

Dating



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**“We have come to know and to believe in
the love God has for us.”**

1 Jn 4:16

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“We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us.”

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Love arrives! It touches our hearts!

But we've already seen that love is a path, and along this path, we learn how to love.

Courtship is a stretch of this path.



1 We are going to look at two different stories that take place on two different paths of love. The characters in each SCENARIO live their relationship in a different way.

In both cases, you must analyze each relationship, answer the questions individually, and then imagine what you would say to these characters if they were your friends: what advice would you give them?

SCENARIO 1

Gabby and Will have been going out for 10 months. They are very much in love, but there is something that Gabby doesn't like about their relationship: they always go out alone. She insists on hanging out with her girl friends, but he gets offended and tells her that she doesn't love him like he loves her, saying things like:

“All the time that I'm with you is not enough for me”.

“Well, *I* love you”.

Her friends throw it in her face and she doesn't know what to do. Her mom also makes comments about it. The worst is that now she lies and says that she's hanging out with friends when it's not true.

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How many problems did you perceive in their relationship?

What are they?



How do you think Gabby should deal with her concerns?

Do you think that Will is "emotionally blackmailing" Gabby? If so, how?

What is the importance of friends in the life of someone your age? Explain your answer.

If you were Gabby's friend and had to give her advice, what would you tell her?

What if you were Will's friend and had to give him advice? What would you say?

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After your personal reflection, answer and discuss the following questions and statements as a group:



Gabby's attitude is a personality flaw.

Do you think it's important to maintain friendships when you start going out with someone? What about when you're dating them?

Would a relationship with constant emotional blackmail be successful?

The moment that Gabby starts lying to her mother is a red flag that something's not right. Do you think that loving relationships should be kept hidden?



What do you think Gabby should do? Is this relationship being built into true love?

Do you think that Gabby should be brave and leave Will?

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SCENARIO 2



Josie has always been a good, studious and family-oriented girl.

This year a new boy came to her school; he is older than the rest of the class because he was held back twice. He is your typical "bad boy"; he is very attractive and you can tell that he has a lot of experience. He becomes the leader of the group.

His mannerisms really catch Josie's attention, and she is really attracted to him. Everyone knows that **Jack** fails almost everything, doesn't study, and smokes; they say he smokes pot on the weekends, comes home late, and his parents don't give him any rules. Even still, Josie feels really flattered when he asks her to go out with him. She believes that love can do anything and will be able to change Jack's behavior.

Do you think that Josie will talk to her parents about this? Would that be a good thing for her to do?

Do you think that a relationship with Jack would be good for Josie? Why or why not?

It seems like Josie is in love. Do you think that being in love is enough of a reason for her to begin a relationship with Jack? Why or why not? Should she be keeping other things in mind?

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After your personal reflection, discuss the following questions and statements as a group:

A relationship with Jack would be good for Josie. He is an experienced guy and can open her eyes to some things and introduce her to what the world has to offer. She is in control of the situation and will be able to say no to whatever is not in her best interest, and she will be able to tell if things aren't working.

What appeals to us is not always the same as what's in our best interest. Do you think that a relationship with Jack would be in Josie's best interest? What would you tell Josie if you were her friend?

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If Josie decided to wait and take a step back to reflect and analyze Jack's situation and the things that they have in common, and to orient the strong affection that she feels for him toward him and toward her true happiness, do you think she would do the right thing?

What should you keep in mind when you begin a relationship?



It is important for me to recognize and order my affections well before I begin a friendship. The same is even more true when it comes to courtship.

Love is a very powerful passion and I know that it can overtake me. Being very attracted to someone is not a reason to start a relationship with them. It is important to get to know their "interior" and to see whether they would be good for me.

The call to love awakens in me a desire to be a better person and makes me desire the good of the other. To do this is to order my affections, to order my life toward true love.

Courtship is a wonderful way to truly get to know this person who has awakened in me the call to love.

It's a shame to waste time, devoting my time and parts of my person to relationships that I know won't lead me anywhere good.

I already have a lot of tools to use along this path of love that I am walking down. I can begin a beautiful stage of my life. I shouldn't rush things!

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2 After taking some time to reflect, we invite you to participate in this activity:

We need a pair of volunteer actors!
Are you up for the challenge?

The scene that you have to act out is a situation that your teacher will explain...

Watch out! There are a few RULES:



NO TALKING

NO MAKING NOISE

NO HAND SIGNALS

NO WRITING/DRAWING

ONLY GESTURES!!

Were you able to guess what it was about?

Could you detect emotions? Which ones? When?

Is it easy to express things through gestures? Is it easier with words?

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When you want to communicate using only gestures, do you think it's difficult to find the right gesture that will allow the other person to understand you?

Your body language is what you express with your body. Do you think gestures are important for the expression of what you carry within you?

Gestures are part of communication. Think about the gestures that you use with:

YOUR FATHER	
YOUR MOTHER	
YOUR TEACHER	
YOUR SISTER	
YOUR BROTHER	
YOUR MALE FRIEND	
YOUR FEMALE FRIEND	
THE BOY/GIRL THAT YOU LIKE	
YOUR BOYFRIEND/ GIRLFRIEND	

Do you use the same gestures to communicate with everybody? Why or why not?

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Do you think there is such a thing as deliberate gestures? Is slapping someone the same as caressing them?

3 Now, just like in the previous activity, think about which of the gestures listed on the chart you would show to each person in your life:

	GIFT	GLANCE	CARESS	HUG	KISS
YOUR MOTHER					
YOUR TEACHER					
YOUR BROTHER/SISTER					
YOUR MALE FRIEND					
YOUR FEMALE FRIEND					
THE BOY/GIRL THAT YOU LIKE					
YOUR BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND					



Gestures, just like words, are necessary for communication and, therefore, for all relationships.

The importance of gestures is based on the fact that they allow me to express my deepest affections through my body.

Since they are acts, gestures have consequences for me and for other people. They can either strengthen my relationships or destroy their true meaning. For this reason, it is important to order the gestures of love in union with my affections.

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4 Now we're going to watch a 3-minute scene (from 47' to 50') from the movie "A Walk to Remember" (A. Shankman 2002).

The protagonists of this story, Jamie and Landon, live out a love story. They are both very different from each other. Landon comes from a broken home. He does poorly at school. He gets into trouble and, through one of his punishments, meets Jamie. She is a very traditional, serious girl, with a lot of self-confidence. She is the son of a protestant pastor, lost her mother at a young age, and has a terminal illness.

In this scene, Landon takes Jamie to observe the stars at night. Jamie has changed Landon's life and he knows the importance of respecting Jamie so that their love can become even greater.



Did you notice how Landon brings a blanket for each one of them? Why do you think he makes this gesture?

Jamie wants to go slowly, expressing her love in an adequate way. Does it seem like Landon values that?

When they start to kiss, Landon puts a stop to the situation. Why?

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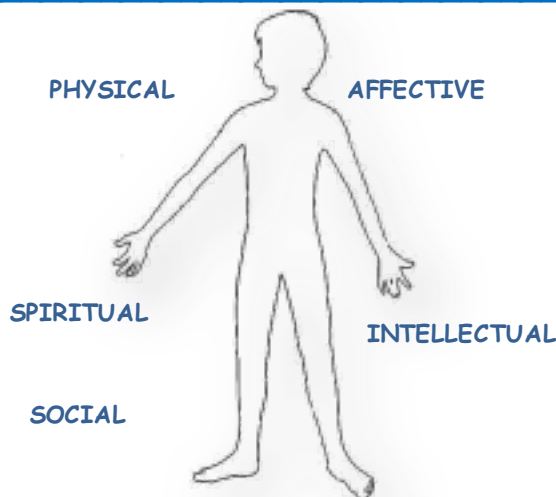
What do you think Landon is protecting with these concrete gestures of bringing two blankets and postponing their kiss?

Do you think that he didn't want to kiss Jamie? Why does he stop? What tools does he use?

Do you think that Landon has integrated his affections and sexuality into his whole person? Or did his desire to keep kissing Jamie cause him to "break into a million pieces"?

Do you remember when we spoke about the dimensions of the person?

With what dimension do you think Landon is loving Jamie?



What does the word CHASTITY sound like to you?

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I can either think that chastity is a "gravestone", something negative, or I can view chastity as something attainable and desirable for me:

- *"I want to be chaste and pure, because I want to be WHOLE".*
- *"I want to be a PERSON".*

The real burden is that which prevents me from FLYING, prevents me from BEING A PERSON.

To live out chastity is to integrate my SEXUALITY into my PERSON and to be capable of expressing with my body that donation is ordered toward love, toward giving myself to the other through gestures that are proper to this love: be it filial, fraternal, or spousal.

I wouldn't show the same gestures of love to a stranger. The gestures of love I show to an acquaintance are different from the ones I reserve for a friend.

The gestures of love between couples who are dating or married are also different from one another.

The absence of genitality during courtship doesn't mean that sexuality is silenced. Courtship allows me to learn the language of tenderness.

5 In small groups, we invite you to reflect on chastity in courtship:

What things do you think you a dating couple can do to help themselves live chastely during their courtship?

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What type of gestures do you think are appropriate during courtship?



What types of things seem contrary to chastity in courtship? (Watching pornography, dressing provocatively, etc...What else?).

What tools and strategies can you use to live chastely?

6 Now we're going to watch part of a video called "Romance without Regret": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez_s9dMvPJY

It is the witness of de a girl, who expresses how her life changed and became more complete once she decided to change the way that she lived out her sexuality.



After listening to this experience, we are going to present you with a series of topics related to dating that often come up in our society.

Let's not forget that we are immersed in a culture where the value of sexuality is "inflated", even though it has really lost its true and profound meaning.

Choose three of these topics and discuss their content.

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1	Girls give boys sex in order to gain their love. Boys give girls “love” in order to get sex.
2	Pressure within friendships to have sexual relations.
3	Lack of respect for one’s own body, and the body of the other person.
4	The body as a gift for the person that we choose to spend our life with.
5	It is never too late to start over and change your life.
6	Girls should be careful with how they dress in order to not confuse men. The message that girls send out is that the best thing they have to offer is their body.
7	In order to live purely, men need to be helped by women and their behavior.
8	Disordered actions begin to weaken our conscience and destroy us from within. What is evil begins to be presented to us more and more as something good.

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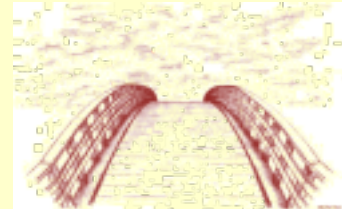
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Courtship is a stretch along the path of love. A choice between going down one road or another.

It is a bridge to marriage that passes from fraternal love to spousal love. For this reason, I have to be very sure that I want to cross the bridge, and I have to choose well WHO to cross it WITH.

Each side of the bridge is a different world, and the bridge is a walkway. On the bridge, we are neither just friends, nor are we spouses.



It is a precious opportunity to learn to build an US in love, out of a YOU and a ME. And love has a clear dynamic that compels me to come out of myself in order to meet the other.

Courtship helps me to practice fidelity in love, respect in differences, appropriate self-giving, sacrifice, communication, forgiveness, waiting and hope, so as to one day be able to live out a total self-donation of my body and soul at the other end of the bridge, in marriage.

To live chastely in courtship is to live courtship in an integrated way, as what it is: a time to get to know each other in order to respond to the vocation to love in marriage.

It is good for me and for the other to avoid certain situations that make it difficult for us to live chastely, avoiding occasions to as to evade danger, and so to learn how to be a suitable helper for the other. This will strengthen our courtship a lay a solid foundation on which to build a marriage.