

Session 3: Your Family - Your School of Love

Supplies for this session: *Would You Rather* sheet, pens, markers for each person, post-it notes.

- **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 abstinence
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A greater understanding of what love means, and how this can lead to more fulfilling relationships
 - Steps to creating a better relationship with their parents

- **Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)**

Choose one of the following icebreakers to start off the session:

- *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
- *Would You Rather*
 - Give students the *Would You Rather* sheet and give a few minutes for students to circle their choices
 - When ready, read each one out. If they chose A, they will stand at one side of the room. If they chose B, they will stand on the other side of the room. (*For example:* "Would you rather have all the traffic lights you approach be green or never have to stand in line again?" If they chose the A answer, they will go on one side. If they chose the B answer, they will walk to the other side).
 - Do this for each question and they can see who chose similar answers.

- **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. Make short points, but do not spend too much time on this section.
 - 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 moments when they saw or experienced God this past week. Have them turn to the person next to them and take a couple of minutes to share these moments.
- **II Shim Session Reading (15 minutes)**
 - Read through the “Session 3 Reading: Your Family - Your School of Love”
 - Just like the last session, youth will split into partners and take turns reading. Give each a highlighter.
 - After they finish a section, they will highlight one or two main thoughts that stood out to them. They will discuss why those thoughts stood out to them, and then continue reading.
 - **Discussion: (15 minutes)**
 - Post 3 pieces of chart paper on the walls in the room, spread out. Write each of the following questions, one question on each chart paper. Split into 3 groups and have each group stand in front of a question. Give each person a marker (or pen).
 - Say, “Take some time to answer the different questions on the walls. Write your answer on the chart paper. When finished with all 3 questions, walk around again. But this time, you can read the different answers that people have written.”
 1. What is your favorite family tradition?
 2. What have you learned from being in the sibling realm of heart? (Explain that if they do not have siblings, they can think of their close friends).
 3. What is one area of your life that you could be more understanding towards your parents?
 - After you see people are all finished and reading other responses, have everyone sit back down. You can read a few of the responses for each question.
 - **Activity: Identifying Labels (15 minutes)**

- Give each person two post-it notes
- Ask everyone to make a list of all the labels they give their parents (each parent on a separate post-it note), 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 circle the most common negative 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?

- **Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)**

Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their Il 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 hope for you to be?

- **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**

- Find a unique way to serve and/or take care of your parents this week. 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 Il 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 the reading, have a conversation and share your thoughts with your parents.

- **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

The Four Realms of Heart

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. As we get older, we learn how to interact with others from both our parents and siblings. True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, teach us in the Unificationist faith that the family is the “school of love” in which we learn how to grow our hearts. 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. This is seen as the blueprint by which we are meant to grow and be able to love as God loves. The Four Realms are represented through four stages of relationships that each human being goes through in their family:

1. *Children's love*: the love you learn to give and receive as a child
2. *Siblings love*: the love you learn to give and receive with your brothers/sisters
3. *Conjugal love*: the love you learn to give and receive with your spouse
4. *Parental love*: the love you learn to give and receive as a parent

The basic idea is that as you go through life, you will learn to expand your heart and love others in a deeper way.

// Section Recap: The family provides the understanding of how to love others. Throughout our lives, we will go through each of the Four Realms of Heart. By working on our relationships involved in each of these stages, we can get closer to becoming more mature, more loving, and more like God.

Learning to Love Step-By-Step

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 a parent,

you learn what it means to love someone unconditionally - loving someone so much that there's nothing they could do to stop you from loving them.

Each of these realms should be learned 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, which can 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. Ideally, we will have grown our capacity to love so much so that we will then become like God.

// Section Recap: The Four Realms of Heart occur in a specific order. Although they can overlap, they should mainly be worked on in that order as we grow. If we move onto another stage in our lives without improving our ability to love in the previous realm, it can negatively impact the relationships we have.

Understanding Your Parents

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. That includes your parents! They are also still working on learning to love the way God does. They've been working on 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 still be working through things in their lives. They may not be perfect yet, but they are doing the best that they can. So try to give them a break sometimes, because they are still 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. Then, as you grew, they eagerly awaited your first steps, first words, and your first day of school. They wiped your poopy butts, celebrated your achievements, and worked hard so you can have food to eat each meal.

You may not always see it, but they love you so much. This is because each parent expresses love in different ways. 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 situation 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. You may not always see it, but their true intention is for you to 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 frustrates when you make choices like that. I know you know better!	You have so much potential. I want you to have a great future, so being responsible and making time for school will help with that.	Step back and think, "Are the people I surround myself with really helping me become a better person?" We want you to wait until you are more mature and ready to commit to someone.

// Section Recap: When our relationships with our parents are strained, it can be difficult to see the love they have for us. We have to think back to the times when they showed care, guidance, and support. They may not always express their love in a way that we can see or receive, so we need to make an effort to be open to what they are saying or doing.

The Effects of "Labeling"

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 assume they will never be able to listen. Our negative labels define our parents in a way that distances them from us.

However, the truth about our parents is that they are changing and growing every day, just like we are. They, too, have the ability to learn and grow, even if we don't always believe that. If we keep our concepts of them, we will never notice that they have actually changed and become a good listener! 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 a parent and child 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:

- **Switch points of view:** 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 concerns:** 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. Take time to explain the situation to them.
- **Listen to them:** Don't shut them out. Take time to listen and understand. If you feel strongly about a topic, you should express yourself, but give your parents a chance to be heard as well.
- **Think before you speak:** 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 just as you are.
- **Use "I" statements:** 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 and can always find ways to improve our relationships with them.

// Section Recap: Our relationship with our parents is not always easy. However, if we label them and perceive them in a certain way, we cannot be open to the possibility that they can change and grow. We cannot expect our parents to be perfect, and should try our best to communicate and understand 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 do you like about the Unificationist faith?
8. What is a core belief or commitment that you live by?
9. What really inspires you these days?