



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Discussion can be led by reading a quote aloud (preferably twice), then asking one of the questions that follows it to spark discussion. There is no advance preparation needed.

WHAT IS MATURITY?

Self Knowledge + Self Mastery = Maturity
→ Becomes Self-Gift to Another

SESSION #1: MATURITY AND VIRTUE

“Christianity is not a behavior modification program. It’s not sin management. Christianity is the method, the life of Christ who’s come to set us free and transform us into the abundant life we so earnestly desire.”

-- Sr. Miriam James Heidland

1. A common definition of maturity in the world around us is “having it all together” and being a unique individual with a lot to offer. A common definition of maturity among Christians is to be a “good—or perfect—person”. How do you think this perspective has influenced society? How have these false definitions of maturity influenced your thinking? Why are these faulty definitions of maturity?
2. Christian maturity means that as we become more fully alive as adults, we become more like Christ, and becoming more like Christ makes us more of who we are. What does Christ’s life teach us about maturity?

“A man who governs his passions is master of the world. We must either command them, or be enslaved by them. It is better to be a hammer than an anvil.”

-- St. Dominic

3. Maturity was defined as self-knowledge and self-mastery. Why is self-knowledge the foundation of maturity? What distractions keep you from self-knowledge? How does knowledge of yourself make you

better at relationships?

4. How does self-mastery make you more capable of growing forward in your life? How can a lack of self-mastery hold you back from maturity?
5. How can you “govern” your passions/emotions rather than overriding them or rejecting them?
6. How can your emotions contribute to making you a better person?

“Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly.”

-- Francis de Sales

7. To become more fully who you are, why do you need virtues, or good habits? When have you felt most fully at home with yourself?
8. What virtues in your life help you to pay more attention to God and others? Who do you know who lives out those virtues well?
9. Examples: industriousness, patience, justice, courage, prudence, humility, obedience, moderation, tact, gratitude, etc.

SESSION #2: DATING AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

“Self-knowledge puts us on our knees and it is very necessary for love. For knowledge of God produces love and knowledge of self produces humility.”

-- Bl. Mother Teresa

1. How does self-knowledge help you make better dating decisions?

“A mature love...looks outward in the sense that it is based not on my feelings, but on the honest truth of the other person and on my commitment to the other person in self-giving love.”

-- Dr. Ed Sri

2. What does dating look like when it is self-centered? When it is other-centered?
3. What kind of activities should dating include to not only help you get to know each-other, but develop a strong, mature foundation?

“Even as you seek a virtuous, fair, and good spouse,...it is fitting that you

should be the same.”

-- St. Bernardine of Sienna

4. Would you want to date someone at the same level of maturity and virtue as yourself? Why or why not? Why would you make a great spouse and partner to Heaven?

“We don’t only want to be loved at “our best”; we want—in fact, we need—to be loved at our worst. We need to be loved in our nakedness: warts, blemishes, and all.”

-- Christopher West

5. Dating relationships tend to strip away the masks from areas of immaturity that have not yet been discovered. What are some healthy ways to react to experiencing this in yourself or in your significant other?
6. How do you show your significant other mercy and patience but challenge him/her to grow?

“Many would have avoided mistakes in their relationships if they had asked themselves, ‘When I see this red flag, why don’t I want to take this seriously?’”

-- Fr. Hillary Ike

7. What flaws or personal characteristics would you rather idealize or rationalize away rather than acknowledge when dating?
8. When might breaking off the relationship be the most healthy choice?→

SESSION #3: DATING AND SELF-MASTERY

“But in order to love, you must be free, for to love is to give your self to someone or something freely, completely, unconditionally, and without reservation. It is as if you could take the essence of your very self in your hands and give it to another person. Yet to give your self—to another person, to an endeavor, or to God—you must first possess your self. This possession of self is freedom. It is a prerequisite for love, and is attained only through discipline. This is why so very few relationships thrive in our

time...Without self-mastery, self-control, self-dominion, we are incapable of love.”

-- Matthew Kelly

1. What does it mean to “possess yourself”?
2. How does self-mastery bring freedom?
3. In what aspects of life is self-mastery most relevant?

“Being in love’—is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by (in Christian marriages) the grace which both parents ask, and receive, from God. They can have this love for each other even at those moments when they do not like each other; as you love yourself even when you do not like yourself.”

-- C.S. Lewis

4. What is the difference between being “in love” and being “in love and truth”? How can you make sure that your emotions do not dominate in forming the foundation of your relationship?
5. What is the difference between experiencing feelings of love and choosing to show love? What is the relationship between feeling love and choosing it?
6. When have you experienced this “choosing” love from someone when you did not feel deserving? What was your reaction?
7. What are some ways to grow in the ability to choose love?

“No! We cannot lead a double life. We cannot be like schizophrenics, if we want to be Christians. There is just one life, made of flesh and spirit. And it is this life which has to become, in both soul and body, holy and filled with God. We discover the invisible God in the most visible and material things. There is no other way. Either we learn to find our Lord in ordinary, everyday life, or else we shall never find Him.”

-- St. Josemaria Escriva

8. How is God present in your dating experiences? How does God want to draw you closer to Him through your dating life?

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MUST EMPTY
US OF SELF.
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COLUMBUS

Marriage and Family Life Office
familylife@columbuscatholic.org
614-241-2560