

IT'S LOVE, IT'S LOVE

by Patrick M. Mulcahy

PURPOSE

To help the youth examine boy-friends and girlfriends in view of religious beliefs and family values.

PREPARATION

In advance gather Bibles and pencils or felt-tip markers for each youth. Prepare the What I Can Offer and What I Look For worksheets in the "Meat" of the Meeting. Prepare refreshments.

This meeting can be done well with a small or large group. If you have a large group, split them into small groups of six to eight. Assign group leaders to facilitate discussion and explain activities.

Ask three of the group leaders to present the skit in the Opening section. The three should understand the message they are to convey, but should not be over prepared, as this skit is best when improvised.

OPENING

Present the following skit:

Setting: Your family and you are seated around the dinner table. Your parents are giving you numerous reasons you should break up with your steady date. You've heard them before: Your steady date doesn't dress well, gets poor grades, causes you to get poor grades, supposedly is using drugs, or is not of the same religion.

You are telling your parents why they are wrong and why you still should be allowed to date this individual. You add they are old-fashioned, you're old enough to make your own decisions and your date doesn't have to please them as long as you're happy.

Opening line: Parent says, "About this kid you're seeing, we think you should break it up."

Closing line: Parent shouts, "Fine. We can make it so you won't see this no-good for at least six months. You're grounded!"

In groups, discuss:

- Who was wrong?
- What, if anything, could have been done to make both the parents and the teenager happy?
- If you were the teenager, what would you have done or said?
- If you were the parents, what would you have done or said?

Each group should start thinking about a skit for the Closing and choose three different youth to act the roles. This skit, however, will present the opposite viewpoint—a positive discussion between parents and teenager.

THE "MEAT" OF THE MEETING

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. What does Paul say about love and dating? What should both partners be to each other? How should they treat each other?

Distribute the following What I Can Offer worksheets and give each person a few minutes to complete it.

What I Can Offer

Rate yourself from 1 (poorest) to 5 (best) on each of the following characteristics:

- Physical appearance
- Figure/physique
- Personality
- Intelligence
- Popularity
- Charm or charisma
- Clothing

Which of these are truly important to me?

What is my best feature?

What do I need to work on most?

Discuss the answers to the last two questions. Each person can pass on these if he or she is uncomfortable answering in front of others.

Distribute the What I Look For worksheets and give each person a few minutes to finish.

Ask the youth to discuss their selections and choice of ratings. Each group then should tell the large group the three main qualities its members look for in a date.

Return to the small groups and serve the refreshments. Use the refreshment break for the groups to work on the closing skits outlined in the Opening section.

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

Have each group present its skit.

What I Look For

What do you look for in a steady date? Check the qualities you most desire, but you can't have everything, so each quality costs you points. You only have 20 points, so choose carefully. You determine the amount of points each quality is worth.

- Is okay-looking
- Is good-looking
- Is a knockout!
- Has a good figure/physique
- Has a sense of humor
- Is extremely intelligent
- Is a good conversationalist
- Is popular
- Is athletic
- Is a good dresser
- Is well-liked by your friends
- His/her friends like you
- Your parents like him/her
- His/her parents like you
- Is honest
- Is not over aggressive
- Is considerate and polite
- Is wealthy
- Is genuinely caring
- Is of your religion

Close by praying the youth will choose partners they can genuinely love and who will help them draw closer to God and their parents.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Sex, Love or Infatuation: How Can I Really Know?, by Ray E. Short, Augsburg, 425 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, MN 55415.