

**“My friend isn’t 16 yet,**

**but she’s**

**dating  
and lies**

**about it.**

**How can I help her see  
that dating so early  
isn’t a good thing to do?”**

**I**t’s hard to watch someone you care about make poor choices. It may be even harder to get through to her, especially if she feels strongly enough about this guy that she’s willing to be dishonest about their relationship.

Since your friend is trying to hide her dating, she probably already knows that it isn’t right. Let your friend know that you love her and care for her, even if you don’t agree with her choices. Don’t do anything to encourage her behavior, like lying for her.

In *For the Strength of Youth* it says that “a true friend will encourage you to be your best self” (“Friends,” 12). Perhaps the best way to do this for your friend is by example—by being *your* best self. Stay true to your standards. Invite her to activities that show her that she can make friends and have fun without dating. Your friend will see the benefits of waiting to date.

Pray for her and ask Heavenly Father how you can best help her. If you feel that she would be receptive to it, try discussing her choice to date before turning 16. Tell her why *you* think youth are advised to date only after 16. Encourage her to pray about her current choice and where it may lead her. Bear your testimony that waiting to date will keep her safe and clean. **NE**

## Rules Protect Our Hearts



Try telling her that the rules the Church has aren’t just to keep her spiritually safe but also emotionally as well. The rules God and prophets of the Church have given us are there to protect our hearts.

*Ashley K., 18, Washington, USA*

## Be Thou an Example



I would tell my friend that dating before the age of 16 is wrong. We’re too young then and probably not mature enough yet either. Also, we have been promised blessings if we heed the words of the prophets. I would make sure to be obedient to this counsel myself so that I can be a good example to my friend.

*Luke J., 12, Arizona, USA*

## Pray for Help



Dating is meant to be a social tool to meet new people until you are old enough to go steady. You can try to explain to your friend that by dating before she is 16, she is missing out on fun social events. Each individual is best reached in different ways; so when in doubt, pray to your Heavenly Father and ask what He thinks you should do to help.

*Aimee S., 18, New York, USA*

## Wait to Date

Some of the youth in my own ward decided to date earlier than 16, even dating each other, and I have been guilty too. I have learned that dating early and dating steady aren’t worth it in the long run. Explain to your friend that Heavenly Father has given us standards for a reason and that He cares for our safety and happiness. It is hard to do the right thing sometimes,

especially when a lot of our peers are doing the opposite. But following the Lord's standards will be the best decision you will ever make, and you will never regret it.

*Elizabeth S., 17, Utah, USA*

## 16 Marks Maturity



Sixteen marks the start of the maturity of our reasoning ability. We choose more effectively as we get older. Be sure to point out

that dating before 16 opens up more possibility for immorality and violations to the standards of the Church.

*Derrick T., 18, Pangasinan, Philippines*

## The Prophet Knows



I would try to convince them that dating isn't a good idea through references to the gospel. The prophets have made it clear what they advise, and they have more experience than any teen. There are many problems that could arise from dating too early or with just one person. I would offer to go on a group date with them as soon as both of you are old enough. It would be safer, and the leaders of the Church know that.

*Kimberly M., 14, Montana, USA*

## A Helping Friend



I recently went through this with one of my best friends. I know how you feel; it is hard to watch someone you care for make mistakes, but

I gained a great testimony from it.

I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me

know how to help her. The next day when I saw her at school, I realized that by being her friend and being an example to her, I was helping her. I was there when she needed me, and after she stopped dating, she told me that she was grateful for my example and how it had helped her see what mistakes she was making in her own life. Be someone she can turn to and talk to about anything. Don't judge her—love her like Christ loves you.

*Myrissa G., 17, Montana, USA*

## Use Your Resources



First, try to set aside some time with your friend so you can talk to her about dating.

Before that time, say a prayer that she will understand your

advice. During the talk, introduce her to the section on dating in *For the Strength of Youth*, or give her a copy of the document "Dating FAQs" in the April 2010 *New Era*.

After showing it, bear your testimony.

*Zachary M., 13, Nebraska, USA*

*Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.*



## FAITH AND ROMANCE

"Do you want capability, safety, and security in dating and romance, in married life and eternity? Be a true

disciple of Jesus. Be a genuine, committed, word-and-deed Latter-day Saint. Believe that your faith has everything to do with your romance, because it does.

You separate dating from discipleship at your peril. Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, is the only lamp by which you can successfully see the path of love and happiness. How should I love thee? As He does, for that way 'never faileth.' "

**Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "How Do I Love Thee?" *New Era*, Oct. 2003, 8.**

## NEXT QUESTION

"How do I develop my talents without showing off?"

Send your answer and photo by June 15, 2011.

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org), click "Submit Your Material," and then select "Questions and Answers."

You can also write to us at [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

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Responses may be edited for length or clarity.