

# BODIES THAT HONOUR

## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: SLEEPING MONSTERS

All of the teens except one – the assigned “monster hunter” – lie down on the floor in sleeping poses and pretend to sleep. They must be perfectly still. The monster hunter is not allowed to touch the sleeping monsters, but has to try to make them laugh. If a sleeping monster moves at all, then s/he is out for that round. The last monster still sleeping wins the round.

SMALL GROUPS WILL HAVE MORE ROUNDS, AND YOU MAY NEED TO TIME HOW LONG THE SLEEPING MONSTERS ARE ABLE TO KEEP FROM MOVING TO DETERMINE A WINNER IF YOU ONLY HAVE A GROUP OF TWO, WITH EACH TAKING TURNS BEING THE MONSTER HUNTER. FOR LARGER GROUPS, YOU MAY DESIGNATE MORE THAN ONE HUNTER AT A TIME.

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION: LUST VERSUS LOVE

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What do you think is the difference between lust and love?
- Share the following verse: **“For this is the will of God... that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honour”**. – 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

What do you think this means for an unmarried person? What do you think it means for a married person?

*A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):*

- *Lust is characterized by an overwhelming, selfish sexual desire. It can be like a sleeping monster: once woken, it can be hard to control. (See the repeating message of Song of Solomon – 2:7, 3:5, 8:4 – “Do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases”). It can prevent us from perceiving a person or situation clearly, and can affect decision-making in a way that bears similarities to an addict seeking drugs. On the other hand, married love involves sexual desire, but for believers, love means that this desire is checked by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and the character of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13.*
- *Believers who are unmarried are called to celibacy and those who are married are called to be faithful to their spouses. Both groups are called to be loving in all their relationships, an attitude that starts in the heart and mind. Today's lesson will explore these questions further, so allow your teens to share their thoughts, and then move into the lesson portion which will speak directly to these matters.*

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## THE LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 6+7

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND "DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 3: SPECIAL OCCASIONS" BY SUE CARELESS.)

There are two "honourable estates" that scripture teaches about: celibacy and holy matrimony. Both involve surrendering human sexuality to our Creator and allowing him to direct this aspect of our lives – for our good and his glory.

Those who marry are called to use their bodies to "honour" one another. We can all use our bodies to give a friend a hug of encouragement, or to make a family member a meal. In the marriage relationship, husbands and wives also honour one another with their bodies through sex. This aspect of a believing couple's relationship isn't separate from the rest of their relationship. It should be characterized by that same quality of love that is described in 1 Corinthians 13 – patient, kind, not insisting on its own way, and so on. It also means being *faithful* throughout life to this one person to whom the promises of matrimony have been made. For the unmarried, the honourable estate is celibacy, until and unless they marry. The single life is one that can be wholly focused on the broader Church community and the building of God's kingdom. It comes with its own blessings and challenges.

Human sexuality was made by God and formed part of the creation that he declared "very good". It has, however, been tarnished by the fall, by human disobedience. Our culture is filled with distractions, temptations and lies which seek to pull us away from these honourable estates. As is the case with all sin, the battle begins in the heart and mind. Believers must "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). In other words, "whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8). And being thus equipped, let Christ be honoured in your body (Philippians 1:20).

Refer to 1 Corinthians 6:13-20, 7:6-11, 32-35, 38-39.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9 – 7:40.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- According to this passage, what considerations should affect our decisions whether or not to marry?
- What are some of the specific directions given to married people? Why do you think they are included?
- What is the connection between God and the body of a believer?
- How do you think this view of the body should affect believers today?
- What should we do if we feel that we have *not* been honouring God with our bodies?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *St. Paul's teaching about glorifying God in the body leads into his address on Christian marriage, in which he responds in very practical terms to the different situations in which the Corinthian believers found themselves. His goal is "good order" and "undivided devotion to the Lord". For those who are already married, it means remaining married. For those who are single, it means honestly asking themselves whether they "burn with passion" and*

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struggle to “exercise self-control” (7:9), and if so, seeking marriage. Those who remain single can and should focus their concerns on “pleasing the Lord” (7:32). Both the married and the unmarried should regard their situation as a “gift from God” (7:7). Notice, too, Paul’s words about if a widow is seeking remarriage in 7:39: “she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord”. Those who do marry as believers should seek to marry a believing spouse, someone who will be a partner in living to honour God (2 Corinthians 6:14).

- Christian marriage is a gift (7:7) and an honourable estate (7:38). Those who are married ought to stay married, and not separate from one another (7:10-11), for the whole of their lives (7:39). It is also natural that husbands and wives desire to please one another (7:33-34), and believing couples should seek to lead orderly lives that honour the Lord together (7:35). The Corinthian Church struggled with sexual immorality and it was necessary for St. Paul to be very clear (as you can see in the broader passage) about what constituted this. As human beings we can be very good at rationalizing those things we want to justify, even if they are not God’s intention for us. Scripture speaks very clearly on many points, but perhaps especially on the areas of life in which we are most prone to sin.
- Chapter 6 alludes to the fact that God created our bodies. He is the one who knows the purpose for which they were made. The body was not “meant” for immorality (6:13). It goes on to point out that through the redemptive work of our Lord, our bodies have been made “members of Christ” (6:15), and were “bought with a price” (6:20). Moreover, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (16:19). Believers can and should glorify God with their bodies (16:20).
- If we see our bodies as made by God, then we should trust that our Creator knows what is best for us. If we believe that our bodies are made holy by Christ’s redemption, then we ought to treat them in a way that recognizes the great sacrifice that was required to free us from sin. Moreover, the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, should act as a further incentive for us in each moment to seek to honour God with our bodies.
- Not one of us is without sin, and this area of life is one in which many of us are particularly susceptible to sin. If we have not been honouring God in our bodies, then we should respond with repentance, knowing that our God is gracious and forgiving. If relationships have been harmed as a result of our sin, then we should seek to restore them. If ongoing temptation continues to be a source of trouble, then we should seek to limit the ways in which those temptations can effectively reach us. For example, this may mean being selective about the websites we visit, the conversations we participate in, the places we go, and the media messages that we take in.

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

**Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.**

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

**Spend some time prayerfully considering whether sexuality is an area of life that you struggle to surrender to God. Are your thoughts, words, and deeds “honourable”? If you need to take some time to repent, then do so, confident that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Close your time of reflection with the following prayer:**

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*O almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(THE COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, BCP PAGE 194)

## CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 6+7: YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN

**6** <sup>13</sup>The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. <sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” <sup>17</sup>But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup>Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body...

**7** <sup>6</sup>Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. <sup>7</sup>I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. <sup>8</sup>To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. <sup>9</sup>But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. <sup>10</sup>To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband <sup>11</sup>(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife...

<sup>32</sup>I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, <sup>34</sup>and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.

<sup>35</sup>I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord... <sup>38</sup>So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. <sup>39</sup>A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.