



**FAMILY**  
Curriculum

#DateDifferently



# THE DATING PROJECT *Documentary*

Half of America is single. The way people seek and find love has radically changed. The hook-up, texting and social media culture have profoundly altered the dating landscape. Traditional dating has become "outdated," yet men and women still seek meaningful relationships. People are frustrated in love, but does anyone really know how to connect in today's virtual world? The film follows five single people, aged 18-40, as they search for authentic and meaningful relationships. There is no script. There are no actors. These are real people trying to find love and happiness in an age of swiping left or right.

This curriculum guide has been developed to assist all those who want to restore a dating culture for young people. It will provide them with hope and the tools to find and develop strong, healthy relationships, while learning more about themselves and the society they live in.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>I.</b>	Introduction of Film . . . . .	1
<b>II.</b>	Instructions for Licensing the Film . . . . .	1
<b>III.</b>	Curriculum Overview and General Notes . . . . .	2
<b>IV.</b>	Session 1 . . . . .	3
<b>V.</b>	Session 2 . . . . .	7
<b>VI.</b>	Session 3 . . . . .	12
<b>VII.</b>	Session 4 . . . . .	16
<b>VIII.</b>	Appendix . . . . .	19
<b>IX.</b>	About . . . . .	29

*" A documentary that gives hope and direction to millennials for relationship maturity and meaning."*

*~ Sr. Rose Pacatte, National Catholic Reporter*

*"The most important documentary in recent years ..."*

*~ Suzanne Venker, Fox News*

*Curriculum written by Jon and Suzette Sornborger*

## INTRODUCTION OF FILM

***The Dating Project*** is a documentary film from Paulist Productions, Family Theater Productions, and Mpower Pictures. This informative documentary offers a perspective on dating versus “hooking up,” and the reasoning behind the value of dating. Though some people think dating is outdated, it’s actually important for making meaningful connections that include respect and taking the time to know the other person better. For more information on *The Dating Project* you can access the website at [www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com](http://www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com)

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR LICENSING

Obtain a movie license at [outreach.com](http://outreach.com) and search "The Dating Project."

*The Dating Project* Movie License includes what you need to legally show the movie at your church, including:

- DVD with full-length *The Dating Project* movie
- An annual *The Dating Project* Movie License for 1 location
- Digital Movie Event Planning Guide
- Digital Resources including web graphics, printable ticket invite, printable bulletin insert template, and PowerPoint slide templates

The Standard License is appropriate for churches with average attendance of 100 to 1,000 people.  
\*Available in the U.S. & Territories.

## INTRODUCTION TO STUDY GUIDE/CURRICULUM

As parents of a teenage son and two young adult children, this documentary was impactful. One of our hopes and desires as parents of teens was to find a family, value-oriented way to open the eyes and hearts of our children about the world of dating. We were, especially, concerned about guiding our teens through social media, social pressures, and expectations. We believe that there are hopes and desires in the hearts of most parents for their children to find that special someone who is kind, respectful, God-loving, and faithful. Here, we offer a guide to help families begin a dialogue, and navigate ways for teens and young adults to treat and care for themselves, and others, while developing a relationship.

**The Dating Project** offers an opportunity for a discussion about many dating issues, important information on the “hook-up” culture, and the belief system that has been created around this new cultural norm. After watching the movie the first time, we knew that this would be a great tool for families to get together for several evenings of open and safe conversation with their middle schoolers and teens, in particular. We developed a simple, 4 session guide for families to gather (either as a family unit or with other families) for fellowship, watching the movie, and sharing perspective, hope, and understanding for life choices and life lessons.

This curriculum is a complimentary resource provided by Family Theater Productions and Paulist Productions. Please make copies to share with your team leaders and facilitators, but it may not be published in part, or in its entirety, in public places or on any websites.

We offer a format that includes the following: \*Please note that the ***bold & italic*** print is for the facilitator to say out loud.

- Introductory guide to the gathering
- Opening Prayer
- Opening Activity
- Guide to the session
- Discussion Questions: This will include Basic question(s), Pondering Question(s) and a Life Lesson Activity or Challenge
- Closing remarks and Prayer
- Appendix with worksheets or resource pages and prayers for each session

## INVITATION TO FAMILIES

Just like asking someone on a personal date, inviting families to view and discuss **The Dating Project** might feel a bit demanding on their schedules. As you delve through the content and watch the documentary several times, you'll feel more confident about the value of the material and want to spread the word. Lead with your heart and pray about it. Put together a list of families you know with teens and for whom you desire to share this resource and opportunity. Realize that some will be more open than others. Consider some cannot see beyond their schedules to the important impact this could have on their whole family. Don't be discouraged. Present it as an opportunity to get statistics and have an open, safe discussion about dating, which is often a difficult interaction for parents and teens. Be positive! Accept the decline graciously and leave the door open for a future date.

**SESSION 1 – THE DATING PROJECT**

(90 - 100 minutes)

**PRE-MOVIE PREP**

**Facilitator:** Please watch the film a few times prior to the start of inviting and showing the film to families. Take notes for yourself, and reflect on the parts that speak to you, and your hopes for guiding the youth and their parents to understand the value of dating.

At some point in your time together (probably Session 2 or 3), it may be important for you (or another parent) to share your own dating story. Please take some time to reflect on that, and determine what you might want to say.

**You will be watching *The Dating Project* Documentary (70 minutes in length)**

**Preparations before families arrive:**

- Set up equipment (computer/DVD/screen) to show the movie and have it ready to go.
- Create an environment for families to comfortably watch a television/projector screen.
- Provide snacks; movie snacks would be fun for this session, since you'll be watching the whole movie; i.e. popcorn, licorice, etc.
- Have name tags, markers and pens available for everyone.
- Make a copy of the session's Prayer (Appendix 9)
- Make copies of Parent Family Conversation Guide (Appendix 1)
- Make copies of Youth Family Conversation Guide (Appendix 2)

**Facilitator:** As people arrive, greet them and show them where the snacks are. Invite them to sit wherever they want. Invite a familiar face (a willing youth) to help with the prayer. Give it to the person so that they can look it over and feel comfortable with it (Appendix 9).

**Facilitator:** *Thank you, everyone, for coming tonight. We are happy to have you here. We are going to start our evening with prayer. \_\_\_\_\_ is going to help us with the prayer tonight.*

**Opening Prayer:**

*Thank you, God, for bringing us together to listen to and discuss the world of dating, and allowing us to have honest and safe discussions while listening and learning with open hearts and minds. Lord, help us see the wonder and sacredness of your creation. Amen.*

**Opening activity:** Display a few hooks, of any sort, on a table: i.e. a fishing hook, peg hook, a wall mount hook, a picture frame hook, a cup hook, a grate hook, etc. When the youth and adults have had an opportunity to get a snack and sit down, begin below:

**Facilitator:** *We will be watching a movie called "The Dating Project." So, yes, it's about dating!* Ask the following questions: (Answers will vary)

- **What does it mean to date?** If no one answers you can say something like: *Parents, you remember dating? What is dating?*
- **What do you do on dates?**
- **How many of you are dating someone right now, or have dated?** (a nod or hand raise is fine)

**Facilitator:** *You are probably wondering why there are hooks on the table.*

Ask the question: **What is a hook used for?** Expect a variety of answers.

- Tell them: **Keep your thoughts and ideas about the hook in mind as you watch the movie.**
- Explain a little bit about what they will be watching (see synopsis), and invite everyone to keep an open mind for a conversation after the movie.

**SYNOPSIS**

*Half of America is single. The way people seek and find love has radically changed. The trends of hanging out, hooking up, texting and social media culture have created a dating shortage. Dating is now... "outdated," yet men and women still seek meaningful relationships. The film follows five single people, aged 18-40, as they search for authentic and meaningful relationships. There is no script. There are no actors. These are real people trying to find love and happiness in an age of swiping left or right.*

*I invite you to keep an open mind for a conversation after the movie.*

**Facilitator:** Play Movie

**Facilitator:** After the movie, it will be important to process the movie through conversation. Depending on how many people are in attendance, you'll want to use the following questions in small group format; 8-10 per table keeping parent and youth together.

**Basic Question:**

- ***What are your initial reactions to the movie?***  
Expect a variety of answers.

**Pondering Questions:**

- ***What is your perception or understanding of the hook up culture?***  
Leave some time for people to think about this.
- ***Did your opinion change after seeing the movie?***  
Answers will vary
- ***When I first saw this, I was surprised that "hooking up" has so many meanings and so many layers to it! For example, making out or kissing is the same as having sexual intercourse...how can all of this be "hooking up"?***
- ***I'm guessing that you figured out why I put hooks on the table? In my mind the "hook up" culture is like a "catch and release" idea. What do you think of that?***  
Answers will vary

**Life Lesson Challenge:**

*Your challenge this week is twofold:*

- 1. Take some time to notice differences and similarities between Face to Face conversations and Social Media conversations that you have or observe.*
- 2. Carve out some time as parent and child, and have a meaningful conversation about "hooking up." Spend some time looking at the consequences of "hooking up" and talk about ways to avoid, say NO, or shift the situation. Parents, please be mindful not to judge and youth, be honest, seek advice, and know that if you have found yourself in a "hook up" situation before, that that does not define who you are today! Your parents have much wisdom to share, and they are the biggest supporters and advocates for you. Your sincere and honest relationship with each other will be very important for many years to come. Here's a little guide that can be helpful.*

Pass out Appendix 1 Parent Family Conversation Guide to the parents.

Pass our Appendix 2 Youth Family Conversation Guide to the youth.

**Closing Prayer**

*Thank you, Lord, for opening our eyes to the beauty of your creation and realizing the respect we want, and need, to give. We appreciate your unconditional love as we strive to make good dating decisions and have open and safe conversations on the journey. Bless us this week as we take a new look at how we communicate. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*



## SESSION 2 – THE DATING PROJECT

(approx. 60 minutes)

## PREP PRIOR TO SESSION

- Review the section of the movie where Professor Cronin explains the levels of dating. The Dating Assignment can be downloaded from the website: [www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com](http://www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com)
- Purchase or gather any type or style of Invitations; birthday, wedding, graduation, etc. (new or used doesn't matter, just that they are invitations).
- Bring out the hooks that you used for the first session.
- Get snacks, name tags, markers, plain or loose leaf paper and pens.
- Make a copy of the session's Prayer (Appendix 9)
- Make copies of Professor Cronin's Levels of Dating (Appendix 3)
- Make copies of The Dating Assignment (Appendix 4)
- Make copies of Session 2 Life Lesson Questions (Appendix 5)

**Preparations before families arrive:**

- Set up the room for all to see each other. A circle usually works best, but also with the ability to see the TV screen for a short bit of the movie. Cue **The Dating Project** to 15:05.
- Display a few hooks, of any sort, on a table (same ones that you used last week): i.e. a fishing hook, peg hook, a wall mount hook, a picture frame hook, a cup hook, a grate hook, etc. Add Invitations, of any sort, to the table.
- Provide snacks, name tags, markers, paper and pens.

**Facilitator:** As people arrive, greet them and show them where the snacks are, and invite them to sit wherever they want. Invite a familiar face (a willing youth) to help with the prayer. Give it to the person so that they can look it over and feel comfortable with it.

**Facilitator:** *Thank you, everyone, for coming tonight. We are happy to have you here. We are going to start our evening with prayer. \_\_\_\_\_ is going to lead our prayer tonight.*

Opening Prayer:

*“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, it will be opened.” Luke 11:9-10*

*Heavenly Father, help us to seek with a pure heart, knock with an expectation for wholesome interaction and learning, and give thanks for receiving insight into the world of dating. Amen.*

**Opening Activity:** When the youth and adults have had an opportunity to get a snack and sit down, welcome everyone and ask the following questions:

**Facilitator:**

- ***At the end of the previous session, you were asked to notice the differences and similarities between Face to Face conversations and Social Media conversations. Please share your experiences and observations:***  
Answers will vary.
- ***There’s an addition to the table décor. Anyone notice what it is?***
- ***What is an invitation used for?*** Expect a variety of answers, i.e. birthday parties, weddings, graduations, church events, etc.
- ***How do you decide who to ask to an event?*** Answers will vary.
- ***How do you prepare for these special celebrations?*** Expect a variety of answers.

***Hold on to these ideas, because we will come back to this in a bit.***

**Facilitator:** ***Do you remember Professor Cronin’s Levels of Dating?*** (nods, hand raising, etc.)

- ***Let’s get into groups of 4-6*** (grouping may vary depending on your numbers ***and see how many levels of dating you can remember.***  
***You’ll get bonus points for adding specifics.***  
Hand out paper for them to write out the different levels of dating.  
Allow about 5 minutes.
- ***Let’s take a look at Professor Cronin’s Levels of Dating:***  
Play Movie at cued time stamp 15:05 and stop at 18:32.

**Basic Questions:** Expect a variety of answers.

- **How many levels did you get correct?**  
Hand out a copy of Professor Cronin's "Levels of Dating Page" (Appendix 3)
- **What do you think about the idea of Dr. Cronin's "Levels of Dating?"**
- **Looking back at the invitations we discussed at the beginning, why is it important to know who to ask?**
- **And why is it important to plan ahead, i.e. food, place, etc.?**
- **What are the specifics to Level 1 Dating?**  
Hand out The Dating Assignment (Appendix 4) and review as a group
- **Consider the following (particularly, at the age level of the youth present):  
Create a house rule for dating that challenges the date to arrive 20-30 minutes early to meet the parents before the first date. This might be a hard thing to convince your date to do, but tell them that it is a house rule!**
- **In fact, parents, it's a good idea to actually practice what your child should expect from a proper date, or at least talk through it with them!**
- **Parents, it's a great practice to show your daughters that young men should be respectful and honorable, and what that means.**
- **If you have a son, teach him how he should treat his date; arrive early to greet the parents, open the door for his date, etc.**

**Pondering Questions:** Answers will vary

- **Have you and your parent(s) ever had a conversation about dating?**
- **Looking at your Parent and Youth Family Conversations Guide that we gave you the first night, please remember this is a safe place for conversation. I invite you to take 5 minutes and share, as parent and child, on what you think dating is for you, and talk about Professor Cronin's Level 1 dating proposal.**

**Life Lesson Challenge:** (Read the following while handing out Appendix 5)

**The following questions are a bit more detailed. Parents, please answer these, as well. They'll bring back some great memories from your dating years. So, if you were to go on a date, consider the questions on this handout** (Appendix 5):

1. What do you think a girl/guy should be like; an athlete, a musician, attractive, a brainiac, sensitive to others?
2. What qualities do you think are important in a person for yourself?
3. Remember, if you have given into the peer pressure of "hooking up" in the past, you can change that notion of yourself, as that does not define you and your future relationships!
4. Who wouldn't you go on a date with?
5. Dr. Cronin talks about inviting a friend on a date, and how that might change your friendship. What would be the advantage of having a steady boyfriend or girlfriend versus just being friends?
6. Because no physical connection can happen in Level 1 dating, how would you know if there might be something more happening?
7. What are some ways that you can stay strong in your desire NOT to participate in "hooking up"?
8. If you're thinking about your potential date, where does faith fit in the picture for you?
9. Is faith an important attribute for your potential date?

**Here is a copy of the questions. Please take time to discuss the questions together, as family units.** Allow about 20 minutes for conversation.

**Would anyone like to share? You don't have to get personal if you are uncomfortable. A general comment is fine.**

Closing Reflection:

- *Remember to take your child on practice dates, or talk through what a date should be (or not be) like. Show them how they should be treated! This will help them to understand what to expect.*
- *Parents, pray daily for your child's intended spouse.*
- *Youth, thank God, in your daily prayer, that He is preparing your special someone, especially for you.*
- *All, ponder where you find God in this dating process.*

## Closing Prayer

*Lord, we thank you for inviting us to learn about dating and relationships, in a safe place, with those we care about, and those who care about us, in return. Remind us to invite you into our dating search for courage, hope, patience, and faith. Amen.*

**SESSION 3 – THE DATING PROJECT**

(approx. 60 minutes)

**PREP PRIOR TO SESSION**

- Review the section of the movie where Professor Cronin explains the Levels of Dating. The Dating Assignment can be downloaded from the website: [www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com](http://www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com)
- You will need 1 pair of glasses, preferably, not sunglasses.
- Make a copy of the session's Prayer (Appendix 10)
- Make copies of Glasses page (Appendix 6)
- Make copies of Life Lesson Challenge (Appendix 7)
- Bring out the hooks and the invitations that you used for the previous sessions, and add the pair of glasses, mentioned above.
- Get snacks, name tags, markers, plain or loose leaf paper, and pens.

**Preparations before families arrive:**

- Set up the room for all to see each other. A circle usually works best, but also with the ability to see the TV screen for a short bit of the movie. Cue **The Dating Project** to 16:54 to watch the description of Level 2 dating (in case it is needed).
- Display a few hooks (same ones that you used last week), the invitations, and the pair of glasses on a table.
- Provide snacks, name tags, paper, and pens

**Facilitator:** As people arrive, greet them, and show them where the snacks are. Invite them to sit wherever they want. Invite a familiar face (a willing youth) to help with the prayer. Give it to the person so that they can look it over and feel comfortable with it. When the youth and adults have had an opportunity to get a snack and sit down, welcome everyone.

**Facilitator:** *Thank you, everyone, for coming tonight. We are happy to have you here. We are going to start our evening with prayer. \_\_\_\_\_ is going to help us with the prayer tonight.*

**Opening Prayer:**

*"At present, we see indistinctly, as in a mirror. But then, face to face. At present, I know partially. Then, I shall know fully, as I am fully known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthians 13:12-13*

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for inviting us to come back together to see your words of wisdom about dates and relationships. Help us to clearly see what you have in store for us. Amen.*

**Feedback Activity:** Ask the following question:

**Facilitator:** *Let's take a look at the questions and experiences from last week... Did anyone get a chance to take their child on a practice date or talk through the process?*

Allow sharing; if yes, ask: **What was it like?**

**Were you able to reflect more on the following Level 1 Dating questions?**

- What qualities do you think are important in a person for yourself?
- Who wouldn't you go on a date with?
- Dr. Cronin talks about inviting a friend on a date, and how that might change your friendship. What would be the advantage of having a steady boyfriend or girlfriend versus just being friends?
- Because no physical connection can happen in Level 1 dating, how would you know if there might be something more happening?
- What are some ways that you can stay strong in your desire NOT to participate in "hooking up"?
- If you're thinking about your potential date, where does faith fit in?
- Is faith an important attribute for your potential date?

**Opening Activity:** Ask the following question:

**Today this session is looking at Level 2 dating.**

- **Does anyone remember what's involved in Level 2 dating?** Answers will vary

**Facilitator:** Read Professor Cronin's description of Level 2 Dating out loud (Appendix 3) and/or watch the DVD time stamped at 16:54 and stop at 18:00.

- **What are your thoughts on this?** Answers will vary

**Facilitator:** *Did you notice what we added to the table as you came in?* Answers will vary

- **What are glasses used for?**
- **How might the glasses relate to Level 2 dating?**

Pass out Appendix 6: Page of glasses:

**Work on the following questions alone. Then, share with your parents and parents share with your child. Parents, you can shift the word date to spouse, if you want.**

1. **What do you see in yourself as you date? (write it inside the right glasses lens)**
2. **What do you see in your date or what do you hope to see in your date? (write it inside the left glasses lens)**
3. **How do others see the two of you in your continued dating (courtship), or do they? (write this outside and around the glasses- the others looking in on/at the two of you)**

Allow 10-15 minutes for this activity.

**Facilitator:** After 10-15 minutes, invite everyone back to focus in the circle.

**Would any of you be willing to share your "seeing" experience with the group?** Answers vary.  
**Thank you for sharing.**

**Let's continue with a few questions on 'seeing.'** Please share out loud. Remember there's no judgment, just your honest answers.

#### **Basic Questions:**

- **Why do you think physical intimacy is off the table for Level 2 dating?**
- **Do you 'see' more of the other person when that piece of intimacy is out of play?**



**Pondering Questions:**

- *Do you 'see' faith as an important part of your Level 2 dating experience? Why or Why not?*
- *How might your view of your relationship change if Level 2 dating continues long term?*

**Life Lesson Challenge:** (handout Appendix 7)

*I invite you to work individually, and then share with each other* (parent and child)

- *Look at the choices that you have made in dating that have brought you to where you are today.*
- *Reflect on, and discuss as a family, your visions for dating, moving forward.*
- *Define for yourselves how Level 2 dating affects your family dynamics.*
- *Within the couple, what pressures exist to move to Level 3, if any?*
- *How do you communicate, safely and lovingly, if your views differ?*
- *Discuss the idea of creating a 'house rule' of inviting the potential date for dessert or even a meal.*

**Closing Reflection:**

*Reminder...*

*Parents, pray daily for your child's intended spouse.*

*Youth, thank God, in your daily prayer, that He is preparing your special someone especially for you.*

*All, ponder where you find God in this dating process.*

**Closing Prayer**

*Thank you, Lord, for helping us to see good ways to pursue a date, and the value of those we date. Continue to give us discernment in seeing the character of others, and honestly, seeing our own character as we interact with others. Amen.*

## SESSION 4 – THE DATING PROJECT

*(approx. 60 minutes)*

## PREPARATIONS BEFORE FAMILIES ARRIVE

- Set up the room for all to see each other. A circle usually works best, but also with the ability to see the TV screen for a short bit of the movie. Cue **The Dating Project** to 18:02 to watch the description of Level 3 dating (in case it is needed).
- Display the hooks, the invitations, a pair of glasses, and add a large heart.
- Make a copy of the session's Prayer (Appendix 10)
- Make copies of heart page (Appendix 8)
- Provide snacks, name tags, paper, and pens.

**Facilitator:** As people arrive, greet them and show them where the snacks are. Invite them to sit wherever they want. Invite a familiar face (a willing youth) to help with the prayer. Give it to the person so that they can look it over and feel comfortable with it. When the youth and adults have had an opportunity to get a snack and sit down, welcome everyone.

**Facilitator:** *Thank you, everyone, for coming tonight. We are happy to have you here. We are going to start our evening with prayer. \_\_\_\_\_ is going to help us with the prayer tonight.*

Opening Prayer:

*"Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love."*

**Ephesians 4:2**

*"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14*

*Heavenly Father, we ask you to help us see your hand in this process, and thank you for inviting us to learn together. Open our hearts as we explore the wonders of dating and commitment. Amen.*

**Opening Activity:** Ask the following question:

**Today's session is looking at Level 3 dating. Does anyone remember what's involved in Level 3 dating?** Answers will vary

Play Movie at cued time stamp 18:02 on the DVD and stop at 18:32 for the description of Level 3 dating.

- **It's about a committed relationship. What's a committed relationship?**  
Answers will vary
- **Can you go on dates with other people? NO**
- **Is this person someone that you share deep emotional stuff with? YES**
- **Is there kissing involved? YES**
- **Is there passionate kissing, or more than kissing involved? NO**
- **Are you spending lots of time together?** Pause for any answers; **Yes, probably, as you begin to share your deeper emotional self with the other person.**

**Any thoughts on this?** Answers will vary

- **What did we add to the table?**
- **What might this represent in Level 3 dating?**

**Basic Question:**

Answers will vary.

- ➔ **How does the Level 3 date change from Levels 1 & 2?**
- ➔ **Does adding a kiss change the dynamics of the relationship? How?**

**Pondering Questions:**

- ➔ **Do you have a different understanding of the 'heart' of dating after discussing the levels of dating?**
- ➔ **What are the pros and cons of being in an 'exclusive' relationship?**

**Life Lesson Questions:**

- *Does the spoken commitment make it easier or more difficult to abstain from more of a physical relationship? What are some things you can do or say when you are feeling pressured, or are in the 'heat of the moment' to change the situation?*
- *How do you, or can you, help yourself and others around you maintain faith within your relationship?*

**Activity:** Distribute Heart page (Appendix 8)

**Facilitator:** *Fill each piece of the heart with a word or phrase that describes what you hope to find in a date. For example; a person who is fun, intense, compassionate, etc.*

Allow about 5 minutes or so and then invite them to share.

*I invite you to share with each other, parent and child.*

**Closing Reflection:**

*So, in looking at what you identified as important qualities of a Level 3 date, what might indicate that you are ready to move from a Level 3 dating pattern to the leap-of-faith into a Level 4 committed marriage relationship?*

*Any thoughts?*

*Wow! We spent over 4 hours talking about what a date is, how to date, and to where it could lead. Thank you for investing in yourself and your future. Your challenge, now, both youth and parents, is to take what you have learned, and spread the good news about the value of dating. Keep the lines of communication open, date honestly, and love deeply!*

**Closing Prayer**

*Lord, we thank you for open and giving hearts, for joy and wonder, as we reveal ourselves to others with emotion and honesty. Help us to be patient in the process, not only with others, but also, with ourselves. Help us to remember, in prayer each day, that you have a plan, and to ask that your will be done. Thank you, God, for caring enough to create us, and that special person for each of us! Amen.*

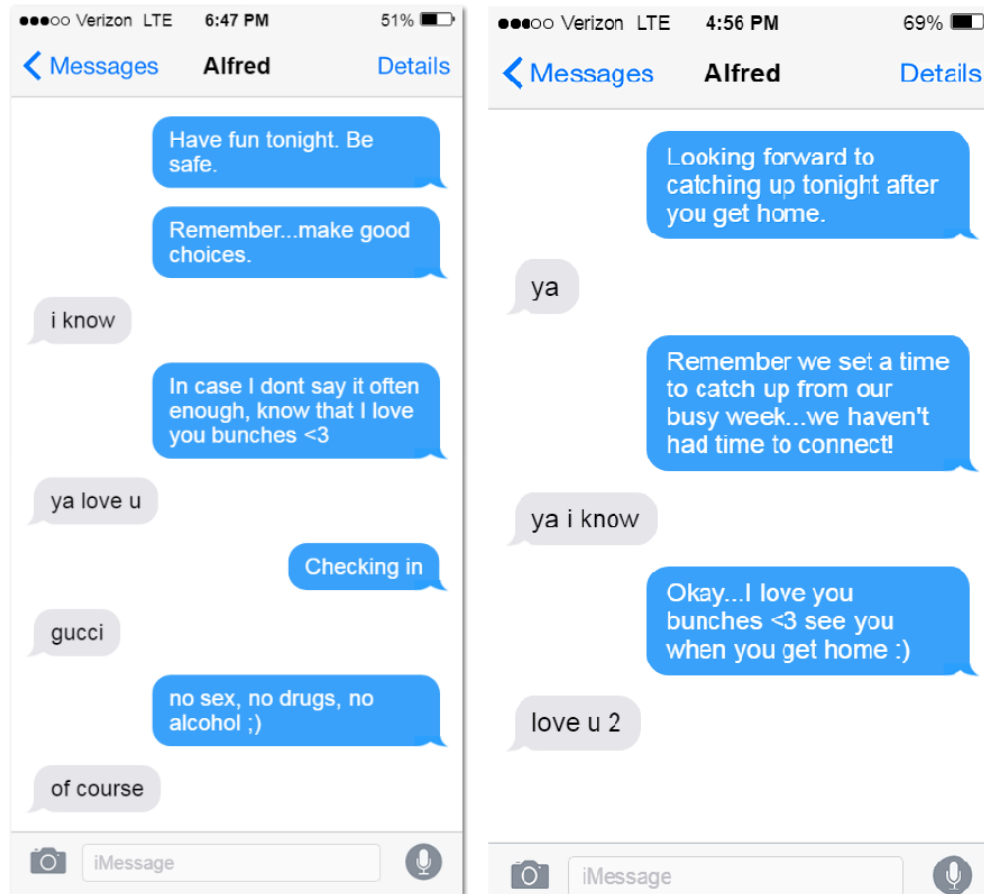
**APPENDIX 1: Parent Family Conversation Guide**

There are important sensitivities in conversations with your kids that need to be defined. Dating and the hook-up culture are sensitive subjects, so direct discussion and questioning about the subject can be intimidating for both parent and child. Please realize that although they may not frequently verbalize it, you are held in high esteem and your presence with them at this event is both supportive and embarrassing. With such family dynamics, here are suggestions for these conversations for you to consider. These take time; usually years, not months, but start where you are. Example: You have agreed that your child can call you at any time, for any reason, if they need to be picked up, no matter their condition, no questions asked, and there is no retribution – physical safety is the primary objective. Start with physical safety and expand your interactions from there. Verbally remind them, often, that you love and support them.

These sessions are designed to allow for parents and youth to have open, honest, and safe conversations. What this means varies from family to family, so we suggest the following:

- Agree that what is shared here, stays here, unless agreed to by both of you.
- Agree that this is a 'safe' environment for both parents and kids to divulge past decisions and experiences without retribution. This goes along with the idea of safety first – divulging discretions should be about what was learned to keep your youth safe in the future, not about punishment for being openly honest about a poor choice.
- Agree that points of contention will be noted and discussed outside the session (hopefully, in an equally 'safe' environment). Again, the focus is gaining information and understanding, and lovingly finding a way forward for our dating youth.
- To be sure that you are hearing what you think you are hearing from your child, it may help to (calmly) reiterate what they said to make sure you are 'on the same page.' You might say, 'Do I understand correctly that you went to a party where people were hooking up because you were curious about that culture?' (This obviously takes some practice and will come more naturally as you keep doing it).
- Agree to pray for each other. They can pray whenever they need to; sometimes it helps to ask them to pray for you. We need to pray for them for discernment, right decision-making, continued faith when things are tough, comfort in trials, and feeling and knowing that we love them and support them. Remember, they will remember most what you model more than what you say.

## APPENDIX 2: Youth Family Conversation Guide



A note from parents says, "Even though I may not say all of this very often, I'm working on it!":

- I love you more than words can say!
- I am proud of you!
- I believe that you can do whatever you put your heart into!
- I won't totally freak out if you tell me something outrageous...honesty is what I hope for.
- Sometimes I need help understanding; bear with me if I ask you to repeat what you said.
- God invites us to prayer and forgiveness everyday...let's help each other with that.
- I will always be there for you.
- I want to know your dreams and hopes for the future.
- Trust and patience are a process that I am working on.

## APPENDIX 3: Levels of Dating

**DEVELOPED BY: Professor Kerry Cronin**

### LEVEL 1 DATING

1. The first three dates. No more than three dates because you should know by then if you're really interested.
2. Meant to gather information about the person to determine the viability of a future relationship.
3. Should last 45-90 minutes.
4. Is a daytime event.
5. No alcohol or physical interaction (other than what Prof. Cronin calls an A-frame hug).

Notes: Reconnaissance work only... information gathering. You shouldn't be talking about, "Wow you know your relationship with your dad seems really complicated. You want to talk to me about that?" That's Level 2 and Level 3 work. That's not Level 1. Additionally, if you're in a relationship and you're still talking about superficial stuff that you talk about in Level 1, something is up, too. You have to know where you are in dating. But, similarly, you have to know where you are in your own emotional journey, right? Navigating dating transitions means you've got to pay attention to what it is you need to attend to right now.

### LEVEL 2 DATING

A relationship is going on, but you don't owe the person. Everyone is very responsible for his or her own heart.

Addition: Sex is part of intimate expression, but it is not intimacy. Sex – and anything that prepares the body for sex - is off the table. Along those lines, no marriage privileges, like staying over at each other's apartment/house or traveling together (except to see family). We want you to open yourself to one another in a real way. "Real intimacy can only begin once you know yourself. Since intimacy means "in-to-me-see," how can anyone "see into" you and who you are, your fears, dreams, hopes and desires unless you know who you are and are willing to allow someone in? Experiencing true intimacy begins with being connected to your own heart (Shana Schutte)."

### LEVEL 3 DATING

You have discussed a committed relationship with the other person, you are responsible for their feelings, and you "bear the burden of the other person's heart." In this stage, you now take responsibility for the other person's well-being.

Addition: Sex – and anything that prepares the body for sex - is off the table. Along those lines, no marriage privileges, like staying over at each other's apartment/house or traveling together (except to see family). The intimacy you are to pursue "involves the mixing of your life with another's, a mingling of souls, a sharing of hearts. (Shana Schute)."

### LEVEL 4 DATING

"Our souls crave intimacy"—Erwin Raphael McManus

Marriage. Consummate the relationship and continuing dating.

## APPENDIX 4: The Dating Assignment

THE **DATING** ASSIGNMENT

## HERE ARE THE RULES:

- 1** Ask **IN-PERSON**  
No text messages. No Facebook. No Snapchat. No Instagram.

Face to face. Eye to eye. IRL.
- 2** Within **THREE DAYS**  
Waiting longer creates unnecessary anxiety, invites drama, and sets the stage for unsolicited (or worse, solicited) opinions and advice.
- 3** A Romantic **INTEREST**  
Pick someone that catches your eye. A romantic interest.

Think possible, not soulmate.
- 4** Somebody **NEW**  
This should not be a date with a person whom you've dated before.
- 5** Be **OPEN & HONEST**  
Avoid the dreaded "acci-date."

While you do not have to use the word "date," make sure you're clear this is a date.
- 6** Only **45-90 MINS**  
Leave 'em wanting more--and give yourself a hard out if you don't find yourself wanting more.
- 7** Make **A PLAN**  
No "So...what do you want to do?" Take initiative to plan the date. Show you respect their time.
- 8** You **ASK**, You **PAY**  
Make it clear: This person is worth the money--and you're worth the investment, too.
- 9** But **ONLY \$10**  
You're not a spendthrift, but, geez, you're not royalty, either.

Unless you are. Then still \$10.
- 10** No **TOUCHY**  
How far is too far? An "A-frame" hug at the end of the date is far enough.
- 11** Tell **THREE PEOPLE**  
Cold feet happen, but it's less likely if you've got support. Only three teammates, though. TMZ is everywhere!
- 12** Go **ALONE**  
You've got support, but for the love of Pete, no wingman, best friend, or group dates.



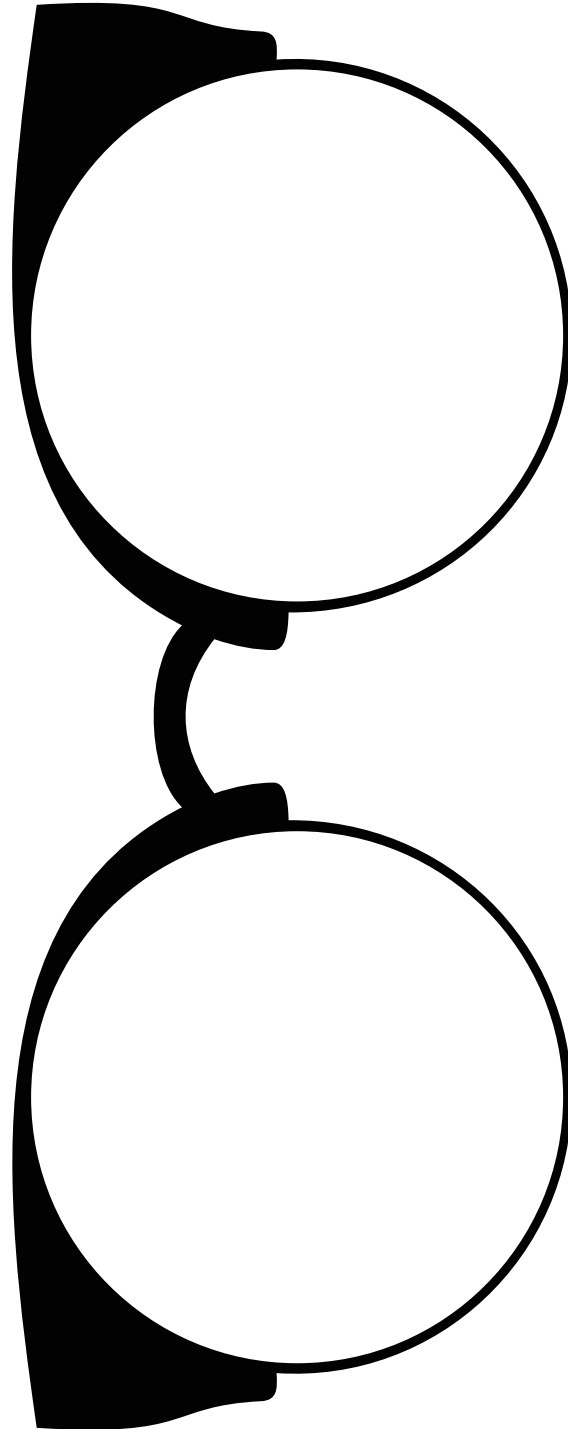
## APPENDIX 5: Life Lesson Challenge

The following questions are a bit more detailed. Parents, please answer these, as well. They'll bring back some great memories from your dating years.

So, if you were to go on a date, consider the following:

- What do you think a girl/guy should be like: an athlete, a musician, attractive, a brainiac, sensitive to others?
- What qualities do you think are important in a person for yourself?
- Remember, if you have given into the peer pressure of "hooking up" in the past, you can change that notion of yourself, as that does not define you and your future relationships!
- What are reasons you wouldn't go on a date with someone?
- Dr. Cronin talks about inviting a friend on a date, and how that might change your friendship. What would be the advantage of having a steady boyfriend or girlfriend versus just being friends?
- Because no physical connection can happen in Level 1 dating, how would you know if there might be something more happening?
- What are some ways that you can stay strong in your desire NOT to participate in "hooking up"?
- If you're thinking about your potential date, where does faith fit in?
- Is faith an important attribute for your potential date?

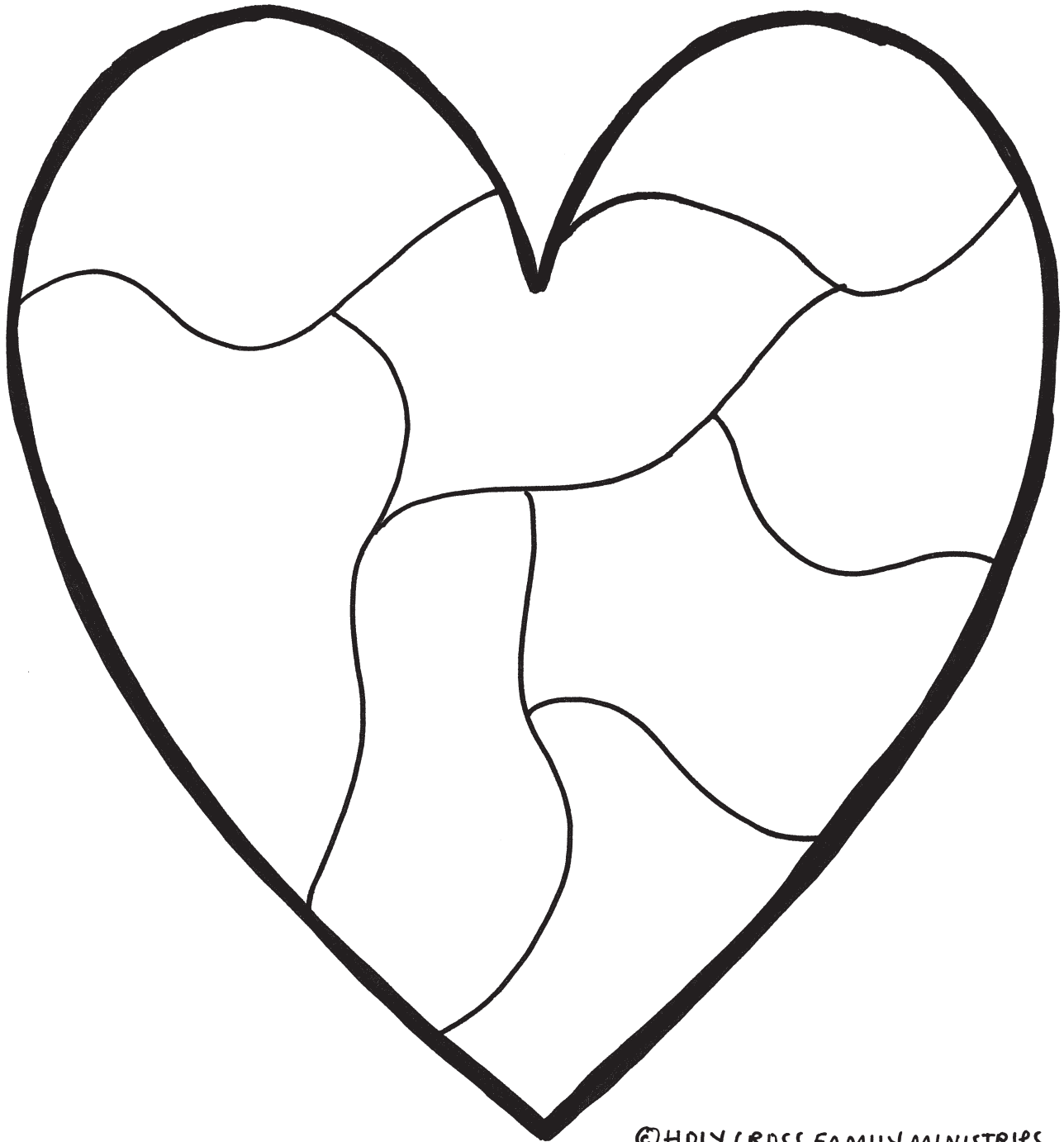
APPENDIX 6



## APPENDIX 7: Life Lesson Challenge

- Look at the choices that you have made in dating that have brought you to where you are today.
- Reflect on, and discuss as a family, your visions for dating moving forward.
- Define for yourselves how Level 2 dating affects your family dynamics.
- What pressures are there to move to Level 3, if any? Who pressures?
- How do you communicate, safely and lovingly, if your views differ (parent/child)?
- Discuss the idea of creating a 'house rule' of inviting the potential date for dessert or even a meal.

APPENDIX 8



© HOLY CROSS FAMILY MINISTRIES

## APPENDIX 9 &amp; 10: Prayers

**Session 1****Opening Prayer:**

*Thank you, God, for bringing us together to listen and discuss the world of dating, and allowing us to have honest and safe discussions, while listening and learning with open hearts and minds. Lord, help us see the wonder and sacredness of your creation. Amen.*

**Closing Prayer:**

Thank you, Lord, for opening our eyes to the beauty of Your creation and realizing the respect we want and need to give. We appreciate your unconditional love as we strive to make good dating decisions, and have open and safe conversations on the journey. Bless us this week as we take a new look at how we communicate. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Session 2****Opening Prayer:**

*"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, it will be opened." Luke 11:9-10*

*Heavenly Father, help us to seek with a pure heart, knock with an expectation for wholesome interaction and learning, and to give thanks for receiving insight into the world of dating. Amen.*

**Closing Prayer:**

Lord, we thank you for inviting us to learn about dating and relationships in a safe place with those we care about, and those who care about us, in return. Remind us to invite you into our dating search for courage, hope, patience and faith. Amen.

**Session 3****Opening Prayer:**

*"At present, we see indistinctly, as in a mirror. But then, face to face. At present, I know partially. Then, I shall know fully, as I am fully known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthians 13:12-13*

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for inviting us to come back together to see your words of wisdom about dates and relationships. Help us to clearly see what you have in store for us. Amen.*

**Closing Prayer:**

Thank you, Lord, for helping us to see good ways to pursue a date, and the value of those we date. Continue to give us discernment in seeing the character of others, and, honestly, seeing our own character as we interact with others. Amen.

**Session 4****Opening Prayer:**

*“Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love.”*  
Ephesians 4:2

*“Let all that you do be done in love.”* 1 Corinthians 16:14

*“Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust. It is the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.”* 1 Corinthians 13:7-8

Heavenly Father, we ask you to help us see your hand in this process, and thank you for inviting us to learn together. Open our hearts as we explore the wonders of dating and commitment. Amen.

**Closing Prayer:**

Lord, we thank you for open and giving hearts, for joy and wonder, as we reveal ourselves to others with emotion and honesty. Help us to be patient in the process, not only with others, but also with ourselves. Help us to remember in prayer each day, that you have a plan, and to ask that your will be done. Thanks for caring enough to create that special person for each of us! Amen.

## ABOUT

**THE DATING PROJECT** was created in partnership with Paulist Productions, and Mpower Pictures in association with Family Theater Productions, and is distributed by Pure Flix.

**ABOUT PAULIST PRODUCTIONS**

Paulist Productions was founded over 50 years ago to create thought provoking entertainment that explores the human condition, and has produced award-winning documentaries, feature films, television, and TV movies addressing pressing social issues and important moral questions. Paulist has provided programming for Paramount, Warner Bros., CBS, ABC, A&E, the History Channel, Hallmark Hall of Fame, and UPtv. In a time of rapid change and declining options for family viewing, Paulist is dedicated to developing positive programming with meaningful content.

**ABOUT MPOWER PICTURES**

As a production company, Mpower Pictures is dedicated to “empowering” both the artist and the audience by telling stories that are compelling, bold, and uncompromising. Steve McEveety, CEO (The Passion of the Christ, Braveheart), John Shepherd (Bobby Jones, The Ultimate Gift), Todd Burns and David Segel launched Mpower in 2007 to make movies that profoundly impact culture, while inspiring and entertaining audiences. The company was awarded Heartland Film Festival's "Truly Moving Picture" award for its feature films Snowmen and The Stoning of Soraya M.

**ABOUT FAMILY THEATER PRODUCTIONS**

Family Theater Productions tells stories that inspire, entertain and inform. Founded in 1947 by Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., and headquartered on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, Family Theater Productions is an award-winning producer of family-friendly and faith-based media for radio, film, television and digital media. The Head of Production is Father David Guffey, C.S.C. Learn more at FamilyTheater.org, or on Facebook, at FamilyTheater.org

**CURRICULUMS:** This curriculum was developed by Family Theater Productions. You can download one or all five versions -- Family, High School, College, Young Adults and Fathers & Sons -- at [www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com](http://www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com)







## The Dating Project Curriculums

Guide the conversation. Bring the film to life.

*Become a part of the movement to revive, reclaim, and restore dating.*

### Curriculums for all groups:

Family | High School | College | Young Adult | Father and Son

Each curriculum includes outlines, talking points with guided prompts for activities and questions to ignite discussion. Designed to serve the needs of all groups, there are one session or multi-session options.

Download the curriculums for free at **[TheDatingProjectMovie.com](http://TheDatingProjectMovie.com)**

Obtain a movie license at **[Outreach.com](http://Outreach.com)** and search The Dating Project.

Dating should be a manifestation of the good, the true and the beautiful.

Help shape change.

**#DateDifferently**



[www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com](http://www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com)  
Curriculum ©2018 Family Theater Productions

