

BIG IDEA

Provide your child a healthy concept of friendships, marriage, and other relationships in a society that constantly diminishes the value of these connections.



KEY SCRIPTURES

- *We are to love God and love others* (Luke 10:27).
- *We need relationships to help us* (Ecc. 4:9-12).
- *We are to keep peace with each other* (Eph. 4:1-3).
- *We are to serve others* (Phil. 2:3).
- *God gives us marriage* (Gen. 2:24).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR PRESCHOOLER IS ASKING

- Why do people get married?
- Who can get married?
- How do we treat people?



AT THIS AGE MOST PRESCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Begin to recognize different types of relationships.
- Begin to understand the right ways and wrong ways to treat people.
- Group themselves based on gender.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Preschoolers don't fully understand the concept of marriage, so they often have erroneous ideas, like "When I get older, I'm going to marry my mommy." Never respond in shock or disapproval to these types of statements—simply explain the truth.
- Children at this age often have "boyfriends" or "girlfriends" at school or church. Remember that preschoolers do not understand these relationships as adults do. It is best to respond neutrally to this information, not encouraging the behavior but not conveying distress about it either.
- At this stage, the most important relationships outside of the family are your child's peers. Stress often the importance of showing respect to others and including everyone. Encourage your child to reach out to new playmates. Teach them relational skills and how to connect with others.



COACHING TIPS

- Parents are the most effective example of a healthy relationship. Modeling respectful and loving relationship behavior with your spouse is of the utmost importance. How a child's parents communicate affects him, so explaining and modeling healthy ways to solve disagreements is important. Also showing him that marriage takes commitment and work will paint a more realistic picture.
- In addition to modeling healthy relationship behavior, draw attention to unhealthy relationship behavior as well. Reinforce good decisions in relationships and give examples of negative relationship choices, such as "Hitting or saying mean things to each other is never OK in a relationship" or "God planned for families to love one another." Other important topics to discuss might include appropriate versus inappropriate touch.
- Although preschoolers are too young to understand the metaphor of marriage as Christ and His bride, it is never too early to observe and discuss biblical relationships, both marriages and friendships. These examples can shape a sense of respect for others, building a firm foundation for healthy relationships in the future.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT DO YOU THINK MOMMY AND DADDY'S WEDDING LOOKED LIKE?** Begin the discussion on healthy relationships early. As they grow, add more information and details on the subject according to their age and understanding. Looking at wedding pictures, reading children's books, or even examining relationships in children's movies can be good starting places to open the discussion.
- **HOW DO YOU KNOW?** Ask your child how she knows her dad loves her mom or how she knows her grandparents love each other. Not only does this give you a glimpse into your child's mind, but it can open a dialogue about traits of a loving relationship or allow you opportunities to clarify any misconceptions.
- **WHAT DOES GOD SAY?** Starting with small, concrete examples, have a conversation with your child about some of God's truths. Mention that sometimes the world says things that go against God's truths, like what marriage is. Talk about the story of Adam and Eve as God's first example of marriage.



SAY OR PRAY

- God created Adam and Eve. They were the first husband and wife.
- God created humans to have relationships.
- God wants us to love others.
- God created people so we wouldn't be lonely.