

AWKWARD

Feb 21- Week 1 Middle School

INSTRUCTIONS

Tripp will give a message during ChAOS in the gym after a few group games. Your group will gather afterwards to discuss the message in your rooms. Here is more information about the subject along with the questions to help with your discussion.

BOTTOM LINE:

What we do with our desires matters.

SCRIPTURE:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2 NIV).

“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT).

THINK ABOUT THIS:

Leading a conversation about sex and dating with your middle schoolers can be challenging, and that's not just because it's awkward. Your middle schoolers will come to this conversation from all kinds of places. Some will be completely embarrassed or grossed out. Some will be uninterested or unsure why they'd be asked to talk about it at all. Some may be curious and eager to learn more. And others may have experience or are beginning to have experiences with sex and dating. Whatever their perspective, remember that this conversation is important. It's planting seeds that will hopefully help them develop healthy habits when it comes to sex and dating. So, make sure you are creating a safe space for students to share without fear of judgment.

It's a lot easier for middle schoolers to talk about others than it is for them to talk about themselves. That's why talking about the qualities they want to find in someone else first is important. They'll be able to identify those things in others and doing so will help them shift their thinking back to themselves. Do your best to help your middle schoolers understand why it's important to focus on themselves. We don't want to give them a false hope that simply becoming the kind of person they want to be will magically equate to a happy dating life. Rather, we want them to understand the value and peace that comes with becoming the kind of person God wants them to be.

Finally, remember that you may have students who have experienced sexual abuse on some level. This conversation could lead them to eventually open up to you about that, so be prepared to follow up, support, and point them toward help if and when they do.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

ICE BREAKER:

What's the funniest or most awkward moment you've seen or experienced?

MESSAGE:

- In a letter written by Paul to the Romans, he helps us to understand a little more about our desires. (Romans 12:1-2 NIV)
- Paul started off by talking about who God is: He's someone who offers us mercy.
- Because we're human, we all mess up sometimes. We end up choosing to do things that we want instead of the best that God wants for us.
- That's called sin, and because of sin, we all deserve to be separated from God. But instead, He sent Jesus to save us and bring us back into relationship with Him. That's the ultimate act of mercy.
- We can respond to what God has done for us—to His kindness to us—by living the way He calls us to live.
- Paul wrote a message to the people of Corinth to remind them of what God says is best for them. Paul listed what God says love looks like: patient, kind, faithful, hopeful, and lasting. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT)
- Don't we usually think about the type of love Paul mentioned as being about the other person in our relationships? Instead of focusing on finding all this great stuff in other people, we need to stop and look at ourselves.
- No matter if you choose to date or choose not to date, one step you can take toward becoming the person God created you to be is to practice sexual integrity. We need to put these characteristics into practice before we even think about dating someone.
- Paul explained that we should use our sexual desires in ways that are pleasing to God.
- When it comes to our sexual desires, He wants us to live with sexual integrity.
 - What we do with our desires matters.
 - Focus on becoming love before looking for love.

APPLICATION

- Instead of using dating as a way to look for the "right" person, let's focus on developing the characteristics of love that Paul listed for us.
- First, pick one of the characteristics on Paul's list that you want to develop in yourself.
- Then, practice what you pick.
- If we're going to become love before looking for love, we're going to need to focus on growing the characteristics necessary to be the type of person we would want to date.

QUESTIONS

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how awkward do you feel talking about dating?
2. On a scale of 1-10, how awkward do you feel talking about desires and attraction?
3. Do you feel like a lot of middle schoolers you know are dating?
4. What's one reason someone might want to have a boyfriend or girlfriend?
5. What's one reason someone might not?
6. What's one reason talking about this kind of stuff might be awkward for a middle schooler?
7. What's one reason it might be helpful for a middle schooler to talk about this stuff?
8. How does it make you feel to know that God created things like desires and attraction?
9. What does it look like when somebody has integrity and why does sexual integrity matter?
10. Besides me, who is another adult in your life you trust who you can talk to about this?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE)

It's anonymous question box time! Hand each student a few pieces of paper and ask them to anonymously write down any questions they may have when it comes to sex or dating. Remind them that it's completely normal to have questions about this kind of stuff, and this group is a safe space to ask those questions. Explain that the questions will be given to the RSM Staff who will do their best to answer them in the coming weeks during large group.

If students say they have nothing to ask, encourage them to write, "I don't have a question," so that those who do have questions feel comfortable writing them. Once all the questions have been written down, have students place them into an empty tissue box.