
LESSON A

Goals, Values, and Marriage

FOCUS: Analyze the influence of values and goals on preparing for marriage.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Students will define what a family is. Have the students define family. Ask students, "What is your definition of family? What makes a family different from other groups?" Have the students describe some functions of the family. Ask, "How do these relate to family members' needs and wants?" Have the students also identify the qualities of strong families. Ask, "Which trait do you think is most important? Why? Which trait do you think is least important? Why?"
2. Students will examine the different functions of the family. Hang several colored posters that say, "A Family should: could: does: can: sometimes: never: is:" Have the students write their responses to these phrases on the posters. Then, discuss the different responses and the different functions of a family. Use Student Handout, "Family Functions." Discuss how the marriage relationship affects the functioning of the family.
3. Students will understand the different family structures and stages. Use Student Handout, "Family Structure" and "Family Stages." Because of the increasing number of single parent and blended families, many articles about them appear in newspapers and magazines. Have the students locate an article about a single-parent or blended family. Have them write a brief report summarizing what the article has to say about the satisfaction and frustrations of these kind of families. Be sure to have them credit the magazine or paper the article is found in, page number, and author.
4. Have the students select a married couple whom they admire (e.g. parents, other relatives, or from television and movies, etc.) Make a list of the qualities in the relationship that they like. Choose another couple whose relationship is not admirable and make another list of the qualities that they do not like.
5. Ask the students, "What makes a quality boyfriend and girlfriend or marriage relationship?" Have the students make a list of the qualities that they value in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship and would like to have in a future marriage relationship.

Then have the students make a list of qualities that they desire in a mate. Ask the students now to evaluate themselves in terms of these qualities. In other words ask the students, "Do I possess these qualities?" Point out that in a relationship it is more important to be the right person, not just find the right person. Discuss how what we value will influence the people that are attracted to us.

Journal Entry # 1



My most important marriage goals will be...

Family Functions

The family facilitates growth and development of individual family members by sharing resources (time, energy, money, information), responsibilities, priorities, and goals. Think of ways your family shares:

Time

Energy

Money

Information

Responsibilities

Priorities

Goals

When you marry, are there family ways of sharing you will—continue?

Are there any you would discard?

Family Structure

Family structures may take on various forms, but whatever the structure, families try to provide a quality environment which encourages human growth and development. These family structures could be any of the following:

- nuclear: married couple in their own home with children, if any.
- single-parent: one adult lives with one or more children.
- blended: single parent married; family includes step-parent, perhaps step-children.
- extended: several generations of a family live in one home.

Describe the structure of your family when you were a child.

Describe the structure of the family you would like as an adult.

Is there a difference between your reality and ideal? Why or why not?

How could your future spouse and his or her expectations change the picture?

Family Stages

Families progress through three general stages:

- **founding:** couple forms, children are born.
- **expanding:** children are added, progress through developmental stages.
- **contracting:** children launched; retirement.

Identify the present "family stage" of your own family.

Compare with other members of your class.

When you begin your family, how will your situation be different from the family you left as a child?

Why could it be useful to understand that families progress through predictable stages?

