

# MORE TO THE STORY

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A 6-WEEK TEACHING PLAN  
FOR YOUTH GROUPS

the goodbook  
COMPANY



# NOTES FOR LEADERS

## HOW TO USE THESE SESSIONS

This is a series of six sessions for youth groups, introducing teenagers to some key ideas about God's plan for sexuality and relationships. It is based on *More to the Story* by Jennifer M. Kvamme and is designed to be used in conjunction with the book.

Each session is designed to last about an hour and consists of three parts. Each part consists of a Bible reading, some points to make from the front, and some questions for discussion.

It may be useful to copy the key points or questions into a PowerPoint or worksheet for the young people to follow along.

Leaders will need to prepare by reading the relevant parts of *More to the Story* (indicated in each section). Here you will find more detail to help you articulate the various points well, as well as to prepare for the discussion times.

## EXTRAS AND ADAPTATIONS

You can find additional discussion questions in the back of the book if you would like more of these. You may also like to consider adding an introductory section or activity.

Please note that session 5 (on singleness and dating) has four sections rather than the usual three. You may like to choose the three which best suit your group. Or you may prefer to have a longer session that week, or to cover the material in two sessions.

Please consider how you could best encourage the young people in your group to engage with the book, which goes into more detail on each topic than this teaching plan can cover. It will help them think more deeply and widely about these questions. You may like to encourage them to read the relevant chapters in advance of each session. Alternatively, you may prefer to point them to the relevant chapters after each session, to help them find answers to questions that have arisen from the time you've spent together.

## A FINAL NOTE

*More to the Story* has a chapter on abuse, which is not covered in these sessions. Be aware that some members of your youth group may have had sexual experiences which they did not choose or want, yet which may be causing them to feel deep shame or guilt. As followers of Jesus, who said of himself, "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench" (Matthew 12:20), we should be showing these young people compassion. Do read the chapter on abuse as you prepare to teach, and be ready to point young people to it, or to the resources and helplines mentioned there.

# SESSION 1: THE BIG STORY

## WHY IS SEX SUCH A BIG DEAL TO GOD?

BASED ON CHAPTERS 1 AND 3

### 1. SEXUALITY IS PART OF GOD'S GOOD DESIGN

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 13-17

Read Genesis 2:18-25

Points to make:

- Eve is made perfectly fit for Adam.
- He responds to her with a joyful love song.
- They feel no shame.
- Conclusion: Sex is a good part of God's design—this closeness to another human is good.

Questions to discuss:

- What views do you hear from people around you about sex and sexuality?
- What do people you know think about the Christian view of sex and sexuality, and why?
- What do you think the Christian view of sex and sexuality is?

### 2. SEXUALITY IS MEANT TO POINT TO A GREATER INTIMACY WITH GOD

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 17-21; 33-35

Read Ephesians 5:25-32

Points to make:

- Jesus' relationship with the church (i.e. all believers) is compared to a marriage.
- In fact, marriage was always meant to point to the relationship between Christ and the church.
- We were designed for closeness with one another, yes, but more than that, we were designed for closeness with God; this is the truest intimacy.
- Conclusion: The reason God really cares about our sexuality is that it points to him.

Questions to discuss:

- Why is marriage so central to the Bible's story? In what ways does it picture God?
- "Your sexuality was intended to show you how intensely [God] loves you" (*More to the Story*, p 14). Does that surprise you? Does it make you think about yourself or about God in a different way?
- If God designed sex to point us to him, and we leave him out of the picture, how might this affect our experience of sex?

### **3. JESUS ISN'T PUT OFF BY OUR SEXUAL SIN BUT INVITES US INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIMSELF**

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 36-41*

Read John 4:7-18; 27-29

Points to make:

- The Samaritan woman has a complex sexual past, and Jesus knows this.
- He offers her living water—something to truly satisfy her longing for security, safety, and love.
- Her story shows us that we can come to Jesus as we are—no matter what we have done or what has been done to us.
- When we do, we should expect Jesus to transform us. For example, the Samaritan woman becomes one of the first evangelists. Her relationship with the people in her village is altered.
- Conclusion: We can trust Jesus. Will we let him be the most important person in our lives, in a way that will transform us?

Questions to discuss:

- In what ways is Jesus more trustworthy as a “bridegroom” or soul-partner than any human could be?
- What do you think it means to be united with Christ? What do you think that is like as an experience?
- “God’s plan for sexuality isn’t just about sexuality” (p 17). What is it about? Does this make you think about your own sexuality or relationships in a different way?

# SESSION 2: BODY & INTIMACY

## WHY IS SEX “GOOD” IN MARRIAGE BUT “BAD” BEFORE IT?

BASED ON CHAPTERS 4 AND 9

### 1. YOUR BODY IS YOU!

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 43-47*

Read Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7

Points to make:

- We sometimes think of ourselves as being “stuck in” our bodies—like they are separate to our real selves. We may be uncomfortable with our bodies for many reasons.
- God made people in his image—humans are the pinnacle of creation. Our design is good.
- God didn’t create a spirit human and then think up something to put it in. He formed a body, Adam, and gave him life.
- Conclusion: Your body is you, made incredibly in the image of God, who gives it life. So how we treat our bodies really matters.

Questions to discuss:

- What does it mean to be made in God’s image?
- Do you tend to assume God cares more about your heart or about your outward actions? What do you think God’s perspective on this is really?
- Have you ever felt that your body is bad? How does Genesis 1:26-27 help you?

### 2. SEX, WHEN WRONGLY USED, IS DESTRUCTIVE

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 99-103*

Read 1 Corinthians 6:13-20

Points to make:

- When two people have sex they become “one flesh.” Sex is designed to connect people for good. It’s not straightforward to separate afterwards.
- This is why marriage is the right context for sex—in marriage, both partners promise commitment.
- (But this doesn’t mean that getting married is a guarantee of happiness or of a completely healthy sex life.)
- Having sex outside marriage is a sin against yourself (v 18). It will cause you pain.
- Conclusion: God wants you to save sex for marriage because it’s good for you.

Questions to discuss:

- What are some promises that our culture makes around “sexual freedom”? As you watch people around you, have you seen those promises delivered on over the long run?

- Why is a committed, loving marriage the right context for sex?
- Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. What hope is there for those who have made sexual choices they regret?

### **3. AVOIDING SEXUAL SIN MEANS WE ARE HONORING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS**

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 48-51; 103-106*

Read 1 Corinthians 6:13-20 again

Points to make:

- Paul says that if we are believers, we are joined with Christ.
- This is about our bodies, not just our souls. Our bodies are “members of Christ” and “temples of the Holy Spirit.”
- Christians have intimacy with Jesus, who died to save us and rose so that we can have eternal life (v 14). This is the best possible relationship, worth protecting.
- But if we sin sexually, we are compromising that relationship.
- Conclusion: The best reason to avoid sexual immorality is that we love Jesus and he loves us.

Questions to discuss:

- Why does what we do with our bodies matter to God?
- Does chastity guarantee that God will be pleased with us?
- What specific, practical means does Jesus give to us, both as individuals and in community with other believers, to help us draw closer to him and truly experience him as our greatest treasure and joy?

# SESSION 3: IDENTITY & GENDER

## WHY DOES IT MATTER WHAT PRONOUNS I USE?

BASED ON CHAPTERS 5 AND 7

### 1. GENDER IS A CRUCIAL PART OF GOD'S DESIGN

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 75-82 and 110-112*

Read Genesis 1:27 and 2:18

Points to make:

- Our gender is a core part of how we are created and how we reflect our Creator—it is not incidental.
- Adam couldn't fulfill God's commands on his own. He needed a "helper."
- This word doesn't mean assistant or sidekick. God is also described as a helper. It is a powerful word.
- Men and women need to work together. This applies in marriage (you need both genders to procreate) but also in every sphere of life.
- Conclusion: God made the two genders to complement each other. We need each other. His design of two genders is good!

Questions to discuss:

- What do people around you say about gender?
- Think back to what we learned in the previous session: your body is you, not separate from you. How does that impact our view of gender?
- When have you seen men and women needing each other and complementing each other?

### 2. WE SHOULD EMBRACE OUR GOD-GIVEN GENDER. BUT THIS DOESN'T NEED TO MEAN FOLLOWING STEREOTYPES

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 75-77 and 82-87*

Read Ephesians 5:22-30 and Genesis 25:27-34

Points to make:

- There are distinctions between the two genders, which we need to honor.
- One example of this is slightly different commands to the different marriage partners.
- But this does not mean embracing every male/female stereotype.
- For example, Jacob is portrayed as doing traditionally feminine things—cooking and staying indoors—yet he was the one chosen by God, not Esau the hunter.
- Conclusion: Don't mix up honoring God's design for gender with following every cultural stereotype.

Questions to discuss:

- The most obvious way in which God designed the genders to come together is in procreation. But not everyone has biological children. How can the genders work together to "bring life" in metaphorical ways?



- What gender stereotypes do you see in the culture around you? What do you think it looks like to honor God’s design for gender without just slipping into stereotypes?
- Read the section in *More to the Story* on pronouns (p 86-87). How can we be good friends to people who are questioning their gender?

### **3. GOD GIVES US AN IDENTITY. WILL WE LET HIM DEFINE US?**

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 53-61*

Read Genesis 17:5 and Colossians 3:9-11

Points to make:

- God gave Abram a new identity based on what he would become.
- This identity was bigger and better than what Abram dreamed of for himself.
- Abram was asked to embrace that identity even though he couldn’t yet see its fulfillment.
- Today, God speaks a new identity over everyone who follows him. We have a new self.
- This identity is unshakable and profound, unlike many of the identities we speak over ourselves—including nationality, class, sexual “orientation,” and anything else.
- Conclusion: God gives us our identity. We can trust this more than any identity we give to ourselves.

Questions to discuss:

- What do people around you tend to find their identity in? Have you ever seen someone’s identity crumble when that part of them changed?
- Read the section “Three Layers of Identity” (*More to the Story*, p 58-59). What are you most drawn to here? What do you think it will look like to let God define you?
- When might it be hard to trust what God says about our identity? Why is it worth it?

# SESSION 4: DESIRE & ORIENTATION

## DOESN'T GOD WANT ME TO BE HAPPY?

BASED ON CHAPTERS 6 AND 10

### 1. SEXUAL DESIRE IS GOOD WHEN IT FITS WITHIN GOD'S DESIGN

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 63-66

Read Song of Solomon 7:6-9a and 8:4, 6

Points to make:

- The Bible isn't embarrassed about sexual desire. It is a good part of God's design.
- But sexual passion is not to be aroused or invited before its time. It is not good when it is not the right time or context.
- As we read in session 1, the marriage relationship is designed to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32).
- So, it's no wonder that the love between a married couple is supposed to be strong. It should reflect the strength of God's feeling toward us (Song of Solomon 8:6).
- Conclusion: Sexual desire is good when it fits within God's design.

Questions to discuss:

- Why do you think God made it so that humans have such strong sexual desires? What is the good purpose of our desires?
- Why is it a problem when our desires arise at the wrong time or in the wrong context?
- When you desire something that you know is not good (this might not be sexuality-related), how do you deal with it? Do you think you deal with it well?

### 2. WE SHOULD NOT ACT ON DESIRES WHICH GO AGAINST GOD'S DESIGN

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 109-114 and 118-119

Read Romans 1:18-32

Points to make:

- We are born into a world that points to God as the divine Creator.
- But we all turn away from God and choose to worship other things. This is what sin is: trusting, worshiping, and prioritizing things other than God.
- When someone gives in to their desires and engages in a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex, this is sinful.
- This is because it is "contrary to nature"—i.e. it is not how God designed human relationships. It is turning away from God and his design.

- At some point, we all do things that do not fit with God’s design (see v 29-31). None of us are holy by ourselves—we all need forgiveness through Jesus.
- Conclusion: When we desire something that does not fit with God’s design, we should say no to it. This includes any relationship outside of a committed marriage between one man and one woman.

Questions to discuss:

- In what sense is sin about worship?
- Why are same-sex relationships sinful? (We will talk more in the next section about the experience of being attracted to someone of the same sex. For now, focus on actions, not feelings.)
- Sometimes Christians can give the impression that gay sex is the greatest sin. What is wrong with this stance?

### **3. WE NEED HELP FROM JESUS TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION**

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 66-73 and 114-117*

Read James 1:13-15 and Ephesians 4:19-24

Points to make:

- We are all tempted toward things that are not godly. These desires often feel very natural.
- We don’t need to feel guilty about being tempted. But we do need to submit our desires to the rule of Christ.
- When we allow our desires for ungodly things to take root inside us (even when we haven’t acted on them physically), this is sin.
- So we need to take our temptations (whatever they are for) very seriously.
- As Christians we should be oriented toward Jesus—desiring him above all.
- He empowers us to put on a “new self,” giving us strength to do God’s will.
- This does not necessarily mean that our patterns of attraction will change, although some people have experienced this.
- Conclusion: Take your temptations seriously, and ask Jesus for help to orient your desires toward him.

Questions to discuss:

- In James 1:13-15, what is the progression from temptation to sin? Can you give examples of what each stage of the process looks like?
- Read “A Battleground and a Window” (*More to the Story*, p 70-71). How does this impact the way you think about temptation and how to deal with it?
- What kind of culture and environment must we cultivate in our youth group and our church so that those who are attracted to people of the same sex will find welcome and support as they seek to follow Jesus?

# SESSION 5: SINGLENES & DATING

## WHAT ARE GOD'S PRIORITIES FOR MY ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS?

BASED ON CHAPTERS 8, 11, AND 12

This session has four sections rather than the usual three. You may like to choose the three which best suit your group. You may prefer to cover all the material in two sessions.

### 1. SINGLENES IS NOT SECOND BEST

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 89-95

Read 1 Corinthians 7:8, 17-24, and 32-35

Points to make:

- Paul says it is better to be single.
- We often focus on changing our situation, but Paul tells us that while changing your situation is fine, the most important thing is your relationship with Christ.
- Singleness can free you to have greater focus on God.
- Conclusion: Don't fret about being single. Singleness can be good.

Questions to discuss:

- What words come to mind when you think of lifelong singleness? Does 1 Corinthians 7 shift your perspective?
- Read the section "Singleness Is Not Loneliness" (*More to the Story*, p 94-95). What are some ways in which a Christian community can ensure that no one feels alone?
- What are some practical ways in which you can make the most of being unmarried, for Jesus?

### 2. MARRIAGE REQUIRES SACRIFICE AND SUBMISSION

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 95-97; 111-112; and 137-138

Read Ephesians 5:1-2 and 22-33

Points to make:

- A husband is called to love his wife as Christ loves the church—nourishing, caring, honoring, and giving himself up for her.
- A wife is called to lovingly submit to and respect her husband out of honor for Christ.
- This doesn't mean marriage is about the husband always getting his way. Both spouses are called to make sacrifices for each other.
- This is like Jesus—who submitted, served, and sacrificed himself for us.
- Conclusion: Marriage is not just about good feelings or a sense of security. It is hard!

Questions to discuss:

- How do people around you define love? How does the Bible define love?

- What is marriage supposed to look like? What is great about this? What is challenging about this?
- What would you look for in a potential spouse and why? How does Ephesians 5 influence your thinking?

### **3. PORN DISHONORS OTHERS AND YOURSELF**

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 121-128 and 131-133*

Read Matthew 5:27-29 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

Points to make:

- We can sometimes think that watching porn is harmless.
- But Jesus says that it is very serious just to look at a person lustfully.
- It is as bad as adultery—it is violating that person, even though it is only in your mind. You are using that person as an object rather than honoring them as a person made in God’s image.
- We are called to honor one another.
- This is God’s will—it is something he helps us with.

Questions to discuss:

- Why does Jesus take lust so seriously? Do you think he wants us to actually gouge out our eyes if they cause us to sin? If not, what does he mean?
- What arguments have you heard people use to justify using pornography? How do you think Jesus would respond to those arguments?
- Read the section “Strategies for Success” (*More to the Story*, p 126-128). If someone came to you for help to overcome a porn addiction, what might you do?

### **4. IN DATING. CAUSE NO HARM**

*To prepare, read More to the Story, pages 131-141*

Read Proverbs 30:18-19

Points to make:

- The “way” of an eagle, a serpent, and a ship is to leave no trace and cause no harm.
- The “way of a man with a virgin” is supposed to be like the eagle, serpent, and ship. A godly man leaves no wounds on his date’s body or heart.
- Both men and women need to think carefully about whether they are honoring and loving their date, or whether anything they are doing could be unintentionally causing harm.
- This includes thinking through how physically intimate it is appropriate to be. (And this is not just about not having sex.)
- Conclusion: The Bible doesn’t talk much about dating specifically, but God calls us to holiness, self-control, and honor in every aspect of life, including our dating lives.

Questions to discuss:

- What does it mean to cause harm to your date? What does it mean to show them honor?
- Read pages 135-136 of *More to the Story*. What guidelines would you want to set up to help ensure you have a healthy dating relationship?
- Why is it important that Christians date only other believers?

# SESSION 6: THE BIG STORY (AGAIN)

## IS IT ALL WORTH IT?

BASED ON CHAPTER 2 AND THE CONCLUSION

### 1. WHAT WE DO SEXUALLY IS REALLY ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 23-31

Read Genesis 3:1-13

Points to make:

- God warned Adam and Eve that if they ate from this tree, the result would be death.
- The serpent questions whether this is really true: “Did God actually say...?”
- Adam and Eve should have trusted God! When they eat, they gain knowledge of evil, and it immediately affects their sexuality (among other things)—they feel shame.
- We sin when we distrust God’s good intentions for us—when we worship other things more than him.
- Conclusion: The Christian sexual ethic isn’t just about keeping the rules. It’s about our attitude toward God and our relationship with him in Jesus.

Questions to discuss:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your level of confidence in God as the one who can best define and provide what is truly good? Can you say why?
- What commands of God do you hear people questioning most often?
- How does it change your perspective on sexuality and relationships when you put them in the context of your relationship with God in Jesus?

### 2. JESUS IS WORTH GIVING EVERYTHING UP FOR

To prepare, read *More to the Story*, pages 151-154

Read Matthew 13:44 and 2 Corinthians 4:17

Points to make:

- The man in this parable finds one thing of great value and sells everything else for it.
- This is done in joy! The treasure might cost everything, but what is gained is far greater.
- If you feel like following Jesus is costly, you’re right. He does ask us to walk away from anything that competes with him.
- But it is also worth it. We are being invited into intimacy with God, which lasts forever.
- Conclusion: Following God’s commands about sexuality is worth it because what we gain (Jesus) is much greater than what we lose.

Questions to discuss:

- What might following Jesus require us to give up? What does he offer that makes it worth it?

- Read John 17:20-26. What does Jesus' prayer for all believers reveal about what he most desires for us? How can we experience that more fully?
- What would you say to a friend who asked you why Christians save sex for marriage or why Christians don't agree with gay relationships?

### **3. WE CAN HOLD OUT OUR HOPE IN JESUS TO OTHERS**

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Points to make:

- We are all sinners in one way or another.
- The only thing that justifies us is the grace of God in Jesus Christ.
- We need to be committed to God's vision for our sexuality.
- But we also need to acknowledge that there is hope for even the worst sexual sinners.
- Conclusion: Don't compromise on sexual sin, but don't dismiss people as hopeless sinners—instead consider how to hold out the hope of the gospel to them.

Questions to discuss:

- What can Christians do to love and welcome people who aren't following God's design for sex and relationships?
- How would you explain the hope that Jesus offers, if you were talking to a non-Christian friend?
- What will it look like in your life to grow in your relationship with Jesus, to follow his commands, and to share the good news with others?