



**TEACHER'S GUIDE**  
**Grades 7-8**

**How Can I Make God-Pleasing Decisions About . . .**

Authorized by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

*I am the light of the world.  
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.*

John 8:12

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# INTRODUCTION

Whether you are a parent, pastor, or teacher, you have been blessed by God with a special privilege and given a great responsibility. The Lord has placed into your hands the task of nurturing his lambs with his Holy Word. The following information will help you as you carry out your God-given task.

**Scope:** Christ-Light is a complete religion curriculum for youth from birth through grade 12. Christ-Light materials are designed for use in all educational agencies of a congregation. Therefore, it is important for the teachers of Sunday schools and Lutheran elementary schools, as well as high school Bible classes and Lutheran high schools, to coordinate their curriculum planning so that these programs complement rather than duplicate one another.

## Characteristics of Students in This Age Group (Ages 12-14)

### Mental development

- Can think abstractly
- Can delve more deeply into spiritual truths
- Can explore the application of spiritual truths in many different ways
- Can grasp where and when events took place
- Can concentrate for longer periods of time than before
- Can memorize easily

### Emotional development

- Are becoming quite independent in forming personal attitudes and habits
- Can display irrational mood swings
- Are searching for identity and freedom
- Want to show that they are responsible

### Social development

- Can work cooperatively in small groups
- Learn from words, actions, and opinions of their teachers
- Are greatly influenced by the words, actions, and opinions of their peers
- Tend to share less of what they are learning with parents
- Are beginning the process of becoming independent from their parents
- May test parental authority

**Parent Involvement:** Parent involvement is a very important element of Christ-Light. Student materials from birth through grade 6 contain written parent messages that help parents review Bible truths with their children. Since teens are becoming more independent learners, Christ-Light does not offer written parent messages at the seventh- and eighth-grade level. Since, however, parents continue to be some of the best teachers of their children, **Table Talk** activities offer suggestions for parent/student interaction. The teacher, therefore, should encourage parents of teens to continue teaching their children, but also urge them to support independent learning.

All the lessons have been written so that parents could teach them at home. Some training will be needed at the beginning, but the need for training will decrease as parents gain experience and confidence.

**Memory Treasures:** Bible passage, catechism, and hymn memory treasures are incorporated into the lessons. Memory treasures marked with a single asterisk are core for Sunday school, and those marked with two asterisks are additional core for Lutheran elementary schools.

**Hymnology:** Many Lutheran elementary school teachers use one day of the week to teach a hymn. Christ-Light incorporates the core hymns into the student lessons and suggests that they be taught as an integral part of the lesson. Those who prefer to use a day of the week to teach a hymn may still do so. All hymnal references are to *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* (CW) unless otherwise indicated.

**General Supplies:** Each student will need a Bible (NIV) and a hymnal (CW). The teacher will need an overhead projector and a chalkboard to carry out some of the suggested options and activities.

## How to Teach the Lesson

**Goals:** Three goals have been developed for each lesson: a spiritual truth, a spiritual attitude, and a spiritual habit. It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will lead the students to know the spiritual truth and to adopt the spiritual attitude and the spiritual habit as part of their daily lives.

## Teaching the Lesson

**Introduction:** (5 minutes) Use this section to develop interest in the lesson. The introduction should be interactive—encouraging the students to participate in discussion. A discussion activity is provided at the beginning of each lesson. However, because each group of students is unique, teachers should feel free to change the activity provided or to use an alternative activity that would effectively lead students into the aim of the lesson.

**Aim:** The aim of the lesson is stated in the form of a question. The Lesson Summary answers the aim question.

**Lesson Sections:** Each lesson is a Bible study. It is divided into three or four sections that develop the truth of the lesson. Each section contains the following elements: The Word, The Word in My Life, and the Illustration and Key Point.

**The Word:** (3 minutes) This element begins by preparing the students to study the key passage(s), which contain(s) the scriptural truth to be taught. This section may give background material or briefly review the verses that surround the key passage(s). The teacher should tell this section, rather than simply read it.

(5 minutes) The Word then penetrates the key passage(s). The scriptural truth found in the key passage(s) is the “meat” of each section. The questions encourage student discussion and are intended to develop deeper insight into the scriptural truth being taught. Teachers should feel free to add verbal illustrations as they teach this section.

**Note:** *Students may not be comfortable with this interactive approach. Teachers may, at first, need to develop one or two simpler questions to lead students into the higher level questions.*

**The Word in My Life:** (5 minutes) This element applies the truth of the section to the lives of the students. One or more applications are suggested in the teacher’s guide. Teachers may use one of

these applications or one of their own. Teachers should use an application that is meaningful to the particular group of students they are teaching. Space is provided in the student lesson for the students to write their responses to the application chosen.

**Illustration and Key Point:** Each section concludes with a concrete verbal illustration and the key point. The illustration should help the students understand and retain the key point being taught in the section. Teachers may use the illustration provided, or they may develop an illustration of their own. Rather than telling the key point, teachers may encourage the students to formulate it themselves. Space is provided in the student lesson for the students to write the key point.

**Lesson Summary:** The Lesson Summary ties the lesson together by answering the question that is asked in the aim and developed in the study of the key points. Rather than telling it, teachers may encourage the students to formulate the lesson summary themselves. Space is provided in the student lesson for the students to write the lesson summary.

**Memory Treasures:** These passages, chief parts of the catechism, and hymns apply to the lesson being taught. Use the explanation following each memory treasure to show how it relates to the truth of the lesson as well as to the students’ lives. Teachers are encouraged to assign the memory treasures that are suggested as core.

**Lesson Activities:** The Lesson Activities offer brief devotion ideas, parent involvement suggestions, review exercises, and lesson extension opportunities. Some activities include **Copy Masters**, which may be duplicated and distributed to the students. One copy master is an outline of the lesson. Teachers may use this as an overhead transparency as they teach the lesson.

**Note:** *Suggested teaching times are a guide and will vary from lesson to lesson.*

## Memory Treasures

<b>Catechism Memory Treasures</b>					
Ten Commandments, meanings, and conclusion Apostles' Creed—articles and meanings Lord's Prayer and meanings Sacrament of Holy Baptism—First and meaning Sacrament of Holy Communion—First and meaning					
<b>Hymn Memory Treasures</b>					
Hymn Category	Hymn Number	Hymn Title	SS Core	LES Core	Optional
Advent	2:1	Savior of the Nations, Come .....			✓
Christmas	38:1-3,13	From Heaven Above to Earth I Come .....			✓
Lent	103:1,2,6	Glory Be to Jesus .....			✓
Lent	111:1,2,5	Sweet the Moments, Rich in Blessing .....			✓
Easter	152:1-3,7,8	I Know that My Redeemer Lives .....		✓	
Ascension	170:1,3	Draw Us to Thee .....			✓
Ascension	173:1	On Christ's Ascension I Now Build .....			✓
Pentecost	183:1,3,4	Holy Spirit, Light Divine .....			✓
Reformation	200:1-4	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.....		✓	
End Time	208:1	Great God, What Do I See and Hear .....			✓
Worship and Praise	234:1,3	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty .....			✓
Word of God	282:1	Lord, Open Now My Heart to Hear .....		✓	
Word of God	284:1,3,4	How Precious Is the Book Divine.....			✓
Word of God	293:1	God's Word Is Our Great Heritage .....			✓
Confession and Absolution	304:1,5,7	Jesus Sinners Does Receive .....	✓	✓	
Close of Service	319:1	On My Heart Imprint Your Image.....			✓
Close of Service	333:1,2	Abide, O Dearest Jesus .....			✓
Redeemer	348:1,4	Jesus, Jesus, Only Jesus .....		✓	
Redeemer	358:1,2	How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds .....			✓
Justification	379:1,3	Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound.. ..			✓
Justification	391:1,3,4	God Loved the World So that He Gave ....			✓
Prayer	411:1,2	What a Friend We Have in Jesus .....	✓	✓	
Trust	422:1-4	Jesus, Lead Us On .....		✓	
Trust	429:1-3	What God Ordains Is Always Good.....	✓	✓	
Trust	432:1	I Am Jesus' Little Lamb .....			✓
Trust	436:1,2,4	Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep .....		✓	
Trust	441:1,3	O God, Our Help in Ages Past .....			✓
Commitment	469:1-3,6	Take My Life and Let It Be .....	✓	✓	
Commitment	478:1,2	With the Lord Begin Your Task.....		✓	
Stewardship	485:1,2	We Give Thee but Thine Own .....			✓
Christian Love	490:1-3	Love in Christ Is Strong and Living.....		✓	
Christian Home	506:1,3	Oh, Blest the House, Whate'er Befall.....			✓
Missions	573:1,2,4	Hark! The Voice of Jesus Crying .....	✓	✓	

**Hymn Memory Treasures (continued)**

Hymn Category	Hymn Number	Hymn Title	SS Core	LES Core	Optional
Evening	587:3,4	Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow .....		✓	
Evening	588:1,2,6,7	Abide with Me .....		✓	
Confirmation	596:1	Let Me Be Yours Forever .....		✓	
Death and Burial	606:1-3	For Me to Live Is Jesus .....		✓	
Thanksgiving	610:1-3	Now Thank We All Our God.....		✓	

**Bible Passage Memory Treasures**

SS Core	LES Core
Genesis 1:1	Genesis 1:1
Exodus 20:11a	Genesis 39:9b
Psalm 37:5	Exodus 20:11a
Psalm 50:15	Job 19:25-27
Psalm 51:5	Psalm 37:5
Psalm 118:1	Psalm 50:15
Psalm 119:105	Psalm 51:5
Proverbs 3:5	Psalm 103:1,2
Isaiah 43:11	Psalm 118:1
Matthew 7:7	Psalm 119:105
Matthew 11:28	Psalm 139:14
Matthew 22:37	Psalm 145:15,16
Matthew 22:39b	Proverbs 3:5
Matthew 26:41	Isaiah 41:10
Matthew 28:19	Isaiah 43:11
Matthew 28:19,20	Isaiah 64:6a
Matthew 28:20b	Matthew 4:10b
Mark 16:16	Matthew 6:33
Luke 11:28	Matthew 7:7
John 3:16	Matthew 11:28
	Matthew 18:20
	Matthew 22:37
	Matthew 22:39b
	Matthew 26:41
	Matthew 28:19
	Matthew 28:19,20
	Matthew 28:20b
	Mark 10:45
	Mark 16:16
	Luke 11:28
	Luke 18:13b
	John 1:29b
	John 3:16
	John 5:39
	John 11:25,26a

**Bible Passage Memory Treasures (continued)**

SS Core	LES Core
<p>John 14:19b</p> <p>Romans 3:23</p> <p>Romans 6:23</p> <p>Romans 8:28</p> <p>Romans 10:17</p> <p>1 Corinthians 10:31</p> <p>Ephesians 2:8,9</p> <p>1 Timothy 2:3,4</p> <p>1 Peter 5:7</p> <p>1 John 1:7b</p> <p>Revelation 2:10b</p>	<p>John 14:19b</p> <p>Romans 1:16</p> <p>Romans 3:23</p> <p>Romans 3:24</p> <p>Romans 6:23</p> <p>Romans 8:28</p> <p>Romans 10:17</p> <p>1 Corinthians 10:31</p> <p>1 Corinthians 12:3b</p> <p>Galatians 3:26</p> <p>Galatians 3:27</p> <p>Galatians 4:4,5</p> <p>Ephesians 2:8,9</p> <p>Ephesians 4:32</p> <p>Ephesians 6:1</p> <p>1 Timothy 2:3,4</p> <p>2 Timothy 3:15</p> <p>2 Timothy 3:16</p> <p>Hebrews 11:1</p> <p>James 1:22</p> <p>1 Peter 5:7</p> <p>1 Peter 5:8</p> <p>1 John 1:7b</p> <p>1 John 3:15</p> <p>1 John 4:19</p> <p>Revelation 2:10b</p>

## Dating Partners?

### LESSON OVERVIEW

#### Goals

We pray that the student

**knows this spiritual truth:** God, who instituted marriage, wants his children to choose their dating partners wisely.

**develops this spiritual attitude:** Wanting to choose dating partners who will not lead them away from God.

**develops this spiritual habit:** Choosing appropriate dating partners.



Whom will I date?

#### Key Points

**1. What is the ultimate purpose of dating?**

Dating is a way to find a partner for a happy marriage.

**2. What kind of dating partners will I avoid?**

I will avoid dating partners who might lead me away from God.

**3. What kind of dating partner is the best choice?**

The best dating partners are fellow Christians who have God-pleasing qualities that I would desire in a spouse.

#### Lesson Summary

God's Word says little about dating, but it does tell me that God instituted marriage. I will view dating as part of the process of choosing a marriage partner. I will avoid dating partners who might lead me away from God. And I will look for dating partners who are fellow believers and who have God-pleasing qualities that I would desire in a spouse.

### Introduction

#### Mating or Dating?

The grinning TV emcee was grilling his contestants for details of their “dream date.” The studio audience was *ooing* and *aahing* as intimate details were revealed one by one.

“He was wearing what when you got to his apartment?”

“When he kissed you, how did you feel?”

“You ended up where after your night on the town?”

If you’ve ever tuned in to one of these “mating game” shows, it doesn’t take long to discover that sex is the one thing these people are interested in. The assumptions are that the best date is the best-looking one and the natural end to a “great date” is a night together in bed. TV shows aren’t the only places Christian teens run into this propaganda. Music, magazines, commercials, and movies all seem to assume the expected price and prize for dating is sex. This doesn’t match God’s plan. God’s Word directs the Christian to make wise choices about dating, starting with what kind of person to date.

#### Explanation

The introduction draws the students’ attention to a scene most will find familiar. Have students create a list of TV shows and movies that produce lurid pictures of man-woman relationships. Why are these shows so popular? How do they influence young people’s ideas about dating and dating partners?



Whom will I date?

**1. What is the ultimate purpose of dating?**

*(Dating is a way to find a partner for a happy marriage.)*

## the WORD

Look up the term *dating* in a Bible concordance or a Bible dictionary, and about all you'll find is information on harvesting the fruit of date trees. The concept of *dating* isn't found in the Bible. It falls into a category of practices called *adiaphora*. That's a fancy word for matters of Christian freedom—things God has neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture. But without ever using the word *date*, God's Word tells us about the ultimate purpose of dating.

### Explanation

Read Genesis 2:18-25.

#### a. Which of Adam's needs did God fill by creating Eve?

God filled Adam's need for a partner perfectly corresponding to him and complementing him physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. None of the animals could fulfill these needs. But Eve did fulfill them. With her Adam was no longer alone.

#### b. What is God referring to when he says that a man and a woman will be united and "become one flesh"?

He is referring to marriage, the special union of a man and woman that God instituted. Husbands and wives share themselves spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically through sexual intercourse, an expression of their oneness.

#### c. Adam and Eve didn't date, but this passage does reveal the ultimate purpose for dating. What is it?

God said it was not good for man to be alone. He designed men and women to unite in marriage. Ultimately, dating should lead us to choose a partner for this lifelong relationship.

## the WORD in MY LIFE

You may wish to use **Copy Master 2** for Options 1 to 3.

### Option 1

Choosing a marriage partner is the ultimate purpose for dating. Which of these are other good reasons to date?

1. learn how to communicate with the opposite sex
2. learn how to show kindness and love to the opposite sex
3. learn how to kiss
4. learn what kind of person you get along with best

### Explanation

Numbers 1, 2, and 4 are good reasons to date. Dating provides an opportunity to learn about the opposite sex: how to relate, how to communicate, how to be a friend, how to show love and kindness in appropriate ways. Dating also helps "narrow the field," teaching young people what kind of person they get along with best. These lessons will help young people when they finally choose a lifelong marriage partner.

Number 3 is not a good reason to date. Marriage provides a lifetime of mutual practice of this "art."

### Option 2

Evaluate these views of dating:

1. Dating is a popularity contest. The more dates you have, the more popular you are.
2. Dating is about developing a physical relationship.
3. Dating is romantic: exchanging gifts and love letters, celebrating Valentine's Day, and other "mushy" stuff.
4. Dating is about being friends with someone of the opposite sex.

### Explanation

1. While many young people judge the success of their social lives by the number of dates they have, this is a selfish and shallow way to view dating.
2. Many young people value a physical relationship but fail to appreciate and nurture the deeper ties of caring and understanding that can develop in a dating relationship.
3. Some find the romantic side of dating very exciting, even to the point of "being in love with love." They value the outward signs of affection more than the affection itself, or they may not have affection for their partners at all.
4. Although some may balk, this definition is

perhaps the best one, especially for people during the early teen years. The dating friendship includes a genuine affection for the dating partner and a concern for the partner's welfare.

### Option 3

Evaluate: Some Christians strongly disagree with the concept of dating altogether. Jim Ryun, famous Olympic athlete and now Christian evangelist, was interviewed on what he considers the misleading nature of the dating process. He and his wife maintain that since dating creates so few permanent ties, it creates the impression that relationships are spontaneous and temporary, a factor that leads many to divorce later in life. They also feel that dating creates an artificial atmosphere for being with another person: proms, movies, and dances—an atmosphere in which boys and girls emphasize looking good and acting polite with little opportunity to interact with each other in everyday life and in challenging situations. The Ryun children have agreed not to date anyone they feel they could not eventually marry. All dating partners are “interviewed” by Mom or Dad and are included in many family events so that they learn what it would be like to be a member of the Ryun family. The Ryuns believe this is the best method to safeguard their children and help assure them of long-lasting Christian marriages.

#### Explanation

The ideas of the Ryun family may seem pretty radical, but they do have some good points. We need to remember that dating is an American custom. Just because it is culturally accepted doesn't necessarily mean it matches God's principles. Dating can be fun and lead to wonderfully fulfilling relationships, but it can also end in heartache and bitterness. The key is to make your dating life an extension of your faith life—one that leads to godly courtship and, God willing, marriage.

Use the illustration and key point to underscore the truth developed in this section.

#### Illustration

When you buy a house, you are very careful. You know that once the decision is made, there's no turning back, no money-back guarantee. So you search very carefully, making sure you've found the right

house for you.

#### Key Point

*Dating is a way to find a partner for a happy marriage.*

## 2. What kind of dating partners will I avoid?

*(I will avoid dating partners who might lead me away from God.)*

### <sup>the</sup>WORD

In the Old Testament, God's people did not date as we know it. But they often chose partners for marriage. Let's see what choices Samson, a judge of Israel, made. From his example we can learn what kind of dating partners to avoid.

#### Explanation

Ask the students for well-known facts of Samson's life. He was a judge known for his superhuman strength. He tore a lion apart with his bare hands. He tied foxes together and sent them into fields to light crops on fire. He lost his strength when he allowed Delilah to cut his hair, an outward sign of his Nazirite vow.

Read Judges 14:1-3,7.

#### a. How did Samson choose his first wife?

Samson based his choice on what the woman looked like. He decided he wanted to marry her after merely seeing her. Later he talked with her and decided that he liked her, but he did not take the time to get to know her well.

#### b. How did he ignore his parents' advice in choosing a partner?

His parents reminded him that God called the people of Israel to remain separate from the unbelieving (uncircumcised) peoples who surrounded them. Samson didn't care that this woman was an unbeliever.

Read Judges 14:12-20.

#### c. How did Samson's bad choice affect his life?

His wife's loyalty to her own unbelieving people was stronger than her love for Samson. She betrayed Samson and revealed the riddle's

answer to the Philistines. When her father assumed Samson hated her because of what she had done, he gave her to Samson's friend.

Read Judges 16:4-6,15-21.

**d. How did Samson's choice of another unbelieving woman affect him?**

Samson had a relationship with Delilah but did not marry her. This unbelieving woman betrayed Samson to the Philistines. The Philistines captured him, and Samson died in captivity.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:33.

**e. What can happen to you if you choose unbelieving or immoral dating partners?**

An immoral or unbelieving dating partner *may corrupt your good character*, perhaps leading you into temptation and sin and away from God.

*the*  
**WORD in MY LIFE**

**Option 1**

Jenny said, "I don't care what my mom or dad thinks. Whom I date is my business." What would you tell her?

**Explanation**

Faith and love for God lead Christian young people to honor the opinion of their parents, even if at first they disagree with it. We would be foolish not to at least listen to their opinion about the people we're dating. After all, they probably know us better than any other people on earth. If it becomes evident over time that our parents think that no one is good enough for us to date, it might be time for an honest discussion of their criteria for evaluating our partners.

**Option 2**

Evaluate: If a Christian dates a non-Christian, it can be a way of doing mission work.

**Explanation**

While it is possible for a Christian to do "mission work" while dating an unbeliever, in all too many situations, the unbelieving person influences the believing person rather than the other way around. This is especially risky when you consider that the person you are dating could become your spouse

one day.

Use the illustration and key point to underscore the truth developed in this section.

**Illustration**

Brian had been a cocaine addict for two years. When he quit, he knew that he not only needed to avoid cocaine, but he also needed to avoid anyone who used cocaine.

**Key Point**

*I will avoid dating partners who might lead me away from God.*

**3. What kind of dating partner is the best choice?**

*(The best dating partners are fellow Christians who have God-pleasing qualities that I would desire in a spouse.)*

*the*  
**WORD**

Ruth lived during the time of the judges. Her first husband had died, and in the following verses we read how her mother-in-law, Naomi, helped her choose a new husband. Let's see why the choice was a good one.

**Explanation**

Review the early life of Ruth with the students. She is best known for leaving her country and people to live with fellow believers in Israel. Her words to her mother-in-law, Naomi, show her great faith in God: "Where you go, I will go . . . Your people will be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

Read Ruth 3:1-13.

**a. Why would Boaz make a good husband for Ruth?**

Boaz had been kind to Ruth by letting her glean with his servant girls. More important, he was an Israelite, someone who shared Ruth's belief in the promised Messiah and lived according to God's laws.

**b. Why was Boaz pleased that Ruth expressed this interest in him?**

He did not say she was beautiful or fun. He said

she was “a woman of noble character.” He liked what he saw on the inside of her—her personal traits.

Read Proverbs 31:30.

**c. What trait is to be praised the most in dating partners of both sexes?**

A heart that is faithful to the Lord is more important than outward beauty or a charming way of speaking or acting.

Read Galatians 5:22,23.

**d. Hearts of faith overflow into lives that exhibit the fruits of faith. Someone summarized these fruits of the Spirit in this way:**

**Good attitude = love, joy, peace**

**Good manners = patience, kindness, goodness**

**Good behavior = faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**

**Explain why these are good qualities to look for in a date.**

These are good qualities to look for in any Christian friend, but especially in a dating partner or future spouse. We see *love, joy, and peace* in an attitude that’s positive rather than angry, bitter, or despondent.

We see *patience, kindness, and goodness* in a polite and courteous way of dealing with others.

We see *faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control* in obedience to God’s commandments, especially when facing temptation.

All these fruits of the Spirit are the result of the wonderful assurance Christians have that their sins are forgiven. Choosing dating partners who have these qualities will increase our chances for smooth and happy relationships and will also support our own faith lives.

*the*  
**WORD in MY LIFE**

**Option 1**

**Copy Master 3** asks students to rate qualities that make a good dating partner or future spouse. First have the students rate them according to Hollywood standards, as in the “mating game” in the introduction

of this lesson. Then have them rate them according to our Christian standards.

**Explanation**

This rating exercise gives students a chance to evaluate their ideas. Have them discuss how the presence or absence of these traits can affect relationships, both in the short term and in the long term. Lead them to see the importance of godly traits—faith, honesty, humility, generosity, etc. Allow them to add more traits to the list if they wish.

**Option 2**

Respond to these young people who are talking about people they would like to date:

1. I’d love to go out with Josh. He’s so cool.
2. Who wouldn’t want to date Jennifer? She’s the most popular girl in class.
3. Steve’s the captain of the football team. Any girl would be lucky to go out with him.
4. I’m going to ask Stacy out. No one’s better looking than she is.

**Explanation**

Help the students see beyond the superficial reasons cited in these comments. Possible responses:

1. What makes him cool? Is he a Christian?
2. Popularity doesn’t mean anything. What counts is how she feels about you and how you feel about her.
3. Does being the captain of the football team make him a good date? Would he make a good husband?
4. Looks don’t mean much in the long run—or in the short run either. Do you know what she’s like on the inside?

Use the illustration and key point to underscore the truth developed in this section.

**Illustration**

When Lindsay looked for her first car, she looked beyond the shiny paint job. She wanted to make sure that the things she couldn’t see—the engine, the transmission, and the brakes—were also in good working order. She understood that what was inside

the car was the most important.

## Key Point

*The best dating partners are fellow Christians who have God-pleasing qualities that I would desire in a spouse.*

## Concluding the Lesson

Use the lesson summary to refocus on the truths of the lesson. The summary answers the aim question,

**Whom will I date?**

## Key Points

1. Dating is a way to find a partner for a happy marriage.
2. I will avoid dating partners who might lead me away from God.
3. The best dating partners are fellow Christians who have God-pleasing qualities that I would desire in a spouse.

## Lesson Summary

*God's Word says little about dating, but it does tell me that God instituted marriage. I will view dating as part of the process of choosing a marriage partner. I will avoid dating partners who might lead me away from God. And I will look for dating partners who are fellow believers and who have God-pleasing qualities that I would desire in a spouse.*



### Genesis 2:24

*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*

This passage explains the union of marriage instituted by God. Dating is part of the process of choosing a partner for this lifelong union.

### 1 Corinthians 15:33

*Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."*

The apostle Paul explains the danger in developing relationships with unbelievers or immoral people.

### Proverbs 31:30

*Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

Here God reminds us that outward qualities are not as important as the inner quality of faith in God.

## Lesson Activities

**1. Psalm and Prayer:** Read Psalm 119:9-11. Then pray: *Dear Father in heaven, help us to keep our ways pure by living according to your Word. Lead us to choose dating partners who have also hidden your Word in their hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

**2. Table Talk:** Encourage the students to do one of the following with their parents:

- a. Discuss what kind of person you and your parents think would make a good spouse for you.
- b. Ask them if they ever had a date with someone who was an unbeliever. How did that person influence them?
- c. Pray that God would guide you in your dating relationships and ultimately lead you to a believer who would make a good husband or wife for you.

**3. Personal Ads:** Have your students create their own personal, or "lonely hearts," ad. Have them focus on the positive Christian attributes they would share with a date or marriage partner. Have them also focus on what they are looking for in a mate. After they have a final draft ready, have them copy it onto a piece of tagboard, using bold markers. Post all the ads. Compare and discuss. (You may wish to discuss real personal ads first, as suggested in Activity 6.)

## 4. More to Explore:

- **The Word in My Life 1:** Agree or disagree: In the United States today, it is more important than ever to remain a virgin. (Agree. Remaining a virgin is something largely ridiculed in our sexually active society. The explosion of sexually transmitted diseases, the danger of AIDS, and the growing drug resistance of many sexually transmitted disease strains make it vital for Christian teens to follow God's plan and stay sexually pure until marriage. Disagree. God has always demanded perfect obedience. Children of God follow his will not out of fear of the

physical consequences but in response to all God has done for them.)

- **The Word in My Life 2:** How do you know when your dating partner may be leading you away from God? (Fruits of faith may diminish: less reading of the Word, lack of church attendance or an unwillingness to attend church, a weaker prayer life, less resistance to temptation.)
- **The Word in My Life 2:** Samson’s bad relationship choices greatly affected his future. How can your dating life affect your future? Think in these terms: physical, social, emotional. Note both negative and positive factors. (*Physical:* Negative—Straying off God’s path in your dating life can lead to the scourge of sexually transmitted diseases, the anxiety of unwanted pregnancy, or the tragedy of abortion. Positive—Following God’s commandments will prevent these tragedies and preserve your purity for a happy and fulfilling marriage. *Social:* Negative—Your dating habits can adversely affect your social reputation, leading people to label you as “cheap” or “easy.” Positive—Dating teaches you how to relate to a wide variety of people. It helps develop friendships that may last a long time. *Emotional:* Negative—Dating can be a source of great heartache and guilt. The emotional scars from dating can last a long time into adulthood. Positive—Dating can be a source of wholesome fun and warm affection. [Note: We will talk about the spiritual side of dating in the next sections.]

**5. Talk Back:** As a review exercise, write the following statements on slips of paper and put them into a bag. Have students choose them and read them aloud. Allow the rest of the class to respond.

- a. Whom I choose to date is nobody’s business but mine. (Because your choice of dating partners can profoundly affect your faith, character, and life, many people are concerned, including your parents, other family members, friends, teachers, and pastors.)
- b. The most important factor in choosing dating partners is how they look. (Beauty doesn’t last. Inner qualities count much more, and Christian faith counts the most.)
- c. My date is an unbeliever, but I’m going to

convert him or her. (First, we don’t convert other people. We share the gospel, and the Holy Spirit brings them to faith through that message. Second, you can’t be sure that you will be the strong partner in the relationship; you may actually be influenced by your unbelieving partner. He or she may lead you into sin or even unbelief.)

- d. I can date all kinds of bad people now, as long as I choose a good person to marry later. (Choosing inappropriate dating partners now can weaken your faith and alter your character. A “good” person may not want to marry you if you’ve spent most of your time in relationships with unbelieving or immoral people.)
- e. My parents have no idea what kind of person would be a good date for me. (That may be true, but they probably know you better than you think, and you would be wise to listen to their advice.)
- f. TV and movies can teach us a lot about dating and marriage. (They can teach us a lot but seldom what God wants us to learn! Hollywood usually emphasizes outward beauty and physical attraction instead of the more important inner qualities.)

**6. Lonely Hearts:** Have every student bring in several “lonely hearts” ads from the local paper. Divide the students into groups. Have them evaluate the ads from a Christian viewpoint. Have them pick one that they consider “the most Christian” and one they consider “the least Christian.” Have each group share with the entire class why they chose the ones they did. (You may want to look over the ads before distributing them to the class or supply your own selection of ads—depending on what kind of things your local papers allow in print.)

**7. Dating Customs around the World:** Have a classroom discussion on dating customs. Supply articles or Internet sites on how the Amish handle courtship or how mate selection is done in other countries. Compare these ideas to current United States custom and to the Ryuns’ idea as explained in the lesson. Ask, “Is our current United States custom the only way? the best way? the right way? What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of the arranged marriages practiced in many cultures?” Be prepared for lots of discussion.



## Whom will I date?

### 1. What is the ultimate purpose of dating?

- Genesis 2:18-25

### 2. What kind of dating partners will I avoid?

- Judges 14:1-3,7
- Judges 14:12-20
- Judges 16:4-6,15-21
- 1 Corinthians 15:33

### 3. What kind of dating partner is the best choice?

- Ruth 3:1-13
- Proverbs 31:30
- Galatians 5:22,23

## Lesson Summary

God's Word says little about dating, but it does tell me that God instituted marriage. I will view dating as part of the process of choosing a marriage partner. I will avoid dating partners who might lead me away from God. And I will look for dating partners who are fellow believers and who have God-pleasing qualities that I would desire in a spouse.

The School of Dating

# Why Date?

Choosing a marriage partner is the ultimate purpose for dating. Which of these are other good reasons to date?

1. learn how to communicate with the opposite sex
2. learn how to show kindness and love to the opposite sex
3. learn how to kiss
4. learn what kind of person you best get along with

## Dating Is . . .

Evaluate these views of dating:

1. Dating is a popularity contest. The more dates you have, the more popular you are.
2. Dating is about developing a physical relationship.
3. Dating is romantic: exchanging gifts and love letters, celebrating Valentine's Day, and other "mushy" stuff.
4. Dating is about being friends with someone of the opposite sex.

## A New Concept?

Evaluate: Some Christians strongly disagree with the concept of dating altogether. Jim Ryun, famous Olympic athlete and now Christian evangelist, was interviewed on what he considers the misleading nature of the dating process. He and his wife maintain that since dating creates so few permanent ties, it creates the impression that relationships are spontaneous and temporary, a factor that leads many to divorce later in life. They also feel that dating creates an artificial atmosphere for being with another person: proms, movies, and dances—an atmosphere in which boys and girls emphasize looking good and acting polite with little opportunity to interact with each other in everyday life and in challenging situations. The Ryun children have agreed not to date anyone they feel they could not eventually marry. All dating partners are "interviewed" by Mom or Dad and are included in many family events so that they learn what it would be like to be a member of the Ryun family. The Ryuns believe this is the best method to safeguard their children and help assure them of long-lasting Christian marriages.

# Dating Rating



Below are a list of qualities to consider in a dating partner. Rate each quality twice, according to Hollywood standards and according to your Christian standards. Use a 1 to 5 scale, 1 being unimportant and 5 being very important.

QUALITY	HOLLYWOOD RATING 1-5	YOUR RATING 1-5
INTELLIGENCE		
POPULARITY		
GOOD LOOKS		
PERSONALITY		
SENSE OF HUMOR		
MONEY		
FASHION SENSE		
HONESTY		
GREAT BODY		
COMMON LIKES		
ATHLETIC ABILITY		
FAITH		
SEX APPEAL		
HUMILITY		
GENEROSITY		