

WISE RELATIONSHIPS: WEEK 1

AM I READY TO DATE?

BIG IDEA

A healthy relationship with Jesus makes all of our relationships better.

LESSON OVERVIEW

This week we'll wrestle with the idea of dating readiness. Instead of focusing on age, we'll push students to think honestly about the source of their own identity and how that affects all of their relationships.

- Big Idea - A healthy relationship with Jesus makes all of our relationships better.
- Bible - Matthew 22:36-40; Genesis 1:26; Genesis 2:18; John 6:35; Matthew 7:11
- Building Blocks - Scripture, Video, Discussion, Images, Prayer, Discussion, Story.

WHAT?

VIDEO - Couples



{This video is 5 minutes. We would recommend previewing it and showing a little each week of this series. The interviews are cute, and the continuity between lessons will be effective and endearing to your students.}

Dating is a really big deal.

- Today (tonight) we're starting a four-week series about dating.
- Why do we need a whole series to discuss it? Because dating is a big deal!

1. Dating is complicated.

- Have you ever heard of a Rube Goldberg machine? They go through a very complicated process to get to a very simple solution.
- Check this one out. <https://youtu.be/xHrYypDKXTc> *[Skip to 0:45 if you don't want to watch the setup.]*
- Dating is more complicated than a Rube Goldberg machine.

2. Dating is a tough subject to discuss.

- There are lots of opinions about dating.
 - Articles, magazines, websites, etc.
- There are lots of memes about dating. *[Here are our three favorites in order. Feel free to find ones that would better connect with your group.]*
 - <http://bit.ly/datingmeme1>
 - <http://bit.ly/datingmeme2>
 - <http://bit.ly/datingmeme3>

3. Dating is confusing.

- Not everyone has a safe place to discuss dating.
- Almost everyone has questions about dating.

QUESTION - What are some of the questions the average teenager

- Let's keep things PG :)

What does the Bible say about dating?

- Pretty much nothing!
 - Dating as we understand it today did not exist when God inspired the people to write the Bible.
 - During Biblical times, young men and women got married at much, much, MUCH younger ages – usually right after puberty.
 - During Biblical times, marriages were often arranged by parents to ensure that both families would be successful.
 - During Biblical times, online dating was in its infancy, because they only had flip phones.
- If the Bible doesn't give us dating advice, where do we turn?

SO WHAT?

SCRIPTURE - Matthew 22:36-40

- The Bible doesn't give specific advice about dating, but Jesus gives us a guiding passage about relationships in Matthew 22:36-40.

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" ³⁷ Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments." Matthew 22:36-40

- It's easy to elevate our relationship with God over our relationships with others.
 - Jesus connects loving God with loving people.
 - If we don't love God well, we'll never be able to love people well.
 - If we don't love God well, we may not be ready to date.
 - A healthy relationship with Jesus makes all of our relationships better.

What does the Bible say about relationships?

1. God exists in community. (Genesis 1:26)

- God has always existed as Father-Son-Holy Spirit. One God, three persons.
- God is relational.

2. We were created to exist in community. (Genesis 2:18)

- God created us in his image to reflect him and his character.
- We are relational.

3. True community begins with your personal relationship with Jesus. (John 6:35)

- We have a deep longing to be connected to others.
- Dating (and eventually marriage) is one way we try to satisfy that longing.
- A relationship with Jesus is the only way to completely satisfy that longing.
- A healthy relationship with Jesus makes all of our relationships better.

DISCUSSION - What do you think?

Here are three statements that connect dating with what the Bible says about relationships.

- 1. If you're looking for a boyfriend or girlfriend to satisfy your loneliness, you will always feel alone.**
 - Only God fully meets that need in your life.
- 2. If you're not at peace with God without a boyfriend or girlfriend (or a BFF), you won't be at peace with one.**
 - Dating relationships can not meet the needs in your life that God alone can meet.
- 3. If you want a healthy dating relationship, you've first got to be OK not having one.**
 - Focus on your relationship with God, and he'll take care of the rest.
 - And it will be worth the wait.

Get in groups of 3 or 4 and discuss the three "if" statements above. Which "if" statement do you feel is most important for you?

[Give 3-4 minutes for student to discuss. Invite any student who's comfortable to share, being careful not to put anyone on the spot.]

NOW WHAT?

Wise people ask good questions.

[Start by telling about some of the questions you've had (or have) about dating. Be honest but discerning about what is appropriate for you to share.]

- Three big questions we each need to answer:
 1. **Am I old enough to date?**
 - Age is not the determining factor when it comes to dating.
 - Some teenagers may be more ready to date than adults.
 - The deeper question is, "Can you make wise dating decisions based on Biblical values?"
 2. **Do I even want to date?**
 - Our culture pushes students to date.
 - There's nothing appropriate you can gain by dating that you can't gain by hanging out with friends.
 3. **How do I know when I'm ready?**
 - If you're OK not dating, you might be ready to date.
 - If you're ready to say, "no," you might be ready to date.
 - If you're ready to break up well, you might be ready to date.
 - *** We'll talk more about "how to break up well" in week 3.***

SCRIPTURE - Matthew 7:11

- Two major approaches to a conversation about dating:
 1. Some of you approach the subject with an open heart, asking, "God, help me know what you want for me."
 2. Some of you approach the subject with your mind made up, saying, "God, it doesn't really matter what you say, I'm going to do what I want to do."
- Sometimes God's best for us makes great sense; sometimes it doesn't. How will you respond?
- God is telling some of you that you're not ready for dating ... that you need to spend more time working on your relationship with Him before you try to work on a dating relationship.

[Read Matthew 7:11]

- In this passage, Jesus tells us how much God loves us, and how God wants to give us good gifts, when we ask, and when the time is right.
 - Do we trust that this passage applies to dating? Even if it means we choose NOT to date now?
- Until you understand who you really are - who God says you are - you might not be ready to date.
- **A healthy relationship with Jesus makes all of our relationships better.**
 - Focus on that and see if God doesn't give you all the good gifts you ask for.

Prayer

[Print copies of <http://www.storylineblog.com/Storyline-Identity-in-Jesus.pdf> (or create your own "identity in Christ" handout) for each student.]

[Close your session in prayer.]

- [Have an adult open in prayer, and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to each person.]
- [Invite students prayerfully to read over the handout, and as one of the identity passages resonates with them, read it aloud.]
- [Close the prayer time and dismiss.]