

MODULE 6  
FRIENDSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP SKILL DEVELOPMENT  
**PARTICIPANT**



AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO I AM SENDING YOU  
**AMBASSADORS**  
fostering a new generation of spiritual leaders





MODULE 6

## FRIENDSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP SKILL DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPANT

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**AMBASSADORS**

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## **AMBASSADORS**

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# AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO I AM SENDING YOU AMBASSADORS



Welcome to Ambassadors.

Ambassadors is a new level of youth ministry designed to equip you to be the best that you can be and to be part of a new generation of youth that will take on the challenge to be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus in your local church and community.

An ambassador generally represents a country or a cause. A Christian ambassador is a representative of another kind; they represent the values, principles, culture, and laws of the kingdom of God. They stand for the character and purpose of the King of this kingdom—Jesus Christ, Himself.

The Ambassadors training is based on seven foundations designed for your development. They include:

1. A Christ-centered discipleship plan
2. Leadership development
3. A personal, public, and small group based mission lifestyle
4. Character and personality development, including outdoor, high adventure programming
5. Lifestyle and vocational training
6. Nurturing godly relationships
7. Community outreach development through service projects and emergency preparedness training

Each of these seven foundations will be taught in the form of seven modules, and you will acquire certification for each module completed.

Each module contains four elements that will be consistently present throughout the course:

- First, the concept of a spiritual companion. At the beginning of each module, you will choose a friend who will be your companion for the duration of the module. You will meet with that friend during each meeting for mutual encouragement and support towards your growth as an Ambassador. Groups of spiritual companions will also join for certain activities. This will foster the concept of community, interdependence, and accountability into the Ambassador's experience.
- Second, an Individual Discipleship Plan (IDP). At the beginning of every module, you will make a simple plan of how you would like to grow spiritually and acquire the practical skills, knowledge, and experience proposed in the module. Your spiritual companion will be there throughout the module to help and encourage you to accomplish your plan. The IDP helps to emphasize

- the continuing nature of discipleship and that learning is a continual part of life. It stresses the need for interdependence on each other as we learn, grow, and work for God. (See guidelines for creating your IDP on the next page.)
- Third, projects. Each module will have a project that will integrate the core concepts from the module into a service learning activity focused on helping others. This will be an opportunity for your group to work together as a whole.
- Fourth, social activities. A social activity will be planned for the group at least once a month. Make sure that you always participate.

## Participant's Guide

A participant's guide for each module has been prepared for you. You hold one in your hands.

- The Participant's Guide is essentially your workbook, which contains all the lessons for each module that you will engage with.
- In the back pages of each module you will find the following: a page to create your IDP, and a list of the sessions of the module that your leader will sign and date upon completion.
- You will be required to complete 75 percent attendance and participation to receive your certification or award at the end of each module. Participants can make up for missed lessons to achieve the required 75 percent at the discretion of their leader.

Fostering togetherness is at the heart of a model for discipleship, which the General Conference is focusing on; it is known as "Together Growing Fruitful Disciples." This model emphasizes understanding, connecting, equipping, and ministering—but doing all of this "together." For God did not design us to grow or minister alone, but in community. Paul writes that growing in Christ is achieved as everyone uses the gifts God has given to them, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

Thank you for accepting the call and challenge to become an Ambassador of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. May this experience enrich your life and assist you in discovering God's greater purpose for you.

General Conference Youth Ministries Department



Gilbert Cangy  
GC Youth Director



Hiskia Missah  
Associate GC Youth Director



Jonatan Tejel Subirada  
Associate GC Youth Director

# CREATING YOUR IDP

As a human being with a nature that naturally tends to move away from God, growing to reflect Jesus as an Ambassador will rarely happen by chance or without much thought. That's why for each of the Ambassador's modules, you will be creating your own IDP. The focus of each IDP will relate to the theme of your current module and last for the duration of that module.

Here is an example of what an IDP will look like. Fill in your own IDP on the form provided.

**1. IDP Module Name:**

CHRIST-CENTERED DISCIPLESHIP

**2. Spiritual Companion:** Who is the spiritual companion who will encourage and support you in the next stage of your spiritual journey of growing as an Ambassador of Jesus? They will remain your spiritual companion throughout the current module.

JOHN WILCOX

**3. Personal vision statement:** This includes two parts: (a) What do you see in your life today that you would like to change in order to become more effective as an Ambassador for Jesus? (b) Describe how you would like to see yourself in the future. Before you start writing, take a moment to pray for God to guide your thoughts.

- CURRENTLY, I DO NOT HAVE A REGULAR OR VERY MEANINGFUL DEVOTIONAL LIFE.
- I WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP A DEVOTIONAL LIFE THAT CAN EQUIP ME SPIRITUALLY TO BE AN EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR FOR JESUS.

**4. Expected evidence of change:** After looking at your personal vision statement, list the evidence you might expect to see that reveals you are growing in Christ.

- I THINK AN EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR IS SOMEONE WHO IS ALWAYS PRAYING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO REVEAL THE CHARACTER OF JESUS WHEREVER THEY GO. THAT IS WHAT I WANT FOR MY LIFE.

**5. Next steps:** List the practical steps you will take to accomplish your personal discipleship vision. Think about how these steps will also shape your daily devotions with God.

- SET MY ALARM CLOCK FOR 7AM TO START MY DEVOTIONS
- SPEND 30 MINUTES IN PRAYER AND BIBLE READING
- REPEAT BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP
- FIND A BOOK TO READ THAT TEACHES DIFFERENT WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE
- PRAY EACH DAY FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOD TO USE ME AS HIS AMBASSADOR

**6. Reflection: How did I do?** This is completed at the end of the module. It gives you a chance to reflect on what worked well and what you would like to improve in the future. You can compare your expected evidences of change to what actually happened.

- I REALLY ENJOYED THESE LAST FEW WEEKS. THE MORE I READ AND UNDERSTOOD, THE MORE CONFIDENT I BECAME TO PRAY FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOD TO USE ME. I THINK I WILL EXPAND THE TIME FOR DEVOTIONS I HAVE IN THE EVENING, AND NOW THAT I HAVE READ A BOOK ON BIBLE STUDY, I WOULD LIKE TO READ ANOTHER ON INTERCESSORY PRAYER. I HAVE FOUND THAT I REALLY ENJOY PRAYING FOR OTHERS.

# basic template for teaching sessions

This template will be used during most in-house teaching sessions. There will be variations in the format depending on the focus for the day.

## welcome & activity

2+ min

1. General welcome and opening prayer.
2. A short getting-to-know you activity. As friendships continually deepen, so the ability to encourage and support each other spiritually deepens.

## did you know?

13 minutes

An activity that introduces the theme for the day.

## mission briefing

10 minutes

A simple Bible study that gives the biblical foundation for the theme done in groups of two or three. It will be helpful for leaders to circulate around the room to listen in on conversations to see that participants are going in the right direction and to answer questions.

## thinking it through

5 minutes

A personal reflection time where each participant writes down what they have personally learned from the Bible study and how this applies to their own life as an Ambassador. To be shared briefly with their spiritual companion who will be a spiritual encourager during the curriculum.

## reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

40 minutes

An activity that expands on the main theme for the lesson. This section is called “reflecting Jesus and His kingdom” because an ambassador’s main task is to represent who Jesus is to others, as well as what the kingdom of heaven stands for.

## next steps

15 minutes

An ambassador for Jesus will grow spiritually and will witness in everyday life beyond the training sessions. Therefore, each participant will develop an individual discipleship plan that will help them grow as an ambassador for Jesus when they are outside of the learning environment.

At the beginning of each module in the curriculum, participants will develop an individual discipleship plan (IDP) that will guide their personal spiritual journey during that section. Each IDP will focus on the theme of that section. “Next Steps” is a time for participants to reflect on how their IDP is working and to pray for each other in what they aim to do next. This will be done with their spiritual companion. A spiritual companion is a friend who prays for and encourages their own companion over a set period of time.

## summary

5 minutes

As a whole group, this is an opportunity to summarize what participants have learned during the session. It is a time for the leader to generally review what has been done and to ask for volunteers to briefly share what they have learned.

# SESSION 1

## won one by one





# SESSION 1

## won one by one



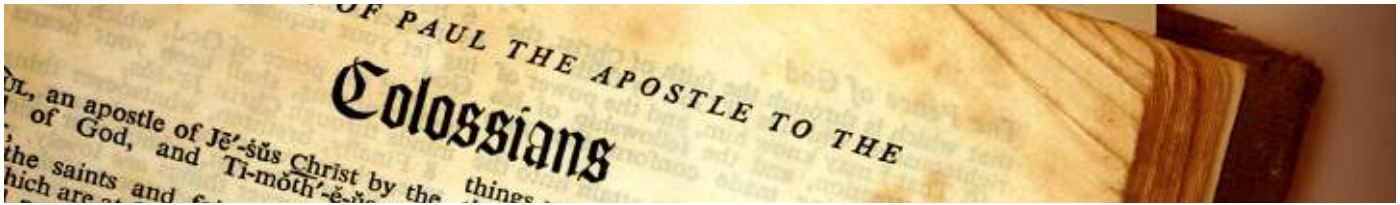
did you know...

While there are many words that describe the broken relationships that grow out of human life, which words below capture the work of sin the most? What words would you add?

### **dis**

Dis able	Dis favor
Dis advantage	Dis grace
Dis agree	Dis honor
Dis connect	Dis qualify
Dis appoint	Dis join
Dis approve	Dis like
Dis solve	Dis obey
Dis band	Dis own
Dis regard	Dis order
Dis claim	Dis integrate
Dis cord	Dis count
Dis figure	Dis respect





mission briefing

1. Read Genesis chapter 3 and identify what you think are the main ideas in this story.  

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2. What type of temptation does the snake offer Eve?  

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3. As a result of this disobedience, what “dis-words” seem most appropriate to describe the effects of their actions? Why?  

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4. What does God do: to the snake, to Adam and Eve?  

---

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reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and answer the following questions:
  - What should be a follower’s/disciple’s attitude toward humanity?  

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  - Who are the hardest people you know to love?  

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  - Who are the hardest people you don’t know to love?  

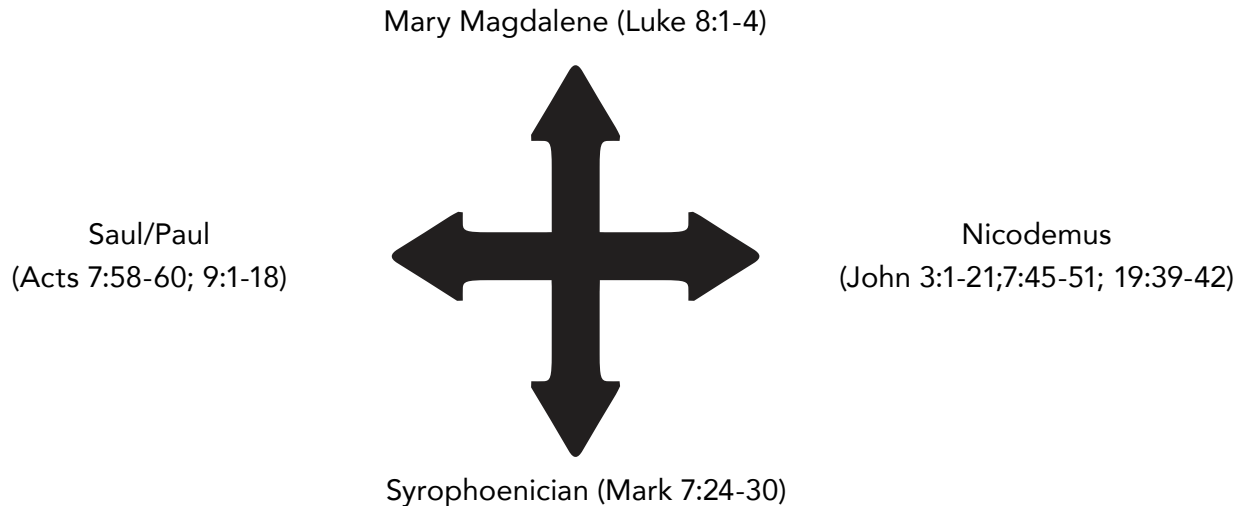
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- How does this message from Paul shape the way you approach people you know and don't know?

- The graphic below shows how disciples were brought into fellowship and follower-ship with Christ from diverse walks of life, culture, religion, and gender. Pencil in names of other “followers” of God from the Old and New Testaments that might share similar experiences of reconciliation. Also, there are those you might think of who are vastly differently than what is shown below. List those as well and why you chose them.



- In the examples of individuals given above, in what way are they “re-connected” or brought into discipleship with Christ? Refer to the “dis” statements in the Did You Know portion of the participant’s guide. What can learn about the relationship between being a disciple of Christ and an Ambassador committed to the work of reconciliation?

- As Ambassadors committed to engaging others in a life of discipleship, rank the following activities according to the most urgent need to the least and share the results with other’s in your group.
  - \_\_\_\_ Building meaningful relationships with people you disagree with
  - \_\_\_\_ Fostering an open mind to people who are different in gender, race, and religion
  - \_\_\_\_ Sharing your time, energy, and trust with people in your local community
  - \_\_\_\_ Deepening your knowledge and sensibilities to those who are dis-connected to God because of sin
  - \_\_\_\_ Becoming a disciplined, passionate follower of Christ in a way that shows in your relationship with members of the opposite sex
  - \_\_\_\_ Helping those who are not believers experience the truth that God loves them
  - \_\_\_\_ Increasing the awareness of sin and its impact on how humans treat each other





## SESSION 2

agents of reconciliation and  
growing disciples





# SESSION 2

## agents of reconciliation and growing disciples



did you know...

Agree or Disagree?

If Christians are content to be passive bystanders to the violent conflict in the world, they will be regarded by history as guilty of destructive behavior.

A choice to be inactive toward human suffering and injustice is a choice to own some of the responsibility.

Misdeeds or Missed Deeds, which is worse?

“... And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

2 Corinthians 5:19, 20





mission briefing

1. What is the bottom line problem? Why is there racial hatred? Why do some starve when there is plenty in the world to eat? Why are women treated less than human in some parts of the world? What is the primary source of the horror of child trafficking?

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2. The word for reconciliation in the Old Testament had to do with atonement—a legal response to alienation or incompatibility. The New Testament idea involves an exchange that creates understanding and restores right relationship. (Knowing that the Greeks did not conceive the idea that gods could have a personal relationship with humans, the idea of reconciliation was foreign). Read the following verses and discuss how the message of God reconciling us would be received.

Romans 5:10, 11                      2 Corinthians 5:18–21                      Ephesians 2:14–17                      Colossians 1:19, 20

3. Which verse speaks to you personally about God’s plan for reconciling the world to Himself?

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---

4. What do you think God is saying to you in this passage?

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thinking it through

1. As you think about your own personal experiences with division and enmity between yourself and others or yourself and God, what approach works well with you? Confrontational? Compassionate? Collaborative? Compromise?

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2. What role do you see yourself having in the reconciliation of others to Christ and to each other?

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### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

This session focuses on the responsibility of believers to participate in the reconciliation of others who are separated from God. Read the following questions and respond to the Bible stories and texts.

1. In 2 Kings 6:24–7:10 there is an ancient story of a handful of people who received good news and were faced with a dilemma. Read the story and discuss the dilemma they faced.

Answer the following questions about the story in your groups:

- What was their ethical/moral dilemma or problem?

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- What were the implications for others if they acted or chose not to act?

---

- What does this story teach Ambassadors today about their role, responsibility, and sense of right versus wrong in the world today?

---

2. There are two stories where Jesus deploys Ambassadors for the work of reconciliation. Read the two stories (Matthew 9:35–10:20 & Luke 10:1–24) and answer the questions below in your group:

- Describe the state of the people in Matthew's story compared to the one in Luke. Is their gross need? Hostility? What challenges are both groups sent out to meet?

---

- How are the needs of people today similar? How are they different?

---

- What "authority" is given to the disciples? Is that the same authority as you and I have today?

---

- In Luke, why do you think Jesus tells them to rejoice not in the power they asserted, but in the relationship they had to God in heaven (names were written in heaven). What is the lesson for Ambassadors in that reminder?

---



3. Who in Scripture experienced cooperating with God for the reconciliation of others—individuals or whole groups of people? Consider the two categories.

Most Obvious

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---

Most Overlooked

---

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---

4. With a local newspaper, scan the pages and look for the situations that call for reconciliation. What would the headlines read if Christian brothers and sisters persisted in making a difference in their communities? Re-write the headlines to see what it might look like and be ready to share with others.

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# SESSION 3

reconciliation and relating to  
enemies





# SESSION 3

## reconciliation and relating to enemies

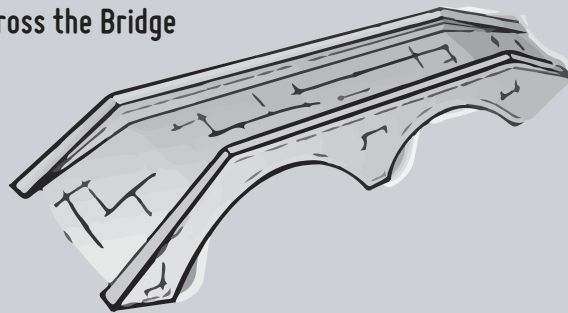


did you know...

What if you discovered that forgiving your enemies could significantly prevent or cure a disease—would you be interested?

Did you know that those who practice a forgiving lifestyle are likely to be more productive at work than those who harbor bitterness and resentment against others?

**Cross the Bridge**

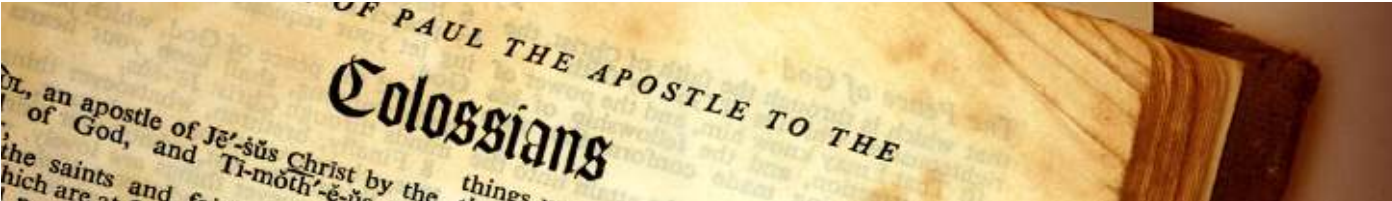


**What do you think you will discover on the other side of forgiving one another?**

“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Matthew 6:14–15, ESV





mission briefing

Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus made statements and taught truths that are hard to imagine. Consider one of the hardest sayings Jesus ever spoke.

1. In Matthew 6:14, 15, Jesus makes a seemingly impossible statement about forgiving your enemy in order to be forgiven by God. Read the passage carefully once through as individuals. Then read the whole context together as a group and answer the following questions:
- a. Does God withhold forgiving us when we don't forgive others? Explain.

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---

- b. How does the experience of forgiving others enable us as believers to value and appreciate the forgiveness God extends to us?

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2. In Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus makes a similar challenge. Read this passage as a group and again check the context of the passage. What is Jesus saying to His followers? What is He saying to you today?

---

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3. Where do you rank on the scale below?

Forgiving my enemies is something I practice

1	2	3	4	5	6
rarely					faithfully

Forgiving our enemies is something I witness other believers practice

1	2	3	4	5	6
rarely					faithfully

Imagine. If this kind of reconciliation were widely practiced, what might be the effects on how our world perceives this church?

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### thinking it through

1. When you think about forgiving the people who have hurt you, misunderstand you, or disrespect you, how do you feel? Is there a resistance? Reflect on the words of Christ and your own need for forgiveness.  

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2. Write down a few symbols that represent people (so as to protect their identity) that you harbor resentment or anger towards. Name what they did to you or you did to them and begin the reconciliation process by praying earnestly for them. As hard as it may be, it may be the only pathway to reconciliation.



### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

1. Read Luke 23:13-47 carefully and underline every phrase or sentence that describes how Christ treated His enemies. List as many examples from this passage that describe the way Christ treats His enemies.  

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---
2. Reconciliation with your enemies involves many attitudes and actions of you as an Ambassador of Christ. It helps to flesh out some of the details in the form of what reconciliation is and what it is not. Begin writing your ideas about what it is and is not below, then share



the ideas with your group. Create a master list you all can agree on and be ready to present it to the rest of the participants. Below are two examples:

**Reconciliation with your enemies is...**

- Taking the first steps to cross the bridge and initiate a new relationship
- Choosing to forgive and treat the other with respect, hope, and good will
- Mirroring the mercy of God for all sinners (including yourself)
- Taking responsibility for being in a broken relationship with another

**Reconciliation with your enemies is not...**

- A compromise or an agreement to disagree
- Always an admission of fault or responsibility to the act that caused the division
- Losing your dignity or personal control of your life
- An immediate feeling of relief but an ongoing experience to foster

3. The big question in response to this challenge to reconcile with your enemies is “Why?” “Why should I respond this way?” Read Romans 12:19–21 and Matthew 5:43–48 and identify some good reasons:

Answer: God is the only One wise enough to judge all our thoughts and motives; let Him be God.

Answer: Because when we hate our enemy we become hateful—the very thing that hurt us in the first place.

Answer: Goodness to enemies offers more than punishment or blame, but it has power to teach people to be different.

Answer: The enemy loses a foothold in your heart.

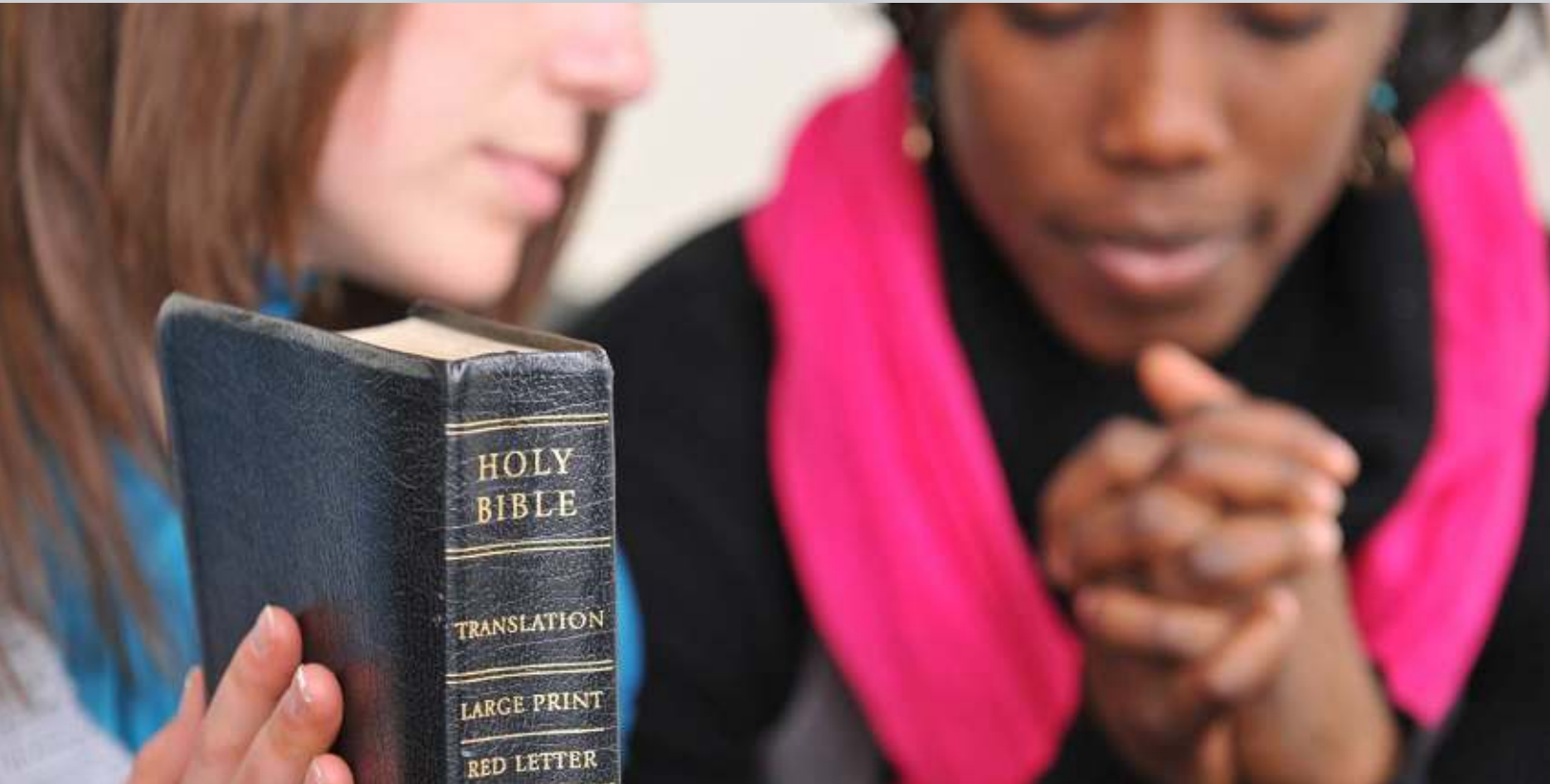
Answer: You act and live the way sons and daughters of God should live.

- 
4. Read and discuss the six steps toward reconciliation to move from “why” we reconcile to “how” we reconcile.



# SESSION 4

## reconciliation and the fellowship of believers







# SESSION 4

## reconciliation and the fellowship of believers



did you know...

### Symbols of the World



Peace Movements—argue for human rights (mostly political)



Yin and Yang—view of the universe that everything is related



Race and Ethnic Equality—works to achieve equality



Humanistic Inherent Goodness View—there is good in all



The Cross—Christ redeems and reconciles people to Him through sacrifice and love

“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble”

1 John 2:9–10





mission briefing

1. As you look around at the needs and problems in your world, where do you see a need for reconciliation the most? (Rank in order of importance, 1–most and 7–least.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Young/Old
- \_\_\_\_\_ Families/Homes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Racial Hatred
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gender Equality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social/Cultural Issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Political Parties
- \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership/Laity

2. Read the Scriptures given below and share from the texts with what mindset and manner believers should practice reconciliation. Ask the following questions of the texts:

- What verses, phrases, or ideas arrest your attention as you think about the work of reconciliation with fellow believers?

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- Is it surprising that believers in Christ would experience serious conflict? Why or why not?

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- What principles, attitudes, or actions emerge from these verses that should be primary guides for believers to bring healing to their broken relationships?

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- a. 1 John 1:8–9
- b. 1 John 2:9,10
- c. Proverbs 18:17
- d. Matthew 5:23, 24
- e. Ephesians 4:14–16
- f. 1 Cor. 6:1–5





### thinking it through

1. What are some relationships you have among believers that are fractured because of behaviors and attitudes that have been ignored? Are you at a place where you believe you can initiate reconciliation?  


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2. What might reconciliation look like in your mind at this time?  


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3. Take time to pray privately about this relationship and ask God to begin stirring your heart and mind to action.



### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

1. What qualities do you think are most needed in bringing healing to the broken relationships in the church?

_____ Courage	_____ Prayerfulness	_____ Integrity
_____ Gentle Spirit	_____ Selflessness	_____ Clarity in Communication
_____ Wisdom	_____ Good Listener	_____ Positive Attitude
_____ Discretion	_____ Long Term Commitment to Growth	

Why did you prioritize the qualities this way?

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2. A common response to people who are in disagreement is that we should not stand in judgment of each other. It is true that the Bible says, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Matthew 7:1-3, NIV).
  - Does this mean that Christian believers ought to leave each other alone?

- If we are not able to point out where our relationships go wrong, how can we reconcile when conflict arises?

Read the whole section in Matthew 7:1–5; pay careful attention to every word and phrase Jesus uses. List the phrases below and discuss how each phrase plays a part in the work of reconciliation.

3. Read the advice given in Galatians 6:1–5 and the counsel of Christ in Matthew 18:15–20 about restoring other believers with ourselves to Christ. As you read these two passages you will discover a process for reconciling fellow believers. Read this passage and discuss the procedural approach to restoring the rifts caused by the behaviors and attitudes of believers.
4. Case Study. Write a case study or a scenario that another group could read and discuss on how to apply the principles studied to bring about reconciliation.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## SESSION 5

communicating the story of  
reconciliation—the Father's joy





# SESSION 5

## communicating the story of reconciliation—the Father's joy



did you know...

### Birth Order Specialists Say...

- Older Siblings: Independent. Responsible. Natural leaders. Strive for perfection. Need approval from authority figures.
- Middle Child: Typically the most rebellious. Compromisers. Love to please people. Excellent at working in groups. Make friends easily.
- Youngest Sibling: Usually the most artistic of siblings. Likely to be the class clown (they are used to getting attention). Typically, the youngest gets bored easily.

“There was a man who had two sons.”

Luke 15:11





mission briefing

1. Read the parable in Luke 15 and pay careful attention to the following parts of the story as listed below:
  - a. The complaint: “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”
  - b. This chapter contains how many parables? (15:3, 8, 11)  

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  - c. Who do the characters in the story represent?  

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  - d. What is the message for the sinners?  

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  - e. What is the message for the Pharisees?  

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  - f. What does this parable declare about the message of reconciliation?  

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2. If this parable were written today, what people group would the younger brother represent? What people group would the older brother represent?  

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3. What should be the overall attitude toward reconciliation? (Luke 15:6, 7, 9, 10, 22-24)  

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thinking it through

1. Think of the different ways in which the church/believers/Christians could celebrate the joy of reconciliation more than it does currently. How often do you praise God for those people who are “found” or celebrate those who “come home”?  

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2. What are some practical ways that you and other Ambassadors can tangibly practice joining with heaven in celebration? Share your ideas.

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### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

What would make the most significant change in the human experience today?

1. As Ambassadors for Christ and His Kingdom, have you reflected on what “the kingdom” of God really is? Take a few moments in your group to flesh out a preliminary definition or description based upon what you know already. Strive to write your definition in 20 words or less.

Some questions to prompt your thoughts:

- Is the kingdom a present reality or a future hope?

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- Is the kingdom of God a physical aspect or is it spiritual?

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- Why is repentance the first challenge of entering the kingdom?

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- In what way is the kingdom like human kingdoms? How might it be different?

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- Why are most of the parables about the kingdom?

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- Is the kingdom something a person should be “in” or “out” of as well as “at” or “near”?

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- Many parables of Jesus start out with, “The Kingdom if God is like...” Why is it described but not really defined?

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Kingdom Definition (20 words or less)

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2. Read Matthew 6:9, 10 and apply what Jesus says about the kingdom to your definition.

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3. Based on what you now know of the “kingdom of God,” read Luke 4:14–30 individually and answer the following questions:

- From verses 18 and 19, list and name the attributes of the new kingdom

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- Why did the people seem confused? (Read the parts Jesus left out in Isaiah 61).

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- What does Jesus say in reply to the challenge of the people to His handling of Isaiah 61?

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4. As Jesus described His mission from Isaiah 61, which part or target ministry resonates with you today?

- Proclaim good news to the poor
- Freedom for prisoners
- Sight for the blind
- Set the oppressed free
- Proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor



# SESSION 6

communication: say what you mean





# SESSION 6

## communication: say what you mean



did you know...

say what you mean

**When you say...**

a. Sometimes

b. Often

c. Always

d. Never

e. Usually

f. Occasionally

g. Rarely

h. Consistently

i. Regularly

**What do you mean...**

%

%

%

%

%

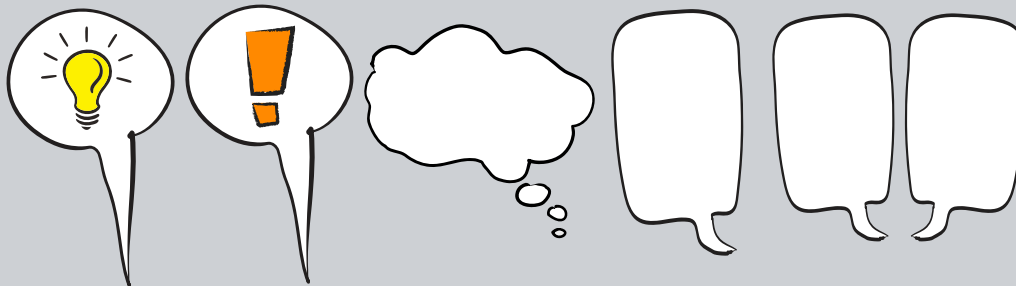
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“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O  
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer”

Psalms 19:14





mission briefing

- 1. Paper Person Activity. What are some observations you gained from doing the exercise with the paper person. What can you say about the power of words?  

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- 2. Read Ephesians 4:29 in your groups and ask: What is God saying to me in these verses? What would it be like to be in a community of faith that faithfully obeyed this challenge?  

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thinking it through

- 1. Reflect on your conversations recently. It is likely that you can remember conversations where you have said something that was destructive and not helpful. Conversely, you may recall things you have said that were good, right, and true. Also, think of occasions where you said nothing, but should have said something. Which are easier to remember?  

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- 2. Without sharing details about what you said—good or evil, or what you failed to say—pray with your group for wisdom to use the power of speech and words well.  

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### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

God created speech. In fact, it was the Creator's words that gave life and substance to matter. Genesis 1 declares, "And God said..." no less than ten times in that one chapter. The Psalmist wrote, "He spoke and it was done; he commanded it, and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:9). The whole world was framed up by "word of God" (Hebrews 11:3). There is no question—the gift of speech is intentional and valuable. As Ambassadors of Christ our words carry power, for good or evil. Even the words we don't speak but should have are precious opportunities for good. Learning to measure and be careful with the gift of speech will bear good fruit in your relationships with others, and especially with God. Consider the light and dark side of speech.

1. Read James 3:1–12 and make a list of five to ten points or illustrations you think are important about the power of speech.
2. Read James 1:19,20. Why do you think the first step mentioned in this passage is to be "slow to speak"? Think of times when you have spoken quickly and regretted it. What can you do to develop the habit of thinking before speaking? (Share with your group.)  

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3. How does 1 Peter 3:9–11 speak to popular culture and media today? How many movies, commercials, videos, talk shows, political ads, and news reports completely violate the advice from Scripture? Is there a danger of being drawn into a pattern of speech if we mindlessly immerse ourselves into this culture?  

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4. If we struggle to know what to say to others, consider the value of sharing Scripture, Bible promises, and hope and encouragement for the future. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 and imagine how hearing these words would resonate with the hearts and lives of people you know.
5. Consider a few more insights about the positive power of good speech.
  - Psalm 40:10
  - Psalm 78:1–8
  - Proverbs 12:22
  - Isaiah 50:4
6. Put it into practice.







# SESSION 7

communication: mean what you say





# SESSION 7

## communication: mean what you say



did you know...

### Researchers report about communication:

- 7% of meaning is in the actual words that are spoken.
- 38% of meaning is in the way that the words are said.
- 55% of meaning is in facial expression.

A



E



F



I



K



M



“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions”

1 John 3: 18





mission briefing

1. What do these verses say about relationships or value of actions or expression in Christian relationships/mission?

a. 1 John 3:7-10, 16-18

b. 1 Peter 1:13

c. James 2:14-20

d. James 3:13-18

e. 2 Corinthians 3:2

f. Colossians 4:5
2. Which passages above speak to you about your relationships with others?
3. Again, how do these verses affect our normal, everyday communication interaction with others? How do these messages of wisdom affect our communication with the world we are called to reach?





### thinking it through

1. As you reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses as a communicator, write what you think is your chief strength in communication, as well as your weakness.

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2. What are some things you can do be more aware of your non-verbal communication to the world and to those around you?

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### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

The focus of this portion is on how Christ emphasizes actions and going beyond simply speaking with words. This is true in our communication as well as in our mission to reconcile humanity back to God. Our words and speech matter, so we are careful about what comes out of our mouth. Also, we are dutiful to express that same message with our actions. Below are some powerful parables used by communicators (Christian and even non-Christians) to teach and support the challenge to do what we speak.

1. Answer and discuss individually or in groups.
  - When in your life have actions resonated nicely with your words/speech?  

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  - Perhaps you can think of a time or two when your actions were not in line with your words, which conveyed a different message.  

---
  - Are there times you can recall when good actions were able to communicate effectively without words?  

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2. In Matthew 21:28-32 you can read the parable of the father who commanded two sons to work in the vineyard. Discuss the parable and the positive and negatives of both son's responses. Ultimately, which son did the Father's will?  

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3. In Matthew 7:24-27 read the parable of the wise and foolish builders. What distinguishes success from failure?  

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4. There is a saying in the world of communication: "Promise less, deliver more." What are some promises you need to deliver on?  

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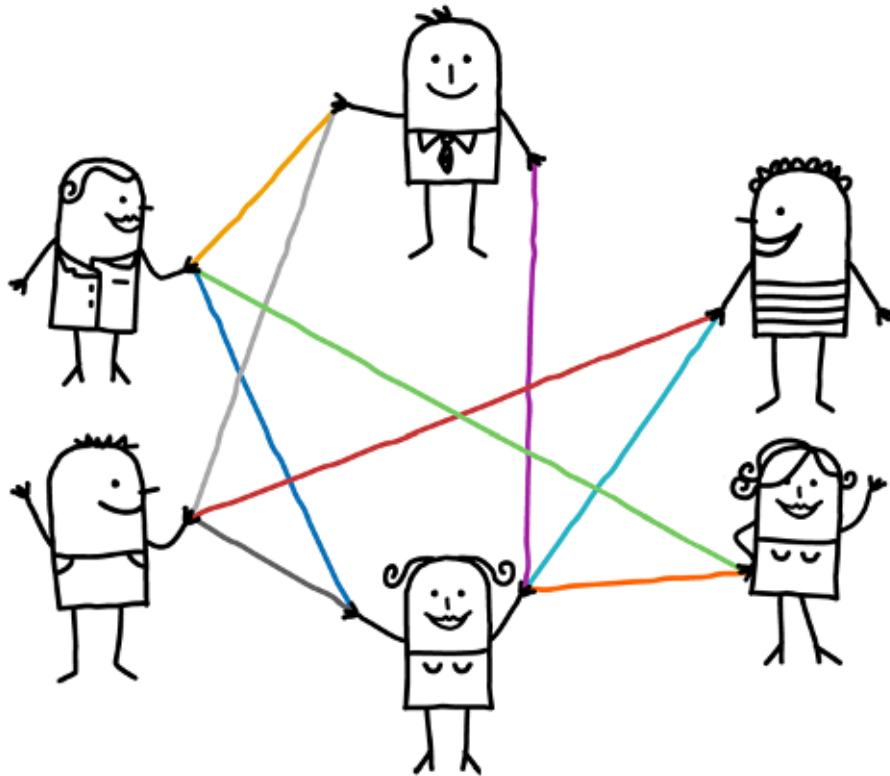
#### **Tips for communication in Multi-Cultural or unfamiliar settings:**

Often, as Christians we find ourselves in unfamiliar settings where the culture, values, and traditions we are accustomed to are not practiced. Especially in such settings where words, language, and speech are already problematic modes of communication, your actions, expressions, and manners can say more than words will ever communicate. Below are only a few prompts: expand and add to the list with your group!

- a. When going into a new community, the word to shape your attitude is "incarnational." It means "to make yourself a part of their world." Immerse yourself with them. Not in their depravity or sin, but with them as they live and struggle. Walk with them. Listen to them. Be concerned about them. Incarnational immersion is to understand, value, and celebrate the attributes of their culture that are honorable.
- b. Learn to communicate in their language. Even if you can't be successful at it, trying will demonstrate that you value who they are.
- c. Listen to them and observe them extensively to see and hear their stories. Every culture, group, or community has a story—what is it?
- d. Where morals and ethics are not involved, be flexible and teachable. If women wear long dresses, so should you. If men never talk to women publicly unless related or married, you should follow that example.
- e. If you don't know what to do, ask a leader, elder, or someone in authority who knows well your questions. Of course, be respectful by saying, "I don't want to be offensive or disrespectful, but could you explain..." or "help me understand..."
- f. Learn all you can about their history, culture, good moments, and sad moments. You might ask, "Tell me more about..." or "Share with me some of your favorite stories..."
- g. Elevate what is good, beautiful, and true about them instead of the things that inconvenience or annoy you. You might notice the way they involve their children or take care of their neighbors or share hospitality. Perhaps you could say, "I noticed that people are often..." Be positive and specific about what you see, hear, and feel in their world.
- h. Listen. Listen. Listen. Someone who listens demonstrates the other person has value.

# SESSION 8

## relationships







# SESSION 8

## relationships



did you know...

### Facts About Communication

1. Seventy to eighty percent of our time awake is engaged in some kind of communication. Of that, we spend...
  - 9% writing
  - 16% reading
  - 30% speaking
  - 45% listening
2. Most of our formal communication training is in writing, reading, and speaking, while very little training is given to developing the skill of listening.
3. You can think faster than anyone can speak. Most speak at the rate of about 125 words per minute. Yet our brains are fast enough to understand 400 words per minute if it were possible to communicate language that fast.
4. When you listen to a public speaker you use only 25 percent of your mental capacity.

We can listen **better**

We should listen **more**

We need to listen **first**

“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak  
and slow to become angry”

James 1:19





mission briefing

1. What human relationships have the most impact on your:

Faith	_____
Family	_____
Education	_____
Occupation	_____
Social Life	_____
Eternal Life	_____

2. The following passages show the height, depth, and breadth of how believers ought to relate to one another. Listen carefully to the verbs in the verses. You will notice that the action words challenge the Christian community to relate well to each other. Underline or circle the verb that describes the relational action we all must engage in and then...

- Write an “H” next to the verse that is comparatively hard to do.
- Write an “N” by the verse that is something you feel you need to do more.
- Write a “C” next to the verses would bring the most change to your lifestyle.
- Write an “R” next to the passage that seems to offer the richest reward.

God-centered relationships are committed to...

1. Love one another – John 13:34 & John 15:12,17
2. Forgive one another – Ephesians 4:32 & Colossians 3:13.
3. Be servants to one another – Galatians 5:13
4. Show hospitality to one another – 1 Peter 4:7-10
5. Pray for one another – James 5:16
6. Build up (edify) one another – Romans 14:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:11
7. Greet one another – Romans 16:16, 1 Peter 5:14
8. Forbear one another – Ephesians. 4:1-2 & Colossians 3:13-14
9. Do not judge one another – Romans 14:13
10. Do not speak evil of one another – James 4:11
11. Do not murmur against one another – James 5:9
12. Do not bite and devour one another – Galatians 5:15



13. Do not provoke and envy one another – Galatians 5:26
14. Have the same care for one another – 1 Corinthians 12:25–26
15. Receive one another – Romans 15:7
16. Teach one another – Colossians 3:16
17. Admonish (counsel) one another – Romans 15:14 & Colossians 3:16
18. Submit to one another – Ephesians 5:21–22
19. Confess your sins to one another – James 5:16
20. Do not lie to one another – Colossians 3:9
21. Be kind to one another – Ephesians 4:32
22. Comfort one another – 1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11



### thinking it through

1. What “one another” verse do you sense God calling you to practice today?  

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2. Reflect and share with your group what you think might happen to a community of faith if they were to actively and faithfully obey the “one another” challenges.  

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### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

#### Opening Activity

1. On a page of paper, put a stick person in the middle of the page and write “me” under the drawing. Quickly draw as many stick people in your sphere of influence (people you come in contact with on a regular basis, i.e. classmates, co-workers, acquaintances in town, church



members, young people who look up to you). For this exercise there are three levels of relationships described by a:

- dotted line (acquaintances)
- thin line (know well)
- thick line (deep, enduring friendship)

2. Read three different snapshots of relationships that occur in the life and ministry of Jesus. Describe the nature, action, and effects of the relationships found in:

- Mark 2:1–5

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- John 1:43–51

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- Acts 4:31–37

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3. Review individually the Seven Attributes of Biblical Friendship and then discuss in your group: a) Which do you think is most relevant to you today, and b) which would make the work of reconciliation more effective today.

1. Christian Friends are selfless and sacrificial: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)
2. Christian Friends’ Love is Unconditional: “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17)
3. Christian Friends are reliable: “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24)
4. Christian Friends listen and advise well: “Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.” (Proverbs 19:20)
5. Christian Friends are committed to growth: “Wounds from a friend can be trusted” and “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:6,17)
6. Christian Friends maintain healthy boundaries: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy...” (1 Corinthians 13:4)
7. Christian Friends Believe in you: They believe the best about you even in your weakest moments. “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22: 31,32)



# SESSION 9

## growing relationships—dating





# SESSION 9

## growing relationships—dating



did you know...

### Dating Questionnaire

1. A date should be... (List three 1-2 word descriptors)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. After how many dates do you think there should be a discussion about the status of the relationship?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Rank the following character qualities in order of what helps make a date a rewarding experience for both.

\_\_\_\_\_ Communication

\_\_\_\_\_ Selflessness

\_\_\_\_\_ Respect

\_\_\_\_\_ Creativity

\_\_\_\_\_ Integrity

\_\_\_\_\_ Simplicity

4. Do you think dating should be more of a group activity than an exclusively private occasion? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you think are some important ground rules for dating?

\_\_\_\_\_

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I  
press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me”

Philippians 3:12





mission briefing

1. Read the following passages and discuss what each passage declares about who you are in relationship to God.
  - 2 Corinthians 5:16, 17
  - 1 John 3:1-3
  - Deuteronomy 7:6
  - 1 Peter 2:9
  - 1 Peter 1:16
  - Leviticus 20:26
  - Romans 12:2
2. How does your relationship to God define your relationships to others?

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3. What role do you see dating playing in the development of your identity with Christ?

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thinking it through

1. First, reflect on who you are in Christ today. What has God done for you and brought you through?

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2. Next, where do you want to be? What ultimate goals do you have as a believer about relationships and marriage? In light of these two questions, how do you think you should proceed in fellowship with the opposite sex?

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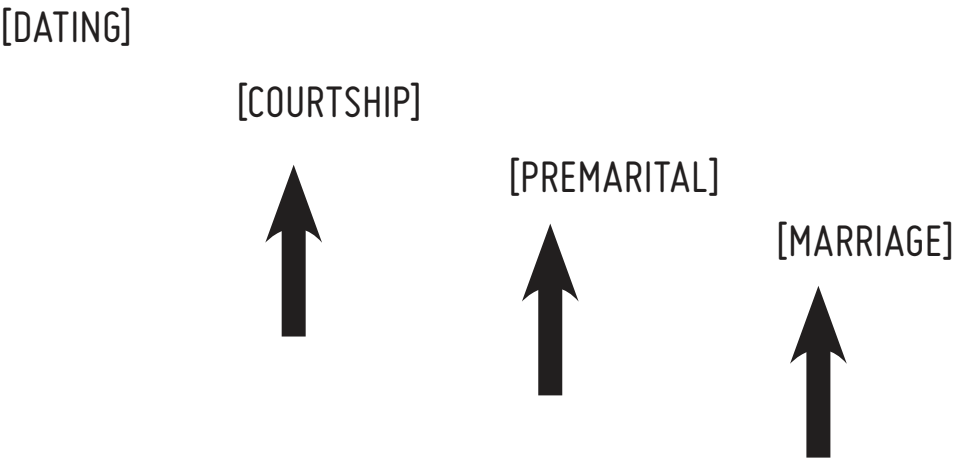


**reflecting Jesus & His kingdom**

1. What does it mean to live an integrated Christian life versus living a compartmentalized life?

Compartmentalized Life	Integrated Christian Life
<hr/>	<hr/>
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2. As a group or individually, read Ecclesiastes 3:1–15. Connect the message of Scripture to the follow comments. Every season of relational growth has its own rules and boundaries. For example, there are activities, conversations, and behaviors that are appropriate for marriage but are not healthy for dating or courtship. The most obvious example would be sexual activity; it belongs healthfully in marriage but it is ultimately destructive in any other context. Even sexual activity does not begin physically, but much like the seasons of relationships below, moves on a continuum. Sex starts in the mind, in unspoken expressions and the nature of conversations that continue to build. Our relationships follow a similar progression.



The arrows represent the area where the boundaries experience stress. They are normal, not evil, but not to be ignored. As you progress in a season (all seasons progress because relationships are never static) you begin to press and stress the boundaries of where you are and where you are heading. Because of this, Christians must be grounded by biblically enduring principles of individual character.

3. Review the following advice from faithful apostles and prophets of God and determine what might apply to your practice of dating or how you relate to the opposite sex.
  - a. To the young adult Timothy, Paul declares:  
“So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).
  - b. Paul declares to those in the secular—even corrupt—city of Corinth a message of consecration (1 Corinthians 6:15–20).
  - c. To those going into a 70-year season of Babylonian captivity, God says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29: 11).
  - d. To a young lady in Australia named Nellie, Ellen White instructed:

Dear Nellie:

I am thankful to God that you love the truth and that you love Jesus... Let the Word of God be your guidebook that in everything you may be molded in conduct and character according to its requirements. You are the Lord’s property; He created you and He re- deemed you... You have a sacred responsibility, one that requires you to keep your soul pure by consecrating yourself to be wholly the Lord’s. Your friends who are totally opposed to spiritual things are not under the leadership of Christ but under the black banner of the prince of darkness. To associate with those who neither respect nor love God—unless you associate with them for the purpose of winning them to Jesus—will be a detriment to your spirituality. If you cannot change their attitudes, their influence will corrupt and taint your own faith. It’s good to be kind to these persons, but not good for you to continually try to be with them and do the things they do; for if you choose the atmosphere that surrounds them, you will forfeit the companionship of Jesus.”

(A Call To Stand Apart, Ellen G. White. Review and Herald, 2002. P. 74–75.)

4. What three principles will you use in shaping your interaction with the opposite sex?

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# SESSION 10

## relationships: courtship





# SESSION 10

## relationships: courtship

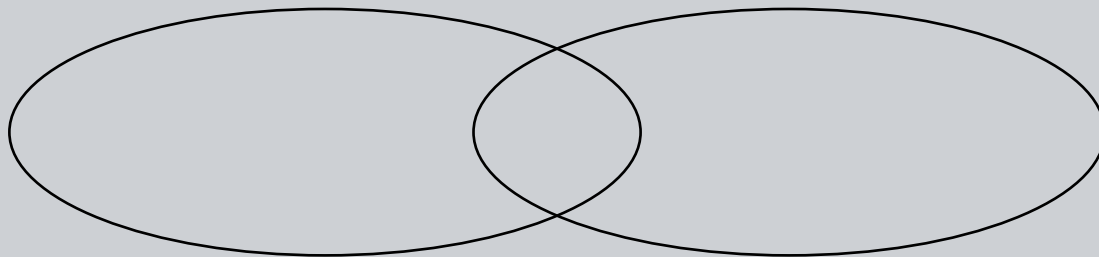


did you know...

- If you have no goal or objective then you will probably achieve it.
- If you have no expectations or ambitions about relationships then you will rarely be disappointed or grateful.
- If you have no standards for success or failure then you will never gain or lose anything.

Dating

Courtship



Goals & Boundaries (Dating)

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Goals & Boundaries (Courtship)

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“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”

Philippians 3:13, 14





mission briefing

This study will explore the tools needed to negotiate the growth and intimacy of our relationships.

1. Read the following and discuss how each passage offers a skill for entering more fully into a relationship. Try to offer a “one word” answer (tool) for each passage.
- Philippians 1:9

• 2 Peter 1:5-7

• Luke 6:43-45

• 2 Peter 1:8-9

• Philippians 4:8
2. How do you know if someone is “the one” or “the right person” to pursue courtship with? Is there only “one”?



thinking it through

1. When it comes to relationships with the opposite sex, is my relationship to Christ the foundation of every thought and decision I make?
2. What commitments do you want to resolve today about your relationships?





### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

1. Definition of Courtship: Courtship is a committed friendship that considers the \_\_\_\_\_ of marriage.

- a. Potential
- b. Possibility
- c. Compatibility
- d. Feasibility

Which word corresponds best with the theme of this session? Why?

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2. Do you believe God has a person who is the perfect match for you? If so:

What does it mean to match perfectly? Does it mean that there is no effort, no compromise, no struggle, no sacrifice, or growing faithfully through adversity?

If not:

What role does God play in our personal lives? Does it matter who we marry? Does God simply want us to choose well and make good decisions?

3. Either/Or: Choose one and explain your position:

The longer you know someone before marriage, the greater the likelihood of marital satisfaction.

Or

The better you know someone before marriage, the greater the likelihood of marital satisfaction.

4. During a courtship that is moving toward a formal engagement or betrothal, which attitudes should cause the most concern or warning?

- a. "He/she may not have the spiritual convictions or commitment I have, but if they did God would do great things with them."
- b. "He/she does not seem to have the ambition to finish what they start, but maybe they just need to find the right opportunity."
- c. "The person I am with seems to have emotional outbursts often, but he/she will get control of that anger as soon as things start to fall into place for them."
- d. "My partner tends to eye members of the opposite sex in a way that makes me feel uncomfortable, but that will go away when we are married; he/she will only have eyes for me once we are committed."



- e. "My partner doesn't communicate or share easily with me on a deeper emotional level, but once we are married it will draw them out and help them be more expressive."
  - f. "My partner constantly avoids social or fellowship settings and wants to spend time only with me. I appreciate it, but it feels like I have to choose. Perhaps when we are married, that will change."
5. 5. Which statement do you feel conveys the most encouraging attitude toward marriage?
- a. "I'm not always sure what he/she is thinking and feeling, but when I inquire we tend to understand each other."
  - b. "I will love her/him the right way if I focus on loving Christ first."
  - c. "Protecting the physical boundaries we have set in not a constant struggle."
  - d. "I feel free to state my opinion without fear or worry, even if I know my partner may disagree."
  - e. "Not only do I love him/her, I admire them for their courage and integrity."
  - f. "We have experienced sadness and disappointment, but with God there is no challenge we can't overcome."
6. Add your own hypothetical statements, four positive and four negative that would cause warning, to the lists given in questions 4 & 5. Try to come up with samples that are not represented already.

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# SESSION 11

## premarital insights—counsel





# SESSION 11

## premarital insights—counsel



did you know...

- Eighty-six percent of couples tend to plan more for the wedding than formal preparation for the marriage.
- Question: What makes a good marriage? Ninety percent of young adults declared, “being in love.”
- “When over 1,000 university students were asked to list the essential ingredients of love, no single item was mentioned by at least one half of those responding.”

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”

Philippians 1:9–11





mission briefing

1. Agree or Disagree: For marriage to succeed, love is all you need!  
Explain your response.  

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2. The following are a few passages that shape the mind of marriage. Read the passages carefully and explore what it says about how we should prepare. It will not necessarily be explicit, but think “if this is true, then how should two people prepare?”
  - “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).  

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  - Proverbs 18:22: “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.”  

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  - Proverbs 30:18, 19: “There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden.”  

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3. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15 and discuss what it means to be “yoked” and what it means to be a “believer.”  

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thinking it through

1. What do you know you need to change about your walk with God and others in order to be oriented to being a soul mate one day?  

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2. What are some things you can do with fellow Ambassadors to make preparing for marriage a fully consecrated endeavor?  

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### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

1. So many young adults long for God to “show them” who they should connect with to develop an enduring marriage. If God has not opened the Red Sea to your future partner’s house, or He has not dropped plagues on every other option except the one you should marry, perhaps He has already spoken. In fact, below are specific things God has declared to be “His will for you.” Again, as you prepare for marriage, “be in God’s will” by doing the following:
  - a. God’s Will is that you \_\_\_\_\_  
(Ephesians 1:11, 12; Matthew 18:12–14; 2 Peter 3:8, 9; Galatians 1:3–5; 1 Timothy 2:1)
  - b. God’s Will is that you \_\_\_\_\_  
(Colossians 4:12, 13; Colossians 1:9–12; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–6)
  - c. God’s will is that you are \_\_\_\_\_  
(Ephesians 5:17–21; Acts 1:7–9; Galatians 5)
  - d. God’s will is that you \_\_\_\_\_  
(Ephesians 6:5–8; Philippians 2)
  - e. God’s will is that you \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 Peter 2:15, 16)
  - f. God’s will is that you \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)
2. How are two people devoted to the explicit will of God better prepared for marriage than two people who were simply “in love”?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Below are seven key questions to ask when you are engaged first with God and then someone else. Read each question and discuss how this question is crucial in preparing for marriage. What Bible verses can you think of that support the thrust of these questions?
  - a. Have you looked honestly at the myths of marriage?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Do you know what love means to you and to your partner?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Have you chosen to be happy no matter what comes your way?  
\_\_\_\_\_



d. Can you say what you mean and mean what you say?

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e. Do you really understand the differences and similarities between men and women?

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f. How do you practice negotiating through conflict and reconciliation?

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g. Are you becoming a soul mate?

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4. Which of the above questions seems to be the most relevant or important to you today? Why?

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Further Questions For Couples to Explore:

5. Every couple headed for marriage ought to reflect and share the following questions:

a. What do you admire about your partner? What do you believe will be true about them whether you marry or not? In sixty years when they don't look anything like they do today, what will be true about them? (List three attributes.)

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b. If you had to tell five stories that define who you are today, what five stories would you tell? Why?

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# SESSION 12

## marriage and parenting







# SESSION 12

## marriage and parenting



did you know...

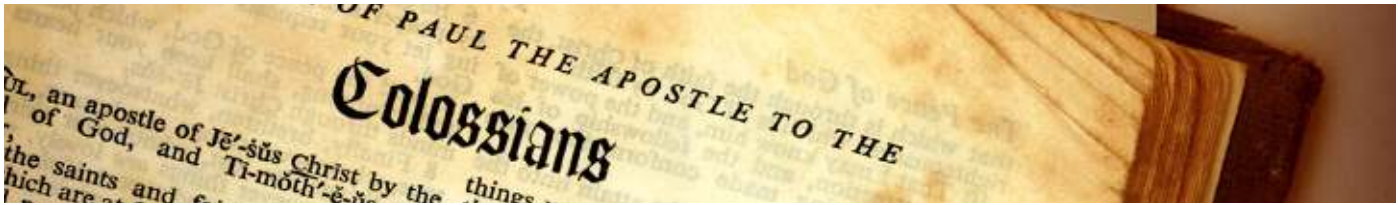


- Did you know people who stay married live four years longer than people who don't?
- Divorce and Mediation Project reports: "80% of divorced men and women said their marriage broke up because they gradually grew apart and lost a sense of closeness, or because they did not feel loved and appreciated. Only 20–27% of couples said an extramarital affair was even partially to blame."
- "In 2003, for every 1,000 people there were 7.5 marriages and 3.8 divorces filed." If this is true, does it mean that 50 percent of marriages end in divorce?

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and the wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

Genesis 2:24, 25





mission briefing

1. Read the narratives that describe marriage in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 2:21–25). What are some observations you see about the nature of this relationship God instituted? Respond to the following questions and comments in Genesis. What are some questions that remain that are not explicitly answered by the text?  

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  - Mankind is the combination of male and female. What are the implications for understanding the biblical family?  

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  - What do you think it means to be made “in the image of God”? In what ways are we like God, and in what ways are we not at all like God?  

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  - Part of God’s original plan was to “be fruitful and multiply.” Obviously, this suggests that sexual intimacy was a part of the plan. How has this become the target of the enemy attack on humanity and the home?  

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  - How is the description of how Eve was taken from Adam a segue into a prophecy about marriage? God seems to set up the way men and women would leave their parents and become one flesh in marriage. Knowing that this happened prior to sin and part of God’s projected plan, what should be our attitude toward marriage?  

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  - What is the connection between being naked and not ashamed, but after sin being naked and feeling ashamed?  

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2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote about the relationship between love and marriage in a sermon while he was in prison:  
“Marriage is more than your love for each other. It has a higher dignity and power, for it is God’s holy ordinance, through which He wills to perpetuate the human race till the end of time. In your love you see only your two selves in the world, but in marriage you are a link in the chain of the generations, which God causes to come and to pass away to his glory, and calls into his kingdom. As high as God is above man, so high are the sanctity, the rights, and the promise of marriage above the sanctity, the rights, and the promise of love. It is not your love that sustains the marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love.”  
What is your response to the observation: “It’s not love that sustains the marriage but the marriage sustains your love”?  

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### thinking it through

1. What do I believe is the purpose of marriage from God's point of view? How would marriage deepen my walk with God and broaden my understanding of His love?  

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2. Perhaps you have heard the statement, "Don't let the cost distract you from its ultimate value." How is this true about marriage? The Christian life? Children? Be ready to share your responses with your fellow participants.  

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### reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

1. As you read the following passages of Scripture, identify the three key verses that you feel are particularly relevant to raising children today.
  - Ephesians 6:4
  - Colossians 3:21
  - Proverbs 29:15
  - 1 Thessalonians 2:7
  - Psalms 144:12
  - Proverbs 22:6
  - Deuteronomy 4:9, 10
  - 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
  - Luke 11:11-13
2. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 there is an overarching message to the Israelites who were born in the desert. What words and phrases speak personally to you about how to raise children?  

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3. Read and discuss the key words and phrases in the most classic wedding vows:
- "I, (name), take you (name), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part."
  - "I, (name), take you, (name), to be my lawfully wedded (husband/wife), my constant friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward. In the presence of God, our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live."
  - "I, (name), take you, (name), to be my beloved (wife/husband), to have and to hold you, to honor you, to treasure you, to be at your side in sorrow and in joy, in the good times, and in the bad, and to love and cherish you always. I promise you this from my heart, for all the days of my life."
4. What are the major promises being made? If a marriage consists of blessings and challenges, identify how the vows reflect the promise to be faithful in both.

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5. The final activity is a commitment letter where the participants read and reflect on the sample wedding vows given. Consider all that has been studied and discussed about relationships, both to God and people. Begin this day a journey of consecration to God's plan for your marriage and family.
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On the piece of paper available, write vows—simple promises that you make to God privately in prayer—and to the one you will give it to when you are married.

It should begin with:

Beloved, I promise...

Whether you are currently in a relationship or not, the promise you make is much like a marriage vow. You are solemnly declaring a promise that you, and you alone, can keep. God has promised to strengthen you and guide you through His word and a community of faith.



# My Journal: relationship

# Session 1

won one by one

## Session 2

agents of reconciliation and growing disciples

## Session 3

reconciliation and relating to enemies

## Session 4

## reconciliation and the fellowship of believers

## Session 5

communicating the story of reconciliation—the Father's joy

## Session 6

communication: say what you mean

## Session 7

communication: mean what you say

## Session 8

relationships

## Session 9

## growing relationships—dating

## Session 10

relationships: courtship

## Session 11

premarital insights—counsel

## Session 12

marriage and parenting

date

leader's signature

[illegible]



community service project planning  
module 6: RELATIONSHIP

Our Ambassador group will become involved in serving the community during this module. We will discuss the basis of the project and think about ideas for a community project or organization in which our group can serve bi-weekly or once a month.

Reflections:

[illegible]











AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO I AM SENDING YOU  
**AMBASSADORS**