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me’”* (John 14:6).



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf which separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

It is not enough just to know these three laws....

Law 4: We must individually RECEIVE Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God’s love and plan for our lives.

We Must Receive Christ: *“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name”* (John 1:12).

We Receive Christ Through Faith: *“By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth: (Read John 3:1-8.)

We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation: [Christ speaking] *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him”* (Revelation 3:20).

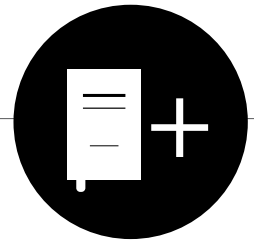
Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

You Can Receive Christ Right Now by Faith Through Prayer

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, I invite you to pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.



The Traces of God

By: Gábor Grész

The core values of the YTL program obviously reflect the authors' conviction that a person is not the end result of a random and aimless process, but their abilities and value point back to a Creator who made them and set them in time, space and in relationships for a purpose. This fundamental statement raises many questions. The answer to the fundamental question of whether God exists precedes and determines your response to the big questions of life: Where did we come from? Why do we live? Where are we heading? Is there any inherent value in us? What happens after death? What you consider to be true, right, correct, valuable and important dramatically depends on whether you think God exists as a person or not. That is why we believe it is important to share our conviction and inspire the readers to think.

If God exists, then your personal future and prosperity is subject to the relationship you have with your Creator. This next article was written to assist this thinking process.

Obviously, there are some fundamental problems when you want to objectively examine this issue. Is it possible and is it right to examine whether God exists like you would with any other forms of life? Can reason provide an answer to everything, and thus completely eliminate the need for faith—faith in the existence or non-existence of God? Was Stephen Hawking right when he wrote the following? “... philosophy is dead. Philosophers have not kept up with modern developments in science. Particularly physics. Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge.”¹

The limitations of science to answer this question

While the Hungarian author Madách anticipates the limitations of the science in the Phalanstère scene in *The Tragedy of Man*,² many people still believe today that science can answer all questions and the key to the future of mankind lies with scientific answers. The Nobel Prize laureate for medicine, Sir Peter Medawar (1960, shared prize) in his book *Advice to a Young Scientist*,³ summarizes the limitations of science when it comes to answering the great questions of humanity:

“There is no quicker way for a scientist to bring discredit upon himself and on his profession than roundly to declare that science knows or will soon know the answers to all questions worth asking.”⁴ He then goes on by saying the following, “The existence of a limit to science is, however, made clear by its inability to answer childlike elementary questions having to do with first and last things – questions such as “How did everything begin?” “What are we all here for?” “What is the point of living?”⁵

A physician-geneticist professor, Francis Collins, who was the director of the Human Genome Project and head of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Maryland, also writes: “But science is powerless to answer questions such as, Why did the universe come into being? Or What is the meaning of human existence? What happens after death?”⁶ The boundaries of science are well depicted with the following statement by Dr. John Lennox, professor of mathematics and philosophy in Oxford: “Science can give us an exhaustive description of how the cake was made and how its ingredients relate to each other, but can’t answer the question why your aunt made it.”⁷

If science would really be contrary to faith in God, all scientists would be atheists. That is not the case. There are excellent scientists on both sides. The real conflict lies between the different worldviews. But which worldview is science pointing towards? Does the Bible really encourage you to leave your senses behind only to grasp God through faith? Is it really only faith in the existence of God that requires faith, while the non-existence of God is a scientific fact?

You can clearly see that science has its limitations when you want to find an answer as to why you exist, where you are heading and whether or not God plays any role in this. Science itself cannot give an adequate answer, but you can still examine this question from a scientific point of view.

The father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, was first to say that man created faith in God because of his awful fear of death. He claims that just like a child needs the comfort and safety of his

¹Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam, 2010), 5.

²Imre Madách, *The Tragedy of Man: A Dramatic Poem* (1861; London: Forgotten Books, 2012).

³Peter B. Medawar, *Advice to a Young Scientist*, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Series, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

⁴Medawar, *The Limits of Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 31.

⁵*Ibid.*, 66.

⁶Francis Collins, *The Language of God* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

⁷John Lennox, *Can Science Explain Everything?* (Epsom, Surrey, England: The Good Book Company, 2019).

parents, people also need a higher power to feel safe. This is why people invented god and religion for themselves. However, there are several problems with Freud's statement. The main one is that it lacks any logical observation or scientific reasoning. It does not examine whether something is objectively true or not, but it expresses a desire without the examination of the facts.

The God who is described in the Bible is not the kind of God man would come up with because of their fear. While God is gracious and loving, He is also preeminent and holy and condemns the ones who reject his salvation. Human fear would rather create a God who provides happiness and ultimate salvation in all situations.

What most people desire by nature usually exists. C. S. Lewis calls this the "argument from desire." The humans' natural desires (hunger, thirst, sexual desires) are satisfied by external realities (food, drink, sexual intercourse). Basically, Lewis says that people long for things that exist because we cannot desire non-existent things since we would not know of them. If there was no food you would not desire it or crave for it, and you would not even need it. Lewis continues by saying that since the desire to experience the transcendent and supernatural is a natural desire of most people, it's highly probable that there must be an external reality (God) to satisfy this desire. In other words, the natural desire of human nature for the supernatural serves as an evidence for its existence.

Instead of objectively refuting God's existence, Freud instead unveils how God reveals himself to mankind. The God of the Bible manifests Himself as a Father—in no other religion, only in Christianity is God presented as a loving father, with whom you can be closely related. Clearly, the reasoning of Freud cannot objectively support claims for the non-existence of God since it is based on a God-image that stems from the Christian experience and it lacks the god-images of other religions. Consequently, it is not based on objective facts.

Although Freud does not provide objective arguments for refuting the existence of God, everyone should consider the probability that God does or does not exist. Either way, your decision will require some faith. For the atheist, they must have faith that there is no God. But can an atheist base their faith on facts, arguments and evidence or are they taking a leap of faith by denying God's existence? The same applies to believers in God. No matter how convincing your reasoning is for either side, ultimately belief in it will be indispensable. But faith does not mean you exclude intellect—even though many people claim exactly this.

I. The traces of God in the universe

*"Everywhere you look in science,
the harder it becomes to understand the universe without God."*

Robert Herrmann (professor of geophysics)

The most accepted scientific view today claims that the universe began about 14 billion years ago. All matter, energy, time and space were made from nothing at the Big Bang. The matter created by the Big Bang then cooled down to enable the formation of galaxies, stars and planets. The most widely accepted scientific view, the Big Bang theory, also claims that the universe is not eternal and that it had a set beginning and it will end at a specific time. (It is interesting to note that up until a few

decades ago scientists generally held the view that the universe was eternal; that matter, energy and time always existed, which is a static fact and is unchangeable.)

The beginning points to a Creator

Since the universe has a beginning, it is not eternal and neither is matter, energy or time. And if it is not eternal, how did it start? What started it? Where did the original atom come from? Obviously, if there had been a moment in time when nothing existed, then how could any existence follow that? It means something or someone had to start it.

The popular atheist scientist, Stephen Hawking, said that proving that “time had a beginning” was the most important scientific discovery of mankind. Basically, it means that time is not endless, it did not exist forever, neither did matter nor energy. It means that the universe has a beginning and an end, and there is a finite amount of matter available. (In fact, there is only one religion where its holy book claims the same, and it is the Bible. The holy books of all other religions claim that their god created the world already in time. But the Bible claims that God created the world outside time, in the beginning of time—as we read in Genesis 1, Hebrews 11:3, Titus 1:2 or 2 Timothy 1:9).

In light of all this, namely that the universe and time have a well-defined beginning, the following questions arise: Who started it? Who started the whole process? German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz concludes that if God is taken out of the equation, the logical conclusion is the following: “Why is there something rather than nothing?”⁸

The answer of atheism is that the universe came into being as a result of a process that was controlled or directed by no one. The thought that something came out from nothing raises many issues. One of these was addressed by 20th century Hungarian poet, Endre Ady, in his poem “*Escape to the Lord*”:

“It would be terrible, impossible that this
Life, Life, Life
belongs to either nobody or to man alone.”

Creation presupposes a Creator

Every man-made thing has a creator, designer, artist or director. In our everyday life it would be unacceptable for something to come from nothing. Nobody passes a house or a car, puts a product in their shopping cart thinking that the given house, car or object happened by accident, that was not created by someone and it is not the end result of an unplanned and aimless process. Everyone is aware of the serious engineering work, planning, design and execution required for roads, for the concrete and the pipes to create a meaningful shape and function like forming a building. Nobody thinks that a building came about due to some fortunate series of events or circumstances that made the particles form bricks. Nor do they think that cement, sand and limestone happened to morph into mortar over time and then somehow got applied to a level amount on all the walls. Time has the exact opposite effect on buildings and items—things break down over time, they do not improve by themselves. If they became better we would get fitter and stronger as we age, and our old machines would be better than the new ones. One of the fundamental laws of physics is entropy—without an

⁸Gottfried Leibniz, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Why_there_is_anything_at_all, accessed 5-24-21.

external energy input, everything is heading towards chaos. Everyone understands that intelligent design and deliberate, planned forces are required for a building (or any kind of structure) to stand and come about. Nevertheless, when you talk about man (whose every cell contains billions of DNA spirals) or the universe—which is a trillion times more complicated than any man-made building or machine—many can easily believe that it came about without intelligent and intentional design.

If you said to someone, “give me proof that this building was built by someone,” then they replied with “the building itself would be the proof that there was a builder.” They would be exactly right, the building itself would be the proof that there was a builder. The sun, the moon, the stars, the grains of sand, all the different snowflakes, 3.5 billion DNAs that vary from everyone else’s DNA absolutely prove that there was a Creator of everything. Just because you haven’t met the builder of a building and you haven’t talked to them does not mean that such a person does not exist. You don’t need some special faith to believe that there is a builder and designer of a building. The work they left behind serves as evidence for their existence. The artwork left behind by the Creator of the universe provides sufficient evidence for us to realize that He does exist.

If we really came from nothing and there is no intelligent Creator, we are no more than the unintelligent and aimless end products of an equally unintelligent and random process that has no goal whatsoever. Any goal or purpose cannot be interpreted within an atheistic setting, because...

... if there is no God, there is no Creator.

... if there is no Creator, there is no Designer.

... if there is no Designer, there is no Plan,

... if there is no Plan, there is no Purpose,

... if there is no Purpose, nothing makes Sense or has meaning at all.

The purpose and goal of anything points back to the person who Created it and it presupposes their existence. The first line of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* states that all men by nature desire to know. In support of this thesis, Aristotle gives the witty explanation that since everyone greatly appreciates all their senses, we do not want to lose any of them. This is why man desperately seeks knowledge. It is our senses that open the gate for the mind to grasp the understanding of knowledge. We want to know the function that different body parts play. At a very young age we discover the purpose of our visible external body parts. Medicine is already developed and it is still evolving, making an effort to find out the purpose of our inner and hidden parts. It would be illogical and a weird contradiction to say that your body parts each have a purpose and at the same time your very existence has no purpose. If there is a purpose, God must also exist. And if God exists, then He created us for a certain purpose. If there is nothing and no one behind life, then nothing and nobody has any meaning or sense, including your life. What is even worse, you would have to draw the conclusion that the lives of your children have no purpose either, since you will all return to where you came from—to nothing.

Did the universe create itself?

In the first two points you have already seen there are logical and empirical problems with the assumption that the universe created itself. Even renowned scientists discuss this issue. For example, Stephen Hawking writes the following, “Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing.”⁹ Anyone who carefully reads this sentence will recognize an obvious

⁹Hawking and Mlodinow, *The Grand Design*, 180.

contradiction. If the law of gravity was required for the creation of the universe, then the universe could not create itself from nothing because gravity was already something that existed. In the first half of his statement Hawking declares that gravity exists, but in the second half he talks about the universe that came about from nothing. A thing cannot cause an effect unless it already existed. Gravity cannot work without already existing. Did the universe come into being from nothing or because of gravity? John Lennox justly says that “nonsense remains nonsense, even when talked by world-famous scientists.”¹⁰

Order, complexity and intelligent design all point to a Creator

Even the most ardent atheists acknowledge that the universe reveals an amazing system, regularity, complexity and intelligence. The famous atheist, scientist Richard Dawkins, writes: “It is overwhelmingly, uncomfortably and blatantly obvious that if Darwinism was really based on chance, it could not be functioning. You do not need to be a mathematician or a physicist to calculate that even eternity would be a period of time too short for the human eye or a hemoglobin molecule to get randomly assembled.”¹¹

The astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle and astrophysicist Chandra Wickramasinghe share the views of Dawkins: “The likelihood of life to spontaneously emerge from inanimate matter is 1 to n , where ‘ n ’ is a terribly huge number with 40,000 zeros at the end. It is a big enough number to bury Darwin and the entire evolutionary theory underground. There is no abiogenesis on this planet nor elsewhere. And if life did not start randomly, it was necessarily created by some purposeful intelligence.”¹²

Consider some examples for the complexity required to create and sustain life.

The perfect fine-tuning of the forces of the universe

Stephen Hawking writes that, “The universe and its laws seem to have been created exactly for us. If any of the approximately 40 physical properties were to change to a minimum extent (their quantity or quality), life would cease to exist. Atoms would not be stable or could not be transformed into molecules, stars could not be formed and the universe would collapse before life could arise and the list goes on.”

Perfectly designed building blocks are required to make life possible at all. And these building blocks are the molecules. To illustrate this, below is a quote from a professor of astronomy, Dr. Hugh Ross, author of *New Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God*¹³:

“Atoms must come together in the appropriate form to possess all the chemical components necessary for life. And these molecules cannot be created without a specific amount of electromagnetic force. And it is this electromagnetic force that enables electrons to circle around the nucleus of the atom. If the electromagnetic force is too strong, the nucleus will not allow the electron to join other nuclei in order to form molecules. And if there are no molecules, there is no life. At the same time, there is a small problem also with the atom. The neutron and proton in the atom are held together by a nuclear force (the strongest force that is known in nature). If this nuclear force that holds the neutron and the proton together is too large, neutrons and protons adhere to other neutrons and protons,

¹⁰ John C. Lennox, *God and Stephen Hawking: Whose Design Is It Anyway?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2011), 32.

¹¹ Richard Dawkins, *Climbing Mount Improbable* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 67.

¹² Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, *Evolution from Space* (Greenwich, CT: Touchstone, 1984).

¹³ Hugh Ross, “New Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God,” <https://evo2.org/hugh-ross-origin-of-the-universe/>, accessed April 27, 2021.

which means that no hydrogen can be formed. There is no life without hydrogen. At the same time, if this particular force was a tiny bit weaker, no proton and neutron would remain together, so only hydrogen molecules could be formed, and life as we know would not be possible. If there was the slightest change in the force that holds the neutron and the proton together, it would make the birth of life impossible. Without this extreme fine-tuning not a single cell could be created. Scientists also know that there is a problem already with the neutron and proton itself. The neutron is 0.138% heavier than the proton. This is why the universe needs a little more energy to create neutrons than to create protons. It explains why there are seven times more protons in the universe than neutrons. If the mass of the neutron was one tenth less than 1% from its current mass, then the universe would create so many neutrons that black holes would abound everywhere and no life could be possible. If the mass of the neutron was one tenth more than 1% from its current mass the universe could not create enough neutrons to produce coal, oxygen, nitrogen, etc. And without these elements, there is no life. Therefore, it is not only the force that holds them together that must be very exact, but also the mass of the neutron and the proton. In addition, the gravitational force must be also a specific value for life to be made possible. The gravitational force must be exactly 10^{40} times less than the electromagnetic force. It is very important for the gravitational force to be much weaker than the other three forces. Yet the other three forces must allow gravity to work, otherwise no galaxies or planets could be created.

“Furthermore, the universe must remain electrically neutral, which means that it must have exactly the same number of positive and negative charged particles, otherwise the electromagnetic force will dominate over the gravitational force, impeding the birth of planets, galaxies and stars. The number of electrons in the universe must correspond to the number of protons to a ratio of 1 to 10^{37} . All these amazing figures testify to such level of fine-tuning that mankind could have never accomplished. Only one person can perform such fine-tuning. Such accurate coordination of the gravitational force, the nuclear force that holds the atoms together and the electromagnetic force would be absolutely impossible with human intelligence, equipment and science. And if there was only the faintest change in these factors, the universe would not stand as it is today.”

The existence of the DNA code

Another amazing example for complexity and a system is the DNA. It was discovered that the DNA is not a sample in the cell, but it is also a code (like a computer code), a language and a mechanism that stores information. Richard Dawkins writes the following on the DNA, “The codes of the genes are very similar to your computer.”¹⁴ The founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates says, “DNA is like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software ever created.”¹⁵ When you switch on a computer, you know that the programs you use were created by programmers with the help of codes. The creation of an operating system is a rather complicated coding task. The DNA of the cell contains an even more complicated code. The DNA is the program that runs the cells of the body. No one thinks that the much simpler computer program codes, which enable operating systems to function, were created by some random and self-sequencing process. How could DNA, which is not only a billion times more complicated and alive than a computer, but also capable of self-correcting and re-coding its damaged parts, be created randomly? All codes are consciously created. Science does not know a coding system that would have been brought forth as a result of a natural process. This is why DNA, which is also a code, had to be designed by some intelligent force.

¹⁴Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 17.

¹⁵Bill Gates, *The Road Ahead* (New York: Viking Press, 1995), 228.

The fact that DNA contains information points to its planned nature

John C. Lennox, professor of mathematics at the University of Oxford, writes, “**The existence of complex specified information is a serious challenge to the view that uncontrollable natural processes account for life and these forces make it scientifically plausible (credible) that life originates from an intelligent source.**”¹⁶ The existence of the DNA code already carries some information. It’s not only that a human cell contains about 3 billion DNA base pairs as a source of information, but these genes also carry additional information, about 7 billion bits each.

Stephen Meyer (Director of Discovery Institute for Science and Culture) writes, “DNA does not require the existence of an intelligent designer because it shows some similarities with a computer program or a human language, but because it has a characteristic (namely its information content) that only intelligently designed human texts and computer languages possess.”¹⁷

At the press event on the completion of the Human Genome Project the program director, Francis Collins, said, “It is a striking and shocking thing for me to realize that for the first time we gained insight into our own instruction manual, which was previously known only to God.”¹⁸ Gene Myers, who also participated in this project, writes, “We are charmingly complex at the molecular level.... But we still do not know ourselves, which is rather disappointing. There is still some metaphysical, magical element.... What is truly astonishing is the architecture of life...this system is extremely complex. It’s as if there was a designer behind it.... What we are facing here is immense and unparalleled intelligence.”¹⁹

The information in the DNA led scientists to conclude that the existence of information had to precede the existence of matter and energy. The Mind was before the matter and not the other way around. Biophysicist Dean Kenyon says, “If science is based on experience, then science tells us that the message encoded in the DNA must have originated from an intelligent cause.”²⁰

The rotation and position of planet Earth

Another example for accurate planning and complexity is the exact distance between the Earth and the Sun. The Earth is exactly at the right distance; it is neither too close nor too far away from the Sun. If it were a little further or closer, no life could exist on it. If the rotational speed of Earth changed only by 10% there could be no life on it. The distance of the Moon is also carefully measured. If it were 20% further away from its current location, all the dry land on Earth would be under seawater twice a day (due to the ebb and flow of tides).

These are all but a foretaste of the amazing fine-tuning and complexity that you can see in the universe and which is necessary for life. The modern discoveries of science (the finality of time, the beginning of matter and energy, the fine-tuning of design, the existence of information, etc.) must have all been created by some amazing intelligence. Neither scientifically nor philosophically is there any other sensible conclusion.

¹⁶ John C. Lennox, *God’s Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Books, 2009), 179.

¹⁷ Stephen C. Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009).

¹⁸ Francis Collins, PBS Newshour interview, July 21, 2006, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2006/07/21/july-21-2006-dr-francis-collins/15186/>, accessed, April 27, 2021.

¹⁹ See Tom Abate, “Human Genome Map Has Scientists Talking about the Divine,” San Francisco Chronicle, February 29, 2001, <http://www.arn.org/docs/news/genome021901.htm>, accessed April 27, 2021.

²⁰ Dean H. Kenyon and P. Davis, *Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins* (Dallas: Haughton, 1989), 187.

A personality refers to a Person

Perhaps someone still thinks this astonishing complexity and design is nothing but the product of chance and came out of matter. However, even if you believed that matter came from nothing, was designed by no one and was created by no force whatsoever (even if there isn't any empirical evidence available), you could still not explain the existence of non-material things that also determine your life. How can you explain rational concepts such as logic, mathematics and science or human intelligence if all this was the outcome of a meaningless accident that made no sense? How can you explain the amazingly complex and complicated personality, soul and emotions of a person if they were purely matter and nothing else? Is it possible to have something out of nothing, make something personal from the impersonal, create sense from what is meaningless, turn the emotionally empty to rich in emotions and make something that lacks any morals into a moral being?

II. The traces of God in your inner being

*"If God does not exist, everything is permitted."*²¹

Albert Einstein clearly saw the limitations of science in particular when it comes to morality. He said, that "We can speak rightly of the moral foundations of science, but we cannot reverse it and talk about the scientific foundations of morality.... Every attempt to translate ethics into scientific formulas is doomed to fail."²²

Your conclusion about the existence or non-existence of God must provide a satisfactory answer for the origins of matter, the birth of life, personality and morality. Denying the existence of God would be equal to saying that the universe came into being in an impersonal way. Not even the impersonal elements of the universe can be explained with an atheistic approach. However, if we presume the existence of matter, energy and the random (which are definitely all impersonal components), we should still find an explanation for the appearance of human beings in the universe. And it is even more impossible to find an explanation for thinking, will and emotions if we exclude the existence of God. If there is no God, no one was present at the outset. Aristotle said that it is much easier to imagine that something existing created the non-existent than it was that the non-existent created the existing one.

Your personality, extraordinary complexity, your souls, joys, doubts, sorrows, passions, love and anger are all immaterial, intangible parts that still very much determine your quality of life. It clearly shows that man is more than the mere sum of molecules.

Besides the complex personality of people, there is something else that invisibly determines the behavior of man and relationships to each other. And this is nothing less than morality. Either expressly or implicitly, morality creates an invisible value system; it helps society and the individual to find their

²¹Rakitin, "A Hymn and a Secret," Part 4, Book 11, Chapter 4, in *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (12th edition; New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002).

²²Max Jammer, *Einstein and Religion: Physics and Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 69.

way in life. The big question is where this moral law in man and this unseen power in societies comes from. Is it a relative system that originates from nothing or it is an internal law written into us by an external authority?

What is morality?

Before we answer, let us define morality. Morality is the concept of good and bad, right and wrong, as well as responsibility. Classic philosophers wanted to find and embrace what was good, beautiful and true. In morality, we are looking for what is proper and fair.

Who is man?

Secondly, before you can provide a satisfactory answer to the origins of morality, it must be clarified who man is. The definition of morals is not possible without a definition of man. The definition of morality should be preceded by a definition of man, for whom morality and ethics exist and whose life and behavior it defines.

It is important to have clear definitions when we talk about ethics and morality. Before we undertake the enormous task of describing human behavioral patterns, it is useful to know what it means to be a human being. Non-Christian ideologies fail to provide a convincing definition for what/who man is.

In the last century, Hungary and all the other Eastern European countries experienced oppression by two extremely cruel ideologies. These ideologies gave a very specific definition to man.

In the interpretation of the Nazis, mankind is made up of superior and inferior races. The primary goal of the Nazi ideology was to reinforce the rule of the superior race over the inferior ones. Its ultimate goal—as the horrors of World War II clearly show—was the eradication of all species they considered to be inferior.

Communists—who were still in charge of the education system when the current adult Hungarian population was attending school—primarily defined man as an economic being. Egalitarianism was the main ideology and therefore, class conflict; wealthier people or land owners were considered to be the enemy. The ruling class had to be stripped of their rights and privileges, and if it served the communists' purposes, they even had to be eliminated, just as in the case of the richer peasants.

By now it has become clear that both Nazism and Communism already fully lost their credibility by the end of the 20th century. These ideologies insisted on defining man independently from the Creator. And because they did so, they were doomed to fail.

There are other powerful, rather intellectually convincing and less political ideologies that seek to define man in our modern times.

The followers of Darwin claim that the key to understanding man lies with biology, since man is a biological being, a being of matter. It means that when you break a human being down into chemical components you find that one person consists of fat (enough for 7 soaps), iron (about a medium size nail), sugar (enough for 7 cups of tea), lime (enough to disinfect a hen house), phosphorus (enough to produce 2000 match endings, magnesium (sufficient to shoot a toy cannon), potassium (enough to fire a handgun), sulphur (enough to kill the fleas on one dog), carbon (enough to produce 900 graphite pencils) and about 8 buckets of water. That's a human being in a biological sense.

The followers of Freud believe that man can be understood through psychology; i.e.; man is a psychological being.

Existentialists say that understanding even in the best case is intangible, but the key to the identity of man is subject to human will. That means that man's existence is because of human will.

We have to make an educated choice regarding what is best for us and live accordingly. Due to a lack of time and space these ideologies cannot be studied here in great depth. They each have their own appeal and most people have their own convictions that—at least to some extent—have been and are still being shaped by the Darwinian worldview.

The Christian worldview has a totally different take on mankind. According to the Bible, man is a fallen image. It means two things:

- Man is made as an image, which means that man was originally planned and created for a purpose. As an image, they were created to be man and woman to bear the image and to reflect the character of their Creator.
- Man is fallen, which means that he consciously went against the original plan of the Creator by making a deliberate, unlawful and condemnable choice. This is sin. What can be said of man is that man bears the image of God, but this image is distorted and ruined. God's plan is to save this fallen image by a Wounded Savior. These wounds were caused by the crucifixion. And healing is accomplished by faith. The name of this healer is Jesus. By redemption we mean the restoration of the original glory and state of man.

When we say that God created man in his own image, it not only means that man is different from animals because of their cognitive skills such as speech, thinking and foresight, but also in the social ability to live in relationships. Man cannot only live in relationship with other human beings, but man also bears this image function largely to connect and live with the Creator, according to the original plan. Therefore, the Christian definition of man entails the following two characteristics:

1. Because of their fallen nature man can do a lot of evil. This is what some of the contemporary social scientists do not want to acknowledge, despite overwhelming evidence in history.
2. Being an image, man has an enormous capacity to accomplish many wonderful things. Obviously, even those who do not accept the Christian worldview are also capable of doing good things. And our fallen nature is confirmed by the fact that even though many people believe the Christian Gospel they are still capable of committing a lot of evil. Being made into an image, man is able to live in a relationship with their Creator.

How does this all relate to morality? Man is capable of good and evil. That is what morality is all about. When we talk about ethics we talk about the difference between good (that we should seek) and bad (that we should avoid). The myth that Christianity is all about man being good or bad is a dangerous idea, yet this notion is rigidly held among people. But Christianity is primarily not about right and wrong. Obviously, this is a question that Christian people are concerned about. Yet, the essence of Christianity is not whether we are good or bad, but whether we are alive or dead. This is the reason why we must distinguish between those who are seemingly Christians, but only hold to religious superficiality and those who are Christians in the Biblical sense because of their personal faith. The Son of God was killed by religious people, seemingly out of religious conviction. A religious evil man is always worse than a political opponent. Pilate—the Roman governor—would have been

satisfied with Jesus being beaten and then released. The priests were the ones who insisted that Jesus should be executed. It is important to note that not everything done in the name of Christianity is in line with Biblical Christianity. Another observation is that most of the supposed “failures” of Christianity, if not all, can be attributed to the alliance between the Church and the State. If someone claims that Christianity lost its credibility by the end of the Middle Ages, it could also be said that the “government” also lost its credibility by then. When the State and the Church are not separated, the Church may engage in unforgivable wrongdoings. Most historical atrocities that Christianity is accused of were committed by governments. We have to realize that governments which deliberately deny religious realities aren’t any better, either. Solzhenitsyn reminds us of the fact that the Bolsheviks killed more people in the first month when they came into power in Russia than the Spanish Inquisition did in the course of 100 years.

The basis for morality

After the definition of morality and man (for whom morality exists) let’s now define the grounds for morality. Without an ethical, moral ground there could be no authority based on legislation or office, even if that authority is man himself. The basis for morality and ethics is some sort of authority. In an atheistic structure the autonomous and self-directed person is the only authority one can resort to. Therefore, man must be the moral authority. If we disregard the existence of God, our trust in the authority of man must stem from our trust in human wisdom. The wisdom of men—in this case—relies on its own power that originates from individual intellect and conscience. Morality could also come from a public consensus that developed in the course of many generations, based on social experience.

Human wisdom is a rather weak handle. Human conscience can become unreliable or insensitive. Morality based on public consensus could be totally degraded. We would not welcome the social morals of 399 B.C., even if it were the golden age of Greek philosophy. Let’s consider the cold reality that the arbitration court which sentenced Socrates to death consisted of 501 Greek citizens. We also tend to forget that the economies of ancient Rome and Greece prospered at the expense of their slaves. Neither would we want to submit ourselves to the public morals prevalent in Munich in 1936 when Hitler was worshiped as a superhuman.

Most philosophers agree that without the existence of an absolute God who set up the rules, there can be no absolute ethics, only preferences. If this God exists, then life is not accidental and has great worth. If there is no such God and there is no absolute right to life either, then choosing life is a mere preference. Without the existence of this absolute God, rulers could and did feel authorized to kill and oppress the weak. Without an absolute, the strong will survive while the weak will perish. For Christians, the basis for morality is God himself. God who reveals and declares certain things. Since morality seeks what is good, God who exists and reveals himself must also be a good God.

Morality is built top down, not from the bottom up. Morality has an objective basis. If morality is based on human wisdom, conscience, consensus or culture, it must necessarily be subjective and changing all the time. The atheist who denies the existence of God cannot provide any explanation for the origin and existence of morality, but neither for anything else, their own existence included.

Who am I? How much am I worth? Why am I here? In what direction am I heading? These are the fundamental questions of philosophy. The answers you give to these questions will determine your whole life. If your answer is materialistic you basically say we are random clusters of cells made of

matter that developed over an extended period of time as a product of an unknown ancient energy. In this case, you define yourselves as a purely biological being. Because of this definition, your goals can only be materialistic and even your future is connected to this matter, which is your body.

If you seek an answer to “Who am I?” by removing the Creator from the equation, it means the following:

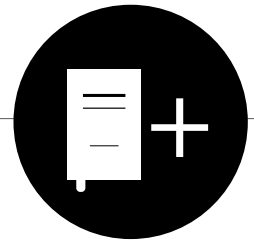
- On the one hand, life is the result of an impersonal, unintelligent, meaningless and ultimately pointless process. We are just as purposeless and aimless as the process that created us. Life is the result of chance and we are accidents. You can seek short-term goals, such as “You are here to help your parents or to raise your children,” but ultimately you are random products, similar to your parents and children. Life is a big accident. There is no purpose, no lasting future and, ultimately, your life has no meaning at all in the long term. Since there was no Creator in the very beginning who would have placed you here for a reason, there is no reason for your existence. It’s that simple.
- On the other hand, your life is worthless. You ask the question “How much am I worth?” Without God, you have no inherent value. You have no objective value. Your worth becomes subjective. Perhaps you think of yourself as someone worthy, but anyone can say anytime that you are not. When your worth becomes relative, even the notion of good and bad becomes relative. A random and impersonal process has no objective value, so the product of this process (man) has no objective value either.

If you are more than a bundle of cells compiled by a randomized particle generator, and if you are the meaningful creation of a sensible Creator, then you have a place and purpose in this world. You are not alone and your existence is not meaningless, either. We examined that without a Creator nothing makes sense or has value. It means that if God exists then He is the final reality. If He created you then this is the reason why you are here on earth and your life has a purpose. You exist for a reason. If you are valuable to Him, your worth is set by this fact. And whatever God says of good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood—that will be your absolute measure. You will then have freedom to make moral choices, but this does not mean that you can decide what is good and what is bad. If you are a creation of God, then He is the one setting the rules. If you are not His creation, then no rules apply.

If God really exists, then and only then do concepts such as justice, purpose and morality make sense. Only in this case does your life have a purpose, does morality count and does truth exist. Christianity not only answers the drama of human life, but it is also true, rational and knowable. Getting to know God on a personal basis is possible and accessible for people who are fallen images.

We hope that the content of these books made you come to the conclusion that the universe, the existence of information, matter and existence of energy along with the complexity of life, and the presence of human personality and morals provide sufficient argument that there is a Creator God. May you see this creator God as one who reveals himself, whose traces of existence are visible everywhere and who can be known. Compare it with the big nothing on the other side.

Which one is more validated by life?



Used and Additional Resources

Josh McDowell and Dale Bellis, *Evidence for Joy: Unlocking the Secrets of Being Loved, Accepted and Secure*

Can you still feel that you are loved when you are mourning the end of a recent break-up? This book reveals the secrets of being loved and it shows how you can tap into a limitless supply of love.

Can you experience acceptance even when others reject you? You can discover the secrets of being secure and you can leave behind the treadmill of “perfectionism.” Your reward will be a confident self-image.

Can you still feel secure when life as you know it is crumbling down into pieces? This book reveals the secrets to feeling safe and secure, it helps you overcome fears and anxiety about an uncertain future and it also helps you become confident and expectant about it.

Josh McDowell, *Am I Who Others Say I Am?*

This book helps you get rid of your fears, worries and lack of self-confidence. It helps you free yourself from the feelings and forces that discourage or hold you down. Josh himself struggled with a sense of worthlessness, insignificance, and fear for a number of years, but he eventually overcame these and became a dynamic speaker and writer. This book is full of practical answers and advice to the desperate state that many people experience today.

Josh McDowell and Dick Day, *Why wait? A report on the sexual habits of teenagers*

- This book reveals 37 reasons why young people are sexually active before marriage.
- There are 26 powerful arguments presented in this book that reveal why it is worth waiting for sex until you get married.
- It teaches you how to resist peer pressure regarding sexuality.
- It teaches young people how to build a good relationship with members of the opposite sex by resisting peer pressure and sexual temptations.

Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, *The Love Killer*

Through the story of a young girl, this novel helps young people understand what real love is and how to keep their love continuously alive. It paints the picture of how sex can destroy teens' lives and spoil the love they so desperately seek. It helps you understand the true meaning and purpose of sex and discover the mystery of never-ending love. It also serves as a guide for evaluating information about safe sex.

Josh McDowell, *Sex, Guilt and Forgiveness*

In his book Josh explains how to treat guilt and anger that originate from negative sexual experiences. He points out that past grievances do not necessarily have to obstruct emotional and psychological health in the present or in the future.

Josh McDowell, *It Can Happen to You*

This is a book that walks you through the life of a Christian young lady confronted by her boyfriend on a date to rape her. It explains what date rape is and how it can happen to you, even when being careful, what to do if you are a rape victim and how to recover from it.

Josh McDowell, *The Myths of Sex Education*

This book exposes the shallowness of "liberal and morally neutral" sex education in the USA. It provides supporting data as to how the exaggeration and concealing of facts misled parents, teachers and lawmakers. Relying on scientific research, surveys and statistical analysis it provides answers to the following questions: Is there a decrease in the number of abortions among teenagers as a result of sexual education? Is "safe sex" really safe? Does the use of condoms help to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies? How does a teacher, a parent or a lawmaker evaluate the American sexual education program?

Barry St. Clair and Bill Jones, *Sex, Desiring the Best*

In this book Barry St. Clair and Bill Jones tackle the 12 most pressing issues related to sex and sexuality in their outspoken, practical approach. The guiding principle of their book is "seek the biggest and the fullest experience by building on a solid foundation that will help you to have the most enjoyable sex life possible."

Josh McDowell, *No! The Positive Answer*

The target audience of this short handbook are students. It explains how to keep the powerful sexuality you possess under control. It is a short guide that Josh draws from his research and experience regarding sex.

Josh McDowell, *It Happened to Me*

This short booklet was prepared primarily for those who suffered any form of sexual abuse and rape. It describes various forms of abuse and rape and it reveals how God can help you to recover and become free.

Josh McDowell & Paul Lewis *Givers, Takers And Other Kinds of Lovers*

The book skips old school generalizations and deals with the basic questions such as: What happened to sexual freedom? What is true love? What is your most important sexual organ? Do men react differently than women?

Dr. Ross Campbell, *Your Child & Drugs: Help for Concerned Parents*

"I did not only write to parents whose children take drugs. If your child is so fortunate that they have not been trapped by drugs, this book is for you. If your child is only three years old and you never want them to start taking or trying drugs, this book is for you. If you are expecting your first child, this book is definitely for you...to help you, your children and basically the whole family to live without drugs and experience real value in your relationships."

Josh McDowell and Bill Jones, *The Teenage Q&A Book*

Here are the answers to your questions that have been left unanswered for years! It answers to over 230 questions like these: How can I get along with my parents? Why do I view myself and think about myself this way? How can I make friends and even keep them? How can I get rid of the memory of my rape? In this book you will find open, honest and straightforward answers. It provides you with clear Biblical solutions to the toughest problems of your life.

Barry St. Clair and Bill Jones, *Love: Making It Last*

Barry St. Clair and Bill Jones, the two popular youth workers and presenters, explain how you can find love and have lasting relationships. The book answers questions like the following: What does it really mean to fall in love? What does it feel like to be truly in love? What should I do when I am rejected? How do I find the right partner? Barry St. Clair and Bill Jones help to unveil the mystery about love and they help you to get on a path that leads to happier relationships.

Elisabeth Elliot, *Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under God's Control*

The author guides readers into the topic of love and purity through interesting stories and personal experiences. It discusses the time of waiting and searching, and it also provides practical help to find the right partner.

Dr. James Dobson, *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women*

James Dobson is an acclaimed expert of the human character and Christian family life. As a husband and father, his writings are grounded in personal experience; he perceives issues from close up that women have to face. In this book, he analyzes many important areas of a woman's life and personality, including self-esteem, exhaustion, financial troubles, depression and physiological problems, romance, sex and bearing children.

Dr. Ross Campbell, *How to Really Love Your Child*

The author is a psychiatrist and the father of four children. He gives comprehensive descriptions on the most fundamental issues of parenting. In his book Dr. Campbell reveals that the grounds for a good relationship with your children are unconditional love and acceptance. He gives practical advice on how you can make your child feel loved and accepted and consequently grow into a mature person.

Dr. Ross Campbell, *How To Really Love Your Teenager*

In this book Dr. Campbell provides valuable help on how to raise teenagers. According to him, a large share of the mistakes committed by the parents originate from the fact that they do not know how to express their love to teenagers and because they do not understand their behavior. He explains the symptoms of adolescent

depression and what you can do about it. You can learn how group dynamics for teenagers work and how these affect adolescents. The book describes that the anger and outrage of teenagers is absolutely normal, they only need to be taught how to relieve this pressure. He also explains how teenagers can be taught to become gradually independent and this book provides useful advice on how to intellectually and spiritually educate them.

Josh McDowell, *The Secret of Loving*

You can experience the most fulfilling love, fellowship and community. You can find that intimate setting where you can give and receive love. You can experience the mystery of fulfilled love, marriage and sexuality.

Dave and Claudia Arp, *Two on the Road*

This book will help you assess what life cycle your marriage is in at this point. It provides practical advice for problematic areas such as communication, finances, sex life and creating a common set of values, etc. Dave and Claudia Arp keep biblical principles in mind as they share examples from their own lives with a great sense of humor.

Dr. Lawrence J. Crabb, *The Marriage Builder: A Blueprint for Couples and Counselors*

Most married couples consider their partners as someone who has to satisfy their own needs and it reduces marriage to some form of mutual manipulation. In his book, Lawrence Crabb explains that a fully fruitful marriage can develop only when the partners expect the fulfillment of their deepest needs from God. It is only in God that you can find your safety and understand your importance.

Dr. István Török, *Etika (Ethics, only in Hungarian)*

Answering the eternal and pressing question of “What should I do?” Professor Török helps us to be vigilant against the worldly responses to life. The cultivation of Christian morality requires greater vigilance than ever before if you do not want to carelessly mix the responsibilities of divine wisdom with worldly philosophy.

Dr. Endre Gyökössi, *Magunkról magunknak (About us and to us, only in Hungarian)*

The renowned Hungarian theologian psychologist uniquely combines two different disciplines. A larger part of this book is dedicated to the human psyche. It is useful for the work of counselors and pastors. The author examines interesting topics such as the question of the body and soul, fear, aggression, personal will and emotions, loneliness, passion, suffering and facing death.

Dr. Endre Gyökössi, *Együtt a szeretetben (Together in Love, only in Hungarian)*

“The primary purpose of this book is to show a way for believing families to experience faith, true love and the gospel as they raise children in a loving and modern way. In this book, the author illustrates how growing a family can have a unique and gospel-driven element that does not stir up rebellion in children,” writes István Harsányi in this recommendation.

Dr. Ferenc Pálhegyi, *Keresztyén házasság (Christian marriage, only in Hungarian)*

Even though the author understands that psychology is a discipline and also a practical tool he still says *“I’m not expecting psychology to solve the fundamental issues in my life...”* You ultimately wonder where he expects a solution to exist or expects to find a solution. The author reveals in his book that you can solve marriage problems only by taking the Word of God seriously and by trusting your life to Him. If you accept the biblical approach and biblical teachings, it will help you to build a solid and secure marriage.

Dániel Ablonczy, Dr. Endre Gyökössi, József Adorján, *Nem jó az embernek egyedül (It’s not good for man to be alone, only in Hungarian)*

This book wants to help young married couples and families with questions related to family life. The authors want to raise the moral standards of society and boost the financial well-being of family life. They hope

to provide guidance, brotherly and pastoral love and above all, they bring the Word of God to young people who are getting married.

Don Meredith, *Two Becoming One*

The writer stresses important aspects such as why marriages fail, the stages marriages go through—including the reality stage and how our unresolved resentment impacts men and women differently. Included are many valuable, biblical and practical helps.

Josh McDowell, *Teens Speak Out: What I Wish My Parents Knew about My Sexuality*

If you want to equip young people to live moral lives in today's sexually promiscuous culture, you need to be in tune with their gut-level struggles. They wrestle with a lot more than you are aware of. This book helps teenagers, parents, pastors, teachers and youth workers to have a biblical, reasonable and sensitive approach while saying no to premarital sex.

Valson Thampu, *AIDS Heresy and Prophecy—What the Virus Says*

In his book Valson Thampu demonstrates through a convincing case that the Biblical and Christian worldview gives us the only “golden rule” that helps us to develop conscious, consistent and meaningful responses to AIDS. No other worldview can stand under the scrutiny of critical research. The book reveals the shortcomings of the information provided by the “experts” and it gives an honest assessment of the real situation. It deals not only with the symptoms, but also the root of the problem itself.

Esther Kietz, *Dance for Life, 14 years in the shadow of AIDS* (not published in English, only in German and Hungarian)

In February 1981, in a small rural hospital in Germany a long-awaited baby girl is born. The birth was very difficult, and the life of the mother could be spared only with immediate blood transfusions from voluntary blood donors. During this heroic struggle an almost unknown, yet lethal virus—AIDS—is transmitted both to the mother and to the baby. The little girl tested positive for HIV.... Is there still hope, love and life after such terrible news? Esther Kietz, the grandmother, writes a very realistic and honest account of the 14 years of struggle that followed.

Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*, 2010.

John Lennox, *God and Stephen Hawking*, 2011.

H. Katherine Hayles, *How We Think*, Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis, 2012.

Gary Wilson, *Your Brain on Porn*, 2017. Relevant research on the impact of pornography: <https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/relevant-research-and-articles-about-the-studies/>.

How Porn Effects the Brain: <https://fightthenewdrug.org/get-the-facts/> 2021.

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Social Dilemma video, Netflix, 2020.

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