

The Ten
Commandments

6th
Commandment

TEACHER GUIDE

Luther
House
Confirmation
Curriculum



You are not to commit adultery.

Essential Question: Why did God institute marriage? How does our misuse of the gifts of sex and marriage cause harm to ourselves and our neighbor?

Students will be able to:

- Identify God as the one who instituted marriage.
- Articulate the promise(s) that God gives to marriage.
- Describe God's purpose for marriage.
- Contrast God's purpose for marriage and sex with other messages we hear.
- Define adultery.
- Explain how the Sixth Commandment cannot be fulfilled simply by avoiding sex before marriage or not cheating on your spouse.
- Give examples of how our misuse of sex causes harm to others (and ourselves)
- Connect our misuse of sex with our mistrust of God; it is sin for which we need to be forgiven

Lesson Overview: We get a lot of conflicting messages about sex and marriage, don't we? If it feels good, should you do it? Who can get married? Why would people want to get married in the first place? Don't a lot of (or even most) marriages end in divorce, anyway? What's the deal with that? What about having babies—why would anybody be crazy enough to have kids? Have you seen the movie *Hotel Transylvania*? We may worry that, like Wayne the werewolf, we'll be overrun by our "pups". Different people seem to have different answers to these questions. But sex and marriage aren't something that we humans came up with. They are gifts that God gives for a purpose—not so that we'll misuse them. God is the one who gives us the blessing of marriage and children, and promises to provide for all our needs. Even so, we often think of marriage and children as threats to who we are and to our freedom. We would rather live our own lives on our own terms. In other words, when it comes to sex, marriage, and family, we don't trust God as we should, and that's exactly what the Sixth Commandment shows us.


1. Opening Prayer



Lord God, our heavenly Father, you have created us male and female not for indecency, but to be true to each other and to be fruitful and multiply. Protect us and our neighbors from the harm we cause each other through the misuse of your gifts. Cause us to fear and love you so that we honor marriage and one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

2. Essential Vocabulary



 **For Teachers: Words matter! Here are a few that you can explore briefly with your students:**

Adultery: any sexual activity that takes place outside of a marriage relationship between a man and a woman

Chaste: avoiding sexual activity outside of marriage

Sex: sexual activity, especially sexual intercourse; also, the biological characteristics of male or female

Lust: strong desire; especially, wanting to use another person as the means to gratify your desire

Procreation: bearing offspring through sexual reproduction

Marriage: an exclusive relationship of lifelong fidelity between a man and a woman, instituted by God for the bearing and raising of children and for mutual support

3. Video Lesson: Sixth Commandment




This video offers some words about what the Sixth Commandment is all about.

There will be “knowledge check” questions after the video.

- What is the purpose of marriage?
 - To have adventures with your spouse
 - **To bear children and provide a stable home for them**
- Why does God give the Sixth Commandment?
 - **To protect our marriages and families**
 - To ensure we are not lonely

4. SING BOLDLY: Hymn Connection




 *There is a video that explores a hymn that can be sung during worship, and how the hymn connects to what we believe. The students will learn how this ties into the subject of our lesson, some background of the hymn, and the video will even teach us how to sing it boldly!*

Teachers: At this point in the lesson, there will be an option to skip ahead to the **“Memory Work and Wrap Up”** portion. Alternatively, you may lead your group through all or part of **“Here I Hear & Speak”**. This section will equip you to lead group discussion and achieve the lesson’s learning goals. We advise that you explore this option with your small group (or as an individual). This guide has been created primarily to help you as you facilitate the “Hear I Hear & Speak” section. You will be learning about this part of Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, how it comes out of God’s Word in Scripture, and even how to equip our learners how to give that Word to others.

5. HERE I HEAR & SPEAK: Discussions and Activities




Group Activity: Have you ever been to a wedding? Have you seen a wedding portrayed in a movie or on TV? In your group, brainstorm a list of things they would expect to see and hear at a wedding. We will take a few minutes to do this. Then, we will return to our large group and share our ideas.

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Lists may vary, but will probably include things like music, clothing, rings, the members of the wedding party, reception, unity candle, etc.

While there are many things we expect to see and hear at a wedding, most of them are not what actually make it a wedding. Dresses and rings and wedding cakes are great, but none of these things make people married. A marriage is a matter of promises that are given and heard. In *any* wedding ceremony, the two people getting married give promises to each other. Here are some promises (or vows) that a bride and groom give to each other in a marriage service: “I take you to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you in all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.”

- What is included in “all that is to come”?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Note that this is NOT, “for as long as I am happy and feel fulfilled.” Traditional vows may say, “in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer.” The

marriage vows recognize that marriage is not about what we want, but what the other person needs from us.

- What does it mean to be faithful to someone?


 **TEACHER NOTE:** To be faithful means to keep your promise to them.

- Does this promise have an ending point? What is it?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** The promise is to be faithful until death.

At a wedding, people give their promises to each other. But marriage is not something that we humans came up with. Marriage was God's creation in the first place, and He gives His blessing to it. The blessing God gives to marriage is "Be fruitful and multiply."


- What does this mean?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** This is having babies. It might be good to teach or re-teach the definition of procreation here. God chooses marriage between a man and a woman as the means to bring new people into the world. God does not give such a blessing for a same-sex relationship. Therefore, we have no blessing of marriage to give to such a relationship.

Each person has different "desires", and each want those desires to be called "right". For example, I have a desire to defend my car from being stolen. I have a desire to win arguments, too. I want to be recognized and rewarded for the "good" things I do. And for people and God to overlook all the mistakes I make, and all of my jealous thoughts. Just because I have these desires, doesn't make them "right" or even "acceptable". God decides what is right by His Word of promise. God calls marriage between man and woman "good", and there is a promise in it. We don't have the word that calls sexual desires outside of marriage "good".

The Sixth Commandment is "You shall not commit adultery." This commandment tells us that sex is to be used within the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman.

- How might this be different from other messages you hear about sex?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** There are so many messages, some very explicit (like pornography), and many less obvious (like "safe" sex) that communicate something different about sex. Again, keep coming back to the blessing God gives, "Be fruitful and multiply," and how our failure to trust God's promise is at the root of all these things.




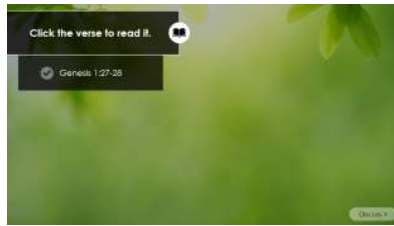
In the Word: Let's see how Scripture passages relate to what we've discussed so far!



- Read: Exodus 20:14

- Discuss: What does *adultery* mean?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Any sexual activity that takes place outside of a marriage relationship between a man and a woman




- Read: Genesis 1:27-28
- Discuss: God created human beings in His own image. That means He created us male and female with a purpose. What is that purpose? (see verse 28.)

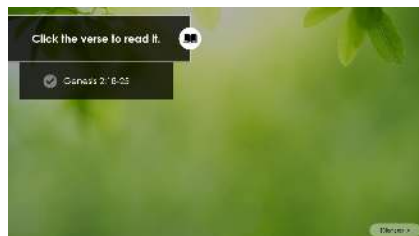
 **TEACHER NOTE:** God created us male and female so that we would bear children.

- And God blessed them. When God gives a blessing, it means He is giving a promise. What is this promise that God gives to marriage?


 **TEACHER NOTE:** “Be fruitful and multiply”

- Does “be fruitful and multiply” feel like a promise? Why or why not?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** This blessing often doesn’t feel like a promise to us. Having children can sound like a burden we don’t want to deal with. It can seem like it would interfere with what we want to do with our lives. Or we worry about finances, global overpopulation, etc. These fears all come from our sin—our lack of trust that God will do what He said He will do.



- Read: Genesis 2:18-25
- “It is not good that the man should be alone.” Humans were not created to be alone and independent. How is this different from some of the cultural messages we hear?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** We often hear independence and self-sufficiency described as virtues.

- Re-read v. 24. This is marriage. So was marriage a human invention? Who established marriage between a man and a woman?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Marriage was not a human invention. God established it.

- Marriage was established for bearing and raising children, to avoid unchastity, and for mutual help and consolation. How is this different from the way many people often talk about marriage?

TEACHER NOTE: People usually talk about marriage in terms of love. And while love is certainly part of marriage, many people think of love as a feeling they deserve to have. But feelings are unreliable and often change. Instead, Scripture teaches us that love is not a feeling you have, but is being used up for the sake of someone else.



- Read: Hebrews 13:4
- Discuss: Marriage is a vocation. We learned that a vocation is a particular way you are called to meet the needs of your neighbor. When you are married, who is your “nearest neighbor”?

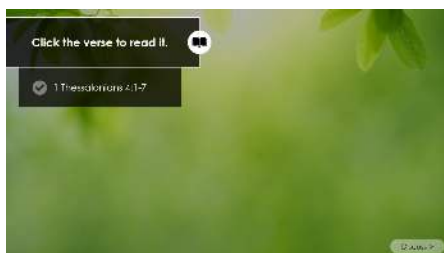
TEACHER NOTE: Your husband or wife. The one with whom you share your bed and your home.

- What do your spouse and children (including future spouse and children) need from you in marriage?

TEACHER NOTE: Among other things, they need you to be faithful to them.

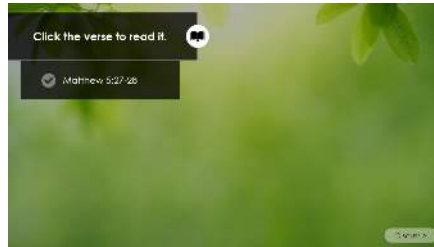
- “Let the marriage bed be held in honor by all.” How do our neighbors benefit when we are faithful to our spouses?

TEACHER NOTE: When we are faithful to our spouses, it also helps our neighbors be faithful to theirs.




- Read: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7
- Discuss: The Sixth Commandment belongs to the Second Table. That means it mainly deals with your relationship to others. So, is what consenting people do with their bodies really nobody else’s business? Why?

TEACHER NOTE: Martin Luther writes in his Large Catechism that “you are to defend, protect, and rescue your neighbors whenever they are in danger or need, and, moreover, even aid and assist them so that they may retain their honor. Whenever you fail to do this (although you could prevent a wrong) or do not even lift a finger (as if it were none of your business), you are just as guilty as the culprit who commits the act. In short, all are required to live chastely themselves and also help their neighbors do the same.”



- Read: Matthew 5:27-28
- Discuss: According to Jesus, who has already committed adultery even without *doing* anything?


 **TEACHER NOTE:** Anyone who lusts after another person in his heart. It might be good to teach or re-teach the definition of lust here.

- So could you fulfill the Sixth Commandment simply by avoiding sex before marriage or by not cheating on your spouse? Why not?


 **TEACHER NOTE:** No, you could not. The Commandment requires our hearts. We fall utterly short here.



- Read: Ephesians 5:21-33
- Discuss: What does it mean to “submit to one another”?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** To submit is to give yourself up. It is to have your own wants and needs put aside in favor of what someone else needs.

- Marriage means joining together. St. Paul uses Genesis 2:24 here: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” “Two becoming one flesh” means exactly what it sounds like: sex. When two people have sex, they are literally joined together—in other words, they are married. **Have you ever considered that having sex with another person is actually being married to them?**
- The Hebrew word *yada* means to know someone in a way that is extremely personal and intimate. When you have sex with another person, you *yada*-know—each other in a way that others don’t. Here’s the thing: once you know someone this way, you can’t un-know them. You can’t un-ring a bell. The new kind of personal knowing and relationship never goes away. **What does this tell us about marriage (and divorce)?**

 **TEACHER NOTE:** The legal process of divorce can’t undo this either. Divorce can’t take away the knowing **or** remove the blessing that God gives (Be fruitful and multiply). Even if your parents are legally unmarried or divorced, you still remain the blessing that was produced by their marriage.

Sometimes people are moved to break off the marriage and the promise that had held the marriage together. Sometimes there are things said and done that betray the trust of the relationship, and these instances threaten the ability for that relationship to continue. If a

broken or wavering confidence in the other person disrupts the marriage, this can be very hard. Sometimes, it is too difficult to overcome. However, the promise you have from God remains true, and it is true forever. His Promises stick. The Lord might use you to deliver this word to your parents, too, especially if their trust in one another wavers.

SUMMARY: In Ephesians 5, Paul says that this is a profound mystery, and it refers to Christ and the church. You were joined with Christ when you were baptized (see Romans 6 for more on this). Because you know and are known by Christ, your new relationship with Him never goes away. Everything that was yours (your sin) became His, and everything that was His (the forgiveness of sin and eternal life) became yours. So nothing will be able to separate you from Christ. Christ will never be unfaithful in His promise to you. When we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. (2 Timothy 2:13).

6. MEMORY WORK



The words in Luther's Small Catechism are worth memorizing. In this lesson, there could be tools, including songs, that will equip students to find some success.

- *The Sixth Commandment.* You shall not commit adultery.
- *What does this mean?* We are to fear and love God so that in matters of sex our words and conduct are pure and honorable, and husband and wife love and respect each other.

7. LEARNING CHECK



- Any sexual activity that takes place outside of a marriage relationship between a man and a woman is **adultery**.



- *True or False:* You can fulfill what the Sixth Commandment requires by not having sex before marriage.



- Who instituted marriage?
 - The earliest human civilizations
 - The Church
 - **God**



- Which of these is a blessing God gives to marriage?
 - Lasting happiness and fulfillment in another person
 - **“Be fruitful and multiply”**
 - Love is love

- God gives marriage...
 - **to bring children into the world.**
 - **to limit the harm our sin does to others.**
 - **for mutual support between husband and wife.**



- Who needs you to be faithful to your spouse?
 - **your children**
 - **your spouse**
 - God



- When we don't cheat on our spouses...
 - we are doing everything the Sixth Commandment requires.
 - our behavior is righteous before God.
 - **it helps our neighbors to be faithful to their spouses.**



- Why are sex and marriage so hard?
 - Our bodies are evil.
 - **We don't fear, love, and trust God as we should.**
 - We aren't trying hard enough.

8. WRAP UP

Closing Prayer & Benediction



- Lord God, we give You thanks that You have created us male and female. Forgive us when we misuse Your gifts of sex and marriage, and cause us instead to live decently in our words and deeds for the good of one other, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

It is good practice to give a blessing to each individual student before they leave you! (You might also select one of them to give this spoken benediction to you.) Our Lord uses baptized believers to give this, God's message, to one another. Here is a Benediction that you could use this week:

(Name), Almighty God, who has joined you with His Son in Holy Baptism, keep His promise to you now and forever. Amen.



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