



HIGH SCHOOL  
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 Traditional dating has become "outdated," yet men and women still seek meaningful relationships.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.

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*" 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 more than a film. This is a movement. It is a movement to revive, reclaim, and restore dating. A big task, yes, but a most worthy one. Dating can, and should be, a manifestation of the good, the true, and the beautiful – the universal human experience of ethics, logic, and aesthetics.

The program consists of three sessions. Each session lasts between 75-90 minutes. As the facilitator, you play a vital role.

**Why?** The hook-up culture can mean anything from a random meeting to an intimate encounter. This is harmful, and it must change. The Dating Project aspires to be a constructive tool for this change.

**Who?** This curriculum is intended for teenagers.

**How?** The first session presents the film. The remaining two sessions utilize scenes from the film, present prepared questions and enable small group discussions.

**What?** The sessions facilitate conversations concerning dating. They also provide an opportunity for teenagers to meet, discuss, and propose strategies and solutions.

**The Bottom Line** As a facilitator, you are part of the movement. You are guiding a process that seeks to inspire a culture of respect, dignity and joy. It is critical that you ignite discussion, particularly in the small groups. You will need help with this process. It will be vital to the sessions to have engaging, approachable collaborators to lead small groups and guide discussions throughout the sessions. Welcome to the team, and thank you for participating!

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR LICENSING

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

Link to licensing:

<https://www.outreach.com/Films/Church-Movie-License/The-Dating-Project-54174.aspx>

The Standard License is appropriate for churches with average attendance of 100 to 1,000 people.

\*Available in the U.S. & Territories.

## INTRODUCTION TO CURRICULUM

As parents of a teenage son and two young adults, this documentary was impactful. One of our hopes and desires as parents of teens was to find a family and 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 teens to find that special someone who is kind, respectful, God-loving, and faithful. Here, we offer a guide to help teens begin to dialogue and navigate ways to treat and care for themselves and others, while developing a relationship.

***The Dating Project*** offers an opportunity for dialogue 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 it would provide a great opportunity for families to have an open and safe conversation with their middle-schoolers and teens, in particular. So, we developed a simple 3 session guide and process for teens to gather, either as small groups or in a large youth group setting, in order to watch the movie, have fellowship, and share hopes, perspectives, and understandings of life choices and lessons.

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/or a Life Lesson Activity or Challenge

- Closing remarks and Prayer
- Appendix with worksheet or resource pages and prayers for each session

### **INVITATION TO TEENS and YOUTH GROUPS**

Just like asking someone on a personal date, inviting teens to view and converse about The Dating Project might feel a bit demanding on their school, work, and extracurricular activity schedules. As you delve through the content and watch the documentary a few 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 teens you know for whom you desire to share this resource and opportunity. Realize that some will be more open than others. Don't be discouraged. Present it as an opportunity to get statistics and have an open, safe discussion about dating, which can be a difficult interaction for teens. Be positive!

This gathering works best as a small group format of 8-10 teens. If you have a large group, after the opening activities and viewing of the film, it would be helpful to break them up into small groups for discussion with a facilitator to help guide the conversation along. Small group discussion is noted through the session.

## SESSION 1 – THE DATING PROJECT

(approx. 60 minutes)

## PRE-MOVIE PREP

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

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

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

**Preparations before teens 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, if needed.
- Get enough **dice** for each small group (one die per small group).
- Make a copy of **Prayers** for the readers and facilitator (Appendix 8).
- Make copies of **Dice Activity** questions, enough for each small group (Appendix 1).
- Make copies of **A Note from Parents/Guardians/Counselors for Teens** (Appendix 2).

**Facilitator:** As people arrive, greet them, 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 early so that they can look it over and feel comfortable with it (Appendix 8).

**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: Dice Activity** (Appendix 1) 10 minutes

1. Break into small groups of 8-10 (adjust as needed) and sit in a circle, either at a table or on the floor.
2. Give each group the set of **Dice Activity** questions (Appendix 1).

**3. Facilitator:**

Give instructions: ***Each person will take turns rolling the die. The number that the die lands on is the question that person will answer.***

**Facilitator:** Call the large group back together. Answers to questions will vary.

***Any thoughts on the dice questions?***

***Does anyone want to share a rule that your family has for dating?***

***We will be watching a movie called "The Dating Project." So, yes, it's about dating!!*** 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. The idea of dating is now... "outdated," yet men and women still seek meaningful relationships. The film follows five single people, aged 18-40s, 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. Use the following questions:

**Basic Questions:**

1. ***What are your initial reactions to the movie?*** Expect a variety of answers.
2. ***What is the biggest issue in the dating culture you've noticed or experienced?***

**Pondering Questions:**

1. ***Do you hear about or see much hooking up in your school or among people you know? Is it pretty common? Is there pressure to "hook up"?***
2. ***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 getting each other aroused without having sexual intercourse, and then there's actually having sex...how can all of this be "hooking up"?***
3. ***Why do you think people "hook up" rather than date?***
4. ***Which do you think makes more sense? Why?***
5. ***What could be some problems that "hooking up" might cause? Do you think people "hook up" because they fear commitment or rejection?*** Leave some time for people to think about all of this. Answers will vary. If you get one-word responses, invite teens who answer to "say more" about their response.
6. ***Habits become vices or virtues. Why is it important to practice Godly habits when it comes to dating?***
7. ***How do the music, television, and movies you listen to or watch affect your life?***
8. ***How do drugs or alcohol increase the problem connected with "hooking up"?***  
Answers will vary.
9. ***Rasheeda is very open about her faith, and towards the end of the film, she talks about being a child of God. What does it mean to treat someone as a son or daughter of God, particularly when it comes to dating?***



**Life Lesson Challenge:** Read the following before handing out Appendix 2.

**Your challenges this week are:**

1. *Take some time to notice differences and similarities between Face to Face conversations and Social Media conversations that you have or observe.*
2. *Pay attention to the media's portrayal of how you're supposed to live out your singleness. Do you think it's making people feel happier and more fulfilled?*
3. *Dig deeper into what Jesus asks of us when it comes to how to live out your singleness by reading scripture and/or talking to your parents, youth minister, or pastor.*
4. *What are the consequences of "hooking up"? Be honest and seek advice. Know that if you've found yourself in a "hook up" situation before, that that does not define who you are today!!*
5. *Consider ways to say NO to a "hook up" or figure out how to shift the situation.*
6. *If you were part of a "hook up" and don't see it as an issue, honestly think, why would people who care about you think it is an issue? How could it be an issue for the other person involved in the "hook up"?*

*Your parents/guardians, as well as school or youth counselors, have much wisdom to share and your parents/guardians 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 for you to take home.*

Pass out Appendix 2.

**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, 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. 75 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)
- Get snacks, name tags, markers and pens.
- Make a copy of **Prayers** for reader and facilitator (Appendix 8).
- Read the Opening Activity **Highs and Lows** (Page 9) and be prepared to give the teens an example.
- Make copies of **The Dating Assignment** (Appendix 4).
- Make copies of **Life Lesson Questions Session 2** for teens (Appendix 5).

**Preparations before teens 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 time stamped at 0:13:50-0:19:41.
- Set out snacks, name tags, markers, paper and pens.

**Facilitator:** As people arrive, greet them, 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 early 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 positive interaction and learning, and thankfulness on receiving insight into the world of dating. Amen.*

**Facilitator:** Ask the questions:

1. *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.
2. *What did you notice about the media’s portrayal of how to be single? Was there a dominant theme?*
3. *Did you discover anything enlightening when you dug deeper into what Jesus is asking of us – and why - when it comes to relationships?*

**Opening Activity:** **Highs and Lows** - Invite teens to gather in a circle. Invite them to:

*Please share a “high” that you experienced this week, something that you feel really excited or good about. Then, share a “low” that you experienced this week, something that either made you feel disappointed, upset, sad or mad. If you aren’t ready to answer when it becomes your turn, you can pass and we’ll come back to you towards the end. I’ll start by sharing. My high this week was \_\_\_\_\_. My low was \_\_\_\_\_.*

This activity is a great way to get to know the teens in the room a little better.

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

**Facilitator:**

1. *We see that everyone has experiences of high and lows, which also happens in dating.*
2. *Do you remember Professor Cronin’s Dating Assignment? (Nods, hand raising, etc.).*
3. *We’re going to watch that section, and then discuss it.*

**Facilitator:** Play the section of the movie where Professor Cronin explains The Dating Assignment. After the clip, hand out Appendix 4.

- *Is that what dating looks like for you?* Answers will vary.
- *What rule did you like the best? The least?*
- *Why do you think she has people make the “ask” in person?*
- *Does fear of rejection play a role in asking someone out or not? How can you be bolder?*
- *Professor Cronin talks about letting someone go – letting them be “free” – if you don’t know how you feel after 3 dates. Why is it important to be open and honest with someone as soon as you know there is not a romantic interest, rather than dragging it on because you don’t want to hurt them (and either way they are going to get hurt)?*
- *Remember, that even if you have given in to the peer pressure of “hooking up” before, every day is a fresh start. Your past does not define you and your future relationships!*

**Life Lesson Challenge:** Read the following before handing out Appendix 5.

**Facilitator:**

*The following questions are a bit more detailed. If you were to go on a date, consider the following:*

1. *Who do you think your date should be: an athlete, musician, brainiac, sensitive, funny, popular, etc.?*
2. *What qualities do you think are important when you are looking for someone else?*
3. *If you’re thinking about your potential date, where does your faith and their faith fit in?*
4. *Dr. Cronin talks about going “off type” when asking someone on a date. What would be the advantage of this approach?*

5. *Since an A-frame hug is your only physical interaction in Level 1 dating, how can you know if there might be real chemistry between the two of you?*
6. *Will you allow God to enter into your dating life, and will you listen? Does anyone have ideas on how to do that?*
7. *What are some ways that you can stay strong in your desire NOT to participate in "hooking up"?*
8. *Here is a copy of the questions. Please take time to discuss the questions together in small groups.* Pass out Appendix 5. Allow about 10 minutes for conversation.

*Would anyone like to share? You don't have to get personal if you are uncomfortable. A general comment is fine. Or, maybe you heard someone say something that you thought was interesting. You don't need to reveal their name.*

#### Closing Reflection:

Facilitator: *God made us to be in relationships.*

- *How is God a resource in your life? If He isn't so far, how could you make Him one?*
- *Have you ever considered praying to God to guide you to a good person to date?*
- *Consider where you find God, or might find God, in this dating process!*

#### Closing Prayer:

*Lord, we thank you for inviting us to learn about dating and relationships in a safe space. Remind us to invite you to bring courage, hope, patience, and faith into our dating search. Amen.*

**SESSION 3 – THE DATING PROJECT**

(approx. 90 minutes)

**PREP PRIOR TO SESSION**

- Review Professor Cronin's Levels of Dating. The Dating Assignment can be downloaded from the website: [www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com](http://www.TheDatingProjectMovie.com)
- Make a copy of **Prayers** for reader and facilitator (Appendix 9).
- Make a copy of **Dive In Conversation Starters**. Instructions and Questions (Appendix 6).
- Make copies for the teens of **Life Lesson Challenge Session 3** (Appendix 7).
- Have **The Levels of Dating** (Appendix 3) ready for your reference.
- Get snacks, name tags, markers or pens.

**Preparations before teens arrive:**

- Set up 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 16:20 to watch the section on the Levels of Dating (in case it is needed).
- Provide snacks, name tags, markers and pens.

**Facilitator:** As people arrive, greet them, 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 early 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 prayer tonight.**

**Opening Prayer:**

**"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."  
1 Cor 16:14**

**"Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust. Love stands when all else has fallen."  
1 Cor 13:7-8**

***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. Open our hearts as we explore the wonders of dating and commitment. Amen.***

**Opening Activity: Dive In Conversation Starters** - Invite teens to gather in the two chair circles (as described in Appendix 6), and proceed with the activity. After they have had time for the activity, ask them to return to a group setting (if it's the most practical, they can quickly turn their chairs to face the facilitator/screen).

**Facilitator:**

***Today's session is looking at Level 3 & 4 dating, and what it means to build and have meaningful relationships. Does anyone remember what's involved in Level 3 dating?***  
Answers will vary.

**Facilitator:**

Read **Professor Cronin's Levels of Dating** out loud (Appendix 3) and/or watch the DVD time stamped at 0:16:20-0:19:40.

- ***What are your thoughts on this?*** Answers will vary.
- ***How was our rotating Dive In Conversation activity helpful in understanding Level 3 dating?*** Answers will vary (looking for something like, "not shallow", "questions made me think at a deeper level").
- ***In one part of the film, Rasheeda talks about sleeping with people and the feeling of being used and using someone else. She talks about the still, small voice getting quieter and quieter. She further explains that she can say she's a Christian and talk about it, but if you don't see that in the way she lives her life, it's a lie.***
- ***Why does sexual integrity matter? Do you understand why?*** Answers will vary.

- *Relevant Magazine* wrote that “Christian Romance should be a spectacle to behold.” Why is it important that we as Christians strive to live out our dating and relationships in a way that honors and glorifies God? Answers will vary.
- Would you agree that no one gets into a relationship thinking, “I can’t wait to get my heart broken?”
- Would you also agree that no one gets into a marriage thinking, “I can’t wait until my divorce?”
- The national average of marriages that end in divorce is 50%, but if the couple regularly attends church together, that number drops to 20%. If the couple is involved in an activity together at their church (beyond just attending), that number drops to only 8%.
- Healthy and holy dating will lay the groundwork for a healthy and holy marriage. Every person is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves to be treated as such. It’s important to start training your mind and heart now, so that when temptation enters, you will be equipped to answer.
- Professor Cronin speaks with Shanzi about finding someone of character. Why is that so important? Answers will vary.
- People have talked about the importance of human relationships for a very long time. The ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, says that there are three types of friendships/relationships: Utility, Pleasure, and In the Good. Let’s examine them.
  1. Utility: one or both of the people are used as a tool to the benefit of the other person (Ex: a plumber or ride share driver). When it comes to dating, a lot of people get stuck in Utility relationships (you use this person because they do nice things for you or raise your social status). Give time for answers to the questions that follow.
    - a. Have you seen this type of relationship with people you know?
    - b. What are the problems with this type of relationship?
    - c. Would you want to be treated this way?
    - d. Would you want your best friend or brothers and sisters treated this way?



2. ***Pleasure:*** one or both people are fun to be with but there is not respect and meaning in the relationship. When it comes to dating, a lot of people get stuck in Pleasure relationships (people who like kissing/hanging out/partying together, but not much else). Give time for answers to the questions that follow.
- Do you know any people who have been in this type of relationship?***
  - What are the dangers with this type of relationship?***
  - Would you want to be treated this way?***
  - Would you want your best friend or brothers and sisters treated this way?***
3. ***A Friend in the Good:*** both people in a relationship, by their meaningful presence in each other's lives, actually help to make each other better people than they were before they met. When it comes to dating, these are the relationships that last, because both people care about the feelings and well-being of the other person. Friends in the Good don't want harm to come to themselves or the other person. Whether times are happy or times are tough, they help each other to make good, kind, and thoughtful decisions.
- Why does this type of relationship build trust?***
  - Would you want your best friend or brothers and sisters treated this way?***
  - Would the people who love you most in the world want you to be treated this way?***

**Basic Questions:** Answers will vary.

**Facilitator:**

*Let's take a look at Level 3 dating and address the following questions.*

*I'm going to ask the question and you have to turn to the person next to you, or find a partner, answer the question and explain why you chose that answer. Each person gets a 30 second response.*

1. *Does adding a kiss change the dynamics of the relationship? YES How?*
2. *Can you go on dates with other people in Level 3 dating? NO Why?*
3. *Do you see faith as an important part of your level 3 dating experience? Why?*
4. *In Level 3 Dating, is this person someone that you share deep emotional stuff with? YES Why?*
5. *Is there kissing involved? YES*
6. *Is there more than kissing involved? NO Why?*
6. *Are you spending lots of time together? Probably*
7. *Are you sharing more of your deeper emotional self with the other person? Probably*
8. *Do you actually see more of the other person's worth when getting physically intimate is off the table? YES*

*So that we're all on the same page, let's review your answers and responses to the questions.*

Repeat questions with Level 3 answers.

**Pondering Questions:** Share in small groups

- *Do you have a different understanding of the purpose or the value of dating after discussing the levels of dating?*
- *What are the pros and cons of being in an 'exclusive' relationship?*
- *How can you spiritually prepare for dating?*

**Life Lesson Challenge:** (Read the following before handing out Appendix 7)

- *I invite you to work individually and then share with each other. Look at the choices that you have made in dating that have brought you to today. Reflect on and discuss your visions for dating moving forward.*
- *How has The Dating Project helped you see another way to date or get in a relationship?*
- *How can you help yourself maintain faith within your relationship?*
- *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?*
- *Here is a copy of the questions. Please take time to work on them alone and then share your thoughts in your small groups.* Pass out Appendix 7. Allow about 10 minutes for conversation.

**Closing Reflection:**

*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? There probably aren't any of you that are looking to get married right now, but it's good to look at how to have a healthy relationship and to discover some positive ways to actually find the 'right one.' This is better than having a bunch of other influences giving you bad advice, like "hooking up" with as many people as possible and then maybe meeting the right person! Unfortunately, we don't have time to cover it, but science shows that having a large number of hook ups, or worse, many sexual partners, statistically leads to anxiety, unhappiness, and even depression, not to mention higher rates of disease and divorce. So, it's important to talk now about a better way to find love!*

**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. 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. 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.*

**APPENDIX 1: Dice Activity**

1. What is dating, and what do you wish dating was like?
2. What role does Christianity play in your life when it comes to relationships and how Christians are supposed to treat people?
3. Do you think that a boyfriend or girlfriend defines you as a person? Explain.
4. What do you think of dating apps? Do you think that dating apps encourage the hook up culture? What's good about them? What dating problems could they cause? Explain.
5. What do your parents/guardians think about you dating?
6. What is the purpose of dating?

## APPENDIX 2: Life Lesson Challenge 1 &amp; A Note from Parents/Guardians/Counselors for Teens

**Life Lesson Challenge:****Your challenges this week are:**

1. Take some time to notice differences and similarities between Face to Face conversations and Social Media conversations that you have or observe.
2. Pay attention to the media's portrayal of how you're supposed to live out your singleness. Do you think it's making people feel happier and more fulfilled?
3. Dig deeper into what Jesus asks of us when it comes to how to live out your singleness by reading scripture and/or talking to your parents, youth minister, or pastor.
4. What are the consequences of "hooking up"? Be honest and seek advice. Know that if you've found yourself in a "hook up" situation before, that that does not define who you are today!!
5. Consider ways to say NO to a "hook up" or figure out how to shift the situation.
6. If you were part of a "hook up" and don't see it as an issue, honestly think, why would people who care about you think it is an issue? How could it be an issue for the other person involved in the "hook up"?

**Your parents/guardians, as well as school or youth counselors, have much wisdom to share and your parents/guardians 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.**

**Things to consider...from your parents/guardians, even though they may not say it to you often...**

- You are valued
- You are enough
- You are doing well
- I love you
- You make me proud
- I believe that you can do whatever you put your mind to
- I won't totally freak out if you tell me something outrageous...honesty is what I hope for
- I want to know your dreams and hopes for the future
- Sometimes I need help understanding; bear with me if I ask you to repeat or explain 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, no matter the situation
- Trust and patience are a process that I am working on
- I value your time; I want to spend time with you

## 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. The date should last 45-90 minutes.
4. The date should be 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. Similarly, 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 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

In 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 Schutte)."

## LEVEL 4 DATING

*"Our souls crave intimacy"*—Erwin Raphael McManus

Marriage. Sex is a healthy, special, and powerful part of this relationship! Consume the relationship and continue dating each other. Note: A lot of moms and dads still have date nights!

## 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 (Session 2)

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

- If you're thinking about your potential date, where does faith fit in?
- Who do you think your date should be; an athlete, a musician, a brainiac, sensitive, witty, popular?
- What qualities do you think are important when you are looking for someone else?
- Dr. Cronin talks about going "off type" when asking someone on a date. What would be the advantage of this approach?
- Since an A-frame hug is your only physical interaction in Level 1 dating, how can you know if there might be real chemistry between the two of you?
- Will you allow God to speak into your dating life...and will you listen?
- What are some ways that you can stay strong in your desire NOT to participate in "hooking up"?
- Is faith an important attribute for your potential date?

## APPENDIX 6: Dive In Conversation Starters

**Dive In Conversation Starters**Instructions:

Set up chairs in two circles: one on the inside and one on the outside of that. Make sure that the chairs are facing each other and there are an equal amount of chairs in the inside circle as well as the outside circle.

Every teen will sit across from another teen, and they can be same or opposite sex. The facilitator will call out a question (see questions below). The inner circle person will answer the question first to their partner. They will have 45 seconds to answer the question. Then, the facilitator calls out the second question. Their partner will answer back with the next question. They will have 45 seconds to answer their question. After both parties have had a chance to answer the question, the outer circle will rotate to the right and the game continues as instructed above.

Here is a list of questions to ask the teens, adjust as you feel necessary:

- What's your favorite childhood memory?
- What song best describes your life, and why?
- What would be an example of a "really" embarrassing moment?
- If you were to win a lifetime award for doing something that could change lives, what would it be? *[For example, I would win a lifetime award for curing a major disease because I am passionate about finding a cure for lung disease since that is what my auntie has]*
- What's your favorite food?
- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Who's your favorite celebrity, and why?
- Who do you look up to the most, and why?
- If you would describe yourself as an animal, what kind of animal would you be and why?
- What would be the most "perfect date" for you?
- If you had to give yourself a nickname, what nickname would you give yourself and why?
- Which is more important to you in the person that you are dating and why: having a great sense of humor, having an intelligent conversation, being active and sporty, being passionate about life, etc.?
- What car would best describe your personality?
- If you had all the money in the world, what kind of gift would you give your boyfriend/girlfriend?
- If you were a superhero, what would your power(s) be and why?

## APPENDIX 7: Life Lesson Challenge (Session 3)

**Life Lesson Challenge:**

Work individually and then share with each other.

- Look at the choices that you have made in dating (or avoiding it) that have brought you to today.
- Reflect on and discuss your visions for dating moving forward.
- Has The Dating Project helped you see another way?
- How can you help yourself and the people you date maintain faith within your relationship?
- 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?

## APPENDIX 8 &amp; 9: Prayers

**Session 1****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.

**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 positive interaction and learning, and thankfulness on 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 space. Remind us to invite you to bring courage, hope, patience, and faith into our dating search. Amen.

## APPENDIX 8 &amp; 9: Prayers

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

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”  
1 Cor 16:14

“Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust. Love stands when all else has fallen.”  
1 Cor 13:7-8

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. 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. 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. 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**