

CHASING LOVE

PARENT GUIDE

The content of this study is very important for today's teens to understand God's design for sex, love, and intimacy, but it may bring up some tough questions and topics of discussion for your teens. This guide will help parents know what to anticipate as their teens study each week and will give them insight into the key takeaways and truths taught in each lesson.

SESSION 1 — TRUST GOD

This session tackles some difficult topics, such as trust, right and wrong, judgment, and perseverance. We see the idea of “Why does it matter?” over and over. Here are some questions students might have:

- Why does it matter if we seek God or self first?
- Why does it matter that there is a moral right and wrong?
- Why does it matter that we know how to judge properly?
- Why does it matter whether or not I stay strong in difficult situations?

SESSION 1 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- God's commands aren't about taking away fun, but creating the best space for us to thrive.
- We have a meaningful, higher calling to live for God and serve others rather than ourselves.
- The people we trust influence us the most. It's important to know who we're trusting.
- God—our perfect heavenly Father—is worthy of all our trust.
- Chasing after the world leads to emptiness; chasing after God leads to fulfillment.

SESSION 2 — TRUE FREEDOM

In this session, we consider questions about freedom, purpose, God's will, and the positives of living a Christian sexual ethic. This discussion may bring up questions like these:

- If I'm free, why can't I do whatever I want? God will forgive me.
- What is my purpose in life?
- How do I know what God's will is? Specifically, what about His will for me?
- What's the big deal about following a Christian sexual ethic? Aren't these “rules” a little old-fashioned?
- What does it mean to love God and others with my body and soul?
- Why should I stay committed to a God who doesn't seem to want me to enjoy life?

SESSION 2 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Boundaries are necessary for true freedom.
- Freedom means living life God's way and cultivating desires that align with His Word and His will.
- We are incapable of living holy lives on our own because sin wrecked humanity.
- Thankfully, God extends grace to us through His Son, Jesus, and empowers us to live life His way through the Holy Spirit.
- God made us for relationship with Himself and others.
- We find true freedom when we are committed to His purpose and building loving relationships with others.

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SESSION 3 — REAL LOVE

Real love calls students to make some tough decisions, often on issues lacking a specific “how to” in the Bible. Here are some questions students might have:

- What does it really mean to be modest and pure?
- What does it mean to honor God with my body?
- Is what I wear and what I do really a big deal?
- How do I renew my mind?
- How do I speak the truth in love to someone I disagree with?

SESSION 3 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Love is more than an emotion. It’s an action that involves both body and soul—and a deep concern for others.
- To love means to protect and provide.
- God’s commands about reserving sex for marriage protect us physically, emotionally, and spiritually and provide us with true freedom in our relationships.
- It’s important to balance speaking the truth and doing it in a loving way, rather than wanting to prove a point or show our intelligence.
- The way we dress should honor God and create a loving environment for others.

SESSION 4 — GOD’S GRACE

This session explores difficult questions about God’s grace to us, God’s grace to others, and how our understanding of both affects our relationships. Here are some examples of questions students may ask:

- What’s the big deal about having sex with someone I’m not married to if we both consent?
- Isn’t the ultimate goal of life to find a good sexual partner and get married?
- Is sex the worst sin, and if I’ve already had sex, will God forgive me?
- How do I get over the guilt and shame I feel because of my sexual sin?

SESSION 4 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Before they can even begin to understand God’s design for sex and relationships, students need to understand why they need God’s grace and forgiveness.
- Our understanding of our own sin and need for forgiveness greatly influences the way we interact with others.
- Satan’s lies infect what God made good, causing us to doubt God’s goodness and His desire for our good, too.
- We can’t measure God’s words by the way we feel—Satan likes to twist God’s words. Instead, we need to use God’s Word as the measure for our feelings.

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SESSION 5 — GOD'S DESIGN

God created us for relationship with Him and others, but students may struggle to understand what that looks like. Some questions may include:

- What does a good relationship with God have to do with our sexuality?
- Isn't sex the key to being happy? If so, then why does the Bible have so many rules about it?
- Sex isn't really a big deal though, right?
- Why do I need to care about purity if I'm not having sex?

SESSION 5 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- All humans are sexual beings, whether sexually active or not, and all people were made for relationships, whether they're single, dating, or married.
- When God made people in His image, this included weaving into us the desire for relationship with Him and others. In fact, our purpose is to live in loving relationship with God and others.
- Although Jesus was never sexually active, He was human just like us and tempted just like us (Heb. 4:15). Jesus had a relationship with God and friendships with others, and He models the best way for us to have healthy, godly relationships.
- Talking Tip: Be honest with students about the purpose of sex, how to face temptation, and how pursuing God above all changes everything.

SESSION 6 — RELATIONSHIP STATUS

Culture tells us that a major part of our happiness comes from being in a romantic relationship, but that's not true. Both singleness and marriage come with their own unique struggles. Some questions might arise from the study this week, including:

- If I never get married, does that mean I won't be as valuable in the eyes of the church?
- Do singles really have family?
- What's so great about marriage? If I'm single, I can go wherever I want and do whatever I want with no one holding me back.
- Can single people ever really be happy never having sex?
- If I'm in love with someone of the same sex, why can't I date or marry that person?

SESSION 6 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- We can love God and others both as singles and married people; both are gifts that can be used to serve God and the Church.
- No matter whether you're single or married, your identity rests in Christ.
- Sex is not required for a fulfilling life.
- You can find meaning in your relationship with God and others, just like Jesus did.
- God designed sex to be one man and one woman who become one flesh for one lifetime.

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SESSION 7 — THE TRANSGENDER QUESTION

The conversation about homosexual behaviors and gender identity issues is a difficult one. The world and the media share a completely different perspective for relationships than God's Word, so there is a lot of confusion surrounding same-sex relationships and gender.

Here are some of the types of things students may want to know:

- Does God still love me if I struggle with same-sex attraction or gender identity issues?
- What if I don't fit the stereotype for my gender?
- How do I gently and respectfully share my beliefs with people who think differently?
- How can I balance standing firm in the biblical truth about sexuality and gender and loving others?
- Should I use a preferred gender pronoun for transgender people?

SESSION 7 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Although society may see Christians' view of marriage as outdated, intolerant, and hateful, we have to learn to balance speaking biblical truth and loving others.
- God loves all people deeply—including those who struggle with same-sex attraction or gender identity issues.
- Sexual immorality is not an agree-to-disagree issue. The Bible is clear that it is a sin.
- All people, including gay and transgender people, only experience true freedom when they embrace God's design for their lives.
- We love God best when we remain faithful and walk in obedience to what the Bible teaches.

SESSION 8 — ABUSE AND PORNOGRAPHY

The content of this session—addiction to pornography and sexual abuse—may make some students uncomfortable or bring up painful feelings for others. Although they may not ask them in front of the group, be prepared for students to ask questions like:

- If I'm addicted to pornography, how can I break the cycle?
- How can healthy relationships help me heal from pornography addiction and/or abuse?
- I was sexually abused as a child, and I feel so much guilt and shame. How do I move forward and trust in God's goodness?
- What are some ways in which I can help those who have been sexually abused?
- What if I am, or someone I know is, being sexually abused right now?

SESSION 8 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Everything we take in changes us in some way. Porn is even shown to rewire the brain.
- Pornography creates unrealistic expectations about and views of sex.
- Porn harms performers, marriages, and children.
- All sexual abuse is harmful and wrong.
- Pornography is a perversion of God's design for sex.

SESSION 9—THE CHALLENGE – KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- God gives us the strength and a way to escape temptation.
- We can model the way we respond to temptation after Jesus—with Scripture.
- It is possible to remain sexually pure, even in our over-sexualized culture.
- Hookups and romantic relationships with non-believers are dangerous.
- While it's possible for a Christian to experience same-sex attraction, and God forgives those who engage in homosexual behaviors, practicing homosexual behaviors is at odds with God's design.