

# 10 Dating & Friendship

## LEADER GUIDE

---

### **BIG IDEA:**

The Bible gives us principles that might help us think through dating, but it doesn't give us direct, specific guidance on dating. This video will help guide students through two perspectives: "dating for marriage" and "dating for maturity." It will also tackle the importance of friendship. We need to recognize the overlap that exists between the two, but most of all, we need to help our students see that intimate, meaningful friendships are vital to living the Christian life.

### **Tips for Conversation:**

This dialogue with students will inevitably lead to multiple conversations about crushes or other friends who are dating. Remember, there is no perfect, one-size-fits-all biblical method for dating (or courting). But biblical wisdom is needed as we navigate the grey.

Here are some additional tips to consider as you enter into dialogue about dating and friendships:

### **Teach students how to grow and nurture friendships.**

Our students often have a deficit of real friends in their lives—friends that aren't found on a screen. They have friends on Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram. But how many of those friends would show up in a moment's notice if our students were in need of something? How many of those friends know about our students' hopes and dreams? How many of those friends know who our students REALLY are—in all their loneliness and depression and anxiety? Some tough things in life can't be scrubbed with a filter.

Share with students some of your own experiences with friendships—both the good and the bad. Help them understand what it takes to cultivate real, deep, intimate, authentic friendships: sacrifice, unselfishness, vulnerability, authenticity, and so on.

### **Let students know they don't need to rush into a romantic relationship.**

Remind students that high school crushes rarely become future spouses. Help them understand the blessing of focusing on other meaningful activities while in high school. Help them see the lasting value in honing their art skills, getting a job, exploring creation, and using their bodies to do good in the world.

Students can use these years to learn who they are, what they offer the world, and what they like in others. This season can be a time of learning that sets the stage for future relationships, if and when they choose.

Most importantly, help students use this time to grow in their identity in Christ. For those who do eventually date, learning to be more like Christ in their interactions with themselves and others is a great first step to dating well.

### **Encourage students to develop a better understanding of boundaries.**

In the mentor video, we discuss several forms of boundaries in dating relationships. Remember, healthy boundaries aren't just physical. Sometimes the lack of boundaries in other areas causes us to fail in our physical boundaries. Social, emotional, and spiritual boundaries are just as important as the boundaries students set physically.

Students might find it helpful to distinguish between and reflect on each of the different forms of boundaries. Here is a breakdown of each:

**Emotional boundaries** can be difficult to understand or establish. However, they protect students from some of the hurt that often comes in dating relationships. For instance, it is easy for dating couples to want to dream together, envision a future with each other, and even think about creating a life together. But these conversations often move too fast and should be delayed until a foundation of commitment and trust



has been laid. Truthfully, such meaningful relationships are often established after high school.

**Social boundaries** are about how and where dating couples spend time together. For instance, are they always spending time together alone in one person's bedroom? That location might not help them keep their physical boundaries. Students need to understand that boundaries are not just about touch but also about time and conversation.

Finally, **spiritual boundaries** can promote clarity. Students in dating relationships need to understand that their faith is their own. They don't need to be praying together, be in the same small group, or go to the same church as the person they are dating. Every student is their own person walking with God.

---

### Questions for Small Group:

1. What are the boundaries you've set when it comes to dating and relationships?
2. What would an ideal friendship look like?
3. How have you seen dating relationships play out in your school? What has worked? What hasn't? When these relationships end, do they end well or with a lot of drama and heartache? (Encourage students to think critically about the realities of the world they live in.)

---

### Additional Resources:

**VIDEO:** Full-length interview with Jessie Minassian

**TOOL:** Weekly devotional

