

10 Dating & Friendships

PARENT 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 children see that intimate, meaningful friendships are vital to living the Christian life.

5 Minute Check-In with Yourself and/or Your Spouse:

1. Spend time thinking throughout your own dating and relationship story. What worked? What didn't? Were you happy with where it got you? If this is difficult, it might help to work your way back from where you are today to when you were a teen. If some of your recollections are triggering or traumatic, be sure to stop and, if needed, seek professional help before moving forward.
2. What did healthy friendships look like when you were younger? What about now? How are they different?
3. Now think about your child. How would you like their dating life to go? What things could you say to them now that would positively influence their life in this direction? What impact could healthy friendships have on their dating life?
4. What happens if they make a mistake in their dating life? How will you respond? Being prepared now for the road ahead will be helpful.

5 Minute Check-In with Your Child:

1. What stood out to you in this week's teaching and/or small group time?
 2. What do successful dating relationships look like in your high school?
 3. How do most dating relationships in your high school end?
 4. What do you think makes for the best friendships?
 5. What would you like to see take place in your dating life?
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Tips for Further Conversation:

Helping your child navigate the dating landscape might be one of the scariest things you can do as a parent. But providing direction and a listening ear will go a long way. Here are some additional tips to consider as you enter into the dialogue about dating and friendships with your child:

Communicate your expectations clearly and often.

Parents need to let their children know what they value. Sure, some parents joke that they would prefer to lock up their children to keep them from dating, but that is simply not possible—or healthy! (It's also illegal.) The next best thing you can do is dialogue openly about your hopes and dreams for your child's future, especially when it comes to their dating relationships.

In this video, two perspectives are presented: “dating for marriage” and “dating for maturity.” Both approaches are founded in biblical ideals, and one is not necessarily more right than the other. As a parent, it will be important to decide what you think is best for your child. Maybe you prefer neither of these approaches, or a mixture of both. Regardless, it is up to you to share your values with your child as often as you're able.

Help your children set healthy boundaries.

In the mentor video, we discuss several boundaries. 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 physical ones.



Helping your teen 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 your child 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. As a parent, you can help your child understand what emotional boundaries are and how they can establish such boundaries in healthy ways in their dating relationships.

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. Your child needs to understand that boundaries are not just about touch but also about time and conversation.

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

Additional Resources:

VIDEO: Full-length interview with Jessie Minassian

TOOL: Weekly devotional

