

8th Grade, Objective 8.01

Objective:

Clarify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships for friendships and for dating in the future.

Materials needed:

Healthy Relationships PowerPoint
Appendix 1 – transparency of What Does Love Mean?
Appendix 2 – Teacher Guide to Unfinished Sentences
Appendix 3 – copies of How “Relationship Smart” Are You?
Newsprint of poster board for each group, markers

Focus:

[Use a transparency or slide created from Appendix 1, What Does Love Mean? for the following discussion.] *A group of people were asked this question: **What does love mean?** Here are some of their responses:* (Pause after you read each statement.)

- *“Love is what makes you smile when you’re tired.”*
- *“Love is a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.”*
- *“When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouths.”*
- *Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day.*
- *You really shouldn't say "I LOVE YOU" unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.*

The people that were asked this question were between the ages of 4 and 8.

Ask students:

- *What is your reaction now that you know that these quotes were from 4- to 8-year olds?*

Our close relationships are very important to us and they should be. Maybe we all should take lessons from these young children. We might gain insight into what love means because their descriptions of love were broader and deeper than anyone would have thought.

Statement of Objectives:

When Americans are asked what is most important in their lives, a common response is a happy home life or a successful marriage. Today we are going to look at relationships and what makes them healthy or unhealthy.

Review:

Ask students:

- *With whom do you have close relationships?*
- *How do these relationships differ from acquaintances or casual friends?*

Teacher Input:

Arrange chairs in two concentric circles in the middle of the classroom. This activity can be done in many ways, but this format is in a **FISHBOWL**. In the Fishbowl format, make two concentric circles. The inner circle will be the ones participating. The outer circle will listen, but not participate orally until a later time.

[Note: Although most of the questions deal with Male-Female Relationship issues, most of these questions can be answered in a gender-neutral manner. For example, in the first example given for Girls to answer – “One thing I find attractive in a guy is.....” This question can be answered by a female regardless of whether she is straight, gay, or bi-sexual. It is simply giving an opinion about “Guys” in general. The answer does not focus on sexual orientation, but on qualities in general.]

1. To begin, have girls sit in the inner circle with their chairs. Boys will be in outer circle.
2. The facilitator will explain the rules (respect, right to pass, only talk when in inner circle, listen, no personal names, no put downs). Facilitator will then read the first unfinished sentence. A volunteer from the inner circle will raise their hand to signify that they would like to start. After they give their completed sentence, they will point to the left or right and each person around the circle will then give their reply. They may choose not to answer by simply saying, “Pass.” The same answer can be given several times if that is the best answer they can come up with. There should be no conversation from anyone in the circle or out of the circle while this is going on.
3. When the last girl has given her response, three comments/questions can be taken from the outer circle (boys). During this time there can be a back and forth discussion between the inner (girls) and outer (boys) circles.
4. When discussion has been completed, facilitator will read next unfinished sentence to the inner circle. The same procedure above will be followed.
5. After FIVE unfinished sentences have been completed, have the boys and the girls switch. Now the boys will be answering questions in the same format as above.

Sample sentence stems for the Girls Inner Circle

- One thing I find attractive about a guy is.....
- If a guy likes a girl he should.....
- An important quality in a relationship is.....
- A sign of an unhealthy relationship might be.....
- One personality trait that I think is important is.....
- One turn-off about a guy would be.....
- One way that a guy can show he respects a girl is.....
- Something I just don’t understand about guys is.....

- One reason for ending a relationship might be.....
- When girls are alone, they think about.....
- When guys aren't around, girls talk about.....
- One advantage of being a girl is.....
- Optional sentence stem (ask girls circle to come up with one)

Sample sentence stems for the Guys Inner Circle

- One thing I find attractive about a girl is.....
- If a girl likes a guy she should.....
- An important quality in a relationship is.....
- A sign of an unhealthy relationship might be.....
- One personality trait that I think is important is.....
- One turn-off about a girl would be.....
- One way that a girl can show she respects a guy is.....
- Something I just don't understand about girls is.....
- One reason for ending a relationship might be.....
- When guys are alone, they think about.....
- When girls aren't around, guys talk about.....
- One advantage of being a guy is.....
- Optional sentence stem (ask guys circle to come up with one)

Guided Practice:

In the previous activity, we asked you to finish unfinished sentences about what boys and girls might look for in a person to date or have fun with. You answered questions about qualities that are attractive, how to show respect in a relationship, and how to behave.

Questions for processing:

- *Do boys and girls have different ideas about important qualities in a dating relationship?*
- *Did you have a stereotype about the opposite sex that you learned is not always true?*
- *As you get older and mature, will the qualities you want in a dating partner change? If so, describe an example.*
- *If a boy or girl dates someone several years older, how will that affect the relationship?*
- *Is it possible to be in love with someone whose values are radically different from yours?*
- *What is the best way to end a relationship that is unhealthy or hurtful?*
- *How might dating relationships influence your future goals and dreams for the future?*

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships: Place students in groups of three or four. Assign each group either "healthy relationships" or "unhealthy relationships." Give groups 5-10 minutes to brainstorm and record as many characteristics or their topic as possible. Once all groups are finished, ask a volunteer from a group that was assigned healthy relationships to read the characteristics of a healthy relationship. Post their responses on the wall or board. Then ask for a volunteer from a group that was assigned unhealthy relationships. Repeat this procedure until all groups have reported.

Use the Healthy Relationship PowerPoint to review the characteristics of a healthy and unhealthy dating relationship.

Independent Practice:

Give students a copy of How “Relationship Smart” Are You? (Appendix 3). You may need to define the term infatuation as *short-term, interest in and affection for another; but not deep, sustained, and abiding love.*

This is an individual activity to help you think about what we bring to a relationship. Consider the qualities you have and answer YES, NO, or “I’m Working on It.” You will not have to share your responses with the teacher or others. Once you are finished, answer the two questions at the bottom to decide what you learned about yourself and how “relationship smart” you are.

Closure:

You did an excellent job looking qualities that others might have that would make them more or less attractive. Each of you deserves to have friendships and dating relationships in the future that are fun and respectful and therefore contribute to your health and well-being.

What Does Love Mean?

- *“Love is what makes you smile when you’re tired.”*
- *“Love is a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.”*
- *“When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouths.”*
- *Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day.*
- *You really shouldn't say "I LOVE YOU" unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.*





Unfinished Sentences

For the Girls Inner Circle

One thing I find attractive about a guy
is.....

If a guy likes a girl he should.....

An important quality in a relationship is.....

A sign of an unhealthy relationship might be.....

One personality trait that I think is important is.....

One turn-off about a guy would be.....

One way that a guy can show he respects a girl is.....

Something I just don't understand about guys is.....

One reason for ending a relationship might be.....

When girls are alone, they think about.....

When guys aren't around, girls talk about.....

One advantage of being a girl is.....

Optional sentence stem (ask girls circle to come up with one)

For the Guys Inner Circle

One thing I find attractive about a girl is.....

If a girl likes a guy she should.....

An important quality in a relationship is.....

A sign of an unhealthy relationship might be.....

One personality trait that I think is important is.....

One turn-off about a girl would be.....

One way that a girl can show she respects a guy is.....

Something I just don't understand about girls is.....

One reason for ending a relationship might be.....

When guys are alone, they think about.....

When girls aren't around, guys talk about.....

One advantage of being a guy is.....

Optional sentence stem (ask guys circle to come up with one)



How “Relationship Smart” Are You?

This is an individual activity to help you think about what we bring to a relationship. Consider the qualities you have and answer YES, NO, or “I’m Working on It.” You will not have to share your responses with the teacher or others. At the bottom of the page, write a paragraph about what you learned about yourself.

Knowledge, Skills, Character, and Temperament	Yes	No	Working on it
1. I know what my personal values are.			
2. I understand how personality (mine and others’) affects behavior.			
3. I understand the type of person to whom I am attracted.			
4. I am aware of the differences between maturity and immaturity.			
5. I can distinguish between infatuation and genuine love.			
6. I understand relationships change over time.			
7. I know the difference between “smart” (low risk) dating and “dumb” (high risk) dating.			
8. I am aware of the key things I should learn about someone I’m interested in.			
9. I understand what it means to truly “know” someone.			
10. I can recognize an unhealthy relationship and would have strategies to get out of one.			
11. I can apply positive patterns of problem solving and dealing with conflict.			
12. I know how to respectfully break off a relationship.			
13. I know the steps to take to recover from a broken relationship.			
14. I know the importance of sharing and negotiating within a relationship.			
15. I know how to use effective communication within a relationship.			
16. I understand the importance of forgiveness in relationships.			

Completing this questionnaire helped me understand myself and my relationships better in these ways:

Based on your inventory, how do your responses align with your short-term goals? With your long-term goals?