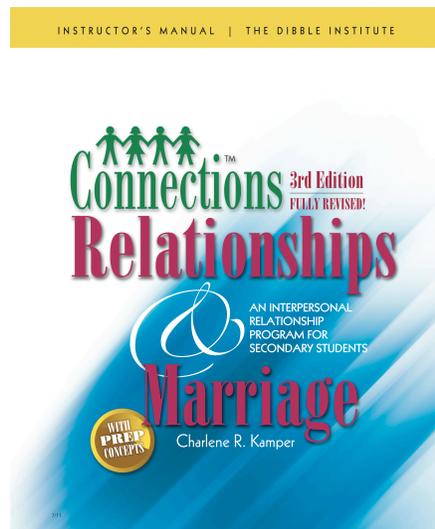


# Sample Lesson

## Newly Revised! Connections: Relationships and Marriage

By: Charlene R. Kamper, MA, CFLE



National evaluations rank **Connections: Relationships & Marriage** as among the most effective teen relationship and marriage programs. Completely revised and expanded for 2011, the course teaches young adults the practical skills for creating – and sustaining - healthy, meaningful relationships.

The 20 ready-to-use lessons offer an eye-opening introduction to: roadblocks to relationships, building on individual strengths, how family experiences shape relationship expectations, conflict resolution, life goals, effective communication, love, commitment and the realities of marriage. The material also covers issues such as gender roles, fatherhood and parenting, economic sustainability, as well as PREP® concepts. Through the course, a wide variety of experiential exercises (including the popular “marriage game”) serve to anchor learning and make the process enjoyable.

[www.DibbleInstitute.org](http://www.DibbleInstitute.org)

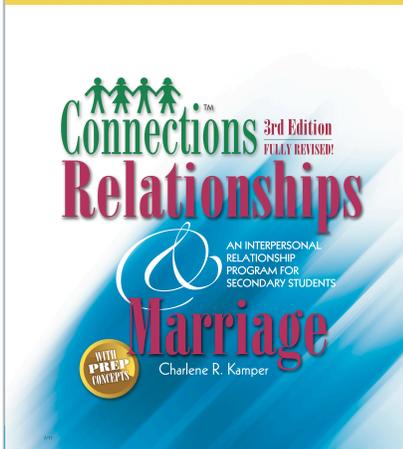
Grades 11-14  
20 one-hour lessons

The Dibble Institute  
800-695-7975  
[relationshipsills@dibbleinstitute.org](mailto:relationshipsills@dibbleinstitute.org)

## Connections: Relationships and Marriage Sample Lesson

### Workbook Table of Contents

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL | THE DIBBLE INSTITUTE



Instructor's Kit                    \$325

**SKU: CRM-I**

- 20 Lesson Plans
- Resource CD with PowerPoint presentation and Resource Masters
- 1 Student Workbook

10 Student Workbooks        \$95

**SKU: CRM-S10**

2-5 packs - \$90

6+ packs - \$85

Extra Posters                    \$49

**SKU: CRM-PS**

Section 1: Personality	Section 5: Marriage
What It's Like to Be Me	Components of Relationships
Understanding Myself Better	What is Love?
Your Plan for Life	Roadblocks to Relationships
Timeline for My Future	Compatibility Counts
Section 2: Relationships	Before You Marry
Behind the Scenes	Priorities
Positive Relationships	Household Duties
Status Check	What About Kids?
Things Change	Making the Decision
Expectations	Rate Your Mate
Attractions	The Wedding
Getting Acquainted	Bogus Marriage License
Dating and Emotions	A Portrait
Breaking Up	Parenting 101
My Ideal Person	Family Album
Section 3: Communication	Finances
Family Patterns	The Family Budget
Settling Differences	Keeping a Job
Let's Talk	Our Crisis
Listening	Family Vacation
Handling Conflict	What I Learned

# LESSON 5 STATUS CHECK



## WORKBOOK ASSIGNMENT

---

- *Status Check*
- *Things Change*

## OVERVIEW

---

*This lesson explores the differences in emotional connectedness between acquaintances and key relationships in a person's life. The lesson also discusses how relationships change over time. These changes are expected and will either strengthen the relationship or cause it to become less meaningful.*

## OBJECTIVES

---

1. Participants will identify different types of relationships they have.
2. Participants will evaluate their emotional connectedness in those relationships.
3. Participants will understand why relationships do not stay the same.

## VOCABULARY

---

dynamic                      static                      acquaintances  
interdependence

## KEY CONCEPTS

---

- Acquaintances are casual relationships that come and go.
- Acquaintances are less connected and require less effort to work.
- Key relationships are more meaningful and have a deeper emotional bond.
- Relationships require attention if they're going to last.



- All relationships experience change; they either continue to strengthen or they go away.
- Family relationships are the first to change over time: parent-child, and siblings.
- Leaving or losing a key relationship is more difficult: a best friend, a family member, or someone you love.

## LESSON PREPARATION

---

### The instructor will need:

- Worksheet: *Status Check* and *Things Change*

## TEACHING THE LESSON

---



### Slide 1

Have the participants turn to the workbook page *Status Check* and read the definitions for *Acquaintances* and *Key Relationships*. Based on the definitions provided in the lesson, ask the members of the group to think about people in their lives who might fit each description and write them down.



### Slides 2, 3

- Tell the participants that even though people experience different kinds of relationships throughout a lifetime, some relationships will have greater significance than others. That has to do with the level of emotional commitment they feel to the relationship.

### Questions for discussion:

1. Why are acquaintance relationships easier to deal with?
2. Why is connecting on the internet so appealing to many teens? What level of connectedness do those types of relationships offer? What are the limitations to those types of relationships?
3. How is the level of emotional involvement in key relationships different from the level in acquaintances?
4. Why is the family usually considered to be a key relationship?



### Slides 4, 5

- Continuing on to the second part of the lesson, *Things Change*, the participants will consider how relationships are dynamic, not static; they are always moving in one direction

or the other. When friends or partners build on positive experiences and increase the bond between them the relationship can grow deeper over time.



### Slides 6, 7

- The family relationship is considered to be one of life's deepest connections. However, even this relationship changes as children mature into adults. Teenagers are often ready for independence before their parents are ready for them to have it.
- Participants will complete the lesson by answering the questions about other types of relationships they have experienced and how they have changed.

## LECTURE NOTES



The first concept presented in the lesson asks the participants to consider differences in the level of emotional connectedness a person experiences between *casual acquaintances* and *key relationships*. Throughout life, friendships are chosen based on mutual values, interests, needs, or goals. But teens today are dealing with an entirely different kind of connection to peers and others. This is the age of increased social networking made available through the use of advanced technology. Children and teens have more opportunity than ever before to interface with people who are both near and far away from them. Many teens describe their distant contacts as “friends” even though they have never actually met in person or spent quality time together.

This type of relationship building is illustrated by the recent expansion of internet chat rooms and dating programs provided for adults. These services abound around the globe for people of all ages who wish to share information or communicate their love aspirations via computer. Some of the existing websites have linked people together in successful relationships, but many do not; and some networking situations have proven untrustworthy and dangerous. Even though the internet has its limitations, teens as well as adults are becoming accustomed to meeting others in this way.

Texting and email communication provides a single dimension of knowledge that people can share when getting to know one another. In order to have a more complete understanding of how well they blend in more areas, relationships do better when the people in them interact regularly one on one. Truly building lasting relationships is still an interactive process based on proximity and compatibility. Getting to know how another person acts, thinks, and feels takes time and thoughtful observation. Only then can friends or dating partners discover whether their personalities, habits, skill sets, and goals actually mesh.

**SAMPLE  
LESSON**

For more information  
please contact  
The Dibble Institute  
www.DibbleInstitute.org  
800.695.7975

Temporary or casual relationships have an importance of their own and fulfill the need for connection with other human beings. These types of relationships tend to be less stable over time because they come and go more frequently. They also tend to have a less negative impact on the individuals when they end because there is little or no emotional investment. Examples of this kind of connection are teens who take a class together and know each other by name but don't choose to do things together outside of class, or people who work together daily but don't socialize at a personal level.

Key relationships in a person's life are different and serve a different function. These are the connections that hold people together either by loyalty or love and are not so easily broken. They require a deeper level of emotional involvement, so individuals work harder to make good things happen and are less likely to leave.

This is due to a greater degree of commitment between them. Because these types of relationships are more meaningful, it's also harder for the partners to adjust emotionally if these relationships end for some reason.

**Marriage partners must work together to continually move the relationship forward, increasing the commitment between them and broadening their understanding of each other.**

The most meaningful relationships in life are those that are positive and last over time. When friendships or family relationships are mutually satisfying and supportive, people tend to stay involved. Over time the individuals share a range of experiences across situations and develop respect and caring for each other; the relationship continues to grow stronger. Examples of these types of relationships may be: parents, grandparents, a loving adult who serves as a role-model, a best friend, or a successful dating relationship. As feelings for one another deepen, the individuals choose to become interdependent on each other.

The institution of marriage is a reflection of how the lesson concepts mesh. Next in importance to the family one grows up in, a good marriage is a key life relationship that also demonstrates the dynamic nature of change over time. Once a young person has established independence, the next step of meaningful relationship is usually marriage and starting a family if he or she chooses to do so.<sup>3</sup> But marriage, like any other significant life relationship, does not run successfully on automatic pilot. The partners must work together to continually move the relationship forward, increasing the commitment between them and broadening their understanding of each other. As deeply in love as newlyweds are initially, they will find that as they build their marriage together, feelings for one another continue to grow and strengthen over the years with each new challenge and experience they share. If the relationship should ever no longer be a priority, it will begin a downward momentum that can ultimately cause it to end due to lack of care.

As any young person going through the developmental stages knows, physical and cognitive advances affect one's social connectedness as well. The more an individual is capable of doing and understanding, the wider his or her circle of acquaintances



becomes. This is particularly true of the active and mobile teen years, especially now with the extensive use of technology for social networking. Friendships and other types of relationships are possible through various means as a result of expanded opportunities, such as the internet, joining a club or athletic team, or beginning a part-time job.

This lesson addresses two important concepts for teens to consider; 1) *casual acquaintances and key relationships affect people differently*, and 2) *all life relationships experience change over time*. Relationships at every age are dynamic, not static, meaning they are perpetually redefining and do not stay the same. They will either deepen because the partners are mutually contributing positive things to make that happen, or they will diminish because they have lost importance to the partners involved. Although most people have a vague sense of this already, the significance of the fluid nature of relationship may be missed if not considered more carefully.

Based on the first concept, change is a natural and expected process of the life relationship journey. When a relationship is new, it's difficult at that point to determine whether or not it will last. A budding connection to another person hasn't yet stood the test of time. Many friendships or dating partnerships start out fine, but as most people soon learn, that's not a guarantee for the future. Relationships are works in progress. It's common for trouble spots to appear later as the partners discover more and more about each other. They will either take the steps necessary to solve the issues, or in time the relationship will end.

Another primary example of change over time can be seen in one's family of origin. Longer-term relationships such as with parents, siblings, or best friends experience a similar pattern. During the developmental years a child relies heavily on parents. The available adults initially serve as role models for communication, teamwork, love, empathy, and support. While the majority of families are able to build strong love bonds between the members, there are also examples of families or other close relationship ties that are estranged or no longer intact. Unfortunately for some teens, broken relationships are more the norm in their experience than successful ones.

***Relationships at every age are dynamic, not static, meaning they are perpetually redefining and do not stay the same.***

By the teen years, friends become a greater focus of time and attention for the adolescent. Often adolescents are eager to venture out and try their wings before the parents are ready to let them. If parents have done a good job, the young person will eventually establish a separate identity and be prepared to enter the adult world as a productive member of society. In fact, most young people by the early twenties are emancipated from their families and function reasonably well on their own. But the cycle of life doesn't end there; it continues forward. There may be a time coming when the child-turned-adult becomes the caregiver and protector of the parent.



## SLIDES FOR LESSON 5

SLIDE 5.1

Acquaintances are casual relationships that come and go.

SLIDE 5.2

Acquaintances are less connected and require less effort to work.

SLIDE 5.3

Key relationships are more meaningful and have a deeper emotional bond.

SLIDE 5.4

Relationships require attention if they're going to last.

SLIDE 5.5

All relationships experience change; they either continue to strengthen or they go away.

SLIDE 5.6

Parent-child and sibling relationships are the first to change over time.

SLIDE 5.7

Leaving or losing a key relationship is more difficult: a best friend, a family member, or someone you love.

# Status check

*There is a difference in emotional connectedness a person experiences based on the type of relationship it is. After reading the definitions and discussing the differences between Acquaintances and Key Relationships, use this page to look carefully at some of the relationships in your life and record your level of connectedness with those people:*

- *Low: hardly know them*
- *Somewhat: know things about them but aren't close.*
- *Moderately: have talked about important things and done things together.*
- *High: they are a meaningful part of my life.*
- *Very high: there is love and trust between us at all levels.*



**Acquaintances:** *Temporary or casual relationships which have an importance of their own. Because these relationships come and go more often, people are also less committed to them emotionally. How would you describe your level of connectedness to each of the relationships you listed?*

ACQUAINTANCES	LEVEL OF CONNECTEDNESS
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**Key relationships:** *Close and meaningful relationships that influence in deeper ways. These relationships represent strong emotional ties to another person or people. They usually develop over a longer period of time and are missed when they end.*

KEY RELATIONSHIPS	LEVEL OF CONNECTEDNESS
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

# Things change

*The following exercise is designed to focus attention on how relationships change over time. This is normal and expected. As people get to know one another better, the relationship will either grow stronger through mutual experiences, or go away because needs or feelings are no longer the same.*

## Discussion Questions:

1. How has your relationship with your parents changed as you have matured? .....

.....  
 .....

2. With your siblings? .....

.....  
 .....

3. If older brothers or sisters have moved out of the house, how has that changed your relationship with them? .....

.....  
 .....

4. Which friendships have gotten stronger over time?.....

.....  
 .....

5. Are there friendships that ended? Why?.....

.....  
 .....

6. Under what circumstances might an acquaintance relationship become a key relationship?

.....  
 .....

7. Why doesn't it work to be emotionally distant in a key relationship?.....

.....  
 .....