

Conversation Starters for Key Terms in Matt. 5:27-32

Elementary Aged Children

SEXUAL IMMORALITY: Not honoring God and others with your body for your own pleasure

“God gave us bodies to serve him and others. We can use our hands to help around the house. We can warn others when we see trouble. These are good ways to use our bodies. Sometimes we may want to use our bodies in ways that feel good to us but dishonor God and are not good for other people. This could mean looking at pictures or people that we should not look at or touching people in ways that only a husband and wife should touch. A husband and wife promise each other and God that they would use their bodies to serve each other in ways they would not with other people. If they do break this promise, this is called sexual immorality. It is very hurtful to themselves, their spouse, other people, and God.”

LUST: Wanting to see someone naked who is not your spouse

“When mom and dad got married, they promised to be a couple. Mom and dad hold hands, kiss, and cuddle in bed together.” *See if they understand what things mom and dad do only with each other.* “All these things are very good, because they make mom and dad a better couple. They promise to do that only with each other when they get married. Does dad/mom kiss anyone like dad/mom?” *Give them space to say No!* “Because that would be wrong. Jesus says we should not want to do that.”

Some follow up questions, if appropriate:

- “Do you think looking at pictures of naked people is right? Does that mean you are being loving to that person? What should you do if you see it?”
 - *Give them a plan/words to tell you* - “If you see a picture of a naked person or if someone asks to see/take a picture of you naked, tell them NO and tell us what happened.”
- “Have you seen a picture of someone naked? It doesn’t mean you’re a bad person, but it is not loving to continue to look at it. You should go do something else or say no if someone shows you one the next time.”

ADULTERY: Breaking a promise to your spouse by being boyfriend/girlfriend to someone you’re not married to

“Has anyone promised you something and didn’t keep their promise? Adultery is also called betrayal, it’s the breaking of a promise, of the trust and the friendship you have”. *Point to Jesus’ love for them:* “Jesus is telling people in the Sermon on the Mount that you have to keep your promise, even when it’s hard. If you think you can’t keep a promise to your spouse, don’t make it. You have to think about it before you get married.”

Read Genesis 2:25. “This Bible verse is telling us that when we get married, our husband or wife will be the most important person to us. We’ll move out of our parents’ house, and we’ll start our own family with our new husband or wife and we promise to love them forever.” *Point to a recent wedding they attended or a movie scene they have recently watched.* “When we get married, we shouldn’t love anyone else in the way we love our husband/wife. If we like somebody else or have another girlfriend or boyfriend, that will really hurt our husband or wife’s feelings and we wouldn’t want to do that because we love them. If we do that, that is adultery.”

DIVORCE: Not being married anymore

“Divorce means that one or both people decide they don’t want to be married anymore. People sometimes choose to get divorced for any number of reasons, but in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is clear that divorce is not part of God’s plan. Breaking the marriage promise is serious. According to Jesus, there is only one circumstance when divorce is ever an option. That is when someone has already broken the promise by being unfaithful. There are many ways to be unfaithful in marriage. In Matt. 5:32, Jesus specifically states that sexual immorality is a way of being unfaithful. When two people get married, the Bible says they become one person (Gen. 2:24). They make a promise to stay together forever. When someone breaks that promise, it’s like ripping that new person in two, and it hurts terribly. This is why God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16) – because it hurts us. It’s important to remember, though, that God is also forgiving, and there is no sin that he cannot bring us back from.

Some people in Jesus' time thought you could divorce the person you married for any reason you wanted – even because you just got tired of him or her. Some people today think that too. But Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount that marriage is too special and too important for that. It's important to keep the promise you made even when it's hard, even if you don't always feel like it. And if you think you can't keep the promise, don't make it in the first place.”

Middle/High School

By the time our kids reach middle school, there is obviously less of a need to explain the meaning of these terms to them. Instead, it is helpful to engage with them around where the topic impacts their life, and to cast a vision for why doing things God's way is best. In order to do this, it is important not to simply focus on a list of 'don'ts', but to also cast a positive vision of God's design and purpose for this area of their lives.

- What does the marriage relationship between a man and a woman symbolize?
- What was God's plan and design for sexuality? Why does it work best in that context?
- Why is lust a problem? How does it hurt your relationship with people around you? How does it hurt you?
- In verse 29, Jesus advises us to remove the causes of temptation from our lives. What causes you to be tempted, and what steps can you take to remove those temptations?
- What does it mean to 'commit adultery in your heart?' Can people who aren't yet married commit adultery?
- Understanding what marriage symbolizes, why is adultery such a problem?
- Understanding what marriage symbolizes, why does Jesus counsel against divorce?
- Is Jesus making a concession for adultery as a reason for divorce?
- Do you think there are other reasons Jesus didn't mention in the passage that would make divorce a sad but correct choice?