

MARRIAGE

Lesson 9

Workbook Assignment

Components of Relationships
What is Love?

Overview

This lesson will examine the different types of relationships that can develop between individuals. The lesson will focus on the three components of relationship. Imitation forms of love can be mistaken for genuine love.

Objectives

- ◆ Students will be able to identify the three components of relationships.
 - ◆ Students will be able to describe different types of relationships using the three components of relationships.
 - ◆ Students will analyze and discuss the difference between imitation and genuine love.
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Vocabulary

love		passion
intimacy	genuine	imitation

Key Concepts

- Individuals experience many different types of relationships throughout their life.
 - The three components of relationship are intimacy, passion and commitment.
 - Different relationships meet different needs.
 - Relationships change over time.
 - Different types of relationships can be described as: nonlove, friendship, infatuation, empty love, romantic love, companion love and complete love.
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Preparation for Lesson

The teacher will need:

- Overhead transparency **Components of Relationships**
- Worksheets *Components of Relationships* and *What is Love?*

Teaching the Lesson

Begin the lesson by introducing the concept that different relationships in our lives may have different components. Write the words "Intimacy," "Passion," and "Commitment," on the board. Divide the class into three groups and assign one of the words to each group. Ask the groups to decide on a working definition of their word and then have one student from the group put the definition on the board underneath the word. Compare the student's definition for each word with the definitions provided in the teacher's manual.

- Draw an equilateral triangle on the board and label the sides Intimacy, Passion and Commitment. Discuss with the students that relationships may contain none of the components or up to all of the components.
- Using the overhead **Components of Relationships**, present the information found in the Lecture Notes on types of relationships.
- Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Ask the students to begin the assignment found on pages 33 and 34. Allow approximately 20 minutes for completion.
Handouts
- Finish the lesson by discussing with the class the information concerning true love provided on page 35 of the workbook. *Handouts*

LECTURE NOTES:

Sternberg proposes in his research that relationships are based on three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. The quality of a relationship will depend on which components are present and the degree to which the components are experienced. Relationships that have the best chance for survival are those that contain all three components.

Intimacy can be described as feeling close or connected to another person. This may include physical, emotional, or intellectual connection. It is the kind of closeness shared by good friends, family members or secure dating partners. It is possible to feel connected to others, even when we are not with them.

Passion usually involves the physical arousal that occurs between individuals. When individuals are attracted to one another, the desire to be with the other person can be intense. Often the result of these strong feelings is sexual interaction.

Commitment is the conscious decision made by the individuals involved to stay invested in the relationship. It allows the relationship to grow and mature in a secure environment. The level of commitment will determine the difference between a short-term or long-term relationship.

Individuals will find themselves attracted to different types of relationships based on various needs. How well a relationship meets the needs of the individuals will often determine the strength of the relationship. Because relationships do not remain the same over time, the components of the relationship may also change. Relationships can contain some, all or none of the components.

Nonlove is best described as the relationship we have with casual friends or recent acquaintances. None of the components are present and the relationship is distant. *Friendship* is based on intimacy and is the connection we feel with close friends or family members who know and understand us well. *Infatuation* involves the physical attraction of passion, an intense need to be with the other person. Initially this type of relationship is very exciting, but tends to fade over time without the presence of the other components. *Empty love* exists when two people remain in a relationship that has become a habit. They no longer experience the connection of intimacy, nor the excitement of passion. In cultures that practice arranged marriages, empty love may be experienced at the beginning of the relationship, before intimacy and passion have developed. *Romantic love* is characterized by the connection of intimacy as well as the physical arousal of passion experienced by the individuals. While both partners may be swept along with emotions, neither partner is committed to the other. The security of commitment is missing when the partners are free to leave the relationship. *Fantasy love* may be experienced by individuals who are attracted physically to one another and decide too quickly to get married. When the excitement of passion wears off, no real intimacy has been established. They find themselves committed to someone they don't truly know. *Companion love* is a relationship based on the connectedness of intimacy and the security of commitment but there is no passion between the individuals. *Complete love* is when all three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment exist within the relationship. No one can guarantee that this type of relationship will last, but it has the greatest potential for satisfaction and survival if both individuals are willing to work hard at maintaining the relationship.

Sometimes it is difficult for adolescents to determine the difference between genuine love that nurtures the development of a healthy relationship and imitation varieties of love that stifle growth. Students should examine carefully what feelings are associated with the relationships they are currently experiencing. With help, they can learn to recognize unhealthy patterns in relationships and distinguish them from healthy ones. Although the list is not exhaustive, three types of imitation love are presented on page 35. Imitation love is not fulfilling and leaves the individual feeling unsettled and "empty" inside.

Over controlling love occurs when one of the partners is more dominant and controls the thoughts or actions of the other partner. Decisions that affect the relationship are not

MAKING THE DECISION

Marriage is a fulfilling experience for those who have chosen their mate wisely. Even when all of the components for complete love are present, no one can guarantee that a marriage will last. Additional factors can influence or weaken the relationship. There is no doubt that the best marriages begin with a strong foundation. Use the following checklist as a guide to eliminate potential problems when you think you have found the person you want to marry.

THE SEVEN MOST PREVALENT CAUSES OF FAULTY MATE SELECTION:

- 1. The Decision to Get Married Is Made Too Quickly**
- 2. The Decision Is Made at Too Young an Age**
- 3. One or Both Persons Are Too Eager to Be Married**
- 4. One or Both May Be Choosing a Mate to Please Someone Else**
- 5. The Experience Base is Too Narrow**
- 6. The Couple Has Unrealistic Expectations**
- 7. One or Both May Have Unaddressed Significant Personality or Behavior Problems**

WHAT IS LOVE?

Many individuals mistake imitation love for the real thing. In a relationship, how does one know the difference between genuine love and love that is false? How the love makes you feel emotionally is one of the ways to recognize the difference. Imitation forms of love leave you feeling "empty" inside after spending time with the other person. Genuine love leaves you feeling secure and content with your partner even when you are separated. True love must be experienced with the heart but understood with the head. While it sounds romantic to "fall" in love, the truth is that we *decide* who we want to love. Read the following descriptions designed to help you make one of the most important decisions of your life.

Imitation love can be:

1. **Over controlling** -- this kind of love doesn't provide for personal growth. You are not allowed to think or make decisions on your own. The partner or someone else decides what is "best" for us.
2. **Conditional love** -- love that is based on meeting a standard of performance; you have to *do something* or *be something* in order to *earn* the love.
3. **Physical Arousal** -- this is love based on excitement. As love deepens, the original intensity lessens. Some think this means the love is fading so they move on to someone else.

Genuine Love is:

1. **Nurturing** -- this love allows for personal growth, you are free to explore *all that you are* within a safe and encouraging environment.
2. **Unconditional** -- you are loved for who you are in spite of imperfections or inabilities in performance.
3. **Generous** -- less importance is placed on what you are *getting* from the relationship and more is placed on what you are *giving* to the relationship.

COMPONENTS OF RELATIONSHIPS

Write a definition for the three components of relationship.

Intimacy _____

Passion: _____

Commitment: _____

Give an example from your own experience or one that you may have seen or know about, that illustrates each type of relationship described in the overhead diagram.

Nonlove: _____

Friendship: _____

Infatuation: _____

Empty Love: _____

Romantic Love: _____

Fantasy Love: _____

Companion Love: _____

Complete Love: _____
