MARRIAGE



LESSON TEXT

Genesis 2:18-25: Ecclesiastes 4.9-12

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will describe the first marriage recorded in the Bible.
- The students will explain how marriage is like a team.
- The students will explain. that God must be the center of a great marriage.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- 3" x 5" index card For the teacher:
- extra Bibles
- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world
- props for mock wedding
- tape/cd player
- wedding music
- small basket

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 2 copies, 1 for the teacher and 1 for the guest couple
- · Page C, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Gettina Ready

Faithful Instruction

Teacher Focus

Teacher Tips

Preclass Activity: Famous Couples

from the Bible

Starting Up

Welcome and Singing

Opening Praver

Victories

Good News from the Kingdom

Getting into God's Word

Illustration: Mock Wedding

Scripture Study

Activity: How Will Your Marriage Glorify God?

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Ephesians 5:3 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time

Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Ephesians 5:3



Family



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Genesis 2:18-25, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Titus 2:11-12. This lesson will help your students to understand the blessings and benefits of a godly marriage. Look at the marriages of your friends and coworkers. What are they based on? Are the couples happy, or do they only appear to be so? Then look at the couples around you in the kingdom. What is the difference? Whether it is in their daily lives or through the media, our preteens are bombarded by images of divorce, unhappiness and infidelity as "common" to marriage. This lesson will help your students to understand that great marriages are possible, but only with God as the center.

TEACHER TIPS

The lesson will require a great deal of preparation. As an illustration for your class, you will create a mock wedding. You will need to invite a newly married couple (married less than three years) who dated in the kingdom. This will be your wedding couple. They will also participate in the activity segment of the lesson by answering questions for the students about their dating relationship, their engagement and the goals for their life as a Christian couple. Look for a couple who is doing very well spiritually, and who have a God-centered focus for their lives and marriage. NOTE: Do not use a couple who is engaged.

The challenge for the week requires each student to interview a married couple in the church regarding the importance of God in their marriage. It will be important for the students to talk with couples who are spiritually strong in their marriage and their ministry. You should determine the couples who would be appropriate for helping with this exercise, and pair each student up with a couple. (Students should not be paired with their parents.) If you have a large number of preteens, you may pair one couple with two students.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

FAMOUS COUPLES FROM THE BIBLE

Using their Bibles, the students will complete a worksheet that identifies famous (and infamous!) married couples from the Bible.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- 3" x 5" index card

Reproducible Pages:

Page A, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. As the students arrive, give each a pen or pencil and a copy of Reproducible Page A (Couples in the Bible).
- 2. The students may work alone or in pairs to complete the worksheet. Using the chapter references given, the students should use their Bibles to fill in the missing name in each example. The completed list will show your students some of the couples found in the Bible. (See answer key at the bottom of next page.)
- 3. When the students have completed the worksheet, give each an index card. Have them write down questions that they would like to ask the married couple during the interview segment of the class. Let them know that all their questions may not be answered, since time may be a factor. Select any that are appropriate, and share them with the couple before the interview.
- 4. When all the students have completed the worksheet, give them the correct answers. Applaud those students who matched all the couples correctly.





GETTING READY

STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER

Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together? Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to be especially thankful to God for designing marriage and family.

VICTORIES

Take the time to have the students share about the challenges they were given at the end of last week's class. Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times? Would anyone like to share something they learned?

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

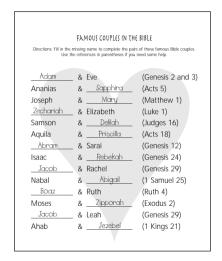
MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

INSTRUCTIONS

Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom." Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that the kingdom of God is worldwide, and the victories of our brothers and sisters on other continents should inspire us and spur us on.







ILLUSTRATION

MOCK WEDDING

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use the following guidelines to prepare for the mock wedding:
- → The bride should dress in white or off-white, and the groom should dress in a suit.
- → The male lead teacher will act as the minister and "officiate" during the wedding. While this will be an abbreviated ceremony, the basic elements should include sharing about the couples, a charge to use their marriage and family to glorify God, and vows. You may wish to speak to a ministry leader to obtain several versions of marriage vows and decide which will best meet your needs.
- → Your students can act as ushers, attendants, the bride's escort and wedding guests. Assign the roles as your students arrive, and give any specific direction necessary.
- → You should decorate your class with any props (flowers, ribbons, candles (unlit) that are appropriate for a wedding. Borrow these items to avoid any great expense (the wedding couple may have some of the items from their own wedding to share). Arrange the chairs in rows facing the front of the class, and mark out spots for the couple, minister and attendants to stand. You should try a "dry run" with all participants before class begins in order to help everyone be confident about their roles.
- → As a special treat, you may wish to have a "reception" for your snack time, including a small cake or cookies, and some punch. Be sure to bring appropriate utensils, plates, etc., if this is done. Assign students to help with the clean up.

- The activity segment of the class will be a question and answer session with the "wedding couple." Reproducible Page B lists questions that can be given to the couple in advance. Suggest that the couple pray and think about their answers in advance, in order to be prepared when the students ask the questions. The students will also be given a chance to write down some questions of their own before class. You will need to screen these prior to the interviews, and share them with the wedding couple so that they can formulate good answers. Use these if you still have time left after all the questions on Reproducible Page C are answered.
- 2. Have the class move their chairs to face the front, creating an aisle down the center. While you are making final preparations, have the wedding party get into place. Assign a student to play appropriate music during the preparations. The music for the attendants' entrance and bridal entrance should be planned ahead, and should be ready to play.
- 3. Before you begin, remind your students that, while this is a fun activity, marriage is a serious step. It cannot be entered into without great thought, prayer and preparation. Your expectation is that they should be listening to the words being spoken and thinking about how important marriage is to God.
- Conduct the ceremony as you have rehearsed it, keeping it to ten to fifteen minutes. Then begin the scripture study.



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to Genesis 2:18-25. Select a volunteer to read the passage.

- Why did God create marriage? (didn't want man to be alone / wanted him to have a suitable helper)
- Was this the first marriage? (yes, note: "The man and his wife..." / the first bride and groom)
- Who taught the man and woman how to show their love to each other? (God gave them the instruction.)
- Were the man and the woman equal before God? (yes "...united and became one flesh...")
- Why did they feel "no shame"? (Their relationship was completely pure. / They had nothing to hide.)
- Was there anything that Adam and Eve needed in their relationship that God did not provide? (no)
- What did they need to do to keep their relationship pure and growing? (obey God)

God created marriage to be an awesome relationship between a man and a woman, with God at the center. Both of the people need to love, obey and serve God, and fulfill the roles God gave them in order for the marriage to be great.

Select another student to read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Many couples use this verse as part of their wedding because it is about two people working together as a team.

- What are some of the ways that a couple can work as a team? (v9 – share their faith / work together in their ministry / balance their best traits / share work at home; v10 – encourage each other / help each other be strong; v11 – take care of each other; v12 – defend each other against Satan)
- In verse 12, the passage states that "a cord of three strands is not quickly broken." In a marriage, who are the three strands? (husband, wife and God) Why is a marriage strong if it has these three cords? (The couple will live by God's word, will be blessed by God, will be strong spiritually and will fulfill the roles God has given each one.)

God promises that disciples will have awesome marriages if they keep him at the center, love each other, and carry out the responsibilities God has given each one. God's plan for every marriage is that it will bring glory and honor to him.

ACTIVITY

HOW WILL YOUR MARRIAGE CLORIFY GOD?

The students will interview the married couple who participated in the mock wedding. The goal is to help them understand that a marriage takes great planning, prayer and devotion to God. It is not just a ceremony.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- small basket
- Reproducible Pages:
- Page B, 2 copies, 1 for the teacher and 1 for the quest couple

PREPARATION

- Prior to class, give one copy of Reproducible Page B (interview questions) to the couple you have invited. This will allow them to pray and prepare great responses.
- Čut a second copy of Reproducible Page B into separate questions. Fold each question in half and place in a basket.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Have the students gather in a circle around the couple you have invited to the class. Tell them that they will have the opportunity to interview the couple, asking questions that you have prepared.
- 2. As time allows, give each student an opportunity to draw one of the questions from the basket. They may ask the question of either the man or the woman. After the response is given, allow another student to select a question, etc.
- 3. Be sure the students are listening well to the responses. You should comment, where appropriate, either to clarify or reinforce a point.
- 4. If there were any appropriate and unique questions from the preclass activity, fold them and add them to the questions in the basket.

NOTE: In general, it seems best not to open up the discussion for students to ask on-the-spot questions. Some students will get silly, and some questions might not be appropriate.





GETTING IT TO OTHERS

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Ephesians 5:3

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

Page C, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

- Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page C (Memory Verse).
- Have the students say the memory verse together aloud several times.
- 3. Talk about what the verse means.

NOTE: Since preteens are often a little embarrassed about the words "sex" or "sexual," it would probably be best not to ask anyone to say the memory verse by himself or herself.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND

If your students bring a snack or if you have planned a "reception" for the wedding, allow the students to eat while you explain the challenge for the week.

This week, each student is to interview a married couple in the church, asking them to tell why God is important in their marriage and why they are glad they have a Christian marriage. Give each student a slip of paper with the name of the couple they are to interview (either in person or by phone). The students should write down their findings to share next week with the class.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Interview the couple whose name you have been given, asking them (1) why God is important in their marriage and (2) why they are glad they have a Christian marriage. Write down their answers to share with the class next week.



MARRIAGE



LESSON TEXT

Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Corinthians 15:33: 2 Corinthians 6:14

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will understand the importance of dating only Christians
- The students will understand the importance of purity in Christian dating.
- The students will know the consequences of impure behavior.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil For the teacher:
- · several cotton balls
- extra Bibles
- 1 poster board
- black marker
- tape

Reproducible Pages:

Page D, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction

Teacher Focus

Teacher Tips

Preclass Activity: What Kind of Date Will I Be?

Starting Up

Welcome and Singing

Opening Prayer and Review

Great News Sharing

Getting into God's Word

Scripture Study

Activity: The Road to Christian Dating

and Marriage

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Ephesians 5:3

Weekly Challenge and Snack Time

Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Ephesians 5:3







(SUPPLEMENT)

FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, 1 Corinthians 15:33 and 2 Corinthians 6:14. This lesson will cover the subject of Christian dating as a prelude to Christian marriage. While your students are not yet ready to date, this lesson will help them to develop the convictions needed to have great dating relationships that will prepare them to have awesome Christian marriages.

TEACHER TIPS

Prior to class, write a list of the qualities that you feel are most important in a dating relationship. Ask several dating and engaged couples what characteristics they looked for in a partner. The main point of all the responses should be that as disciples, they would date only disciples. This is important because we marry people we date. If we date only disciples, we will eventually marry a disciple. You will need to be firm in convictions on this subject in order to help your students understand the importance of dating according to God's plan for our lives. Be sure to stress that they are too young to date, but this information will help them as they are beginning to formulate their thinking about the subject.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

WHAT KIND OF DATE WILL I BE?

This activity will give your students the opportunity to think about the qualities that make up a great date. It will give them insight into their own character and show them things they may need to work on.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

pen or pencil

For the teacher:

extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

Page D, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. As the students arrive, give each a pen or pencil and a copy of Reproducible Page D (What Kind of Date Will I Be?). Each student will also need a Bible. This activity should be done individually.
- 2. The students should first open their Bibles and read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. They should then read each statement on Reproducible Page D, looking for and circling words that are found in the 1 Corinthians passage.
- 3. As they complete the worksheet, the students should think about each of the behaviors and determine which things they may need to work on in order to be a good date in the future.



GETTING READY

(SUPPLEMENT)

STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with one of the students praying for each student to grow in their faith, to have a deep conviction about the need for purity, and to be an excellent example to their friends.
- Have several students recite together the memory verse for the week: Ephesians 5:3.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson (Core Lesson).

CREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief so that as many as possible can share.







(SUPPLEMENT)

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Begin the lesson by reminding your students about the things they learned in the Core Lesson:

- marriage is from God
- a great Christian marriage has God at its center

Ask the students what things they think might lead to a great Christian marriage. They may respond that they need a great relationship with God, they need to pray, etc. The point that you want them to focus on is that a great marriage comes out of great Christian dating. You should remind your students at this point that they are still too young to date. However, this lesson will help them develop the convictions they will need in order to have great dating relationships when they get older.

Have the students turn to Jeremiah 29:11, and select a volunteer to read the verse.

- What does this verse say about God's plan for our lives? (He has plans for us, wants to bless us, and doesn't want us hurt.)
- What does this mean for our future dating relationships and our eventual marriages? (He will bless us if we seek to do his will in our dating relationships. Our marriages will be relationships in which both husband and wife love each other and treat each other with respect.)
- Can we trust God's plan for our lives? (yes)
- Why? (because of his promises / because we know he loves us—even more than our earthly parents)

Have your students think about this: If God loves us and has great plans for us, why would we do anything other than what he wants?

Ask the students what they think is the most important aspect of dating. After several responses, select a volunteer to read Matthew 5:8.

- What type of people does Jesus call blessed in this verse? (pure in heart)
- What does it mean to be pure in heart? (think and act in a godly way / be righteous)
- If we are concerned about having purity in our dating relationships, how will those relationships be?
 (godly / fun / righteous / encouraging to both people)

God expects us to be pure in our thoughts and actions when we are dating. Have the students turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, and select another student to read

- God says that we can avoid immorality and impurity by practicing self-control. How can we do this? (read the Bible, know what things tempt us, be open, talk about struggles, pray)
- This verse says that if we are impure and lack selfcontrol, we are wronging others and taking advantage of them. In other words, we hurt/sin against the person we are dating. How do we do this? (cause them to struggle with their own self-control, make them feel quilty, cause them to be impure)

Our impurity can lead the person we are dating into impurity, even if they did not plan to be impure. It can also lead to emotional hurts when the relationship is over, and can lead to gossip and hurtful remarks about both you and your date. Finally, it hurts God, who made us and wants us to be righteous and holy at all times. When we are impure, we are hurting his great plans for us.

What can we do to remain pure in dating relationships? Select two students to read 1 Corinthians 15:33 and 2 Corinthians 6:14.

- What do these two passages say about whom we need to date? (date disciples only) Why would God say this? (disciples put God first, want to be pure, follow his will, please him, a non-disciple can pull you away from your faith)
- If we date only disciples, whom will we marry? (disciples we marry people we date)
- What are some other ways that we can be sure we are pure in our dating relationships?
 - · get advice
 - double or group dates only
 - pray
 - be strong with God
 - be open about struggles





(SUPPLEMENT)

ACTIVITY

THE ROAD TO CHRISTIAN DATING AND MARRIAGE

This exercise will help your students understand that we can get off course from God's great plans for our lives when we do not follow his commands.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- several cotton balls
- 1 poster board
- black marker
- · tape

PREPARATION

- 1. Before the class begins, set up a small obstacle course in one part of the room. This can be a path blocked by chairs or a table. Stacks of books for the students to walk over may also be used. Be sure there is a way through the course—just enough room for a preteen to pass.
- 2. Write the memory verse on the poster board.
- 3. Tape the poster board to the wall at the end of the obstacle course so that the students can see it as the goal they need to attain.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Have the students listen as you read the memory verse. Talk about how this scripture teaches us what God wants our goals for dating and marriage to be. These are not easy to achieve. The world will tell us that "no one does this," "you don't have to do this," "you will not have fun if you live like this." We all have decisions to make about who we will listen to—God and his word or the world around us.
- 2. Explain the following to the students:

 Tonight, several of you will travel down the "road to pure dating relationships" (and marriage someday). The only problem is that there are distractions and obstacles (stacks of books, desks, etc.) along the way. You will be given the message of God to carry with you (a cotton ball on top of your head). The goal is to keep your eye on the goal (the poster on the wall) and get to the end of the course without losing the message and

direction of God (without letting the cotton ball fall off your head). And remember this: You cannot hold the cotton ball in place with your hands. If the cotton ball falls off, you must pick it up immediately and place it back on top of your head. Your eyes are to stay on the goal (the poster); don't look down or away.

- 3. Select a few students to stand along the sidelines of the course. These students should try to blow the cotton ball off the head of the student who is going through the course. While they are not blowing, they should say things like "It's no fun to be pure." "Nobody else is living this way." "You are weird if you try to live a pure life."
- 4. Explain that the obstacles and the students on the side represent the world. They try to influence our thinking and get us off God's course, the Bible.
- 5. Have two students go through the course at a time, one behind the other. The cotton balls will probably fall off their heads. When this happens, have the students stop, put the cotton balls back on their heads and figure out a way that they can go down the remainder of the road while keeping the cotton balls on their heads. Some suggestions are: Have a friend walk through with you, holding the ball on your head; or, put your Bible on top of your head and hold it down with two hands, pinning the cotton ball under the Bible.
- 6. After as many try the course as you have time for, let the students discuss what they learned. (It should be that, in order to reach God's goals for our lives we need help from God and his word, and from our friends who want to lead us toward God.)



GETTING IT TO OTHERS

(SUPPLEMENT)

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Ephesians 5:3

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Have the students say the memory verse aloud together several times.
- Remind them about what the verse means.

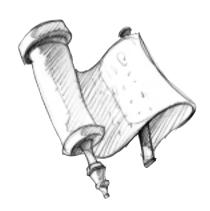
WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat it while you remind them of the challenge for the week.

This week, each student is to interview a certain married couple in the church, asking them to tell (1) why God is important in their marriage and (2) why they are glad they have a Christian marriage. Each student has been given the name of a couple to talk with. The students should write down their findings to share next week with the class.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Interview the couple whose name you have been given, asking them (1) why God is important in their marriage and (2) why they are glad they have a Christian marriage. Write down their answers to share with the class next week.





REPRODUCIBLE PAGE A

FAMOUS COUPLES IN THE BIBLE

Directions: Fill in the missing name to complete the pairs of these famous Bible couples.

Use the references in parentheses if you need some help.

	&	Eve	(Genesis 2 and 3)
Ananias	&		(Acts 5)
Joseph	&		(Matthew 1)
	&	Elizabeth	(Luke 1)
Samson	&		(Judges 16)
Aquila	&		(Acts 18)
	&	Sarai	(Genesis 12)
Isaac	&		(Genesis 24)
	&	Rachel	(Genesis 29)
Nabal	&		(1 Samuel 25)
	&	Ruth	(Ruth 4)
Moses	&		(Exodus 2)
	&	Leah	(Genesis 29)
Ahab	&		(1 Kings 21)





REPRODUCIBLE PAGE B

QUESTIONS FOR COUPLES BEING INTERVIEWED

What type of dates did you go on when you were first going together? Who planned them and what did you do?	What kinds of things do you want to do for God as a married couple and a family?	What kinds of things has God done with you as a couple since you have been married?
How did you know that this was the person you wanted to marry?	What kinds of things do you do to help your marriage be a team effort?	What advice will you give to your children when they want to get engaged?
What is the most important quality of your partner?	How do you make decisions for the family?	What was the most special thing about your wedding?
Did you date a lot of people before you decided to get married?	Now that you are married, do you still have dates with each other?	How do you keep God at the center of your marriage?
How do you share the chores at home?	Do you argue? What hap- pens when you do?	How do you help each other stay close to God?





SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

EPHESIANS 5:3

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Interview the couple whose name you have been given, asking them (1) why God is important in their marriage and (2) why they are glad they have a Christian marriage. Write down their answers to share with the class next week.



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REPRODUCIBLE PAGE D

WHAT KIND OF DATE WILL I BE?

Directions: Open your Bible to 1 Corinthians 13. Read verses 4-7.

Although you are not ready to go out on dates now, one day you will be.

What kind of date will you be in the future?

As you read each statement below, find the word that comes from I Corinthians 13:4-7. When you find the word, circle it.

- 1. Will I be patient if he/she has trouble communicating with me?
- 2. Will I be kind if he/she says something I think is dumb?
- 3. Will I envy if someone else gets to go on the date that I wanted to go on?
- 4. Will I be too proud to go out on a date with certain brothers/sisters?
- 5. Will I be rude and interrupt when others are talking?
- 6. Will I always want to do things my way and be self-seeking on my date?
- 7. Will I be easily angered and quick to get my feelings hurt on the date?
- 8. Will I keep a record of wrongs and hold attitudes against someone if I don't enjoy the date?
- 9. Will I protect the feelings of others on my dates?
- 10. Will I be a giver on a date and try to get to know other people, or will I try to center all the conversation on me by boasting about myself and how great I am?

