

MAKING FRIENDS THROUGH DATING

Appropriate dating can be a great way for your older teens to enjoy the company of other young men and young women. Dating can help them learn better social skills, make friends, and have fun (see *For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 4–5). In this month’s *New Era*, Larry M. Gibson, first counselor in the Young Men general presidency, answers questions about dating.

For instance, he explains: “Although some have defined *dating* as ‘courting,’ dating in the Church among youth does not imply that they are ‘going steady’ or can date no others. By Church standards, dating is intended to be a chance for social relationships that can establish many friendships.”

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- With your teen, read Brother Gibson’s article on pages 16–17 of this month’s *New Era*. Ask your child if he or she has any other dating questions. Use *For the Strength of Youth* to find the answers.
- Discuss why it’s important to “choose to date only those who have high moral standards and in whose company you can maintain your standards” (*For the Strength of Youth*, 4). Consider role-playing what your children could say if someone who doesn’t share their standards asks them on a date.
- Consider holding a family home evening on dating. The April 2010 *New Era* can be a good resource.

- Go to youth.lds.org and click on “For the Strength of Youth” in the youth menu. Then choose “Dating.” There you will find scripture references on this topic, videos (see, for example, “A Brand New Year 2010: Dating” and “Mormonad: Wish You Were Here”), questions and answers, and articles, including talks by General Authorities.

Suggestions for Teaching Children

Although children don’t date, you can prepare your children for dating by teaching them gospel standards, providing ways for them to make good friends, and preparing them to choose the right in the face of peer pressure. Consider these ideas:

- As a family, you could read “Decide Right Now” (*Friend*, Mar. 2012, 2–3), “A True Friend” (*Friend*, June 2012, 44–45), or “Take the Lead!” (*Friend*, Sept. 2012, 24–25) and talk about choosing the right even when there is pressure to make another decision.
- Talk to your child about what decisions he or she makes at school or with friends each day. Sometimes even children experience pressure to date or to label others as girlfriends or boyfriends. As appropriate, discuss the dating standards of the Church and any additional family guidelines you may have. ■



SCRIPTURES RELATED TO DATING

1 Corinthians 11:11
 Doctrine and Covenants 46:33