

RAM SERIES for SINGLES LARGE/SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR NOTES

Overview of RAM Series for Singles: The RAM Series Video Series for Singles is designed to be run in a small group with 12-16 members and with *little involvement* of a small group host. The videos set the stage for what the small group will discuss, and the RAM Series Discussion Guide for Singles that each participant uses provide summaries of the content of the video sessions, discussion questions for each session, and between session growth questions and activities. There are also sections for taking notes, prayer requests, how to maximize the benefits of the Discussion Guide, small group rules and guidelines for small group hosts.

Purpose of Facilitator Notes: However, there are two group formats that may require *greater involvement of the facilitator*.

1. Small group teacher/facilitator: There may be some small group hosts that want to have a more active role in facilitating this material. These facilitator notes can be used to give that small group facilitator suggestions and ideas on how to combine some teaching with the videos and small group discussion questions.

2. Large group teacher/facilitator with small group breakouts: These facilitator notes are primarily designed to equip a facilitator who leads a large group meeting with small group breakouts (e.g. youth groups; adult single ministries). This approach would combine a mix of facilitating large group discussion, viewing the video segments, facilitating small group discussion or activities, and teaching.

The large group may have the participants sitting in small groups (e.g. tables) so that both large group discussion/teaching and small group discussion can be seamless. Other settings may have the large group meet in one area and then break for small groups in different rooms/areas. Typically, the video is watched in the large group. Therefore, the logistics of the facility may dictate if the entire session is viewed all at once, or if the video segments are used with the "host" facilitating the discussion questions and teaching in-between each segment.

Both formats require viewing the video session. As just explained, this can be in one of two ways. First, the facilitator can show the video session in its entirety at the beginning of their meeting/class. The second is that the facilitator can show the video segments as described in these Facilitator Notes. In the discussion question section of each lesson in the Discussion Guide, there are indications of where the session segments occur (same as in these Facilitator Notes).

Materials Needed for Lesson: Trifold RAM (2'x3') or Large RAM (5'x7'), RAM Series Discussion Guides (Single) with mini-RAMs for each participant, video stream of RAM Series (Single) six lessons. It also is necessary for to have a flip chart or white board to write on when facilitating some of the discussions and teachings, especially with the large group.

SESSION ONE

Q1-3 This introduction is an interactive teaching style with ask/respond facilitating. List the ideas generated from Q1 and then Q2 and Q3 on the board as you interact with the class. The group discussion from these three questions and this first video segment will set up the session and the entire series on building healthy relationships with healthy friends and partners.

Play segment 1 (00:00-05:45)

Q4 Collect from the class what would really help them in their friendships now and even in their future relationships.

Q5 List the ideas generated from Q5 on the board as you interact with the class. Have fun with their ideas.

After filling up the board with many ideas, tell the class that you want to be honest—"How many of you have acted like _____ (point to one of the characteristics on the list, like selfish).

Say, "OK I see those hands... how about this—how many of you have acted like _____ (point to another characteristic on the list, like angry). Then say, "Hmmm looks like the same hands. And those of you who did not raise your hands, you must be the liars (point to the word "liar" or something similar; or write "liars" on the board if needed).

Then say, "So here is my question, if we all have acted like a jerk now and then, what is the difference between acting like a jerk and being a jerk?"

This is a thought-provoking question and after collecting ideas and writing them on the board under ACT vs BE then explain that the primary difference is the willingness to change. Those who ACT like a jerk, are willing to admit their faults and work toward real changes. But even if someone admits it, feels badly and apologizes, if they keep on doing it then they are more like BEING a jerk then just the exception of acting like a jerk.

Play segment 2 (05:45-11:36)

Q6 This section can be facilitated in small groups. Q6—You can divide the questions from the Relationship Growth section among your small groups, the number in each small group depends on the overall size of your large group. The questions are identifying three red flags or warning areas of a

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

person or friend who may be difficult to be with in a relationship: 1) lack of insight; 2) lack of emotional controls and healthy self-control; 3) lack of relationship skills. For large groups, have numerous small groups discuss the same question; e.g. all groups in a certain section of large room will take question 1 and then when you process their discussion in the large group you can collect ideas from all the small groups.

Q7 You can use this question to facilitate discussion within the entire group or assign smaller groups to resolve a situation with the Scriptural principles and then, if time, BRIEFLY share their ideas and insights with the entire class after a period of time for small group interaction.

Play segment 3 (11:36-20:19)

Q8 Have smaller groups read the Scripture and use their RAM charts to discuss the following questions under Q8. You have some flexibility here: 1) have small groups just discuss Q8; 2) have the small groups discuss Q8 and Q9; 3) use Q8 and Q9 in large group discussion (see Q9 explanation of large group discussion). After small groups, you can have the groups BRIEFLY share their ideas with the entire class before moving on.

Q9 You can use this question for either small or large group discussion. In small groups have them use their RAM charts to discuss—can assign scenarios to different small groups in order to shorten the small group time. In large group discussion or processing of small group ideas, have the small groups share their ideas with the entire group and use your trifold RAM chart to create each profile with the class' input and ask the class for ideas about what they think is going on in that relationship before moving on to the next profile.

Play segment 4 (20:19-30:20)

Q10 - Q11 Use the following questions to wrap up this session and encourage a concrete take-away application. Q10 You can discuss this with the entire group, then Q11 can be a question to answer by each individual and then if you want, ask for some members of the group to share their relationship goals with God and some important person in their life.

SESSION TWO

INTRODUCTION Use your trifold or large RAM for this introduction. Begin with briefly reviewing the RAM and explain that you are looking at building strong and healthy relationships, as well as five areas that reveal how someone will act in a relationship (they are put in an acronym, FACES). You could say that they are the dropdown box under the "know" in the RAM. They are also the specific areas to consider in your own personal growth. In this

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

lesson, we are going to look at the first area (F) to get to know about someone (Family Background).

Q1 Background to this question- have someone in your group read the intro and the following paragraph from the Discussion Guide from Genesis 41:50-52; 50:20 (NLT).

Q1 Joseph arrived in Egypt when he was 30 years old, and then if you give a year or two for Joseph to marry and have his first child, you would conclude that he had been working through his family issues for 3-5 years. Even after his second child was born, he was still working on family forgiveness as indicated by the names of both his two sons. This shows how long it takes to work through hurts from one's family and childhood, and the importance of putting in the time. Joseph concluded that God worked all things together for good even when his brothers had meant it for evil. This shows what our goal should be when we work on family pain... find God's redemptive plan in the pain. *Use this first discussion question to help the class come to these conclusions.*

Q2 Use this second question to collect ideas about the powerful influence of family upbringing and childhood experiences in shaping how a person acts in the marriage and the family he/she creates.

Play segment 1 (00:00-05:26)

Q3 Explain that you will have the class answer this question by doing an activity. The family tree activity should be introduced immediately after the video segment. Each small group should have a large flip chart paper and some markers. Encourage all members to add ideas to the tree and as they do, to share with their other group members why those ideas are meaningful.

Directions for Activity: Work in small groups with markers and flip chart paper. Draw an outline of a tree. Think about what you would like to practice in your future relationships, and even in a marriage and family of your own someday, and then put in the following:

Leaves on the branches. Write in each leaf something that you like from your family and would like to repeat in future relationships.

Fallen Leaves on the ground. Write in each leaf something that would like to not repeat in your future relationships.

New buds on the branches. Write in each new bud something that you would like to add to your future relationships. These can come from other families you have enjoyed, and from your own ideals and Christian values.

Play segment 2 (05:26-09:40)

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

Q4 The story of Joseph from Genesis 37-45 provides the opportunity to delve deeper into the Scriptures and explore the ways that Joseph is an example of a crucial truth: it is not so much what happens in your family upbringing, but what you choose to take out of your family experiences. You do not live with the events of life alone; you live with the meanings or stories you tell yourself about those events. Joseph did not see himself as a victim of his brothers' rage, but rather, he saw that God used those experiences to bring about divine opportunities—not to approve of what his brothers did, but in spite of their wrongs, to provide Joseph with something good... to become second in command of Egypt, and to be in the position to save his family from the famine. Knowing that God takes things that are bad or wrong and works them together for good when we trust and love the Lord, enables us to be able to forgive and "let go" of the hurts from others. This is a foundation of forgiveness, and it sets the backdrop for the following discussion questions Q4 & Q5.

Play segment 3 (09:40-11:49)

Q6 This segment was about the first major area of family background: how we learned to give and receive love and manage emotions. If only a few words are identified as you brainstorm feeling words (Q6), then have those with phones google "feeling words"—or you could do that and print out a couple of pages of feeling words. In a large group, you could also write down feeling words as the large group shouts them out. The importance of this is the more specific feeling words that you use then the greater awareness of your feelings and ability you will have to describe what you are feeling. Without a "feeling word" vocabulary, you will not be able to identify and explain your own feelings.

Q7 This is a good question for small group interaction. After this question and if you have time, you could ask a follow up question about giving and receiving love is: *How does your family help you to feel loved and important?*

Play segment 4 (11:49-17:32)

Q8 & Q9 Q8-Q10 are good for small group discussion. This segment was about the second major area of family background: how we learned to share power. As you talk about family experiences, try to weave together two areas of emphasis:

1) understanding how you have been shaped by your family and what you are taking out of your family for other relationships;

Q10 2) using this understanding to be discerning of how friends and dating partners have been impacted by their families, and how to evaluate what they are taking out of their family and how it will affect the ways they will act in their relationships.

Play segment 5 (17:32-24:33)

Q11 This segment was about the third major area of family background: the roles you have learned about family relationships. Give time to set specific goal(s) and then ask for some to share what goals they have set for themselves.

SESSION THREE

INTRODUCTION Review the RAM—a tool to help understand what exactly is a relationship (“a connection between you and others”—and the RAM portrays the major connections or bonds that exist in all relationships); and the RAM also is a visual “interactive” tool to help self-evaluate the health of your relationships, and how you are building new relationships. Review the importance of “know” and that we are taking 3 lessons to look more deeply at five key areas to get to know (in acronym “FACES”). In S2 we looked at the “F” of Family Background (lesson 2) and now will look at the “A” and the “C”— Attitudes & Actions of the Conscience; and Compatibility Potential. Will begin with the Conscience.

Q1 Collect ideas on a flip chart or board in answer to Q1: what is the conscience.

Play segment 1 (00:00-09:47)

This video segment sets the stage for the first of two times to delve into the Scriptures, this time to better understand the definition and role of the conscience, and then work in small groups to answer Q2 and Q3 for personal application.

Have someone read the Scripture quotes and explanations that are prior to Q2. Here are some additional notes about the Biblical understanding of the conscience.

The Greek word for conscience meant “to know together,” or to have “two minds in one.” It portrayed a person having two minds... one was living life while the other watched and made positive or negative comments. *The conscience is a God-given capacity to monitor your own thoughts, attitudes and actions with an emotional concern about their moral and interpersonal meanings* (Romans 2:14-15; 9:1). The term, “conscience” was originated by the Greeks, but the concept was in the Old Testament, and the term used for this concept was “heart.”

The conscience is referred to in the New Testament (32x). Twice it is described as “bearing witness” to one’s behavior, motives and thoughts. The word picture is a court room scene in which someone provides a testimony, and then their conscience is personified as someone who takes

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

the stand to “bear witness” in support of their words and actions (Romans 2:14-15; 9:1). In the former of the two passages, the conscience can also bear witness against their words or actions (The Scripture says that the conscience either “condones” or “convicts”).

The conscience is developed through childhood experiences. Some have referred to it as the “internalized parent,” because it often “speaks to you” like your parents talked to you or treated you. The Scriptures attest to different “shapes” of the conscience... weak and immature (I Corinthians 8:7), seared or hardened (1 Timothy 4:2), mature and good (Hebrews 13:18). Experiences all through adulthood continue to influence the conscience. Growth in your relationship to Christ can mature the conscience and make it more effective in guiding behavior and relationships (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Moral judgment is almost always included in the definition of the conscience (the moral impact or meaning that the conscience prompts). However, the conscience also transports you into another person’s perspective so that you can identify/empathize with their thoughts and feelings about you, your words and your actions (this is the interpersonal impact and meaning that the conscience prompts you to consider). This “other” perspective may be:

- 1) God’s view of your life (Acts 23:1)
- 2) Other people’s view of your life (Acts 24:16)

Because the conscience guides a person’s behavior, the degree of trust you have in another is related to the degree of maturity you believe they have in their conscience. This does not mean that a person will never make a mistake or sin, but it does provide you with a measure of confidence in their integrity and consistency when you are not around. In addition, the conscience is highly related to their capacity to empathize with your thoughts, feelings, and situations. If you are in a relationship with someone who has a mature conscience, they will regularly put themselves in your position and identify with you. This makes a person more understanding; and, if they have fairly good relationship skills, it makes them more supportive and encouraging.

Q2 & Q3

These two questions are good for small group interaction. Again, they strike a balance between emphasizing the importance of discerning the maturity of the conscience of a good friend or dating partner (Q2) and developing a mature conscience within yourself (Q3).

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

Play segment 2 (09:47-12:02)

Q4-6

These questions are also good for small group interaction. They emphasize the role of the conscience in making someone more thoughtful of how their actions impact others. It is as though the conscience observes and evaluates oneself based on two primary reference points: morality and others. Morality: how your actions measure up to your own moral code (this was the focus of the questions after segment 1). Others: how your words and actions impact others around you (this is the focus of Q 4-6). It is important to again emphasize the importance of both developing a mature conscientiousness while also being able to discern the maturity of someone else's conscientiousness (thoughtfulness, empathy, and consideration).

Play segment 3 (12:02-23:38)

Q7

This video segment sets the stage for the second time to delve into the Scriptures, this time to look at the importance of compatibility in marriage. But before you do, Q 7 can be done as an activity within small groups. Directions: *Divide into small groups and have each group assign them to one of three aspects of compatibility: PERSONALITY, VALUES or LIFESTYLE. Have each group write their aspect in capitals at the top of a flip chart paper. Then have them brainstorm all of the aspects of that areas that are important to consider in a dating partner (or friend); then put a star by the non-negotiables... what must be there or must not be there. These are their deal-breakers. When completed, have groups explain what they came up with. If more than one group for each of the three aspects, then have all that did the same aspect share before moving to the next aspect of compatibility.* In large groups you can have more than one group doing the same thing (e.g. several groups assigned to personality; several to values; and several to lifestyle). When you process this activity, you would either collect ideas from all groups assigned to same area, or choose just one to share their ideas.

Compatibility has three aspects: chemistry (how you and another click together or are attracted to each other), comparability (ways you and another are similar), and complimentarity (how you and another blend your differences in positive and mutually beneficial ways).

Q8 & Q9

The Bible study and these two questions can be done in large or small groups. Both comparability and complimentarity can be found in two couples in the Bible: Joseph and Mary (a positive example) and Nabal and Abigail (a negative example).

The Bible study sets the stage for small group discussion and application

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

Q10	This is a good question for small group discussion. This application question is about the importance and limitations of chemistry.
Q11	Wrap up this lesson with combining and reviewing the two concepts of the conscience and compatibility. Have participants identify a specific value and how to express it in relationships. They will then consider how this will improve the way their consciences help them in relationships.
SESSION FOUR	
INTRODUCTION	<p>Review the RAM—a tool to help understand what exactly is a relationship (“a connection between you and others”—and the RAM portrays the major connections or bonds that exist in all relationships); and the RAM also is a visual “interactive” tool to help self-evaluate the health of your relationships, and how you are building new relationships.</p> <p>Review the importance of “know” and that we are taking 3 lessons to look more deeply at five key areas to get to know (in acronym “FACES”). Already looked at the “F” of Family Background (lesson 2); the “A” and the “C”—<u>A</u>ttitudes/<u>A</u>ctions of the Conscience; and <u>C</u>ompatibility Potential (lesson 3). This lesson will look at the “E” (Examples of how someone acts in their relationships also referred to as Relationship Scripts) and “S” (Skills that are practiced in relationships). In short, scripts and skills.</p>
Q1	Before showing the first video segment, use Q1 for a fun introduction discussion. Q1-3 work well as a large group discussion. The “negative” stories from Q1 just continue with more stories in Q2 but they shift to a positive focus.
Q2	This question prompts a look into the Scriptures, this time to look at the attitudes and actions we should practice in our relationships. Collect examples from group members of how they have seen these Biblical qualities in others that they know. To conclude this discussion of Q2, you can choose the name of a friend, or family member, or dating partner and replace the word “others” and “one another” with that name. It makes the passage very personal about the “relationship scripts” that should be consistently practiced in our lives.
Q3	This question begins to set the stage for the video segment. Collect all of the “other” relationships that the large group can generate. You should not go into any discussion at this point about these relationships, just list them on the board.
Play segment 1 (00:00-9:11)	

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

Q4	Q4 & Q5 are good to be shared in small groups. There are two parts to Q4. First, they should tell stories of anyone that they have seen that acted differently based on who they were around. And the second part, is to reflect on their own story and describe the positive or negative impact this had on that person's relationships, and if it had an impact on the group member personally. You can ask that group members be appropriate with what they share, and to not talk badly about someone who will be hurt or offended.
Q5	It is important to help the group realize that the habits or "relationship scripts" that they practice in their relationships (even at a young age) will most likely be what they do in their own marriages and families one day. This is equally valuable for how you understand and discern another person, particularly a dating partner.
Play segment 2 (09:11-14:39)	
	This video segment shifts the focus from the scripts we practice in our relationships to discerning the relationship scripts practiced by others.
Q6 & Q7	These questions are good for small group discussions. However, they can be used to facilitate practical discussions and the development of the skill of discernment in either large or small groups.
Play segment 3 (14:39-22:23)	
	The final area of FACES is described in this video segment, <u>S</u> kills for building and sustaining healthy relationships.
Q8	<p>This is a practical question that works great in small group discussions. The group members should choose only one significant relationship (if dating, then that is the preferred relationship) and answer all four questions about that relationship.</p> <p>If you have time, an additional activity for this section is to practice listening and restatement skills. This can be role-played, or practiced in dyads or small groups. You can also model a listening/restatement skill in front of the large group. No matter which way you would like to model or practice a listening skill, just have one person (speaker) share a recent experience and then have the other person (listener) restate both the content <i>and</i> the feelings of the speaker.</p>
Q9, Q10, & Q11	These three questions are designed to put together all five areas (FACES) that are important to get to know about a significant person (friend or dating interest) and can be used in small groups to encourage specific personal goals.

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

A fun way to put all together all five areas of FACES is the “speed dating” activity. The discussion guides have 99 questions to answer in a dating relationship (about 20 for each of the FACES). Before the class begins, choose which questions you would like to include in this activity. Assign one question to each group member (if really large group you can assign the same question to several members).

Have the group divide in half. Form two parallel lines with each member in one line facing a partner in the other line. In a really large group, you can have two concentric circles with the members in the outer circle facing a partner in the inner circle. In both designs, the partners should only be about a foot apart. Both lines (or circles) must have the same number of members.

Call one of the lines (or circles) “A” and tell them that they will ask their question to their partner in line “B”. You will give those partners in line “B” only 25-30 seconds to answer the question. When you yell, “Switch” then you will have the partners in line B (or circle B) ask their question to the partner in line “A.” Again, the partner has only 25-30 seconds to answer.

Then you yell, “move” and only one line (or circle) moves one partner over. In a line, the last partner has to run around to the other side of the line to join that partner. Those in line A ask their question to their new partner with 25 seconds for that partner to answer. You again yell switch, and those in line B ask their question to that new partner in line “A”.

Again, when both partners have asked their questions, you yell, “move” and they start over with a new partner. If you have them do this with five partners, then in about 5 minutes they will have asked their question to five different partners, and also had to answer those five partners’ questions.

This activity is fun, loud and fast. You can process this with a few questions. 1) How many of you either asked or were asked a question that never really was asked in any of your dating relationships (or friendships)? 2) How many of you heard some different answers to the question you asked? What was your question, and what were the differences in how your partners answered your question? 3) What are the benefits of both looking for these things, AND asking specific questions so that you have conversations about them?

SESSION FIVE

This lesson begins with a short Bible study on the topic of trust and how the feeling of confidence or security (trust feeling) actually comes from the opinion or how you think of someone (trust picture). Essentially, we all take what we know about someone and organize it in our minds to form an opinion of that person. It is like a mental representation that puts some things in the foreground, giving them greater importance. And then we put some other things we know about someone in the background, with less importance.

From the Gospel of Luke, an example can be explored of the trust-pictures of what others thought of Jesus and how those trust-pictures impacted what they thought and felt in their trust (or mistrust) of Jesus.

Q1

The Discussion Guide focuses on the religious leader in questions 1a and 1b. But you can ask the same questions about the woman who was anointing Jesus' feet with oil to see why her trust-picture was of Jesus was so positive.

Use this Bible study and discussion to clearly explain the concept of a feeling of trust (confidence) that comes from a mental representation or trust-picture of someone you know. This trust-picture can be accurate or distorted, impacting your feelings of security or confidence in someone you know.

There are many other examples of how people formed either positive or negative "trust" pictures that were projected onto Jesus... e.g. stereotypes of what people are like who came from Nazareth; somewhat twisted ideals of how a prophet should treat sinners and tax collectors; ideals of how a religious leader should act toward a woman caught in adultery; and even an ideal that the coming Jewish Messiah should be a military leader who would defeat the Romans and any other suppressors of the Jewish people. All of these associations, stereotypes and ideals were used to fill-in-the-gaps of how people knew Jesus and what they thought of him, and ultimately how they trusted him.

Play segment 1 (00:00-11:06)

After the first video segment, you can become very practical with the importance of being aware and responsible for how we form trust-pictures of others; and especially in new relationships, the ways we fill in the gaps of our trust picture with our associations, stereotypes and ideals. You can emphasize this by pointing out the differences between

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

“know” and “trust”—just ask: *Can you know someone a lot but trust them a little? Explain this.*

The differences between trust and rely were explained in the video by the story of working in a school group project where you know those in your group and rely greatly on those group members for your grade, but where your trust in specific members is low. Trust is the feelings of confidence that come from what you believe whereas reliance is the feelings of fulfillment and appreciation that comes from how someone meets your needs. This segment is about trust and the last segment is about rely.

Q2

This is a fun way to get into a practical understanding and application of the concept of a trust-picture. There are several questions included in Q2. Begin with how a trust-picture can either help or hurt. Then go to associations and stereotypes of famous people.

Here are some examples of famous people and associations. You could create a guessing game where you gave the fact and had the large group guess what famous person they think the fact was about (or even small groups work together to come up with their best guess). You could divide the group into teams to compete (or use existing small groups if have them) and make a few rules like they are only allowed to make a guess or ask one question (like, “is this person dead or alive?”).

Guess the celebrity.

This celebrity doesn’t use soap when he showers (answer: Brad Pitt)

This celebrity was caught on camera licking donuts off the shelf at a donut shop (answer: Ariana Grande)

This celebrity donated over \$30,000 to a young boy’s cancer treatment (answer: Simon Cowell)

This celebrity brought a homeless man as her date to an award’s show (answer: Miley Cyrus)

Follow up question: what past experiences (associations), stereotypes or ideals influenced the answers you guessed? What associations, stereotypes or ideals made the answers surprising to you?

Q3, Q4 & Q5

These three questions can be done in small groups to personalize the associations and ideals that group members look for in their friends and especially dating partners.

Q3

In small groups, each member can use their mini-RAM charts to talk about pacing their relationships. When one of the four questions in Q3 are answered, then tell the group member to portray their relationship story

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

on the RAM. It may even have some different points in time where one level was high, but then at a later point in time, that same level dropped significantly. Using the RAM to profile what is going on in a relationship can empower a person to more actively and intentionally pace their relationship. *What they can define, they can better control and manage.* If you do this question with entire group, then you can use your trifold or large RAM chart to talk about PACING a relationship.

Q4 & Q5

Although everyone has some ideals, many people have never taken the time to clearly articulate their ideals. However, it helps to sharpen values and discernment when someone takes the time to talk about their ideals for a dating partner (or even a future spouse—Q4). These ideals also need to be realistic and attainable (Q5).

Play segment 2 (11:06-21:31)

Q6

This segment creates the opportunity to delve into a Scriptural description of how to form positive and God-honoring inter-dependencies in relationships from a terrific passage in Romans (Q6). You can read Romans 12:1-2 prior to reading verses 9-18 and searching for the ideals. These two verses explain that we should not conform to the world but develop alternative patterns of relationships that honor God. Identify all the ways to be dependable and to depend on others. Lead discussions on how these qualities are specifically practiced and seen in real life situations. These questions can be done either in a large group or small groups.

Q7 & Q8

These two questions look for the red flags of an unhealthy reliance. The RAM becomes a powerful tool for PACING a relationship in both trust and reliance (Q8).

Conclude this session with having individuals determine three changes they can make in how they build trust and reliance (Q9). Then ask for some of the group to share one or more of their goals.

Q9

This is a good wrap application question that also brings together the importance of pacing a growing trust (what you believe about someone) and reliance (how you actually depend on that person).

SESSION SIX

Q1

Begin this lesson with a short Bible study on the importance of being “in the world” but “not of the world.” Because we are encouraged to “not conform” to the patterns of our culture, then it is important to come up with “alternative patterns” of how to build friendships and especially, how to date or engage in romantic relationships (Q1). You can review

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

Romans 12:9-14 from the last session that described “rely” actions in healthy relationships. However, Romans 12:1-2 is a prerequisite for this healthy inter-dependence. We must find ways to NOT conform to the world and alternative approaches to relationships (especially dating) that honor God and keep our hearts and minds working together.

So either in large group or in your small groups have them discuss challenges encountered in dating practices because of current cultural trends. If you have small groups discuss this, after they have some time to discuss, then ask them to share their ideas with the large group.

And maybe ask a follow up question: *So, if these are the challenges, what would it look like to date in God-honoring ways?*

Q2 This helps to talk further about practical ways that dating practices should not conform to cultural trends if those trends are not God-honoring.

Play segment 1 (00:00-15:11)

Q3 This video segment sets the stage for a Bible study on a passage that explains God’s design for sexual involvement within the context of a marital commitment. Use this passage of Scripture for an investigation of why God connects the sexual relationship with the level of commitment (e.g. marriage). Help them to come to the conclusion and understand that when a couple has a mutual commitment, it provides a circle of security for sexual intimacy and bonding, and ultimately a safe context for child-bearing.

Q4 The common cultural practice of living together without being married (cohabitation) needs to be discussed and analyzed. This can be done several ways. You can have questions 4, 5, and 6 discussed in small groups.

You can also make Q4 an activity. Give your small groups a flip chart sheet of paper and have them make two columns, one for the commitment of a couple that moves in together (unmarried) and the other for the commitment of a couple who are planning to marry. Have them describe differences in the commitment levels between these two types of couples. You can add: Include what both couples do in preparation (to either moving in together or marrying).

Some of what comes out of these comparisons is that marriage, by definition, is a lifelong commitment (“better or worse, richer or poorer, sickness and health, until death do us part”); whereas, cohabitation has

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

a wide range of commitment levels, from those who just want to move in for convenience (financial, logistics, etc.), to those who are testing out their relationship, to some couples who are engaged and weeks or days away from their wedding. There is a striking set of differences when the paths to both events are compared. Marriage seems to prompt future planning, seriousness of commitment, involvement of professionals (like counseling, pastors, premarital inventories), and involvement of families and friends. In contrast, cohabitation typically happens without any of these. Therefore, most couples getting married are much more planful and intentional vs. couple who move in outside of marriage. An example of this fact is that unmarried couples that live together (cohabit) have 3x higher unplanned pregnancies than married couples (all other details being equal). They also have 3x higher break up rates in the first five years compared to married couples (again, with all other details being equal).

Q5 This helps group members to think about the risks, and why they are either overlooked or minimized in current cultural trends.

Q6 Use the RAM to show the logic of the safe zone, and to bring back into the discussion the importance of the five areas to get to know (FACES). Talk about the ways that getting to know someone should inform your trust, and how what you know and trust should be tested out by the reliability/dependability of the person (remember the 3Ts—talk, time and togetherness). All of this clarifies the risk or safeness of a deeper commitment. This approach is actually less risky than moving in with someone as a way to test a relationship or get to know that person. Moving in raises the “rely” in extreme ways (much higher than *know* and *trust* typically) and increases a sense of being trapped in the relationship if concerns or issues are identified/experienced.

Play segment 2 (15:11-21:59)

Q7 The Scriptural passage from Q3 should be reviewed and maybe reread, but now the focus is specifically on God’s design for sex. Q7 prompts group members to think about and discuss why a person’s sexuality is so important to God.

When you refer again to the 1Corinthians 6:16-20 passage, you can contrast God’s design for sex with the common cultural practice of sexual involvement before marriage. You can engage your group members with an activity that will help to sort through the logic of God’s design.

An activity of determining the pros and cons of waiting to begin a sexual relationship until you are married can be done in large or small groups.

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

You can have group members generate pros and cons on a chart, or on cards that they then put in two categories (PRO or CON). However, it is important to find a way in this activity to create a “weighting” of each pro or con so that the *importance* of each reason can be considered and illustrated. This might be done after the ideas are generated. What the weighting reveals is that some pros for becoming sexually active are not that serious, while some of the cons are very serious.

Another way to do this activity is to have two-sided scale, and a set of weights to place on each side. Then have the students list the pros and cons for having sex before marriage, placing a weight on each side of the scale for each respective pro/con suggested. The facilitator can also suggest ideas for consideration of the weight of each pro or con.

An example of the differing values of the pros and cons of becoming sexually active might be when participants consider a break up after having been sexual involved compared to a break up without sexual involvement? How are they different? Why or why not?

If this activity is done thoughtfully and realistically, it will illustrate the greater risks and weightier negatives of sexual activity outside of marriage, and the positive benefits of self-control, boundaries, and keeping sexual intimacy for marriage. This will help to confirm the Biblical teaching on sex and commitment.

Q8-10 These three questions are good for small group discussion. If assigned to small groups, then afterward, in a large group, collect ideas from how they discussed and answered these three questions.

Q8 This question helps group members to explore how they would handle friends and dating partners who might have different values about sexual activity. This is an important discussion because sexual activity prior to marriage is the norm in most current cultures, and those who practice boundaries in their physical relationships are likely to be ridiculed or viewed as odd (even by a dating partner).

Q9 This question helps group members to think through their values and boundaries. Ideas: This question also takes them beyond just physical or sexual actions, to consider other ways that they want to have a commitment to purity. This would include things like what they look at online (e.g. porn, graphic articles), what they think about or dwell on, how they talk with others, tv, movies or series that they watch, etc.

Q10 & Q11 Be sure to save time in this lesson to step out of the topic of commitment and touch, and to put the content of the series all together. You can

RAM Series for Singles Facilitator Notes

emphasize again that the head and heart are meant to work together. That the areas to get to know (FACES) are like a drop-down box under know. And they are all about engaging your mind in your relationships, learning to be discerning while you also work to get your own act together in these five areas. And equally important is pacing the development of your heart, your trust, reliance, commitment and physical relationship.

Q11

This is a good wrap up question with group members sharing what they learned and want to do differently based on this series.