

Session 3: Your Family; Your School of Love

Supplies for this session: sticky notes or name tags.

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)
 - Acknowledge the participants for their work thus far.
 - Introduce what the session will be about:
 - The four realms of heart and how that applies to their life
 - Their relationship with their parents
 - Distractions to living a lifestyle of purity
 - Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A greater understanding of what love means, and how this greater understanding can lead to more fulfilling relationships
 - Steps to creating the kind of relationship that they would really love to have with their parents
2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)
 - *Question Game*
 - Everyone stands in a circle
 - The youngest goes first by asking a question to their left
 - The next person then asks a question to their left as soon as person 1 finishes
 - Keep going in the circle
 - If someone hesitates, or answers a question they are out*
 - Keep going until there is a winner
 - *Questions **can't be repeated in a round until somebody gets out**
3. Review the Homework (10 minutes)
 - Go over the answers to these questions regarding the DP Lecture they watched this week. Keep in mind that the youth may have a variety of answers. It may be a good idea to address these answers in a discussion format with you making the concluding points so everyone is on the same page.
 - **What is the “heart” of God?**
 - **What makes God a “personal God”?**
 - How can our surroundings help us to understand God?
 - This week the youth were to record a moment they saw or experienced God each day. Have each person share at least one highlight from this week.
 - Share which song or the photo the youth chose that they felt reminds them of God. They can either share a portion of the lyrics or why they feel moved by this song.
4. II Shim Session Reading (10 minutes)
 - **Read through the “Session 3 Reading.”**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.

- Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren't listening to one person's voice the whole time.**
5. Discussion: (15 minutes)
- Split into small groups or discuss as one large group. Make sure each person has an opportunity to share. The point of discussions is to allow each person to share their personal thoughts and feelings on a topic, so no answer is right or wrong. **It's a good idea to acknowledge each person after sharing and thank them for having the courage to do so.**
- What is your favorite family tradition?
 - What have you learned from being in the sibling realm of heart?
 - What is one area of your life that you could be more understanding towards your parents?
6. Activity: Identifying Labels (15 minutes)
- Give each person two sticky notes or name tags.
 - Ask everyone to make a list of all the labels they give their parents (each parent individually), both good and bad.
 - **It's a good idea to give an example of a label you have given to your parents in the past such as, "bossy" or "dorky."**
 - Ask everyone to write down the most common label they give to each parent.
 - Give everyone an opportunity to share about these two points either in small groups or in pairs:
 - What is the biggest label they have give for each parent?
 - How could your relationship with your parent change if they stopped labeling them that way?
7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)
- Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
- How is your relationship with your parents currently?
 - How would you like your relationship with your parents to be?
 - What can you do to be the son or daughter they want to be?
8. **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**
- Find a unique way to serve and/or take care of your parents this week. Make sure you have a chance to serve your mom and dad. You can serve each of them in different instances. Try to think from their point of view so you can find a service they will truly appreciate. Be ready to share about what you did and their reaction in class next week.
 - Spend time interviewing your parents about their lives using the interview questions in your II Shim packet. Write down the answers to their questions.

- Read from the Cheon Seong Gyeong Book 5, Chapter 1, Section 4: The Family is the Base of Happiness (pages 489- 493). At the end of each paragraph share a summary with your parents about the meaning of that section.
9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)
- Offer a closing prayer focusing on opening up communication between parents and children and learning to see from one **another's viewpoint**.

Session 3 Reading: Your Family; Your School of Love

Our families are the people who help shape us into who we are and who we will become. As babies our parents teach us how to eat, use the bathroom and become self-sufficient. And as we get older we learn how to interact with others from both our parents and siblings. True Parents teach us that the family is the school of love in which we learn how to grow our hearts. And as Unificationists we believe that by working on the relationships within our family we will be able to also learn how to love all people in the world as an extension of our family.

True Parents have brought us the incredible knowledge of the Four Realms of Heart as the blueprint by which we are meant to grow and be able to love as God loves. You can think of the four realms as special classes that teach us how to grow a certain aspect of our heart. The four realms are represented through four stages of relationships that each human being goes through in their family: **children's love, sibling love, conjugal love, and parental love**. The basic idea is that as you get older you learn to become masters of love in each of these areas.

As youth, your job is to receive the love of your parents and return filial piety (love, respect, and honor) back to them. As siblings (and this includes friends along with your actual brothers and sisters) you learn camaraderie, teamwork, loyalty, and friendship. When you get married you experience romantic love, intimacy, and the process of achieving your dreams together. And lastly when you become parents you learn what it **means to love someone so much that there's nothing they could do to stop you from** loving them. Each of these realms should be conquered in sequential order, meaning you should ideally have a good relationship with your parents and siblings/friends before you get married. If we were to skip a realm without mastering it and then jump into a new **realm, it means we haven't grown our ability to love in that way and that will impact us** and those around us negatively. The realms are meant to build upon one another. We are meant to become a good husband and wife before becoming parents. Once we pass through all four realms we will have experienced all the types of relationships God designed for us. And ideally we will have grown our capacity to love so much so that we will have become like God.

While that is God's design, we, however, live in a world that is still reaching towards perfection. That means that many people haven't had the chance to master the different realms of heart. And that includes your parents! They are also still working on learning **to love the way God does. They've been at it for a while so they've made a lot of progress,** but learning to love like God is not an easy task to accomplish. They may not be perfect yet, but they are doing the best that they can. So try to give them a break sometimes, they **are learning how to become the right parents for you! After all, they've never been** parents to you at this stage of your life.

When you were conceived, your parents were so excited to meet you. They waited months and months until the day you arrived. And as you grew they eagerly awaited your first steps, first words, and your first day of school. They wiped your poopy butts, held you when you were afraid of the dark, and prayed for you as you became more independent. You may not always see it, but they love you so much. They are trying hard to balance being involved in your life while still giving you the freedom you **deserve**. **It's not an easy balance to strike, and each person's situations is unique. When communicating with your parents you've probably noticed that you are often coming from different points of view. That's normal and natural! And because of that your parents may say things that upset you. But their true intention is to help you be successful and happy; it's just that sometimes they don't know how to express that in a way you will receive it.**

Here are some examples of what parents might say and what they actually mean. We call it our **"Parent Dictionary Translation"**:

When They Say:	What were you thinking? Are you crazy? Why would you do something like that?	What are you doing watching T.V./playing on the computer? Did you do all of your homework?	I don't like those friends that you are hanging out with. You are getting too close to that boy or girl.
What They Mean Is:	I love you more than life itself and sometimes it makes me so mad that you don't make better choices.	You have so much potential. I want you to have a great future with unlimited possibilities and being responsible in school helps make a foundation for that.	I want you to think about the choices you make in life. We want you to find true love with your future spouse.

In our relationships with our parents it's common that we have built up some concepts about the type of people they are based on our experiences. We call this *labeling* people, and it can be both positive or negative. For instance, we might say **my Mom is "cute" or my Dad is "close-minded."** **The problem with labeling people is that it limits our perspective of them. If we think our parent is a "bad listener," then we automatically don't want to talk to them. Our negative labels define our parents** in a way that keeps them at a distance from us. But the truth about our parents is that they are changing and growing every day, just like we are. And if we keep labeling them a certain way we will never notice that they have actually changed and have become a good listener! **In our society we tend to think our parents aren't cool or don't. In our society we tend to think our parents aren't cool and don't understand what it's like to live in this world. But that's not exactly true. We have to give them a chance to become the best parents that they can be and put down our labels for a while. They may not be as good at technology as you are, but they do know a thing or two about life!**

A healthy relationship between parents and children requires two active parties. Your parents are trying to find the right ways to communicate and support you, and we should do the same! Here are some tips to consider to improve your communication with your parents:

- Think about the situation from your parents point of view. When they tell you not **to do something ask yourself, “why don’t they want me to do this?”**
- Ease their concern with a solution you can commit to. If your parents are worried about you spending too much time with a boy or girl, talk to them about what safeguards you have in place to keep your relationship as just friends.
- **Listen to them, don’t shut them out. If you feel strongly about a topic you should express yourself, but give your parents a chance to be heard as well.**
- Be kind with your words. If you are having a tough conversation be careful not to be insulting or criticizing. They are entitled to their own opinions as are you.
- **Focus on “I” statements such as “I feel like you’re not understanding my point of view,” instead of “you’re not listening to me!”**

The beauty of families is that no matter what you go through, you will still be family! We will all go through our ups and downs in our relationships with our family members. Sometimes your brothers and sisters may drive you crazy, and sometimes you may be so **happy to have them. That’s life with a family! Even though they may not be perfect, we’re lucky to have them.**

Parent Interview Questions

The intention of the interview is to get a deeper understanding of who your parents are and what is really important to them. Be open to the possibility that there is a lot of depth to your parents that you may not have seen quite yet, and that this is an opportunity to see more of that depth.

The way to gain the most from this interview is to really own it. You do not have to ask every question on this list. You are encouraged to create your own list of 5-8 questions. You are welcome to take questions from the list below that you think would be valuable to ask your parents, and you are welcome to create your own questions. You can interview your parents individually or together.

1. What were you like as a teenager?
2. What was your first impression of Dad/ Mom?
3. What is a moment where Dad/ Mom had a profound impact on you?
4. How has your view of life changed when you became a parent?
5. What was I like as a baby?
6. What is your favorite memory of you and me when I was growing up?
7. What was your life like before you joined the church?
8. What was your experience joining the church and why did you join?
9. What is a core belief or commitment that you live by?
10. What really inspires you these days?