

Built for Keeps

For teens ages 12–14 · about 45–60 minutes · Moral Issues for Teens · Purity & Relationships · game **Covenant or Casual?** · built on **Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:6, and Hebrews 13:4**

Your students are years away from wedding vows — but they are not years away from the *ideas* that will shape those vows. Culture treats marriage like a trial run: swipe, move in, split when feelings fade. Many marriages in our culture end in divorce. Some students already live with the ache of parents who stopped keeping promises. This session teaches marriage the way God designed it — good, honorable, and built for life — so teens learn to think covenant, not casual, long before they stand at an altar.

Before you teach anything, pray.

Some students dream about marriage; some dread it because home was painful. Ask the Spirit for dignity without graphic detail and hope without minimizing God's standard. You are teaching God's good gift and lifelong covenant — not shaming kids from broken families or pressuring anyone toward early romance.

The heart of the lesson

Aside from becoming a Christian, marriage is probably the most important decision a person will make. Scripture calls it good (Proverbs 18:22) and honorable (Hebrews 13:4). It is not a social accessory — it is a covenant God joins together. Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6). That means marriage is for life, not until someone more interesting shows up.

Marriage is for life — choose like heaven depends on it.

God designed marriage with three divine purposes: **companionship** — "It is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18); **children** — raising godly offspring in a stable home (Genesis 1:28; Malachi 2:15); and **intimacy** — one man and one woman becoming one flesh within the marriage covenant (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 5:18–19; 1 Corinthians 7:3–5). Sex belongs inside that covenant, not outside it. Marriage is monogamous, heterosexual, and permanent by God's design.

Marriage also carries roles. Ephesians 5 paints a picture of sacrificial love: husbands lead with Christlike sacrifice; wives respond with respectful partnership; both raise children with patience and instruction (Ephesians 5:22–6:4; Colossians 3:18–21; 1 Peter 3:1–7). These roles are not about power games — they are about reflecting how Christ loved the church.

Look before you leap — marry someone who helps you get to heaven.

Because marriage lasts for life, choosing a spouse is spiritual, not only romantic. Marry a faithful Christian who fears the Lord (Psalm 128) — someone whose character, habits, and walk with God will help you keep marriage permanent, pure, and peaceful. Solomon's foreign wives turned his heart from God (1 Kings 11:1–8). Shared faith is not a preference; it is protection.

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). Divorce and remarriage outside biblical grounds bring adultery and judgment (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Hebrews 13:4). Teens need to hear this without despair: the point is not to crush hope but to teach that covenant thinking starts *now* — in how they date, who they admire, and what they normalize from culture.

GENESIS 2:24

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh**."

MATTHEW 19:6

"So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, **let not man separate**."

HEBREWS 13:4

"**Let marriage be held in honor among all**, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

How the session flows

1 Good gift, lifelong covenant. Hook with marriage as God's honorable design. ~7 min

2 ~12 min

Purpose, roles, choosing wisely. Teach companionship, children, intimacy, Ephesians 5, Christian spouse.

- 3 Play the game.** "Covenant or Casual?" two-team showdown. ~12–15 min

- 4 Quiet honesty.** Reference card, private reflection. ~5 min

- 5 Worksheet.** In class or take-home reinforcement. ~15 min

- 6 Close with courage.** Prayer and covenant thinking for the future. ~8 min

You'll want a screen for the game, printed reference cards and worksheets, pens, and a leader ready to discuss divorce and family pain with compassion — not crude jokes or pressure toward dating.

Leading it, part by part

Good gift, lifelong covenant

Ask: what do people your age think marriage is *for*? (Love, fun, status, kids, "when you're older," or "doesn't matter anymore.") Land the biblical frame: marriage is good and honorable — a covenant for life, not a casual experiment. Read Matthew 19:4–6. God joins; humans should not tear apart what He built.

Purpose, roles, choosing wisely

Cover God's three purposes — companionship, raising children, intimacy within marriage. Then Ephesians 5 in teen-friendly language: sacrificial leadership, respectful partnership, godly parenting. Emphasize **look before you leap**: character, faith, maturity, compatibility. The wiser choice is marrying in the Lord (Psalm 128) — someone who helps you follow Jesus, not drift from Him.

Address divorce honestly but carefully: God hates it (Malachi 2:16); culture normalizes it. Students from broken homes need grace, not blame. The lesson aim is forward-looking — teach covenant loyalty as the standard God set "from the beginning" (Matthew 19:8).

Play the game

Run "Covenant or Casual?" on screen — twelve to fifteen minutes. Rounds sort covenant thinking from casual attitudes, drill key verses, and work dignified scenarios (future choices, family influence, faith in a spouse). Bridge afterward: every card asked whether this view honors God's lifelong design or treats marriage casually.

Quiet honesty

Hand out the reference card. Promise plainly that nobody is collecting it. Give five quiet minutes for students to circle where they are and what they want to believe about marriage before the culture writes it for them. Protect the silence.

Worksheet

Verse fill-in, T/F, lookup, sort covenant vs. casual, one scenario, one "this week" action. The reference card addressed the heart; the worksheet reinforces Scripture on marriage, commitment, and family.

Close with courage

Pray for wisdom about future relationships — who they admire, what they normalize, how they treat parents' marriage with respect. Invite students to memorize the memorable line. Offer leaders for follow-up. Make covenant thinking sound wise, not old-fashioned.

Take it further

Discussion questions for small groups or a follow-up week:

- What does the Bible call marriage? (Proverbs 18:22; Hebrews 13:4)
- How long does marriage last? (Matthew 19:4–6; Romans 7:2–3; 1 Corinthians 7:39)
- What are God's purposes for marriage — companionship, children, intimacy? (Genesis 1–2; Proverbs 5:18–19)
- What roles do husband and wife have? (Ephesians 5:22–6:4; 1 Peter 3:1–7)
- Why is marrying a faithful Christian the wiser choice? (Psalm 128; 1 Kings 11:1–8)
- How does God view divorce and adultery? (Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:9; Hebrews 13:4)
- Who may properly marry according to Scripture? (1 Corinthians 7:1–2; Romans 7:2–3; Matthew 19:9)
- What should a teen start doing *now* to prepare for a covenant marriage someday?

A final word

Marriage is not the enemy of freedom — casual thinking is. Your students will hear "try it out," "everyone divorces," and "faith doesn't matter in love." Give them Scripture, give them the game, give them the card, and trust the Spirit to make "marriage is for life" sound not restrictive but *honoring* — and choosing a Christian spouse sound like the smartest decision they could make for earth and heaven.