Look Closer:
Working for Rachel

At a Glance:



The New Church teaches what many instinctively believe when they fall in love: that true marriage love lasts forever. However there are forces at work that are actively eroding the ideals of marriage love, e.g. movies, TV and people's choices about how they act. This activity is designed to facilitate a discussion of constructive ways to combat these forces and also to help students develop qualities in themselves that will prepare them for a happy marriage in their future.

Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- *Working for Rachel in Our Lives* student page
- pen or pencil

Directions:

1. Today we will be talking about marriage. The Heavenly Doctrine reveals many new truths about marriage. Here are some examples: true married love lasts forever; the Lord creates a partner for each person; as we grow closer to the Lord in our spiritual lives we can experience increasing joy and delight in marriage; cultivating a marriage between true ideas and good loves and actions in our own lives is the best preparation for marriage with another person.
2. The story of Jacob meeting Rachel pictures a beautiful ideal of two people meeting and falling in love. But the story does not end there. Jacob has to work for seven years before he can marry Rachel.
3. Although marriage may seem far away, developing a vision for the marriage you want can help you identify and work on the kinds of qualities you would like your future married partner to have.
4. Part of knowing what you want involves recognizing forces that actively work against marriage love, even trying to destroy it. We may experience these forces in advertising, pictures, movies, jokes, attitudes, etc. Part of our "working for Rachel"—preparing for marriage—involves deciding what to do about these forces when we encounter them.
5. Distribute *Working for Rachel in Our Lives* student page and pens or pencils.
6. Read the top of the page aloud, then invite students to complete the table.
7. Choose some of the topics on the next page for a discussion.

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Look Closer: Working for Rachel continued

Discussion Topics:

1. Think of people who have stood up for what they believe and how that has changed the world, e.g. Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela. Have you known someone who stood up for what they believed in?
2. What difference could you make if you stood up for what you believe?
3. In what ways is it possible to be friends with people who do not share your marriage values? In what ways is friendship not possible?
4. Everyone makes mistakes at times. Recognizing mistakes can sometimes be a turning point for something new and good. Is it ever too late to make a fresh start or choose new habits?
5. Are there other personal qualities you might want to add to the table on the student page?
6. How might a belief in eternal marriage affect the way you treat members of the opposite sex?
7. Does the idea that you can start working on your marriage now make sense?

Working for Rachel in Our Lives

A union with a partner of a similar and compatible nature may be provided on earth when people from their youth love, desire, and seek from the Lord a lawful and lovely partnership with one and who reject wandering lusts as an offense to the nostrils (see *Conjugial Love* 49).

When married partners love each other tenderly, they think of eternity in regard to the marriage covenant (*Conjugial Love* 216:4).

Jacob's meeting with Rachel in the field pictures a beautiful marriage relationship that many long for. We can prepare for this kind of relationship by working to develop the qualities of a good partner in ourselves and by turning away from negative messages which have the power to erode our desire to look toward and honor marriage.

The following is a list of steps you can take today to work for your future marriage. Read through the entire list and then put a check mark next to three steps you would like to set as goals for yourself. If some of these steps are already habits, try committing to something new.

Steps You Can Take

	Look for mentors.		Choose friends who support your ideals and goals.		Avoid situations that might be enabling someone to take advantage of you.
	Work on qualities in yourself that you will be looking for in a partner, e.g. the moral virtues of honesty, chastity, loyalty, compassion, etc.		Improve your mind through education so that you can become a more informed and useful partner.		Practice kindness and communication skills with family and friends who are in your life now.
	Turn off inappropriate movies or TV.		Read the Word.		Be honest with yourself and others.
	Avoid influences and actions that might degrade the ideals of marriage.		Break off potentially harmful friendships.		Trust the Lord and follow His leading.
	Listen to your conscience—it's the Lord talking.		Avoid listening to or repeating dirty jokes.		Show respect for the opposite sex.
	Work on friendships with both sexes in preparation for a friendship with your married partner.		Learn practical skills that will help make your future home run more smoothly.		Get to know who you are and what you value.
	Avoid situations in which you may feel tempted to do things you may later regret.		Look away from pictures that degrade marriage.		Dress modestly to protect both yourself and others who look at you.