Commandment 6: Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

"You shall not commit adultery"

Exodus 20:14; Genesis 39:6-23

Goal: This lesson teaches the sixth commandment through the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Joseph was a handsome man. Potiphar's wife saw him and wanted him to lie with her. Joseph refused to commit adultery, but Potiphar's wife falsely accused him. Joseph was put in prison.

Process: Choose activities for the 4 parts of the lesson from the chart below. For multi-aged groups, teach the lesson to the entire group and select activities that suit your students. Online Extras provide additional activity choices.

Lesson Overview

Lesson Parts	Activities	Materials Given	Supplies Needed
1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)	All Ages *The Sixth Commandment*	introduction p. 2	
2. Readings & Questions (5-7 minutes)	All Ages select readings for your group	readings pp. 2-3 questions p. 4 talk-about picture p. 5	Bible for ages 11-14
3. Activities choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes) *Note*: Activity ages are approximate. Choose activities that will work for your group.	Ages 3-6 *Joseph Says No* moving project	directions p. 6 ***Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*** p. 7 *Joseph Runs Away* p. 8	scissors, stapler, crayons or markers, good quality facial tissue or small piece of fabric
	Ages 7-10 *Clothing Our Minds for Marriage* paper doll activity	directions p. 9 *Words for Marriage* p. 10 *Marriage Figures and Clothing* pp. 11-16	scissors, glue or tape, pens or pencils *optional*: colored pencils or markers
	Ages 11-14 *Healthy Habits* activity & discussion	directions p. 17 *Healthy Habits 1 & 2* pp. 18-19	pens or pencils
	Ages 3-10 picture to color	***Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*** p. 20	crayons or markers
4. Closing & Recitation (2-3 minutes)	All Ages wrap-up	*Recitation Slips* p. 21	scissors or paper cutter
Online Extras	All Ages additional activities	online links p. 21	various

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Introduction: The Sixth Commandment

The sixth commandment is the second commandment about loving our neighbor. The Lord tells us,

6. You shall not commit adultery. Exodus 20:14

The sixth commandment says we should not commit adultery. This means we are not to say or do anything that hurts marriage. Instead, we are to love and protect marriage.

- The Lord tells us that marriage between one man and one woman is the "precious treasure" of human life and of heaven. The Writings for the New Church call this special love, *conjugial love* or *marriage love* or sometimes *married love*.
- Adultery means mixing things that are pure and clean with things that are not clean. Think about a glass of fresh water. Would you drink that? Now, what if there was mud in the water. Would you drink that?
- When the beautiful idea of marriage between a man and a woman is mixed with ideas and loves that are not clean, we say a marriage has been "adulterated".

Our story today is from Genesis. It is about Joseph, a man who was sold into slavery in Egypt. Joseph was a good man. In fact, he did such a good job that his master, Potiphar, gave him a lot of responsibility. However, Potiphar's wife was jealous of Joseph and tried to get him to do something that would hurt her marriage.

Reading Ages 3-**6: Joseph and Potiphar's Wife**

This is a short retelling of the story for young children. To tell the story in your own words using a picture, see the talk-about picture on p. 5.

Potiphar guarded Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was a powerful ruler, so Potiphar's job was very important. Potiphar trusted his slave, Joseph, and put Joseph in charge of his house. The Lord blessed Potiphar's house because Joseph was in charge, and Joseph loved the Lord.

Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to do something that would hurt her marriage, but Joseph would not do it. Her marriage was a gift from the Lord. Joseph knew that if he hurt her marriage he would be hurting the Lord.

One day, Potiphar's wife grabbed onto an outer part of Joseph's clothing. Joseph ran away, but Potiphar's wife held on tightly. Joseph's garment came off in her hand. Later, Potiphar's wife showed Joseph's outer garment to her husband. She told a lie about what happened to get Joseph in trouble.

Potiphar listened to his wife. He put Joseph in prison, but Joseph had not done anything wrong. The Lord loved Joseph and took care of him, even in prison. Eventually, Joseph was freed from prison and put in charge of the whole country of Egypt.

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Reading Ages 7-10: Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

New Church Concept
Teacher Background

"Joinings together of good and truth, and of truth and good, are described in the Word by means of marriages, and therefore unlawful joinings together are described by means of liaisons with prostitutes.

Here therefore the joining of unspiritual natural truth to spiritual natural good is described by…[Potiphar's] wife's wanting to lie with him. No joining together of these exists internally, only externally, where they appear to be joined together but in fact have no more than a mere association with each other.

This also is the reason why it says that she took hold of him by his garment and that he left his garment in her hand; for in the internal sense 'a garment' means what is external, by means of which the two only appear to be joined, that is, they have no more than a mere association with each other."

Arcana Coelestia 4989

A retelling of the story for children.

Joseph was a young man who lived far away from his home and family because he had been sold into slavery. Joseph lived in Egypt, and was owned by a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, ruled a great and powerful country. Potiphar's job was to protect Pharaoh's life. This job was very important, so it is likely that Potiphar had a large house and land with many servants and possessions.

The Lord was with Joseph, so everything that he did went very well. Potiphar noticed this, and he trusted Joseph. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his entire house and everything that he had. Joseph was a wise manager and took good care of everything.

Joseph was young and handsome. Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to do something selfish that would hurt her marriage. She wanted him to help her break the commandment against adultery, but Joseph said "no". Joseph loved marriage, and he knew the Lord would want him to love and protect Potiphar's marriage. Potiphar's wife asked him again and again, but Joseph would not do what she wanted.

One day, when no one else was near, Potiphar's wife caught hold of Joseph's outer garment. He knew what she wanted, so he ran away. But as he ran, his outer garment was left in her hand.

Potiphar's wife was angry. She called out to people in the house. She showed them Joseph's garment. Then she told lies. She said Joseph had threatened to hurt her and that she had screamed, so he ran away. Potiphar's wife kept Joseph's clothing with her all day. She waited until her husband came home. Then she told Potiphar the same lie.

When Potiphar heard her story, he became angry. He believed his wife. So he fetched Joseph and put him in a prison.

But the Lord was with Joseph even though he was shut away in prison. The keeper of the prison could see that and put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. The Lord made Joseph prosper, and eventually he was freed from prison and put in charge of the whole country of Egypt, with only Pharaoh above him.

Reading Ages 11-14: Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

Read Genesis 39:6-23 or use the retelling above.

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Questions Ages 3-6

1. What job did Potiphar do? (He guarded the king of Egypt. He was in charge of keeping Pharaoh safe.)
2. Joseph loved the Lord. But someone tried to make Joseph do something wrong. Who was it? (Potiphar's wife.)
3. Potiphar's wife had wrong thoughts about marriage, but Joseph would not listen to her. Who did Joseph listen to? (He listened to the Lord. He would not do what he knew the Lord said was wrong.)
4. What did Potiphar's wife do? (She took Joseph's garment.)
5. What did Potiphar do when he heard his wife's story? (He put Joseph in prison.)

Questions Ages 7-10

1. Why did everything that Joseph did go so well? (Because Joseph loved and obeyed the Lord.)
2. What responsibilities did Potiphar give Joseph? (Potiphar trusted Joseph and gave him responsibility over his household and everything he had.)
3. Potiphar's wife liked Joseph and tried to make him do something that would hurt her marriage. What did Joseph tell her? (Joseph said he would not hurt her marriage because it was a sin against God.)
4. What is a sin? (A sin means you know something is wrong but do it anyway.)
5. How did Potiphar feel when his wife lied about Joseph? (Potiphar felt angry and put Joseph in prison.)
6. Joseph continued to love the Lord. What happened to him in prison? (He prospered there, too! He was put in charge of all the other prisoners. Eventually, he was released from prison and put in charge of all of Egypt.)

Questions Ages 11-14

1. This story is about Joseph resisting something he knew was wrong. Have you ever resisted doing something that you knew you should not do?
2. The Writings for the New Church teach that people who are in married love can have innocence and peace. Do you know what the quality of innocence is? (Hint: think of the way a very sweet baby makes you feel! Innocence means following the Lord. If we follow the Lord, then we can have innocence.)
3. Because marriage is so precious, adultery is a particular kind of wrong. It is taking something holy, pure and clean and making it something shameful. As well as physical actions, this can mean filling our minds with immoral thoughts. Such thoughts may come into our minds from evil spirits, but we should try to get rid of them immediately. At what point did Joseph say "no" to Potiphar's wife? (He would not even think about doing what was wrong. As soon as he heard her, he told her "no".)
4. Sometimes we can tell very quickly that something is wrong. We perceive it right away. The Writings for the New Church tell us that perception is represented by the sense of smell. They also tell us that hell smells terrible because of the rotten things people say and do there (see *Conjugial Love* 431.) In what ways can we "smell" bad ideas? What do we need to know to have a spiritual sense of "smell"?
5. On the other hand, heaven smells wonderful! True ideas from the Lord and good loves, such as marriage love smell fragrant. What kinds of sweet smells are heavenly to you?

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Ages 3-6: Joseph Says No

Materials Needed

copies of *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* and *Joseph Runs Away* pages for each child, crayons or markers, scissors, stapler or tape, good quality facial tissue or small piece of fabric

Prepare in Advance

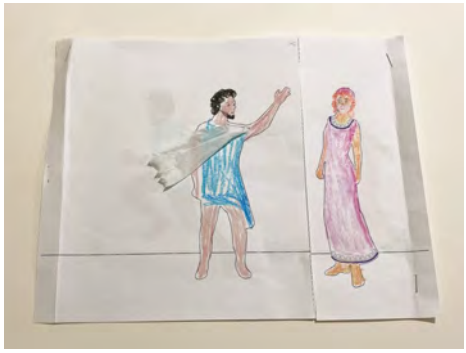
Print project pages. Gather supplies including good quality facial tissue or fabric. Cut tissue/fabric into strips 1" (5cm) long. Cut along the dark line on Joseph's shoulder on the *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* pages. Depending on children's ages, you may wish to cut along the dark line between the figures as well.

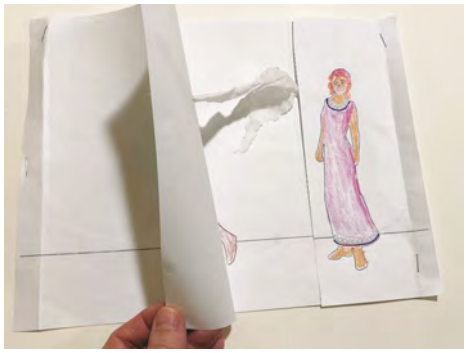
New Church Concept

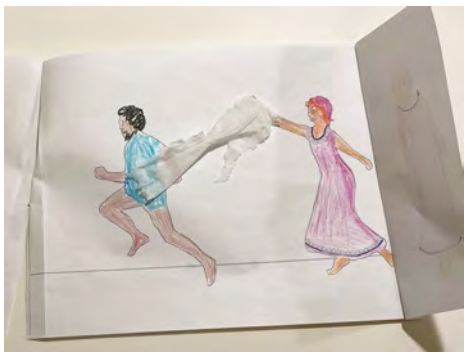
Teacher Background

Marriages are the seminaries of the human race and therefore the seminaries of the heavenly kingdom and for that reason must not on any account be violated but be held sacred. Adultery is unspeakable from the fact that conjugial love comes down from the Lord by way of heaven, and that from that love, as from a parent, mutual love is derived, which is the foundation on which heaven rests." See *Arcana Coelestia* 2733.2

Potiphar's wife had wrong thoughts about marriage. As she took hold of Joseph's outer garment, he ran away. He did not want to hurt her marriage. Children will create a moving picture to re-enact Joseph running away from Potiphar's wife and leaving his garment in her hand.







1. Give children a copy of *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* and *Joseph Runs Away* pages and crayons or markers. Invite children to color the pictures.
2. Staple *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* on top of *Joseph Runs Away* at the left and right edges of the page. If pages are not pre-cut, slip scissors between the two pages and cut just the *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* page along the dark line between the figures.
3. Fold the two sides of *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* back so that the page opens easily to reveal Joseph running away.
4. Staple a strip of tissue or fabric to Potiphar's wife on the dark line just below her hand on the *Joseph Runs Away* page. This is Joseph's outer garment.
5. To re-enact the story, carefully thread the 'outer garment' attached to the woman's hand through the slit precut in Joseph's shoulder on the *Joseph and Potiphar's* Wife page. Joseph is now wearing an "outer garment".
6. Re-enact Joseph running away by opening the page carefully. Joseph will leave his garment in Potiphar's wife's hand as the tissue is pulled back through the slit in Joseph's shoulder.
7. Remind the children that like Joseph, we can run away when someone tries to get us to do something that is against the Ten Commandments.

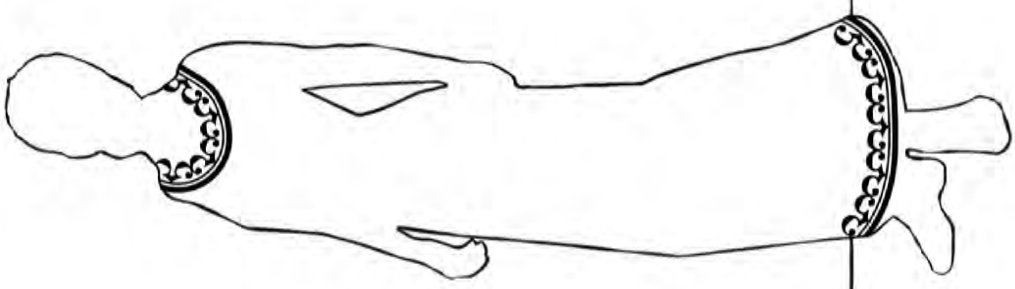
New Church Concept

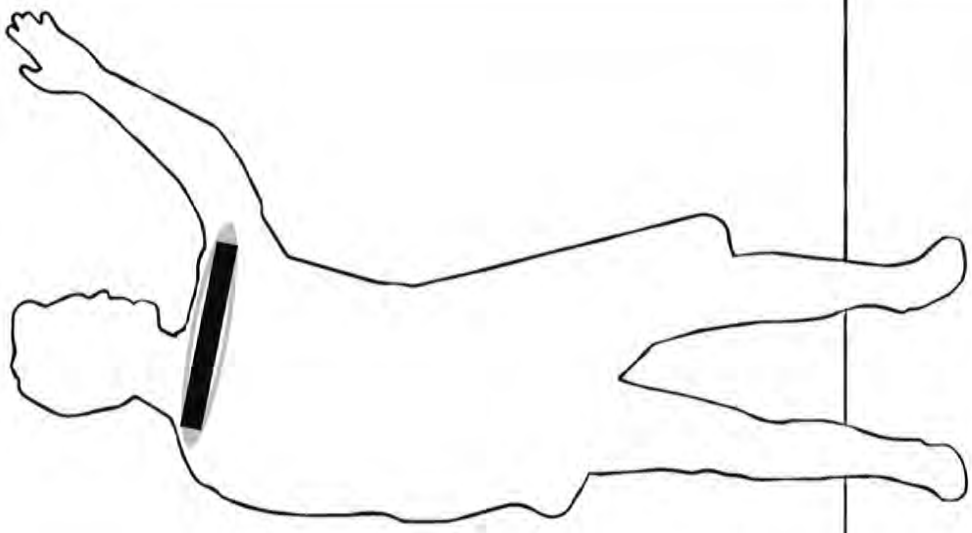
Teacher Background

"In the spiritual meaning, 'committing adultery' refers to contaminating the good things taught by the Word and falsifying its truths." *True Christianity* 314

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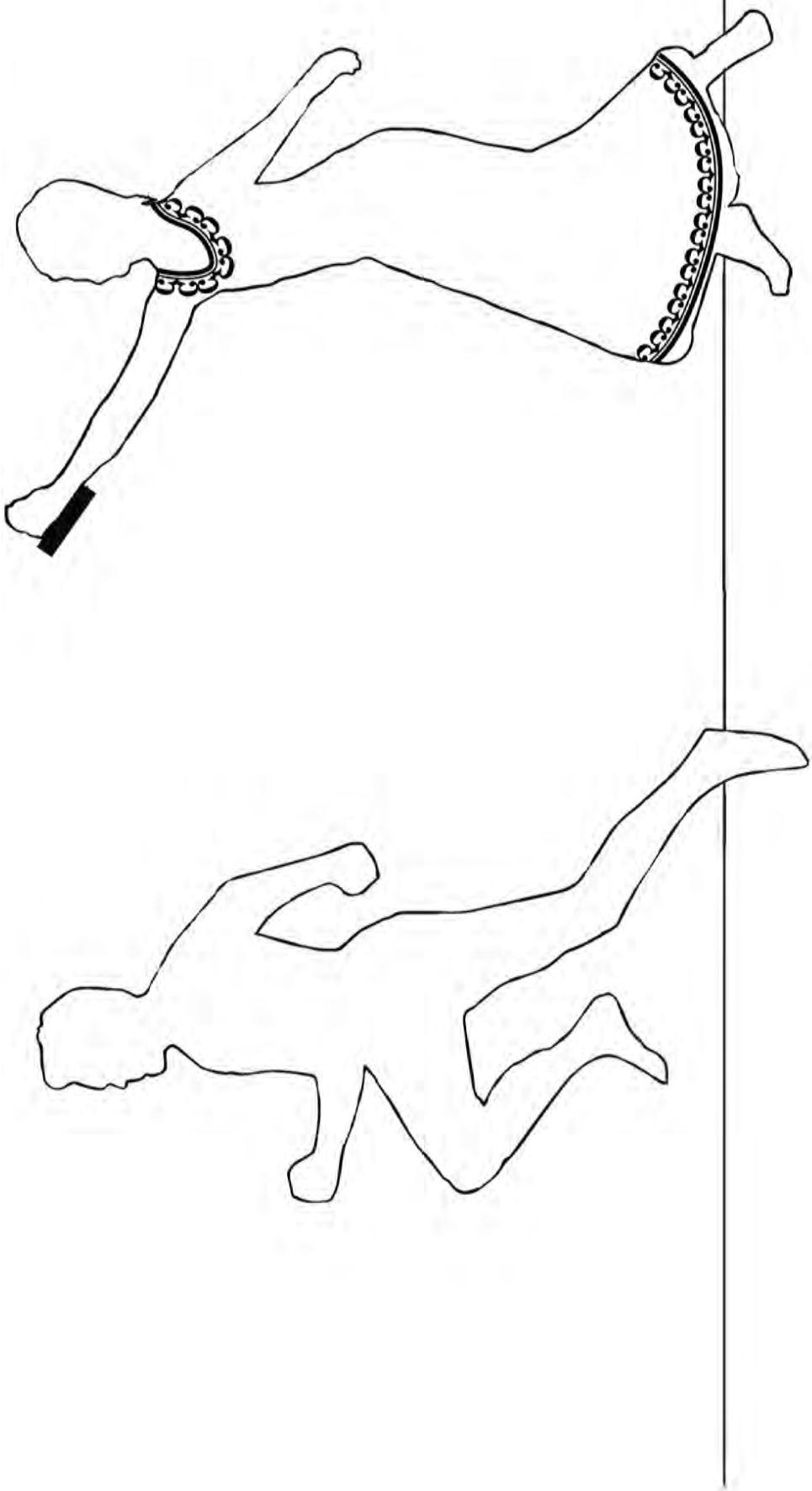
Joseph and Potiphar's Wife





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Joseph Runs Away



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Ages 7-10: Clothing Our Minds for Marriage

Materials Needed for Each Student

Words for Marriage (3 per page), *Marriage Figures and Clothing*, scissors, glue, pens or pencils

Prepare in Advance

Print and gather materials. Cut apart copies of the *Words for Marriage*.

New Church Concept
Teacher Background

The reason why Divine Truths are meant by clothing generally lies in things in the next life that are representative. All there, both angels and spirits, appear clothed in garments, each one in garments that accord with their truths. Those in possession of truths that are authentic and come from God appear clothed in brilliantly white garments; others appear in others different from these. In short, the character of their understanding is what is revealed and represented by their garments. See *Arcana Coelestia* 10536

Everything in the Word contains a marriage of good and truth. Because of this, to commit sexual immorality means, symbolically, to adulterate the goods of the Word and falsify its truths. See *Apocalypse Revealed* 134



The New Church teaches that clothing in the Word represents ideas that clothe our minds. For example, the Lord says that to care for His people, "He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head" (Isaiah 59:17). But for wicked people who want to hurt and shame others, "Pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment" (Psalm 73:6). This activity prompts children to think about ideas they can "put on" to prepare for marriage.

1. How does clothing help us? (It protects from heat and cold, keeps us clean, gives us privacy, etc.) Some people wear uniforms. What might a uniform tell us? (Uniforms show things people do, e.g. police, or doctor.) Sometimes people wear very special clothes, for example, wedding clothes. Why do people wear special clothes for weddings? (to show how important weddings are)
2. In the spiritual world people's clothing shows what they are thinking. Angels who love the Lord and others appear in beautiful clothes. But evil spirits who love themselves and worldly things appear in rags. We can prepare for heaven by "clothing" our minds with beautiful ideas from the Lord's Word.
3. In our story, Potiphar's wife took hold of Joseph's garment. Symbolically, she tried to take away from him the truth that protecting marriage is important. But Joseph knew it was wrong and ran away.
4. The most special "clothing" we can choose for our future wedding are the ideas that will clothe our minds, especially the ways we should treat the person we will marry.
5. Hand out the *Words for Marriage.* Talk about the words. Explain in simple terms what they mean. Some words are from the marriage ceremony in the General Church's *Liturgy*. For example, "cherish" means to care for someone lovingly. Ask students which words they would like to "wear" in their future marriage.
6. Hand out the *Marriage Figures and Clothing*. Students will cut out the rectangle around a figure and then clothe it by cutting out pieces of clothing that show the ways in which they want to honor marriage and gluing them onto the figure. Students can either write selected *Words for Marriage* beside the pieces of clothing, or cut out and glue words around the figures.
7. If time allows, students can make one figure showing qualities they want to have and the other showing qualities they hope for in their future spouse.

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Words for Marriage:

love	respect	be kind
honor	support	stick-together
comfort	encourage	listen
cherish	share	confide
be faithful	trust	be a true friend

Words for Marriage:

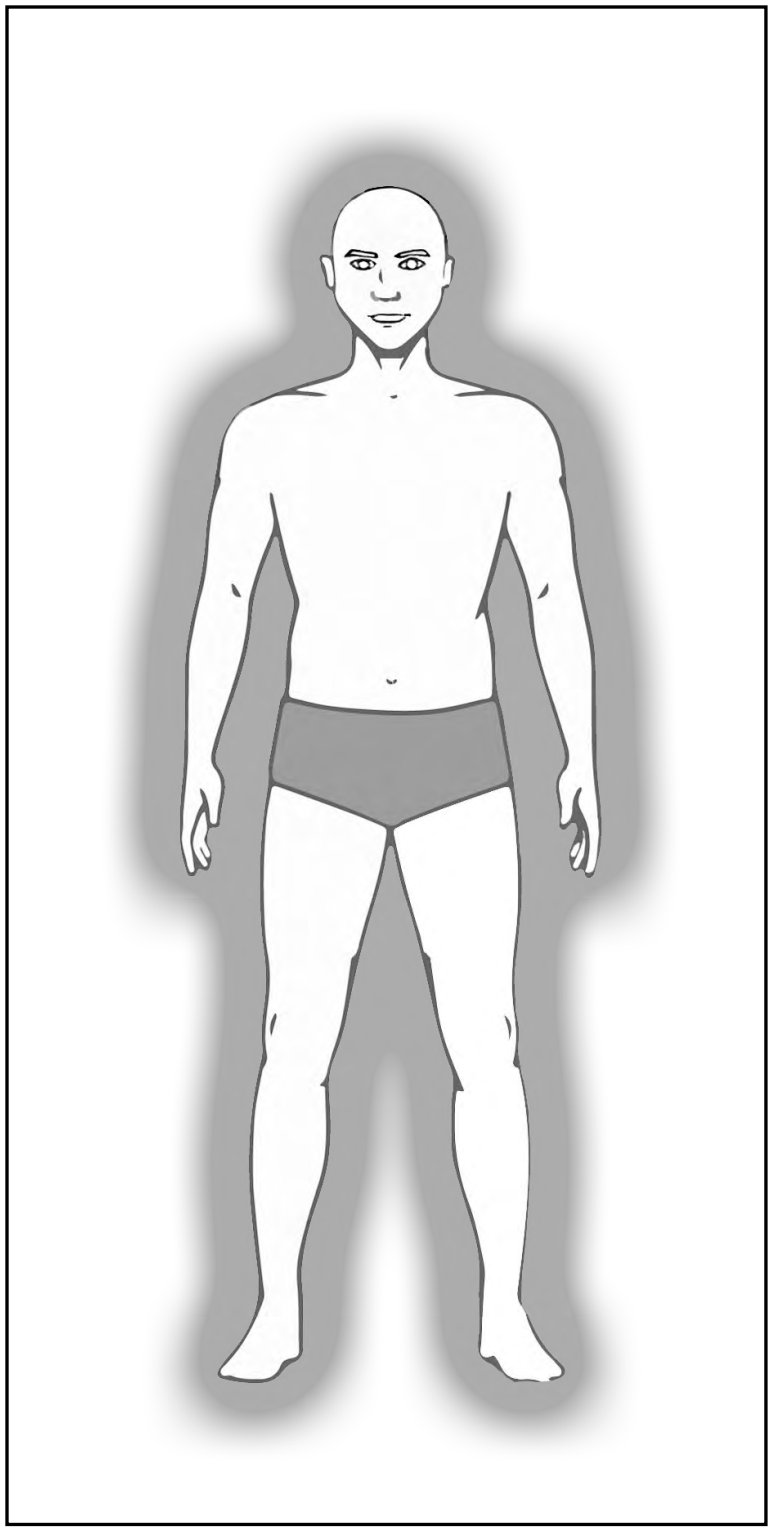
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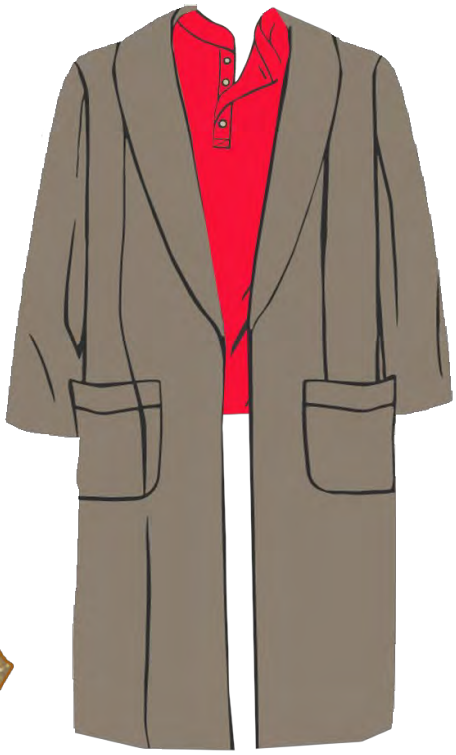
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Marriage Figures and Clothing

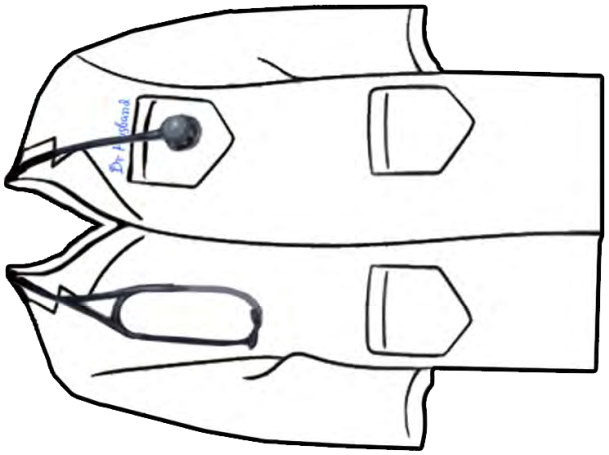
















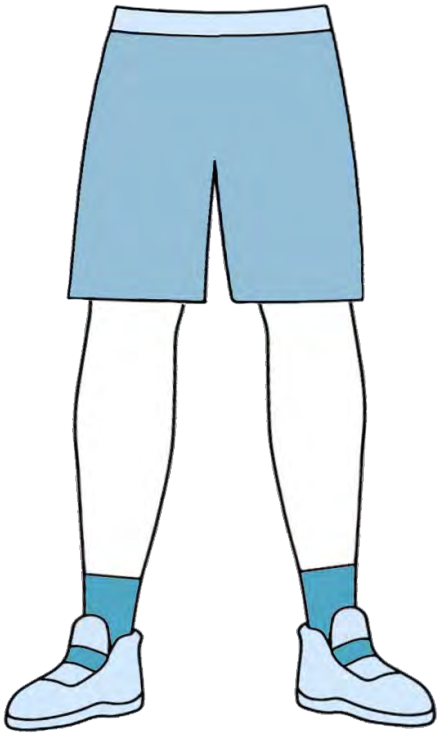






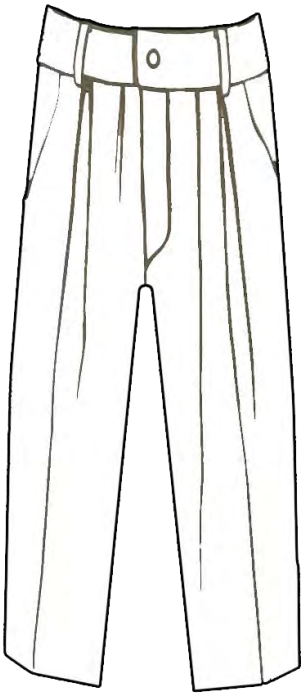
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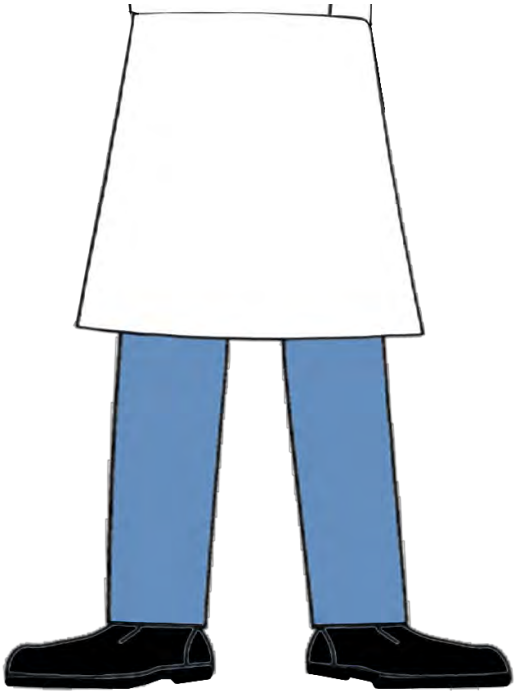
Marriage Figures and Clothing

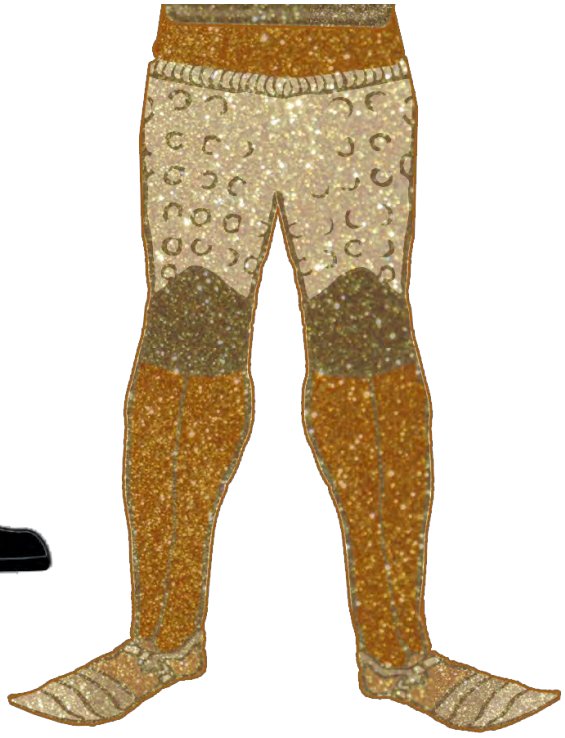












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Marriage Figures and Clothing







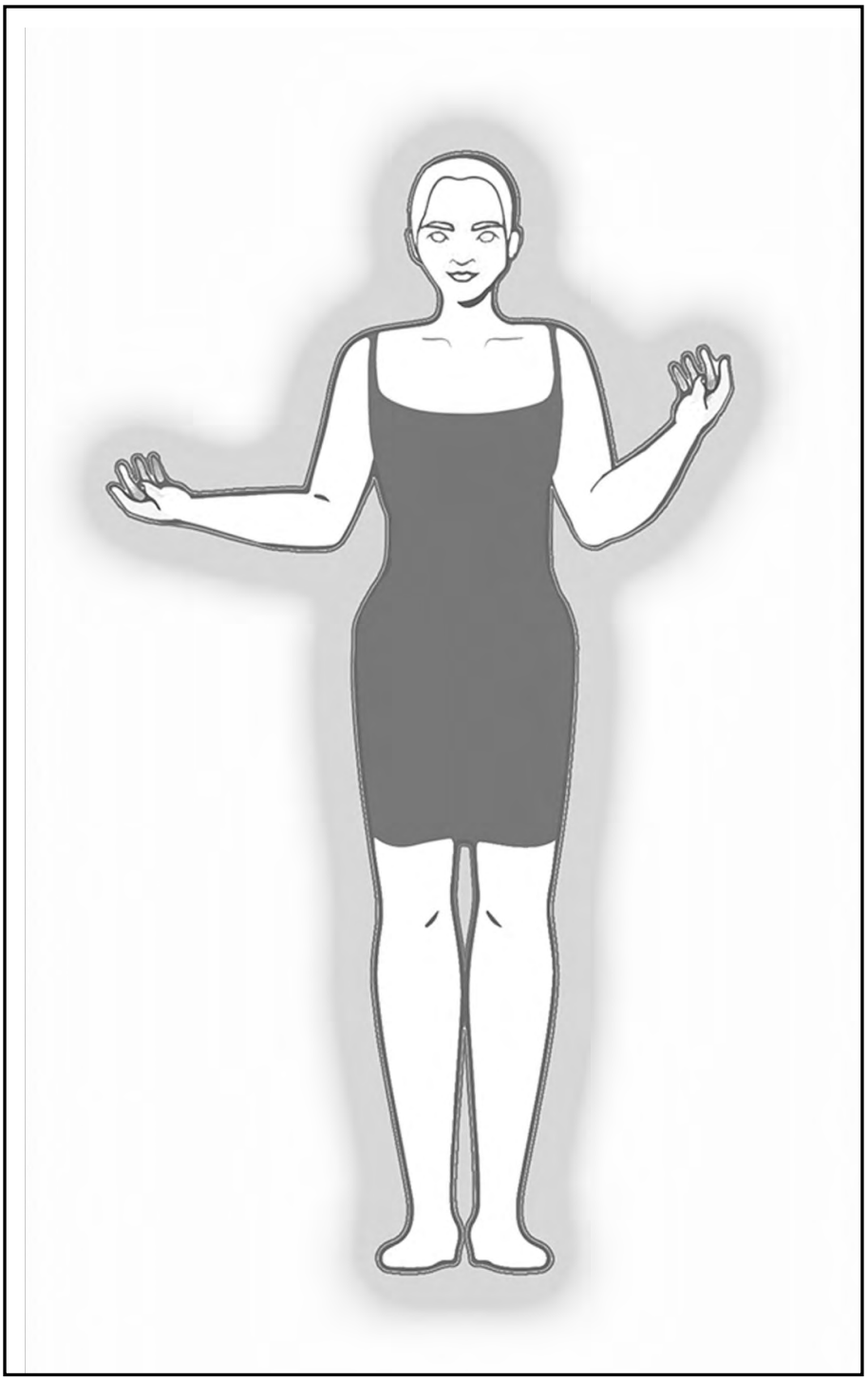




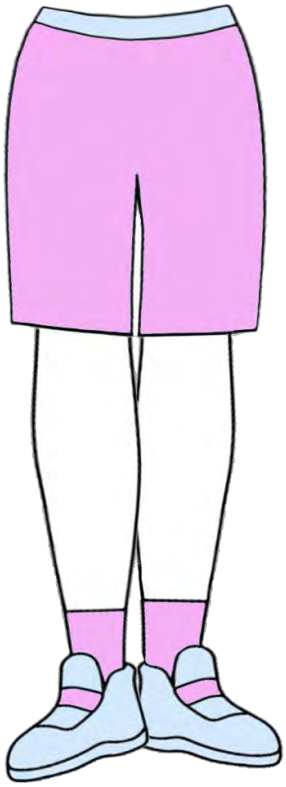


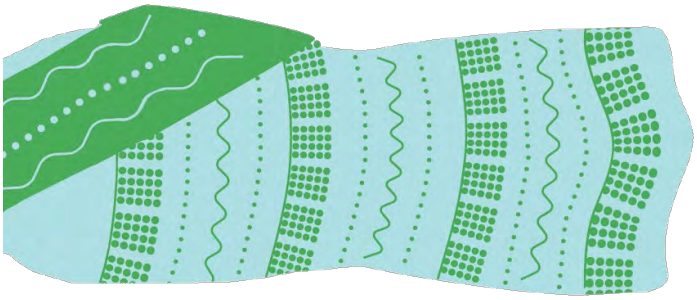

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Marriage Figures and Clothing













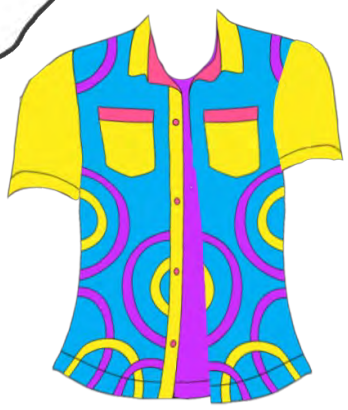
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Marriage Figures and Clothing



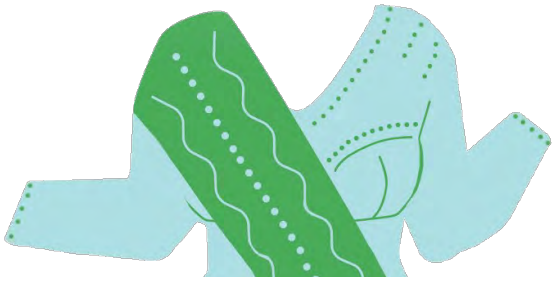












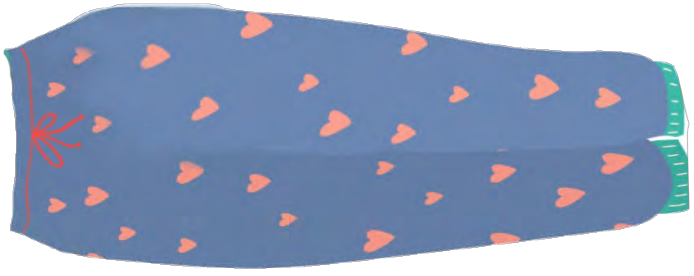












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Marriage Figures and Clothing







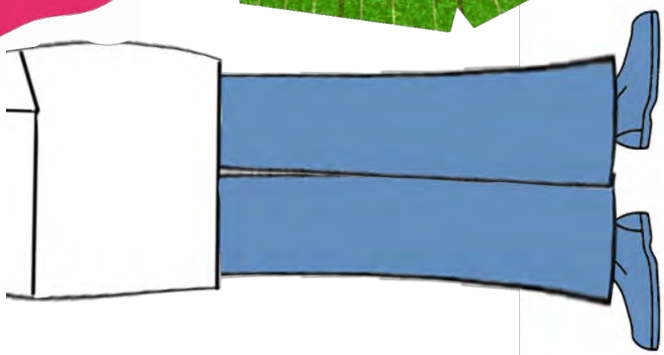












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Ages 11-14: Healthy Habits

Materials Needed for Each Student

Healthy Habits 1&2, pen or pencil

Prepare in Advance

Print *Healthy Habits 1&2*.

New Church Concept

Teacher Background

In the natural sense the sixth commandment, means not only to behave licentiously, but also to engage in obscene acts, to speak lasciviously, and to entertain filthy thoughts. In the spiritual sense it means to adulterate the Word's goods and falsify its truths. And in the highest sense to commit adultery means to deny the Lord's Divinity and profane the Word. These are all forms of adultery. See *Doctrine of Life* 74

In so far as people shun evils, so far do they will good actions. Evil and good are opposites. Evils come from hell, and what is good from heaven. So to the extent that hell, that is, evil, is removed, to that extent heaven approaches and so far does a person have good in view. In so far as anyone does not wish to commit adultery, so far does he wish to live chastely with his wife. See *True Christian Religion* 330

Establishing healthy relationship habits and personal boundaries is a wonderful way to prepare for protecting a future marriage. Since it is often easier to identify behaviors in others than in ourselves, students will first evaluate whether ways others treat them are more or less healthy. Then they will think about how they act themselves. Once students have ranked behaviors, discuss choices and healthy boundaries.



1. Everything we do now establishes the basis for what we do in the future. The Lord created us to enjoy the blessing of marriage to eternity. It is important for partners to protect marriage by caring for their partner and looking out for times when they need to adjust their actions to find even greater blessing.
2. Give each student a copy of *Healthy Habits*. Read the behaviors and circle the face that you think shows whether this is a more or a less healthy habit.
3. When you have finished, discuss answers. Be prepared to defend your choices, and to question others' choices too! Here are a few discussion prompts.
    - Has this happened to you, or to anyone you know?
    - How did you handle this?
    - How did that make you feel?
    - What made (or could make) this situation better?
    - What might you say to your friend?
    - What would you change next time this happened?

New Church Concept

Teacher Background

Evil loves falsity and wants to be one with it, so that they become joined. Likewise good loves truth and wants to be one with it, so that they become joined. Just as the spiritual source of marriage is the marriage of good and truth, so the spiritual source of adultery is the pairing of evil and falsity. That is why this pairing is meant in the spiritual sense of the Word by adultery. This principle ensures that anyone in a state of evil who marries falsity, and anyone in a state of falsity who takes evil to share his bed, by forming such a compact strengthens his attitude in favor of adultery, and he commits it so far as he dares and can. The reverse is also true: anyone in a state of good who marries truth or anyone in a state of truth who takes good to share his bed, sets himself against adultery and in favor of marriage, and embraces a blessed married life. See *Conjugial Love* 428

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Is it more or less healthy when others…. ?	More Healthy				Less Healthy
Won't look me in the eye					
Listen to what I say					
Ignore my boundaries					
Refuse to admit when they have made mistakes					
Say discouraging things to me					
Lie to me					
Trust me					
Do not respect me					
Talk too much					
Speak badly of people who are not present					
Share confidences with me					
Dress immodestly					
Try to bully me into doing something I do not want to do					
Speak for me					
Speak forcefully (i.e. shout or beg)					
Insist on getting their way					
Say I'm not listening to them					
Criticize me					
Won't accept responsibility for their actions					
Speak honestly					
Fear I'll reject them if they say 'no'					

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Is it more or less healthy when I….?	**More Healthy**	**Less Healthy**
Look others in the eye		
Listen to what others say		
Respect others' boundaries		
Admit when I have made mistakes		
Offer others encouragement		
Communicate truthfully		
Distrust others		
Speak for others		
Talk too much		
Speak badly of people who are not present		
Keep confidences		
Dress with modesty in mind		
Care more about what others think than listening to my conscience		
Respect others		
Use a steady tone of voice (i.e. not shout or beg)		
Exercise give-and-take		
Show that I feel listened to		
Criticize others		
Accept responsibility for my actions		
Fear rejection if others say 'no'		
Feel safe expressing my opinions		

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Joseph and Potiphar's Wife



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Closing & Recitation

The sixth commandment, "You shall not commit adultery" means we are not to mix something clean and holy with something that is unclean. Like Joseph, we can stop bad ideas by saying, "no" and turning away.

Today we add the sixth commandment to the commandments which we have already learned. You shall not commit adultery. Let's say it together now. Take home a recitation slip and practice the first six commandments each day.

The Ten Commandments	The Ten Commandments
1. You shall have no other gods before My face. 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. 3. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. 4. Honor your father and your mother. 5. You shall not murder. 6. You shall not commit adultery. Exodus 20:3-14	1. You shall have no other gods before My face. 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. 3. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. 4. Honor your father and your mother. 5. You shall not murder. 6. You shall not commit adultery. Exodus 20:3-14

Online Extras

Looking for something "extra"? Try these online ideas!

Ages 3-6 *Marriage in Heaven* https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/ssg-stories-of-the-word-2-34-angels-in-heaven.pdf

Ages 7-10 *A Unique Friendship Bracelet* https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-unique-friendship-bracelet.pdf

Ages 11-14 *Changing Habits-Cleaning Selfish Thoughts Experiment (video)* *https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-cleaning-selfish-thoughts-experiment/*

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