

# **Lutheran Foundations: A Confirmation Curriculum©**

## **Year 2. Jesus Christ: His Life and Work**

### **The Tomorrow River Lutheran Parish**

#### **Lesson 24. Teaching: Sex, Marriage & Divorce**

#### **April 22, 2026**

**Gathering at NELSONVILLE**

#### **A Moment for Clarity:**

Confirmation students, grades 7-9, are too young to be engaging in sex. This is for later in your lives! Period. The age of consent in Wisconsin is 18. Children who are 16 and 17 can legally consent to some low-level sexual contact (i.e. kissing or petting) but not to intercourse. No one under 18 can consent to intercourse with anyone, ever. If you are 18 or older and having sex with anyone younger than 18, it's at least a misdemeanor sexual assault charge. If you 18 or older and having sex with someone younger than 16, it will always be a felony and can involve prison or lifetime registration as a sexual predator.

It does happen that junior or senior boys will try to “date” a freshman or sophomore girl with the goal of being her first sexual partner. Girls: The attention from an older boy can be intoxicating. Run away from this. It is not love. It is not legal. It is abusive and icky. It will end in tears. Boys, do not do this. Ever. Its slimy and awful and wrong.

Everyone: If someone tries to take advantage of you, even a family member or neighbor, tell someone! There are resources to help and protect you. Your pastors and your teachers are “mandatory reporters”. You will get relief from the unwanted attention and you will get protection.

#### **Sex Ed at School:**

- Basic Information on Parts and Plumbing
- Basic Information on Disease Prevention
- Basic Information of Preventing Pregnancies

#### **Sex Ed at the Doctor:**

- Doctor asks your parent(s) to leave, and then asks you if you are sexually active.
- Makes sure that you know about preventing STDs and pregnancies.

## **Sex Ed among many of the Religious (traditionally):**

- Shhhh! Don't talk about it! That will only encourage kids to experiment!
- "Sex is filthy. Save it for someone you love." Huh?

## **We have to do better than that!**

We believe that sex is gift of God and that the fullness of sexual expression belongs exclusively in marriage. Sex is to be considered precious. It is joyful and good. It means something. It binds two people together. Its sacred.

Sex is not simple recreation. Other people are not just flavors to try. Other people are not things to possess. Other people are the children of God. We should never do something to someone that is not in their best interest, something which may hurt them or cost them or put their future at risk. Sex is supposed to bless a couple and to increase their safety and security. It is supposed to be a gift.

## **What about LGBTQ+ people?**

The ELCA believes that LGBTQ+ people are also the children of God and fully capable of living lives of stability and holiness. LGBTQ+ people have the same rules and expectations before God as do straight people: Faithfulness in marriage, Chastity outside of marriage.

## **Jesus' attendance and first miracle at the Wedding in Cana sanctifies marriage**

<sup>1</sup> On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." <sup>6</sup> Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. – **John 2:1-11**

## **Two times that Jesus' religious enemies try to trap him with issues of sex, marriage and divorce**

You need to understand that there was a big fight going on in Judaism in Jesus' day between two "schools" of rabbinical thought/interpretation

Moses says that "a man can divorce his wife if he finds any indecency in her"... what is the critical word in that instruction?

Shammai school said: "indecency". A man can divorce his wife if she has an affair.

Hillel school said: "any". A man can divorce his wife if she does ANYTHING wrong. Affairs to be sure, but also "brawling", disrespecting his family, or burning the breakfast.

The Pharisees were trying to get Jesus to take sides with one or the other of the two Pharisaic schools: Hillel or Shammai. Either way they could peel away some percentage of the people who supported him. If Jesus sided with the more popular Hillel group, his enemies could claim that he was not very serious about upholding the law of Moses. If Jesus sided with the more conservative Shammai group, they could discredit him with the majority of the people, who favored the more lenient interpretations of Hillel.

There was also a political piece to these tests:

If the Pharisees could get Jesus to speak out against Herod Antipas' marital affairs they might be able to get word to Herod and have Herod deal with Jesus the way he had dealt with John the Baptist – with imprisonment and/or beheading...

### **Is it lawful...?**

<sup>1</sup> He left that place and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around him; and, as was his custom, he again taught them. <sup>2</sup> Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" <sup>3</sup> He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" <sup>4</sup> They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." <sup>5</sup> But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." <sup>7</sup> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two shall

become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." <sup>10</sup> Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. <sup>11</sup> He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; <sup>12</sup> and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." – **Mark 10: 1-12**

### **Woman caught in Adultery**

<sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, <sup>4</sup> they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" <sup>6</sup> They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup> And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" <sup>11</sup> She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

– **John 8:3-11**