
OBJECTIVE Each young man will learn some principles to follow in choosing an eternal companion.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9 and 131:1–4.
2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. Pencils for marking scriptures.
3. If it is available in your area, and you are teaching this lesson to priest-age young men, you could show *The Importance of Proper Dating*, on *Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2* (53277).

**SUGGESTED
LESSON
DEVELOPMENT**

Discussion

Introduction

- Have you ever thought about the children you may one day have?
 - What attributes do you want to have as a father of those children?
 - What attributes do you want their mother to have?
 - When choosing an eternal companion, why is it critical for you to consider what kind of mother a young woman might become?
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Scripture and
discussion

Choosing a Companion Has Eternal Consequences

- Why can't a man be exalted without being sealed to a woman?

Read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4.

- What does it mean that “he cannot have an increase”? (He can have no spirit children in the eternities.)

Chalkboard
discussion

Explain that choosing a companion for eternity is an extremely important decision but is sometimes based on a very narrow understanding of love. A person who responds only to infatuation or romantic love might overlook many important qualities when choosing someone with whom to spend eternity.

- What characteristics of young women are socially and spiritually appealing to you?

Write the young men's answers on the chalkboard, such as—

1. Is unselfish.
2. Shows respect for me.
3. Has initiative.
4. Is considerate of others.
5. Shows patience in stressful situations.
6. Is an active Church member.
7. Has a testimony of the gospel and obeys the commandments.
8. Maintains a healthy outlook toward life.
9. Possesses values and goals similar to mine.

Ask each young man to select what he thinks are the three most important attributes on the chalkboard. Take a vote to determine which areas the young men consider most important. Discuss why they voted the way they did.

Quotation and discussion

Compare the results of the vote with the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball. Have a young man read it.

“We recommend that people marry those who are of the same racial background generally, and of somewhat the same economic and social and educational background (some of those are not an absolute necessity, but preferred), and above all, the same religious background, without question” (“Marriage and Divorce,” in *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1977], p. 144).

- Why is it so important for a couple to be worthy members of the Church? Ensure that the following points are discussed:

1. Exaltation cannot be attained without celestial marriage.
2. Religious values are powerful, and conflicting values can cause continual stress.
3. President Kimball quoted a survey showing that “only about one out of seven non-member spouses would be converted and baptized into the Church” (“Marriage and Divorce,” p. 152).
4. When one spouse is not converted to the gospel, the children are caught between the differing values of the parents.

- Why is it important for a couple to have a similar economic, educational, and cultural background?

Quotation and discussion

Explain that choosing a companion is a tremendous responsibility. President Kimball gave some principles that should guide our selection:

“In selecting a companion for life and for eternity, certainly the most careful planning and thinking and praying and fasting should be done to be sure that, of all the decisions, this one must not be wrong. In true marriage there must be a union of minds as well as of hearts. Emotions must not wholly determine decisions, but the mind and the heart, strengthened by fasting and prayer and serious consideration, will give one a maximum chance of marital happiness” (“Marriage and Divorce,” p. 144).

- What are the major points President Kimball emphasized? Help the young men bring out that he emphasized—

1. Careful planning and thinking.
2. Praying and fasting.
3. That emotions must not wholly determine decisions.

Scripture and chalkboard discussion

Explain that the Lord gave Oliver Cowdery specific advice on how to combine his efforts with inspiration when making an important decision. Have the young men read and mark Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9.

- How can we apply these concepts to choosing a companion?

On the chalkboard list the answers given in the passage of scripture and by the young men. Then explain the following steps that might be involved in finding and choosing an eternal companion:

1. Before your mission, learn to be friends with various young women. As you do that, think about the importance of having the same religion; similar ideals, values, and goals; and some of the same interests as the girl you may someday marry.
2. After your mission, study the issue in your mind. After dating a young woman seriously for a while, you might continue to get to know her under many circumstances, such as in spiritual situations, under stress, in happiness, in fatigue, and while working. Get to know her well. Then make a decision.
3. Finally, take your decision to the Lord for confirmation and ask for his help and guidance daily in this important matter. Alma 37:37 states, “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for thy good.”

Timing for Marriage

Story

Relate the following situation:

Tim was seventeen and Kathy was fifteen when they became married. Their life together became very serious when their baby was born with a heart defect. Tim had to work two jobs, and Kathy spent many anxious hours at the hospital during two different operations on their baby. Both were relieved when the doctor found that the operation would give their child a normal life. But he would require extra care for at least a year.

Kathy watched her friends going to school as she hung clothes on the line. All Tim could see were hospital and medical bills. The future for him didn't include basketball or other activities, at least not the near future.

Explain that Tim and Kathy chose to marry before they were prepared spiritually, emotionally, and practically. It takes a certain amount of experience before we know who we are and who would be best for us. That is why teenage marriages frequently fail.

Point out that Tim and Kathy were aware of the obvious things they were missing because of their early marriage. But they had only a vague idea of some of the other things they might not have a chance for or would only be able to do later in life under different, and possibly more difficult, circumstances.

Chalkboard discussion

- What experiences of value might Tim and Kathy miss or have difficulty in acquiring by having married so young?

Record the young men's responses on the chalkboard. These may include—

1. Mission.
 2. Further education.
 3. Further social and emotional development.
 4. Development of talents.
 5. Ability to acquire the desired livelihood.
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Finding the Right Person

Story

Relate the following situation:

After returning from his mission, Bill felt pressured by his friends to get married. He enrolled in college and began his studies. Although Bill was interested in pursuing his education, his worries about getting married began to interfere with his studies. Night after night, Bill was on his knees asking the Lord to bring the right girl into his life. His prayers did not seem to be answered.

- Is there such a thing as the "one and only" right mate for each of us?

Quotations and discussion

As a part of the discussion, you might assign two different young men to read the following quotations, the first by President Kimball and the other by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

" 'Soul mates' are a fiction and an illusion; and while every young man and young woman will seek with all diligence and prayerfulness to find a mate with whom life can be most compatible and beautiful, yet it is certain that almost any good man and any good woman can have happiness and a successful marriage if both are willing to pay the price" ("Marriage and Divorce," p. 146).

"While I am sure some young couples have some special guidance in getting together, I do not believe in predestined love. If you desire the inspiration of the Lord in this crucial decision, you must live the standards of the Church, and you must pray constantly for the wisdom to recognize those qualities upon which a successful union may be based. You must do the choosing, rather than to seek for some one-and-only so-called soul mate, chosen for you by someone else and waiting for you. You are to do the choosing. You must be wise beyond your years and humbly prayerful unless you choose amiss" (*Eternal Love* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], p. 11).

- What do President Kimball and Elder Packer mean by the term *soul mate*? (A person that is considered the one and only right person.)

Point out that young men should not be looking for *the* right person but *a* right person, similar to themselves in religion, values, goals, and ideals.

Being the Right Person

Adviser presentation

Explain that happiness in marriage consists largely in *being* the right person. A successful marriage depends on each person's willingness to sacrifice and to put someone else first. Marriage can be the greatest challenge we have to test our own Christian ideals. But it can bring the greatest rewards in companionship, love, and happiness.

Chalkboard discussion

- What can you do to prepare yourself to be a good marriage partner?

Write the young men's answers on the chalkboard, such as—

1. Developing a close relationship with the Lord.
 2. Learning to get along with people and being a good friend.
 3. Avoiding selfishness.
 4. Practicing kindness in the home now.
 5. Developing talents and abilities.
 6. Becoming educated or trained in order to be a good provider.
 7. Increasing in spirituality.
 8. Working to overcome weaknesses.
 9. Learning what charity is and seeking it through prayer and effort.
 10. Living righteously in all circumstances, not just when it's convenient.
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Conclusion

Challenge

Challenge the young men to establish a relationship with their Heavenly Father now that will allow them to someday receive personal inspiration in making a wise marriage choice. Remind them that when the time comes to consider marriage, they must continue to pray daily but not expect the Lord to do the work for them.

Challenge them to work now at becoming the kind of person they wish to marry. They should watch for daily opportunities to help and serve others and be close enough to the Lord to choose wisely in one of the most important decisions they will make.