



Il Shim Parent Packet

One Heart, One Mind

Session 1: All About Il Shim for Parents

Parents Introductory Letter

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Il Shim Program! We are so excited for you to take part in this incredible journey over the next 10 weeks! This program is designed for your child and we hope that you will find it valuable and meaningful in deepening your child's faith in God, understanding who True Parents are in the Unification faith, growing his/her relationship with you, and finding ways to get involved that inspire your child.

As a young adult in today's world, your child may find it challenging to understand the Unification faith and how it can fit into his/her life. That's normal! This time of a teen's life should be about making his/her faith something unique and personal. This is a time for teens to figure out what they believe, why they believe it, and what they are going to do about it. We hope that the Il Shim program serves as a foundation for your child to do just that and more.

How It All Started

The Il Shim program was first created to encourage a purity-based lifestyle for the young people of the Unificationist faith as they prepare to receive the Marriage Blessing. The Marriage Blessing is a significant part of the faith, which provides the unique opportunity for engaged, or already married couples to dedicate their marriage to God, commit their lives to their one and only spouse, and together, work to building a God-centered family that was meant to be created before the Biblical Fall. Today, Il Shim has evolved into a rite of passage that encourages young Unificationists to take responsibility over their ever-growing faith journey as well as provides knowledge of the Unificationist traditions and values.

"Il Shim" is a Korean term that translates to *"One Heart"* or *"One Heart and Mind."* This term, brought into light by Reverend Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who we call True Parents. True Parents are also the founders of the Unificationist faith and inspired the start of the program, which motivates young people in the Unificationist faith to be one in heart and mind with God, our Heavenly Parent. Rev. and Mrs. Moon began and officiate the Marriage Blessing Ceremonies for new and married couples around the world teaching a God-centered family as the cornerstone of a peaceful world. The Il Shim program provides a 10-session curriculum that teaches the efforts of young Unificationists and friends who are

interested in our teachings to grow in both knowledge and practice of their faith. This program is aimed at supporting young people in beginning to build their own unique relationship with God and True Parents and working towards the goal of becoming a new generation of peace.

// Section Recap: Il Shim is a rite of passage, a coming of age, which shows young people that during this time in their lives, they should begin to explore their faith, build a unique relationship with God and True Parents, and keep a purity-based lifestyle while preparing for the marriage Blessing.

Purpose of Il Shim

In keeping with the spirit of this original ceremony, we have adopted the Il Shim program and ceremony for the purpose of supporting young Unificationists in taking ownership over their faith, relationships, and life.

We hope that the Il Shim program will help your child in these four areas of your life:

- Growing their Life of Faith by supporting them in creating a unique relationship with God and discovering tools to support that relationship.
- Deepening their Understanding of Unificationist Traditions by providing the resources for them to discover the value and significance of aspects of our faith, such as True Parents, abstinence before marriage, the marriage Blessing, and living for the sake of others.
- Developing their Relationship with you by encouraging opportunities to create healthy conversations with you through open communication and deepening trust.
- Discovering Ways to Get Involved by connecting them to the people who can help you find ways of serving and getting involved in your local community that are inspiring to them.

// Section Recap: These four areas are what we will be targeting during this program: growing their faith and making it their own, learning about our traditions, opening communication and getting closer to you as their parents, and learning how to plug into your community.

Why Choose Il Shim?

Each major faith has a significant ceremony that recognizes and promotes the inheritance of their faith traditions by their youth, such as the Catholic Confirmation ceremony and the Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Il Shim Ceremony is quite similar to these, as it is meant to be a way to recognize your child's maturity and the growing responsibility he/she is taking in his/her life. This program is just the starting point for them to truly take ownership over their faith, their relationships, and their surrounding community.

Throughout the Il Shim program, you and your child will complete many conditions of faith and will also study the tenants of our faith. We hope that through their study, they will find that our Unificationist faith is something truly valuable and worth committing to. The graduation ceremony is meant to highlight this incredible investment you and your family will make as well as recognize your child's commitment to continuing your path of spiritual growth. The ceremony is an opportunity for your child to make a new beginning and a new commitment in front of God, our True Parents, and their own family and community.

Please read through the requirements and schedule of the next 10 weeks so you will be prepared to support your child. You should also take a look at the Il Shim Pledge so you know what your child will be pledging before God, True Parents, you, and your community:

IL SHIM PLEDGE

1. *I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.*
2. *I will strive to inherit the Unificationist traditions of honoring True Parents, upholding the value of the Blessing by maintaining my sexual purity until the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.*
3. *I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.*
4. *I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.*

Each child will have a unique experience throughout the Il Shim Program. Some may take it more seriously than others, and that's okay. Il Shim is not meant to be a quick fix for any youth. It is simply a foundation and framework for you and your child to navigate through these very important topics at a level that is appropriate for them. Your child is just beginning a life journey of discovering who they are and what they believe in. While the Il Shim leaders are very important in this process, we want to stress the significance of parental/guardian involvement throughout the

program. No one knows your child better than you and this program is meant to highlight your incredible investment. You are the main educators of this program at home, and we are here to support you!

We sincerely hope and pray that as you continue your involvement in the Il Shim Program, your family will become even closer together as you support your child and go through all the requirements of the program.

// Section Recap: Similar to other faiths, Unificationists have a ceremony to mark the point of spiritual maturity. This program will provide the tools necessary for your child to begin the journey of making their faith their own. The Il Shim Pledge targets the four main areas of the program.

What's in this Packet?

In this Parent Packet you will find the in-class readings, discussions, reflection points, activities. You will also find the weekly homework assignments along with some perspective and insights specific to parents. As mentioned, homework each week should be done by parents and youth together so that your child can get the most out of their experience! We recognize that talking to teens can be rather difficult; but we would like to strongly encourage you to take initiative in the homework. Your teen is less likely to approach you about it, so help them be successful by initiating the homework!

Program Completion

- Youth must attend all 9 in-class sessions (which includes a 2-day retreat) as well as the graduation ceremony.
- They are allowed to miss up to 2 in class sessions as long as an instructor can provide a makeup session. If a participant needs to miss more than 2 in class sessions, they will be asked to sign up for Il Shim next year instead.
- All homework must be completed with parents on a weekly basis.

Talking With Teens -- Tips for Better Communication

Parents and teens can bridge the communication gap with a little patience and a healthy measure of R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Here are 6 tips for parents and 6 for teenagers.

By: Neil Osterweil

A parent's view of speech development: it begins in infancy, blossoms in childhood, and stops dead in its tracks at adolescence. A teenager's view of speech development: "My parents don't understand a word I'm saying." You don't need a degree in communications to know that parents and teenagers seem to spend more time talking at and past one another than to or with one another. Chalk it up to different agendas, the stress of daily life, or familiarity breeding contempt. Whatever the reason, adolescents and their folks are as good at making conversation as the construction crew at the Tower of Babel.

But with a little give and take, a lot of patience, and a healthy measure of R-E-S-P-E-C-T, parents and teens may be able to remove the roadblocks hindering two-way communication.

To help understand talking with teens, WebMD interviewed two experts in adolescent development: Laurence Steinberg, PhD, Distinguished University Professor and Laura H. Carnell Professor of Psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia; and Carol Maxym, PhD, who counsels families in Honolulu and Washington, D.C.

Good to Know

First, says Steinberg, parents need to recognize that "although your child doesn't have the same level of knowledge, information, wisdom or experience as you do, he or she has essentially the same logical tools and can see through logical fallacies and lapses in what's sensible."

In other words, the "do-it-because-I-said-so" approach to talking with teens doesn't work anymore. "They can't be bullied around by power-assertive statements by parents that aren't based on any kind of logical reality," Steinberg says.

Teenagers have exquisitely sensitive [lie] detectors, agrees Maxym, who counsels families of troubled adolescents in private practice. "Parents need to be emotionally authentic. Don't try to act as though you are angry when you're really not. Don't try to tell your child 'I'm really hurt when you don't go to school,' when what you really are is angry. Kids know their parents really well and pick up on it, and as soon as you as a parent become inauthentic, you've lost any chance of real

communication," says Maxym.

Research also shows that "the big barrier is in how parents and teenagers define issues," If the parent sees a teen's messy room as a moral issue, and the teen sees it as a matter of choice, they may never reach a mutually satisfactory solution, says Steinberg.

What can you do to communicate better? Our experts offer these tips both parents and teenagers:

For Parents

1. Don't lecture your teen, have a conversation. When parents complain "my teenager doesn't want to talk to me," what they're really complaining about is "my teenager doesn't want to listen to me." Conversation involves at least two people, Steinberg emphasizes.
2. Don't attack. "The conversation between any two people will break down if one of the two is put on the defensive and made to feel he's being accused of something," says Steinberg.
3. Show respect for your teen's opinions. Teenagers can be surprisingly easy to talk with if the parents make it clear that they're listening to the teen's point of view.
4. Keep it short and simple. Maxym urges parents to remember what she calls the "50% rule": "Almost every parent says at least 50% more than he or she should. Shut up. Remember when you were a teen and your parents lectured at you? And you thought, 'Will you please stop; I already got the point!' Stop before your teen gets there."
5. Be yourself. Don't try to talk like your kids or their friends. "You're an adult, so be an adult," Maxym says.
6. Seize the moment. A spontaneous conversation in the car or at home late at night -- any time when you're not rushed -- can make for some of the warmest, most rewarding moments, Steinberg says. "I think for parents, one of the key parts of having good communication with kids is being around enough to capitalize on these moments that invariably don't come up when you expect them to."

5 Secrets for Communicating with Teenagers

By: Debbie Pincus

Does this sound familiar? Your teenage son is taking forever in the bathroom (again), but you need him to get ready so you can get to work on time. You're thinking, "How could I have raised such an inconsiderate kid? He's so disrespectful!" Meanwhile, your child is locked in the bathroom, consumed with his image in the mirror. He's thinking, "No way am I going to school with this pimple on my nose." Outside in the hallway, you start pounding on the door, yelling at him to hurry up. He screams, "God, you just don't understand! Leave me alone!" When he finally emerges, he gives you the silent treatment. Not only that, he's missed the bus, so you have to drive him to school. You end up late for work and completely overwhelmed, wondering, "Why doesn't my kid listen to me? Does he have to fight me on everything?"

Distance and explosiveness are often the only ways your teen knows how to communicate when things get intense—which of course only causes more conflict. You and your teen: two different worlds, two different perspectives—and a giant disconnect that can make communicating a real mystery. As a therapist and the mother of three teenagers myself, I know firsthand that the more you push your kids, the more they get defensive and dig in their heels; they become reactive in the form of explosiveness or shutting down. And they're thinking, "My parents don't have a clue, so what's the point of trying to explain myself? I'll just tune them out." Clamming up or exploding are both ways your teenagers attempt to manage their stress and defend themselves. That's because distance and explosiveness are often the only ways your teen knows how to communicate when things get intense—which of course only causes more conflict.

Here are 5 secrets that I've found to be really helpful personally for communicating with kids through the difficult adolescent years.

1. The secret to opening your child's ears: Here's a simple secret that will help you in everything you do with your teen: No matter how hard it might be, try to start all interactions with your child with understanding, even if you don't fully agree or even quite comprehend what they're talking about. Here's an example: Your teenage daughter is not doing her schoolwork, and instead is online with friends chatting. It drives you crazy because you're thinking, "If she fails another test, her average will go down and she'll never get into college. What kind of future will she have?" Your teen, on the other hand is thinking, "I have to get online and talk with Skyler. If we don't make up after the fight we had in the hall today, all the other girls will be against me and I'll have no one

to hang out with at school tomorrow.” Again, two different worlds. Try to start by saying, “I understand how difficult it is for you when you have a fight with one of your friends. I also know that you need to pass this test tomorrow. Schoolwork is your job and it’s your responsibility to do it to the best of your abilities. Let’s sit down and think of a good way you can manage your time tonight.” Be sure not to say “I understand, but…” which will simply disqualify what you’ve just said. Start from a place of understanding, and try to put yourself in your child’s shoes first before telling her what needs to change. I’ve found that doing this tends to “open kids’ ears.” Instead of feeling like they have to defend themselves against you, they actually listen.

2. Take the emotionality out of the equation. Emotion is your enemy when you’re trying to get through to your teen. Remind yourself that what he says and does is not a reflection on you. You may not like how he’s behaving—or even how he’s thinking—but keep your emotions out of it, even if his behavior impacts you. I’m not saying this is an easy thing to do; it’s tough, but it’s a skill you can learn just like any other. In fact, I tell parents to repeat this slogan to themselves before talking to their kids: “This is just like a business transaction; it’s nothing personal.” When you really think about it, there’s no reason to be mad at your child for being himself. He may be making a poor choice, but the truth is, he might not yet have the skill set to make a better one. So your job is to help guide him to better choices so he can in turn develop a better skill set. When you realize what your job is as a parent, it will help you be less emotional. When you feel frustrated, remember, don’t take it personally. Tell yourself that this is simply a problem to solve, and part of “parenting business as usual.”
3. Ask curious questions…not loaded questions. Ask your teen for his ideas and be collaborative. Let him see that you believe in him and that you’re not mad at him for struggling in his life. When you let him see that you have faith in his abilities and he has the space to work things out on his own, you will begin to develop true confidence in him. Don’t ask loaded questions that put your child on the defensive like, “Why can’t you get up on time? What’s wrong with you?” Instead, try opening a conversation with, “Eli, do you have any ideas for how you might get up on time?” If he says he doesn’t know, offer a few of your own and ask which one would work for him. Let your teen know that his problems are his to solve. Don’t step into his “box.” Rather, you are there to help him figure out solutions—and to let him deal with the natural consequences of his behavior. Your goal is to help your child think for himself, which will in turn help him feel like he has some control over his world. Listen openly to what he says and ask him to think critically about each choice. What will work and what will be

problematic about each decision? What would be the natural consequences of each choice—and how would he feel about dealing with that?

4. Don't be needy; stand on your own two feet. Don't "need" your teen's cooperation, validation, or good behavior. As soon as you need something from your child so that you can feel better, you have put yourself in a vulnerable position because he does not have to give it to you. When you need something and don't get it, you will naturally try harder by controlling and manipulating more. And your teen will become more and more defiant or passively compliant—neither of which is good.

The truth is, you don't need anyone else to prop you up. You can validate yourself and solve your own problems. So if your child is acting out, that's his problem. Your problem is to decide how you will choose to behave toward him. That's in your hands, not his. Ask yourself, "How do I want to act, no matter how he is acting? What can I put up with and what can't I?" Take back your power and say to yourself, "If my child is screaming at me, instead of needing him to stop, I can turn around and walk away and not engage." Let him know you won't talk with him until he can approach you with civility. Here's the truth: when you aren't trying to get your child to change or shape up, you will be able to think of better choices for yourself. And your child will be less defiant because he will have no one to resist. When you're not trying to control him and you're not reacting to him, he will have to wrestle with himself rather than with you.

5. Don't do anything until you're both calm. Another rule of thumb is to avoid doing anything until you and your child have both calmed down. The fact is, you don't have to respond to your child when you are upset, or when your child is upset and in your face. You just don't. You can say nothing. You can take a few minutes or more if you need to. When emotions have evened out, you can sit down and talk with him. It's never good to try to bring up a difficult subject or resolve a conflict in the heat of the moment. So if either you or your child is upset, pause and come back when you can address things in a calmer way.

If you attempt a conversation with your child and he's rude or out of line, that's when you have to hold on to yourself and make sure you don't get dragged into a fight. If your relationship with your child is such that it's impossible to have an open, respectful conversation at this point in time, remember that it's still your job to stay firmly planted. Have a slogan that you say to yourself like, "I'm not going there no matter what." If you can do that consistently, over time the baiting and antagonism should calm down. And don't feel badly if you get pulled back in occasionally—staying strong isn't easy. The good news is that the more you refuse to engage, the easier it will get to stay calm.

Session 2 Reading: Your Heavenly Parent and You

Who Is God, Really?

Who is God? What is God? Is God really there?

If you've ever asked yourself these questions, you are not alone. Having questions about God is a normal part in the search for faith. If you haven't asked yourself these questions yet, then now is a good time to think about them! The many religious groups that have developed over the course of history may differ in their practices of faith. However, they all agree on one thing: there is some type of higher power. This is what we call "God." While each person's relationship with God may be different, we all have one thing in common: we are God's Children, and that makes God our Heavenly Parent. As Unificationists, we call God our Heavenly Parent because we recognize that God has the heart of both a father and a mother.

The pretty amazing thing about God is that we can spend an eternity exploring our relationship with Him/Her. There is no end to the pieces of God we can discover. A big part of that experience is that we are continually growing ourselves. Our relationship with God requires participation from each end, so that means God is responding to whatever we are going through and wherever we are at in our lives. So one day, God may be supporting you in a big test you have coming up, and the next day God may be helping you work out a fight you had with your sibling. It's the same God, just a different situation in life. God is present and wants to be included in all of it!

// Section Recap: It is normal, and even necessary, to question God's existence. We can spend our whole lives understanding who God is. As we put in more and more effort into knowing our Parent, we will be able to see our relationship grow too.

God is Present

Because of God's invisible nature, it can be difficult to think about what it means to build a relationship with our Heavenly Parent. The Divine Principle is our faith's main scripture, which shares God's Truth and a deeper understanding of the Bible. In the first chapter of Divine Principle, we learn about the purpose of creation, and that God's heart behind creating the universe was joy. God wanted to have someone to love and laugh with, and that lead Him/Her to YOU! God loves you and loves all of

His/Her children with the deepest love imaginable. I don't know about you, but that sounds like someone I'd like to get to know!

God made each of us as unique representations of His/Her nature. That means each one of us will have a unique relationship with God. If God created the universe for the sake of joy, then the best place to start when building your relationship with God is there. Where do you feel joy? Who or what makes you smile or happy? Where or when do you feel the most joy? Is there a place that you feel "in your element," such as sports, music, or a subject in school? You may not realize it, but these are all places that God is most present in your life.

God wants nothing more than for you to be truly happy, and He/She wants to experience that happiness with you! It may take some time to figure out the ways that you relate best with God, but you will get there - have patience. Perhaps you're not sure where to start? Here are a few suggestions to consider when finding the ways you experience God best:

- Nature & Creation
- Sports, Music & The Arts
- Passion & Expression
- Holy Environments & Religious Traditions
- Family & Friends

// Section Recap: The Divine Principle says that God created each of us to live with, laugh with, and feel joy with. God wants to be present in our lives, and is with us in everything we do. The relationship that he has with each of us is unique and meant just for us.

This Relationship's A Two-Way Street

Just like every relationship, your relationship with God requires active participation. Imagine you had a friend that you loved very much. Now pretend that you've tried contacting them every day for the past month but they never returned your calls or messages. That's not very much of a relationship is it? The same is true with God. While it may be hard to recognize for now, God is talking to you and reaching out to you every day. God is playing His/Her part in our relationship but we need to do the same. We need to set aside time everyday to talk to God, connect with God, and relate with God. Some people can do that through prayer, some can do it through taking a walk in nature, and some can do by taking care of others. The point is they all work, you just have to find what works for you!

Up until this point, you have either been following your parents' lead as far as spirituality goes, or have been looking for something deeper on your own. It is so important to know where you're coming from in faith journey. Now that you're a teenager, however, it's time for you to take it even further. Try practicing your spirituality in your own time as well as the time you do so with your parents. Take your own initiative to talk to God or invite God into your activities. Say a prayer at the start and end of your day by yourself. If prayer is hard for you, try journaling to God. Try talking to people you respect about God. There are so many ways to start growing in your faith journey. If you are able to take these kinds of steps in your spiritual life, then your relationship with God will grow tremendously!

God is so excited for you to get to know each other on a deeper and more personal level. In our current society God can feel so far away from us. But that was not God's desire. God created human beings so we could interact with our Heavenly Parent in every moment and in a natural way. And that's what it means to have a mature relationship with God. For now, we need time to practice and develop our spiritual life so that we can build up healthy habits. So enjoy the journey and discovery of your Heavenly Parent, He/She is pretty awesome!

// Section Recap: Each relationship we have in our lives takes effort from each person involved. This is the same with our relationship with God. Just like you make effort to message your friends or go on outings with your family, you need to make time for God as well. Invite God into everything you do.

Personal Reflection Points

Consider the areas in your life that you feel the most joy. How can you see or feel God's presence during these activities?

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.

Personal Reflection Points

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 on the next page. 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.

Tips for Parents:

- Your child may have a hard time finding a way to serve you, so don't be surprised if it's something very simple. If you are able to recognize whatever service they have done for you, try to celebrate it. Who knows, maybe the celebration will inspire them to continue serving you?
- When your child is interviewing you, don't be afraid of sharing deeply and sincerely. This is an opportunity to see who you really are and what truly matters to you!
- Scripture reading can sometimes be a challenge with teens so you may have to take the lead when it comes to summarizing and discussing the content. If they don't say much don't worry! The content may be soaking in silently.

Homework Reading - Cheon Seong Gyeong, Book 5

Section 4. The Family Is the Base of Happiness

We cannot live apart from heart. Even if you were the president of a country or possessed unsurpassed authority over the world, if you did not have a place to express your heartfelt joy, what good would it do you? You would not feel life's deep joy from those whom you command - your cabinet members or followers. But in your family this is something you can feel. When you return home from work, you should be able to feel this from your spouse and from your children. You need to be able to share it with pride in the company of others. It is the same with God. Even if He were to restore the entire world, without a family God cannot feel joy. So we do ultimately need to have a family. (25-086, 1969.09.30) The family is the foundation for joy

The family is a good place. It is good because our mother and father, our older brothers and sisters, and our younger siblings are there. Everyone, without exception, feels nostalgic for their hometown, and ultimately longs for their original homeland. People tend to think of their hometown more than their nation. Even though we may live somewhere in the Republic of Korea, we long for our hometown. Our hometown opens and elevates our heart. Love binds us to our hometown in multiple dimensions and in all four directions. That is, we are bound to our father and mother above us, to our spouse on the right or left, and to our sons and daughters below us. Our utmost desire is for happiness centered on love, so we cannot help but long for our original hometown. Then where is God's original hometown? The basis of His original hometown is the recognition by His son and daughter that He is their Father. That is, it is the place where His only son and only daughter, who possess His love exclusively, dwell. It is the place where that son and daughter marry to form a perfect family. (23-151, 1969.05.18)

In the Unification Principle and in the book of Genesis, it is written that everything was created for the sake of human beings. The ideal world we long for exists for the sake of human beings. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is the world in which we live for the sake of others, knowing how to love people. The kingdom of heaven does not exist apart from us. The world in which we know how to serve and love others is the kingdom of heaven. Where is that place? When we think of this question with reference to our own life experience, we see that it is in the family, where we love others and where we are uplifted. When parents look at their child, even one who is immature and mischievous, with a zero score on a scale from one to ten, and nothing to be proud of, they still love him or her more than anyone else. The family is where love is abundant. It is the place where you are elevated to manifest your infinite value. It is the place where happiness dwells. (25-283, 1969.10.05)

The family is the eternally unchanging origin and foundation. It cannot be changed even by parents, much less by siblings or national policies. Nothing in the world can change it, not even God. Therefore, in relation to the family, the term revolution is eternally unnecessary. If the family is a place of love, there is no need for revolution. With regard to love between man and woman, our grandfathers and grandmothers in their youth experienced the same heart of yearning that young people feel today. Our hearts are the same; the feelings of youth are the same. However, the framework of the family is changing and this is creating all sorts of structures and shapes. A loving heart is a loving heart, but the shape of the family is changing. This eventually will bring ruin upon humanity. The family that stands on a solid foundation cannot be swayed by any ideology or thought. On the contrary, such a family transcends and governs every ideology and teaching. Once we establish the family with this standard it will never change, not after ten years, one hundred years, a thousand years, even for eternity. It will instill order in a people and a nation. (25-087, 1969.09.30)

Neither your nation nor the world is the base for your happiness. Your family is. Therefore, your ultimate ideal should not be the world; it is your family. Ideal individuals have to dwell in the family. Your ideal itself has to dwell in the family as well. If such a family were to exist, the father of that family would be an ideal father and the mother an ideal mother. The sons would be ideal sons, and the daughters would be ideal daughters. Then each one of them would be the base of an ideal family. Thus we are all meant to realize ideal families. (104-060, 1979.03.28)

What could be considered a happy environment? A happy environment exists when people are positioned to receive love from their parents, experience the love of their siblings, share conjugal love with their spouse, and love their children. People can bring about the advancement of a nation and the world only when they know all these kinds of love. Thus the foundation of happiness is love, centered on harmonious parents, couples and children in a perfected family. (39-238, 1971.01.15)

We absolutely need a home. Without the home as the base of perfect happiness, the nation and world cannot fulfill their purpose. We have to become parents, spouses and siblings centered on the home God would desire to see. Happiness and discontent both begin from homes and spread out to the nation and world. The home is the beginning point and settlement point that God desires. However, we have not been able to realize the home of God's ideal. Instead, the home is sometimes a place of bad feelings and unhappiness. No one knew that the home, which was to be the base of the greatest happiness, could become the base of despair and distrust God has been working until now to reverse this through indemnity. Unhappiness in the family began from the time of Cain in Adam's family. (24-306, 1969.09.07)

When we have something good, we like to boast about it and advertise it. Wanting to advertise something means that we want to draw other people into a relationship with it. What is it that we like most? First we like our parents most, then we like ourselves, and then we like our children. This is what we have seen in history. Then through what are these are integrated? The family is the base that connects us to each other's lives. Based on the environment that connects our lives together, the family is the basis upon which relationships of love can bloom. (36-290, 1970.12.13)

The family should be a place where we model all relationships on every level. All people without exception determine their life path within their families. They are born in a family, go out from their family to all directions and return to their family from all directions - north, south, east and west - and encounter ups and downs in their family. This understanding tells us that a person who cannot experience happiness in the family should not expect to find happiness on the national level. Even if he were to recover his nation, where would he live in that nation? He would be unhappy, with nowhere to go. Only in the family can we find our parents, our spouse and our children. (188-256, 1989.03.01)

Some people may say that they are satisfied with their work and need nothing more, but that is not true. There may be some fulfillment there, but the workplace connects people through material things. Politics is where people pursue their rights and interests. Even in religion, people seek God in different ways, from all directions. Though they may be able to find God, they will not find love. True love can be found only in the family. Someone may be successful in his company, earning vast sums of money and being recognized by many, but if he does not have a loving family, he is an unhappy man. Even if someone goes into the field of politics, becomes a member of parliament and even the president of his nation, if he has no loving home to which he can return, he will be an unhappy man. Even if someone becomes a famous pastor and a great spiritual leader who is genuinely loved by the members under his or her wing, that love is not enough. We look for a deeper and more central place of love than that; that place is none other than the family. (184-055, 1988.11.13)

Even if someone has unified the entire world, he or she will be unhappy if there is disunity within the family. The realization of the ideal of love has to begin in the family; the family is the haven of happiness. Thus the kingdom of heaven begins in the family. Jesus, who came to this earth to realize the kingdom of heaven, spoke of the day when a bride would be prepared for him. He based this statement on the standard of the family. The family is interconnected in love and is united through love. Love does not change, so it can unite everyone. That is why the love of grandparents, of parents and of husband and wife can be one. In love all can unite, because the nature of love includes unity. Further, love's motive is to create life. The

lives and ideals of a grandfather and grandmother are connected in love, which they bequeath to the parents. In other words, they bequeath everything to their children. Our parents are the children of our grandparents, and we are the children of our parents. The environment that revolves around such love is the kingdom of heaven. (48-010, 1971.08.31)

When we say someone is happy, on what basis do we say this? We cannot call someone happy just because he or she has external ability, power or prestige. Can we say that someone is happy because he or she has great wealth and envies no one? No, we cannot. Can someone be called happy because he or she has worldly knowledge, or is influential enough to move the world? These things alone do not make a person happy. All the people on this earth generally feel, experience, and recognize that the family is the base for happiness. Yet they do not have families that meet the standard of true happiness. That is why the issue is the family. In the family, there must be parents. In the world, a child without parents is called an orphan, and we always feel sorry for orphans. If there are parents in the family, it means there are also husband and wife. It is pitiable to have no parents, but it is also pitiable to have lost a beloved spouse. No matter how much husband and wife love each other, there is no greater sadness than when one of them is bereaved. Moreover, having no children is a great cause of unhappiness for a married couple. (23-011, 1969.05.11)

Suppose that someone were unable to acquire a position that brought authority, power or recognition, and had nothing to be proud of. However, suppose that person had a family with true parents, a true spouse and true children, a peaceful family that was the envy of his community. Such a happy family should share its genuine happiness even beyond the tribe; it should impact society, the people and even the nation. There is no question that such a family would be admired by the people and the entire nation. If such a family emerged on earth, representing both the people and the nation, without doubt the world would honor that family. (23-012, 1969.05.11)

We should be willing to make sacrifices in order to recover the family. If the father's self-sacrifice saved his family, the children would say, "Father, you have worked so hard!" If his sacrifice moved his wife to the very marrow of her bones, she would say, "Oh, my love! I am so grateful to you!" This is the way true people are. The individual sacrifices for the family. In a family, the mother makes sacrifices for her husband and children, and the children in return offer devotion to their parents and love their siblings. A family that is united in this way is a happy family. A family where the members strive to serve one another, giving fully of themselves, will experience God in their midst. The family that can embrace God will eternally remain an ideal family. The family is the training center for life in the kingdom of heaven. (61-215, 1972.08.31)

The kingdom of heaven is the world in which we love all elderly people as we do our parents, we love all humankind as our brothers and sisters, and we love those of our own age as we do our spouse. The kingdom of heaven is the world where we live based on this universal view of people, expressed in the different realms of heart that we experience in the family. A social structure that expands based on families made up of such people is like the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is a global extension of our own family, filled with our brothers and sisters. (151-085, 1962.10.07)

What is the kingdom of heaven? It is the place where we can love the people of the world as we love our own family members. People who can do that are the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Grandfather and grandmother, father and mother, couples, siblings and children make up four generations. They are a textbook in the form of a family, a textbook through which we can experience the true love of the universe as citizens of the heavenly kingdom. The family teaches us as if it were a textbook. People who live this way experience no national barriers, even after they go to the spirit world. Wherever they go, wherever they are, the road opens up for them. (129-098, 1983.10.01)

The kingdom of heaven is where husband and wife go after attaining complete oneness through God's love, and is where the children who are born to such a couple go. It is where we go with the family, tribe and people who have attained oneness with God at the center. Therefore Jesus, who did not have a family while he was on the earth, could not enter the kingdom of heaven; he dwells in paradise. Only husbands and wives who have been brought together based on God's love can enter the kingdom of heaven. It is a world where the principle of relationship as husband and wife applies. That is why only families can enter the kingdom of heaven, and each family should bring its tribe and nation along with it. (018-331, 1967.08.13)

Your family is in the position to represent the sovereignty of the heavenly kingdom. Parents represent the sovereignty, children represent the citizens, and material possessions represent the land of that nation. Consequently, being devoted to your parents is the same as being patriotic to your nation and also leads you to fulfill the way of a saint on the world level. (35-306, 1970.10.30)

The four-position foundation is formed when the three types of love-parental love, conjugal love and filial love - are realized. God will surely appear in the place where this four-position foundation has been fulfilled. God dwells in the place where the love of the four-position foundation is secured. It is there that we live and attend God for eternity. That place is the foundation for the kingdom of heaven. (47-224, 1971.08.28)

When people are perfected as the object partners of God, the incorporeal God's ideal of love is substantiated. When people completely unite in mind and body and mature in character with God as their center, they become eternal object partners of God's life, love and ideal. Once Adam and Eve become ideal individuals as God's children, they will form an ideal family, then an ideal society, nation and world, and realize the kingdom of heaven of harmony and unity. In their lives they will experience ideal happiness and bliss in resonance with absolute love. (135-011, 1985.08.20)

Life in the kingdom of heaven begins in the family, not elsewhere. The kingdom of heaven is a multidimensional extension of the family, not something separate from the family realm. When you embrace your husband or wife, therefore, you should think that you are in harmony with all the men or women of the world. In this way, you make the condition in your family of having loved all humanity. (30-083, 1970.03.17)

The extension of the ideal family is the ideal nation, and the extension of the ideal nation is the ideal world. The extension of the ideal world is the ideal cosmos. When that is realized, since the heavenly kingdom is the extension of the family model, people who have experienced the way of true love in the family are set to be welcomed anywhere they go in the world. They will be able to travel freely in the heavenly world. (239-096, 1992.11.24)

The family is a training camp that equips people to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is a training ground. The world is inhabited by people just like our grandfathers and grandmothers. If we expand the family, we have the world. The population of this world is composed of people of the age of your mother and father, the age of your spouse and the age of your children. Therefore, people who expand in all directions the training that they received in their families, and live within a realm of love that serves people in all directions, will enter the kingdom of heaven. The family is the training ground that makes it possible for people to go straight to the kingdom of heaven. (143-072, 1986.03.15)

The family is the place where we can feel the joy of creation on behalf of the invisible God. When we look at the world, we find people who are like our children, people who are like us, people who are like our father and mother, and people who are like our grandfathers and grandmothers. Imagine that you had a yardstick to measure children, another to measure spouses, another to measure parents and another to measure grandparents. Putting all of these together, you could form the body of one family. When you extend the family, you have the world. Look at your own family's situation. If you make all of them - children, spouses, parents and grandparents - the subject partners, and make the world their object partner, the two will go round and

round as plus and minus. People who live on earth interacting in this way enter the kingdom of heaven. This world becomes the training ground that opens the way for you to go to heaven. (254-246, 1994.02.13)

The family is the training ground that prepares you to conquer the ideal nation and the ideal world with love. Moreover, it is the training ground that prepares you to conquer the heavenly kingdom and even God Himself. There, if you cast a net of love and pull it in with all your strength, the world will be pulled to you, the spirit world will be pulled to you, and even God will be pulled to you. In the end, an ideal family is where we fish to catch the universe with love. (106-026, 1979.11.04)

God is the vertical Parent. He will never be apart from you, for all eternity. The reason we have to attend our parents is to receive training in attending God, who is the vertical True Parent in the eternal world. The heavenly kingdom is the world of love. The world of love exists with the air of love, and the family is the place that trains you to adapt to that environment. True love contains the concept of giving. It does not mean that you can act as you please for yourself. If you think you can relax and be comfortable in your own home, you are wrong. It is actually a difficult path to follow. (183-336, 1988.11.09)

People who go the way of filial piety - attending their grandparents and parents in the family - and apply these lessons to the world, will find that they can relate to everyone, anywhere. Even if they go to the spirit world and meet people who have lived in past ages, they will be welcomed. Right there, equality, harmony and unity emerge from the north, south, east and west. When this center of equality, harmony and unity appears, freedom emerges. Freedom means being with God. Once you reach that level, all things of creation will welcome you. That is freedom in the truest sense. (216-302, 1991.04.14)

Our journey through life consists of becoming a son or daughter, a brother or sister, and a husband or wife who can receive and practice God's love. It is a journey to become a husband or wife and love our sons and daughters from the position of second creators, just as God loved Adam and Eve. The beginning is love, the process is love and the end is also love. As the perfect product, after being manufactured according to the specifications of love, we go to the kingdom of heaven. When we actualize the kingdom of heaven, we do not do so as individuals but as whole families. (226-308, 1992.02.09)

In a family there are grandfathers and grandmothers, father and mother and also sons and daughters. It is the same in the world. If you are trained to love people in the world who are the same age as your grandfather and grandmother, your father and mother, and your children, more than you love your own family members, you

will become a perfect being who can relate at any time to the multitudes in the heavenly world. (236-150, 1992.11.04)

Is yours a family in which the father and mother, the couple and the children are united in unchanging love? Is your family a treasure that the universe cannot continue without, a family everyone aspires to emulate? If we expand such a family horizontally, we create a tribe that God can love and cannot release. Yet even if we expand that foundation to a people and a nation, that nation is not enough. We need the world, and even that is still not enough. We cannot reach perfection unless we reach the stage of governing by the authority of the love that connects and unites the spirit world with the earthly world. If we do not reach that stage, there is no way for humanity to be liberated. (141-117, 1986.02.19)

Love is the reason God created man and woman as the ideal of His creation. That is why people who have lived centered on love enter the kingdom of heaven. If you compare the kingdom of heaven to a barn where the harvest is stored, the family is the harvest. A man and a woman who have become husband and wife centered on love enter the kingdom of heaven with their family. When you perfect your home on the earth by creating such a family, your entire hometown will welcome you. You will be a model son or daughter and model grandson and granddaughter whom God can embrace and love. When you put these teachings into practice in your own family, you will stand in a position from which you can go straight to the heavenly kingdom. (213-202, 1991.01.20)

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?

Session 4 Reading: Becoming the Best “Me”

Think for a moment about someone in your life that you look up to. What is a quality about them that makes you respect them? When we think about these people, and even some of the well-known people in history who have impacted the world, we see a few common qualities. One of them can be their ability and desire to make a positive impact on the world around them. When we hear stories of people who have overcome insurmountable odds and persevered to be victorious, we can't help but feel the tugs of our heart strings. Each of us wants to be a part of that kind of story. What if we could be remembered as someone who made a positive difference in the world? Is it even possible? If so, how?

Living with Integrity

Rev. Moon's personal motto for his life is “Before conquering the universe, I must first conquer myself.” What does it mean exactly to “conquer myself”? It means to become a person of *integrity*. Having integrity means being a person who is honest and righteous. A person of integrity will do what they know is right, even if others don't agree. They will make efforts to follow their internal moral compass. Many people can talk about what it means to be a good person, but there aren't many people who practice what they preach. We need to become people who can match what they say and believe with what they do.

It can be hard to practice being a person of integrity in today's society. Perhaps your friends at school don't have the same values as you. They can put you in a situation where you are being pressured to do or say something you don't want to. Have you ever felt your friends were pushing you to do something even though you felt it wasn't right? That's the effect of peer pressure. This is not the healthiest environment to be in. You should choose environments where you and your conscience can feel clear. Your friends are some of the most influential people in your life, so it's important to surround yourself with people who will help you become a better person - not people who bring you down. If you want to be smart, be with people who are smart. If you want to be successful, be with people who are successful. You **are** your environment, and you have the choice to decide with whom you surround yourself. If you feel like some of your friends aren't good for you, it's time to walk away. It may be hard to do at first, but your life will start moving in a better direction.

In our world, it can be hard to stand up for something that is not popular, or widely accepted, by society, and that's why we have to practice being people of integrity. However, we also have to strike a balance between being Godly people and loving

others as our brothers and sisters. We may not agree with the lifestyle choices of others, but that doesn't warrant treating them poorly or judging them. God's heart towards all of His/Her children is nothing but love. God never judges us or holds things against us, so we should do the same with others. This is the ultimate standard with which we should hold ourselves up to.

// Section Recap: Integrity means making the right choices despite the circumstances. Having the right crowd around us can make it easier for us to make the right choices. Surround yourself with people who will lift you up, not bring you down. You are who you surround yourself with.

Making a Difference

If we can become people of true character who can balance integrity and love, we can also become people who can positively impact the world around us. We can become the people who can create God's home here on earth. In the Unificationist faith, we call God's kingdom on earth *Cheon Il Guk* (Chun – eel – gook). True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, have taught us that we should become owners of Cheon Il Guk, meaning that we take action into making this world God's kingdom – God's home.

An owner is someone who takes responsibility over something. If you own a car, you take care of it. You fill it up with gas when it's empty, you get oil changes regularly, you clean it, and maintain all of its parts so it runs well. As a Unificationist, becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk means we take care of the things around us as God intended. If our physical environment is covered with littered, we clean it up. If the people in our environment aren't treating each other with love and respect, we speak up. If someone is hurting, we lend a helping hand. When our conscience urges us about a particular situation, we step up and do something about it.

One of the greatest parts of becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk is that we can help create it with our talents and interests. Each of us has some unique passions and skills that we have developed over the years. Some of you may have a subject in school that you excel in or really enjoy. Some of you may have a passion for sports, technology, music, or one of your hobbies. These are all important parts of what makes you who you are, and God wants you to be excellent in those areas. Becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk also means that you can use your passions and skills to make the world a better place. Use your talents to gain influence in your community and in society. Be the best at what you do, and see how others gravitate towards you.

When people think about changing the world, they often think that they are too small to make a difference. We turn to those who have money, power, or intelligence and tend to rely on them to make the right choices for society. However, we cannot just count on others to make the world a better place. You matter, and you can make a difference anywhere you are. God designed each of us with the potential to do great things. Even if you don't think you have much to offer, remember that there is no one in the world like you. You are the only one who can offer your insights, your thoughts, and your impact to the world. The world needs you just the way you are!

// Section Recap: Being an owner of Cheon Il Guk means taking action and making God's kingdom on earth a reality. As God's children, we are entrusted with the responsibility to change this world for the better. Don't rely on the rich and famous to change society. Use your talents and passions to gain influence and attract others.

Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

When people talk about you, how do you want to be remembered?

What is one of your greatest passions/interests, and how could you use that to impact the world around you either now or in the future?

Make a list of 3 things you can do this week to impact someone or something around you.

This Week's Homework:

1. Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Gerry Servito entitled "What is our Purpose?", http://dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/creation-part-3/ After watching the lecture, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - What is indirect dominion and direct dominion/perfection?
 - Why did God give us freedom and responsibility?
 - What are life and "death" elements and how do they impact you?

2. Read from the Cheong Seon Gyeong, Book 12, Chapter 3, Section 2: High Noon Settlement and a Life of Resonance (pages 1310-1313). At the end of the reading, share a point, or even a question, that stood out to you with your parents.

3. Use the list of 3 things you came up with during your reflection today to impact the world around you. Try to complete all three by the next session.

Parent Tips:

- At this age reading Divine Principle is a bit advanced. This is the reason we are using DP lectures online by great speakers. Encourage them to share their own answers to the questions as well as listen to your answers.
- Scripture reading can sometimes be a challenge with teens so you may have to take the lead when it comes to summarizing and discussing the content. If they don't say much don't worry! The content may be soaking in silently.
- If you feel up to it, try thinking of your own way to impact the world around you. Share them with your child and perhaps invite them to help you complete them! It's a great opportunity to model a life of service, and it could be fun!

Homework Reading: Cheon Seong Gyeong, Book 12

Section 2. High Noon Settlement and a Life of Resonance

High noon settlement is possible when there is no shadow. When the mind and body become one, the shadow disappears. When a couple becomes one, the shadow disappears. When the sun is in the east, the shadow is cast toward the west. When the sun is in the west, the shadow is cast toward the east. Likewise, when the sun is to the south, a shadow will be cast toward the north and vice versa. A shadow can be cast in any of the four directions. However, at high noon, when you stand at the very center, there is no shadow. You should have such relationships with your parents, spouse, children and siblings. Only then can God be positioned as the owner of the eight stages of love. If you are unable to establish a high noon position, the amount of devotion you offer does not matter. Without establishing this high noon position free of shadows, you are not able to be with or go to God, who has no sliver of a shadow, because you are not in a perpendicular position. You should establish such a position in which you cast no shadow for all eternity. (333-155, 2000.09.26)

High noon settlement! For this, there should not be any shadow in the four-position foundation. If we can achieve such a state, God will descend and everyone will rejoice. No matter how vast the area, everyone in it will be happy. Thus, you should each become a mother or father, husband or wife, and son or daughter who can find high noon settlement. If you cast a shadow in any of those positions, you will bring all the misfortunes of heaven and earth to take root in your family. These are terrifying words. This is the one formula and model to which we all have to conform. Everything exists in pairs, as part of a four-position foundation. For example, even when you see things with your eyes, you consciously grasp them only when they come into focus through your optic nerves. This is the structure of a four-position foundation. The same can be said of your mouth and your hearing. You can hear sounds only when sound waves resonate through the three semicircular canals in your ears. If there is a gap there that blocks the resonance, you will not hear what is being said. Thus we need to uphold the life philosophy of high noon settlement as we go forward. (333-106, 2000.09.25)

God's throne is currently situated in the middle of hell on earth, and it must rise like the sun. When it does, all creation will enter the era of high noon settlement, where there is no shadow. The phrase "high noon settlement" means there is no shadow for all eternity. When you go to the spirit world, you will see the sun high up at the center of the sky all the time. You will not see any shadows. If a shadow were to appear, all the good spirits would immediately come and blow it away. It would vanish. In the same way, good spirits will come to the earth and punish this world of shadows. (500-327, 2005.07.14)

When do your body and mind resonate? When you reach maturity centered on God's love, the mind naturally attunes itself to the wavelength of God's love. With the mind tuned to that wavelength, the body completely unites with God's love. This can be likened to the union of particles with plus and minus electrical charges. If that were to happen, our body, mind and ideals would be completely engrafted to God. But we lost the position where that can take place. Hence we need to discover the standard that enables the body and mind to engraft to God, centered on His love. If you skip that step, you cannot discover it in your family. You cannot bring the matter to the national level and discover it in the nation. Then where should you look for it? You should look for it within yourself as an individual. That is why religion has sought the perfection of the individual. Yet people have been ignorant of the fact that you can be perfected only when you attain this realm of resonance. (141-113, 1986.02.19)

When a person is perfected as the Absolute Beings object partner, what kind of state will he or she have reached? The Absolute Being is the subject partner of love and perfect harmony. Therefore, the condition that an object partner must satisfy in His presence is the perfect harmony and oneness of his or her own internal subject and object parts. When a person achieves complete oneness of mind and body, by maturing his or her character centered on the Absolute Being, he or she can establish the foundation of absolute love. At that time he or she resonates in love with the Absolute Being. That is, when your mind and body harmonize completely, without the slightest conflict, a responsive realm of love comes to life and, like a tuning fork, automatically begins to resonate with the Absolute Being. This is the minimum standard required of you, within the relative world, to connect with the absolute state. (102-058, 1978.11.25)

Where did human beings begin? We originated from love. Then what is our purpose? Since our beginning point was love, our purpose is to attain and connect to the end point of love. Since we began in love, our purpose surely is attained through love. To achieve that purpose, we need to create a framework of love with people all around us -- front, back, left, right, top and bottom. Once you are completely fused together at the core in love, you enter a realm of resonance. This is because you will have completely harmonized your mind and body, your whole body, your five spiritual senses and your five physical senses. When you attain this maturity of mind and body and enter this realm of resonance, you are like an original, unfallen human being, and you can embark on the path toward individual perfection. (137-210, 1986.01.03)

Once you enter a state of love, you will find that each and every being exists as the only, unique being. When the Buddha said, "In heaven and earth, I alone am the honored one," he was not speaking casually. In a state of unity between his mind and body, he was saying, "As it is now and was in the past, heaven and earth are in

harmony. Gazing into myself and at everything in motion, having entered the realm of resonance of true love, I can see that God resides within me, all things of creation are within me, and all things are my friends and brothers and sisters. Since I am the subject partner, I am like their owner. Since I am the subject partner, in the whole cosmos, I alone am the honored one." (166-052, 1987.05.28)

If you enter the realm of resonance of true love, you will be able to see heaven and earth clearly. The Buddha said, "In heaven and earth, I alone am the honored one." He said so because when he entered the core of that realm of resonance, he found the entire world in his hands, God residing within him, and heavenly law connected to him. That is why he could say this. Once you enter the realm where true love resonates, you do not need faith. Since you live with God, you do not need a savior. You are free. Everything is finished. (201-166, 1990.03.30)

When a person reaches perfection, his or her spirit self and physical self are configured for the first time to resonate with the realm of heart. In the human world, what is it that resonates with the spirit self and the physical self? It is not knowledge. It is not an ideal, or joy. It is not the pleasure of satisfying worldly desires. Only love resonates with them. (172-085, 1988.01.09)

When you act with the power of love, you can be a partner of great power, connected to the essence that gave God the ability to create the universe. This is possible only with love. You cannot do this with knowledge; you cannot do it with money or authority. Have you ever tried to live that way? How hard have you struggled to correct the misalignment between your mind and body, to perfect your character in harmony with the realm that resonates with Heavens love? To stop you from doing this, the nation is latching onto you and bending you to its angle; the world is latching onto you. The issue is how you are going to sever all those ties, correct the angle and move forward to reach the original realm of heart. Without getting to that place you will never be free. (178-115, 1988.06.01)

Love strives to bring the mind and body into perfect resonance so they can move forward together in oneness. Love does not go toward only one side. When the conscience and the physical mind move forward with a single purpose, love rushes along in the same direction, toward the same destination. This means that love can be found in the realm of resonance that binds the mind and body together, the place that is clearly oriented toward the absolute direction. Therefore, in order to be happy, your physical mind and conscience must resonate with each other. If you do not attain that resonance, love does not emerge. Thus we need to pay attention to whether the conscience and the physical mind stand within the eternal realm of resonance. (183-050, 1988.10.29)

Session 5 Reading: All About Being a Unificationist

Our Core Values

The word “unification” means to be *united*. So it makes sense that Unificationism is about bringing together people of different religions, races, cultures, and walks of life. A key factor in our faith is that we are all God’s children and that makes us brothers and sisters - one family under God. One of the important goals of our church is to bring unity and healing among the divisions of the world in order to bring peace and joy to God’s heart. The way that each of us does that, however, may be a little different from each other. But it’s all about the same thing: bringing humanity back to God, our Heavenly Parent.

If you ask any member of our church what it means to be a Unificationist, they may say something different. And that’s OK! Each person’s faith is as unique as their own personality and we celebrate that. Although every person may practice their faith in a unique way, there are a few things we all agree on that make us a Unificationist community. When in doubt, we can always turn to the Divine Principle and the teachings of True Parents to help us find clarity. Here a few highlights from the teachings of True Parents that make our faith community different from others:

- God is our parent and has the heart of both a mother and father.
- God has been working throughout all of human history to bring joy to humankind since the time of the Fall, which was the result of immature love relationships between Adam, Eve, and Lucifer.
- God designed the family as the “school of love” in which we learn how to love and take care of others through the relationships within our family.
- Father and Mother Moon have taken on the messianic mission of completing the work left undone during Jesus’ life at the time of his crucifixion.
- The Divine Principle is the main theology of our community and has deep insights concerning God and human history.
- The Marriage Blessing is our opportunity to receive salvation as a family through our True Parents.

// Section Recap: The Unification faith has certain core teachings that makes it unique, such as its vision to unify all types of people and bring peace to the world. Each person has his/her own spiritual journey to take in order to create their personal relationship with God and practice these values as their own.

Who are “True Parents?”

As Unificationists, we often refer back to the teachings and words of True Parents. But who exactly are “True Parents”?

Rev. Sun Myung Moon was born in the countryside of North Korea which, at the time, was suffering from Japanese rule. At a young age, he continuously searched for truth and understanding from God, especially on how to free the world and his people from suffering. At the age of 16, during a deep prayer on Easter Sunday, he had a spiritual encounter with Jesus. In this moment, Jesus spoke to him about the truth of his life and the unfinished work that needed to be done in order to bring salvation to humankind. Jesus entrusted him to dedicate his life to completing this work. From this day forward, Rev. Moon sought to share God's message to the world and bring peace on earth. He later met Hak Ja Han, to whom he would marry and share this mission. Through their marriage, they became the first couple in history who would truly stand as a physical, unified image of God. This is why we call them our “True Parents” - Rev. Sun Myung Moon being our *True Father* and Rev. Hak Ja Han Moon being our *True Mother*.

True Parents have worked tirelessly throughout their lifetime to pave the way for God to reunite with His children. Their message was not always met with open arms, and therefore, they had to endure incredible suffering and persecution so that the culture of our world could change and we could find our way to our Heavenly Parent. They shared profound insights and truth with the world that help us to live a heavenly and righteous life. These insights were first written and published in our sacred text, *The Divine Principle*.

From his life-long efforts, True Father has created a legacy of peace based on the creation of God-centered families, valuing marriage between races, ethnicities, nations, and faiths through the Marriage Blessing. It is through the teachings of the Divine Principle that True Father has been able to speak with religious and political figures around the world to pave the way for interfaith dialogue and interfaith marriages. He also pushed to create systems for nations to move away from division and conflict towards peace. Today, True Father's legacy of peace has been taken up by our True Mother, who continues to officiate the Marriage Blessing and has made it her mantle to educate youth to become a generation of peacemakers who value God-centered living and God-centered marriage. The Il Shim program is one form of education that is made available to our youth in their journey towards that goal.

// Section Recap: Rev. Moon, our True Father, received a calling from Jesus himself to continue God's work that has been left undone. Since then, he has spent his entire life with his wife, our True Mother, sharing God and Jesus' message with the world. Our True Parents hope to have their legacy continue through the work of current and future generations of Unificationists.

Sharing Who We Are with Others

Being a young person in our faith, you may not always be sure why we do the things that we do. The traditions you practice as a Unificationist may be very different from those of your friends and you may sometimes have had a hard time explaining them. However, each of our traditions have a rich spiritual history and come directly from our True Parents. If you ever have questions about why we are doing something as Unificationists, we encourage you to ask your parents or a respected believer in your community. What a great way to take ownership of your faith! Here are a few of our unique traditions and a brief explanation of why we do them. These explanations are very short, so if you have more questions please talk to someone about them!

- *Praying in our own name:* We have received authority from True Parents to report and pray directly to God as His/Her children, instead of reporting through the use of someone else's name.
- *Hoon Dok Hae & Pledge:* Time at the beginning of each day to connect with God and read God's word so we can have a clear mind, heart, and spirit for the rest of our day.
- *Holy Songs:* Church songs that can create a positive spiritual environment. Father Moon wrote the words to many of these songs.
- *Holy Candles & Holy Salt:* Holy items that bless either our spiritual atmosphere or bless our physical goods. These holy items allow Heaven to create a heavenly environment around us.
- *Holy Ground:* Specific places that have been blessed and serve as places of direct connection to God and good spirit world.
- *Holy Days:* Special holidays that were created by our True Parents to celebrate important moments in providential history and the creation of a new culture.
- *The Marriage Blessing:* One of the most important traditions in our faith, in which a husband and wife offer their marriage to God by exchanging vows, drinking the holy wine, and representing the start of a heavenly blood lineage.
- *Seung Hwa:* A funeral service in which we honor the life and spirit of a person and send their spirit joyfully to the spiritual world.

As a young Unificationist, or someone even interested in the Unification faith, you will go through your own journey of discovery and creating your own spiritual life. The traditions of our church are a framework by which you can go on that path. You should always feel free to ask questions and understand the purpose and meaning behind the traditions of our church. There is great depth and meaning behind each of them. We carry on these traditions because of their spiritual value and the blessings and growth they bring to our lives and our world.

// Section Recap: Each of our church traditions is meant as a framework to mold ourselves into God's true children. The more we practice these traditions, the closer we can bring ourselves to God, our Heavenly Parent.

Personal Reflection Points

What aspects of our church do you appreciate most?

What aspects of our church do you not yet understand?

Who can you talk to about the aspects of our church you don't understand yet?

This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

1. Ask your parents these questions and write their answers down in your packet:
 - Who are True Parents to you?
 - What do you admire most about them?
 - What did they teach you that changed your perspective on life?
**If your parents are not Unificationist, share with them what you learned about who True Parents are. Write down their reaction/thoughts to what you were able to share.

2. Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Rev. Kevin Thompson entitled "Purpose of the Messiah Part 2",
http://dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/purpose-of-the-messiah-part-2/
After watching the lecture, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - a. How come the Messiah came and was killed if that wasn't God's original intention?

- b. What are the barriers to us recognizing the Messiah?
 - c. What was John the Baptist's role in welcoming Jesus?
3. Offer a 24-hour fasting condition with your parents during this week. The purpose of the condition should be related to this week's content, "Being a Unificationist." You and your parents can decide the specific purpose so that it is most relevant to you and your experience.

Tips for Parents:

- Most young people at this age don't have much of a relationship with True Parents. And for most youth, their relationship with True Parents comes from stories and testimonies from family and friends. So please share about True Parents, or your perspective on the Unification faith, with your children!
- At this age reading Divine Principle is a bit advanced. This is the reason we are using DP lectures online by great speakers. Encourage them to share their own answers to the questions as well as listen to your answers.
- The 24-hour fast is not a very difficult condition to fulfill, but it can be meaningful if it is done the right way. This condition is meant to be an opportunity to learn how to complete spiritual conditions with the right preparation, spirit, and attitude.

Session 6: Il Shim 2 Day Retreat God's Design for Me

Day 1: Owning the 1st Blessing

8:30 AM Arrivals & Board Games

9:00 AM Break the Ice

9:30 AM Introductions

10:00 AM Presentation # 1: God's Design for Me; The Three Blessings

Discussion questions

1. What is one way you can work on accomplishing the first blessing - improving yourself, your mindset, and your life?
2. What is one way you can prepare for the second blessing - being ready and mature to share your life with someone else?
3. What is one way you can see yourself fulfilling the third blessing - caring for the earth as God would?

11:00 AM Presentation #2: Discovering Your Relationship with God

Discussion questions:

1. What is one way you know of that you connect with God currently?
2. What is one way you would like to try to connect with God?
3. Who is someone that can help you be accountable to your relationship with God?

12:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM Service Project

4:00 PM Breaks and Snacks

4:30 PM Learning About Our Faith and Others

6:00 PM Dinner

7:00 PM Being a Person of Integrity

9:30 PM Closing

Day 2: Preparing for the 2nd Blessing & 3rd Blessing

7:00 AM Morning Exercises

7:30 AM Hoon Dok Hae

- 8:00 AM Breakfast**
- 9:00 AM Matching & Blessing Testimonies**
- 10:30 AM Personal Mission Statement Building**
- 12:00 PM Lunch with Parents**
- 1:00 PM Homework: Review & Assign**
Review Last Week's Homework

Assign Homework for this Week:

1. Before II Shim is completed, you will need to complete three hours of service internship work with your local church by graduation. Your homework for this week is to choose your area for internship and make a plan for how and when you will complete three hours of service.

Write down what area of ministry you are interested in working with and who the contact person for that ministry is:

- a. Area of Ministry:
 - b. Contact Person:
2. Design a display for the family mission statement we are making later today and put it up somewhere in your house.

3:00 PM Family Session: Family Mission Statement

4:00 PM Closing & Farewell

Tips for Parents:

- Do you have an area of ministry that you enjoy volunteering with? If so, share that with your child so they can think about some options for their internship.
- Making your family mission statement may take some time, so it's ok if you need time outside of the retreat to finish it. When you are finished design and display it somewhere in your home so your family can be reminded of who they want to be!

Session 7 Reading: I'm Worth Waiting For

In Session 2, we learned when God created us He/She envisioned each of us building lives of love, joy, and fulfillment. We also learned that God invested His/Her entire self into creation with the hope that it would become a world full of happy families living in happy communities. And yet, when we look at the world around us, we see that it is far from God's hope. We can't help but ask ourselves, what happened? How did the world stray so far from God's ideal? The answer to that can be found by looking at the story of our first human ancestors: Adam and Eve.

What Really Happened in The Fall?

You've probably heard the story of the Human Fall a few times before, which is told in the beginning of the Bible. However, let's break it down. After creating Adam and Eve, God shared with them all the wonderful things that they had in store for their lives. God expressed His/Her excitement over being able to experience their lives through them. God also asked them to wait to have a romantic relationship until they were mature people and could receive God's blessing. As time went on, however, the Bible states that a serpent tempted Eve to fall, from which Eve then tempted Adam (*Genesis 3*). The Divine Principle explains how since this serpent has the ability to talk, especially to spiritual beings such as Adam and Eve, it must be a symbol for a spiritual being. This serpent was none other than the angel Lucifer.

Lucifer was one of the top angels who was ranked highly, was entrusted by God, and was allowed in the Garden of Eden (*Ezekiel 28:13*). However, after Adam and Eve were created, he began to turn when he saw the love and attention they were receiving from God. He felt he deserved the same, if not more. The Bible states that Adam and Eve were tempted by Lucifer to eat from the "fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden." Most people believe that this was a real fruit, but the Divine Principle questions how God would put something so simple as a fruit to be attractive and appealing enough to cause the Fall. In addition, Adam and Eve "ate from the fruit" and suddenly felt naked and sewed fig leaves like aprons to cover their parts (*Genesis 3*). Jude 6-7 compares the falling of angels to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, who "gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion." The Divine Principles makes the connection that Lucifer must have tempted Eve (who later tempted Adam) to fall through a sexual act, which is why they felt naked after.

Eve suddenly felt ashamed of her actions and, realizing that God created her to be with Adam, turned to Adam for love, comfort, and an attempt to be who she was before her mistakes with Lucifer. However, Adam also gave into her temptation, and they both fell together. Because sin is passed down through lineage and children, their sin was passed down to their children, which multiplied into today's society.

// Section Recap: The Divine Principle and the Bible both show proof of how Lucifer wanted more, and tempted Eve to walk away from God's plan by diving into a sexual relationship prematurely - before receiving God's blessing. Eve turned to Adam, unknowingly convincing him to Fall as well. Their sins and mistakes evidently were passed down to today's society.

The Process to Maturity

God told Adam and Eve the consequences of "eating the fruit" before they were mature, so why is it that they could make such a mistake? The Divine Principle teaches us that the power of love is stronger than the power of the Principle (or in this case, God's commandment). God designed the world this way so that we could freely choose to love in a mature, Godly way. If the power of the Principle were stronger than love, we would consider following the rules and principles as more important than loving others. We would put studying scripture above freely loving God as our Heavenly Parent. Instead of this, God made love the most powerful force of the universe so that we could lead dynamic and meaningful lives with Him/Her at the center, despite the chance that this freedom and choice to love could cause us to fall.

While this is a great blessing, the time in our lives in which we are growing towards maturity can be difficult. We call this time the *period of indirect dominion*. In order to go through this time period, we will need to follow God's principles so that we can reach the *period of direct dominion* in which our desires and God's desires become one - to freely live and love in maturity.

This is why God asked Adam and Eve to wait for their marriage until they were mature. If we don't wait until we are mature enough, we end up with hurt hearts or hurting others because we weren't ready to fully love and care for someone else. When we talk about saving ourselves for marriage, we're talking about more than just having sex. Our faith teaches us that we are both physical and spiritual beings. So that means there is both a physical and spiritual aspect of purity and that means that purity has many aspects and levels to it.

// Section Recap: God made love more powerful than His/Her principles, despite knowing that his children could potentially fall from this freedom. We need to take time during the period of indirect dominion to work on ourselves

to become mature people, who are able to follow God's principles. When ready and mature, we can then look towards caring for another person through marriage.

Caring For Our Spiritual Purity

The spiritual aspect of our purity has to do with what we allow our spirit to interact with. This includes what you surround yourself with - the types of movies and T.V. shows you watch, the types of books you read, and the types of music you listen to. It also includes making important decisions regarding pornography.

Pornography includes materials that displays vivid sexual activity and include pictures, videos and even books. Because pornography is so easy to access online, you will probably be exposed to it in the near future if you haven't already been. But it's important to know the whole story about pornography. There's a whole science about the negative impact of pornography on your brain and your ability to have meaningful, romantic relationships in the future. It can also distort your image of what true love is, what sex is, and how you will view your future spouse. All of the research surrounding pornography says the same thing; it is not healthy for you or your future marriage.

// Section Recap: You improve your spirit by surrounding it with healthy things. Certain habits, such as porn, can become an addiction that can negatively impact your spirit, your life, and eventually seep into your future marriage and family.

Making the Choice to Work on "Me" First

Nurturing our purity on both of the spiritual and physical planes is the reason we, as Unificationists, choose not to date. It may be hard to explain to your friends why you don't date when they may already have boyfriends and girlfriends. We choose not to date because we want to give our whole heart, soul, and body to our future spouse. If we were to have other romantic relationships before marriage, then when we eventually get married, we will be bringing our full selves into that marriage - including our memories, emotions, and experiences from our past relationships. Instead, we want to be able to share every "first" with our spouse and begin our journey of love on a clean slate. True Parents have taught us that it is only through our spouse that we are able to understand God and understand all people of the opposite gender.

The awesome part of working on yourself while you are in this stage of your life is that it gives you the freedom to focus on the things that make **you** happy, and improve the skills and talents that you have! This is the time for you to build your future and think about what kind of life you want to live. This is your time to have adventures, discover yourself and the world around you, and become the person you want to be. Choosing to save romantic relationships for when you are mature and ready to love and care for someone else means you have the freedom to live your life to the fullest! So enjoy it, because God certainly wants to enjoy your life with you. One day, you'll find someone with the same values as you, get engaged through the Unification matching ceremony, and receive the Marriage Blessing - experiencing marriage the way God intended it to be. But in the meantime, it's important to continue to be invested in your purity so that you can be the best future husband or wife for your spouse.

Here are a few tips and tools to help you in maintaining a purity-based lifestyle and becoming a mature person:

- Choose your music, movies, and T.V. shows well
- Tell your parents, or a respected Unificationist, when you have feelings for someone of the opposite gender
- Hang out with friends of different genders in groups, instead of one-on-one
- Let your friends know where you stand in terms of dating and purity

The most important tip having an abstinent lifestyle is to fill your time with activities and experiences that you love. That way you can focus on being the best version of you!

// Section Recap: We view the purity-based lifestyle as a **choice** - a choice that we want to choose because we know it'll lead to a bigger and brighter future. Now is the time when we work on improving ourselves and fixing our bad habits. Then, when the time comes to look into a committed, long-lasting relationship with someone else, we are able to bring in less baggage and more possibilities for joy.

Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

What tips do you use, or want to use, to keep yourself accountable in terms of living a pure life?

Why do you feel waiting to have a romantic relationship until marriage is important?

What activities, adventures, and experiences do you want to invest your time in now instead of spending your time dealing with crushes, dating and/or temptation/pornography?

This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

- Fill out the "My Plans for My Internet" form in your packet and go over your answers with your parents.
- Write 2-3 paragraphs in response to the prompt, "The Kind of Husband/Wife I want to be."
- Read from the Cheon Seong Gyeong Book 1, Chapter 4, Section 1: The Parent whose position was usurped (pages 98-100). At the end of each paragraph share a summary with your parents about the meaning of that section.
- Here are some optional resources to learn more about the impact of pornography on your mind and body:
 - www.fightthenewdrug.org
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb1hkljcSJQ>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flh8gnC6J1s>

Tips for Parents

- Your teen is most likely very active in social media and is familiar with a lot of what's on the web. Unfortunately they have probably already been exposed to inappropriate images on the internet through no fault of their own. The "My Plans for My Internet" worksheet is a great opportunity to discuss how to have a healthy relationship with the Internet.
 - Here is also an article from Rev. Thompson regarding how to talk to youth about Pornography: https://bfm.familyfed.org/parents-in-bay-area-get-real-about-porn-22282/?mc_cid=2cef447c78&mc_eid=44c2467324
- Reading scripture can sometimes be a challenge with teens so you may have to take the lead when it comes to summarizing and discussing the content. If they don't say much don't worry! The content may be soaking in silently.

My Plans for My Internet

The internet is an amazing place where you can learn *anything!* Unfortunately, some people have abused this freedom and are making material available that impacts your attempts to lead a pure lifestyle. It may seem harmless because it's just the internet, but it's important to have a plan in action for when you are confronted with potentially harmful situations.

Please fill out this form with honest ideas and answers. You can fill in as many or as little ideas in each section, but please fill out at least one answer for each section.

1. I use the following online chatting and messaging services:
2. I have the following guidelines for my online messaging conversations:
3. I use the following social media websites:
4. I have the following guidelines regarding what type of personal information I put on my page:
5. When talking online with people I have only met online and do not know in real life I have the following guidelines:
6. When I come across inappropriate content online such as images, videos, and conversations that are sexual in nature, I...

7. If someone I have met online asks me to meet in person, I have the following guidelines:

Writing Prompt

Write 2-3 paragraphs in response to the prompt, "The Kind of Husband/Wife I want to be."

Homework Reading: Cheon Seong Gyeong, Book 1

Section 4, Chapter 1: The Parent Whose Position was Usurped

God's original position was as our True Parent. Yet something occurred that had nothing to do with the original ideal of creation, and His position as the True Parent was usurped. Although God is the Creator, He was unable to intervene and prevent this from happening. Nevertheless, He has been taking responsibility to deal with it ever since. (240-164, 1992.12.13)

God's enemy deprived Him of His throne. Unable to become the God of glory, He was left to preside over a history of sorrow. Although God most certainly is the King of His kingdom and King of the universe, He has been treated with contempt, as if He were dead. Meanwhile, all His beloved children were violated and the planet Earth became the enemy's playground. (105-199, 1979.10.21)

As a result of the Fall, God became the Parent who lost His children. Is there any father or mother who delights in his or her own glory while their children are in prison? It is the same for God; it fills Him with endless pain. Further, God created everything in the universe for human beings, but as a result of the Fall, God had to hand his children over to Satan's authority. From the moment He lost His beloved object partners, God, the Lord of true love, became infinitely lonely. Moreover, God could not exercise His authority as the Lord of all things, not even once. Even fallen people can boast, but God has never had the chance to demonstrate His full authority and stature as the Creator. Even though He is the Lord of all living things, God could not assume His majesty in front of them, not even once. (343-197, 2001.01.29)

What was lost as a result of the Fall? First, the ideal world of true love was lost. Second, the ideal family of true love was lost; in particular, the husband and wife of true love were lost. Third, their sons and daughters of true love, the first grandchildren of God, were lost. These are God's three kinds of sorrow. (349-013, 2001.07.13)

God's era, in which He hoped to complete His Will, disappeared without a trace because of the Fall. The Fall brought fundamental destruction to the place where He had created all things in hope. Everything that He had planned, the realm of His ideal object partners of eternal love, was violated and destroyed at the root. How sorrowful God must have been when Adam and Eve committed the Fall and disappeared from His presence. They were to have been God's ideal partners, embodying God's pure original love. How bitter God's grief must have been over losing them. (127-019, 1983.05.01)

Christians say that God is the glorious judge who consigns people to hell or to the kingdom of heaven. Yet in fact God is the most miserable being in the world. When the Fall turned the brilliance of heaven and earth into the darkness of hell, God went through the most unimaginable and bitter pain. It was as though God Himself plummeted into hell. Yet when He opened His eyes, came back to consciousness and regained His composure, He became intent on recovering His children who had died. (232-114, 1992.07.03)

God and human beings should be together for eternity. Can we imagine God's pain and indignation when the first human beings separated from Him? Can we comprehend His bitterness and sorrow? They should have grown to maturity while building a foundation of love for God that they would not have exchanged even for the entire universe. This would have established a single axis, so that vertical and horizontal could meet on a level plane. Had the first human beings done this, they would have become the standard of love for all existing beings and for all things of creation in heaven and on earth. Then, any being that connected to their love would have been able to reach that standard. (149-240, 1986.11.23)

God wants His partners of love to be better than Himself. His beloved partners are none other than us, human beings. Nonetheless, we lost that privileged value and instead came to struggle throughout our lives. How miserable God must feel when He looks at us! He thinks, "They were meant to be My direct children, inheriting My love, My life and My lineage. But now they are struggling as victims who moan and lament in pain and wander in despair until the end of their lives." How miserable God must feel, looking down at this. He is such a sorrowful God. (211-209, 1990.12.30)

When you are comforted by someone who has more reason to be upset than you, you can find some consolation in that. However, God has no one to comfort Him, because He has more grievances than anyone in the world. God is the alpha and the omega. A knot of bitterness remains in the depths of His heart. How can He resolve it? This has been God's deep, inner anguish. Under these circumstances God has carried out the providence of restoration to this day. The spirit world transcends time and space; hence, even the sorrow of six thousand years ago can persist forever throughout the realms formed by the ages of history. If you have ever experienced the joy of devoting yourself as a true offering, you will never forget that experience for the rest of your life. With the passage of time, more and more people will recognize and respect you for your offering. The breadth and depth of your offering will increase, and you will be ever more deeply connected with the infinite Origin. When you have such mystical experiences, you will recognize that God's sorrow has not been merely momentary, but has continued up to the present day. (29-294, 1970.03.12)

We should not thoughtlessly insist on our own desires, putting ourselves first. How can we simply assert our own views if we understand even a little about the heart of God? God is immersed in bitter sorrow as He labors behind the scenes of history to lead the providence of restoration, trying to find His lost children who can express their true selves. Day and night, we have to live to build the ideal family. If only we can build the ideal family that God has awaited for six thousand years, that is precisely where the original peaceful world will begin. The ideal family is the starting point of the kingdom of heaven on earth. It is from that point that God's bitter sorrow will begin to dissolve. (356-302, 2001.10.21)

Session 8 Reading: The Greatest Blessing

Today's culture is all about getting what you want instantly - especially with relationships. Society is glamorizing the hook-up culture, but what benefits does that offer for you in the long term? Not many. However, research has shown that married people experience less depression, less poverty, and better health¹. Married people have also shown to be happier, experience longer lives, build more wealth, and have children who show greater academic success, are less vulnerable to emotional illness, and are more likely to have positive attitudes towards forming lasting marriages². There are endless benefits for you! However, the beauty of Unificationism is that it takes marriage a step further with the understanding that successful marriages not only benefit ourselves, but society and the world.

Why Choose the Marriage Blessing?

As Unificationists, we believe that marriage is an essential part of God's plan and our path towards becoming the best versions of ourselves. However, we see that marriage in today's society has lost some of its spiritual value and significance as a result of the Fall. That is why we cherish the Marriage Blessing. The Marriage Blessing is the greatest blessing you can receive because it's the first time in history that God has been able to give His/Her Blessing to married couples! If Adam and Eve had not fallen and instead become mature before having a romantic relationship, they would have experienced their Blessing ceremony with God. However, Adam and Eve fell and all of their descendants have been unable to receive God's Blessing. Furthermore, the mistakes they made and issues they weren't able to resolve were continually passed down from generation to generation. That's why True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, have focused much of their efforts on the Marriage Blessing. Because of the work and foundation that they have made, God is finally able to give His/Her Blessing to humankind and see true, God-centered marriages and families develop.

// Section Recap: We're lucky to live during the time of True Parents because this the first time ever where God was able to bless our marriages. This is the first time we have been able to latch ourselves onto God's lineage and start anew with His/Her true vision.

¹ <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/1/the-benefits-of-marriage>

² <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/blogs/social-benefits-marriage/>

Re-Rooting Ourselves Back to God

The ultimate purpose of the Marriage Blessing is to build a foundation for a God-centered, happy, and peaceful family. While there are many good families in the world, marriage doesn't always produce a strong family. We know that DNA gets passed down from parent to child, but along with DNA, other things, such as destructive habits and unresolved issues, unfortunately, get passed down as well. A person can question why they get angry so easily, and then see that their mother gets angry easily as well.

Ever since the Fall, we inherited bad habits and sin that have spread into our families, society, and culture. True Parents have seen and taught that since the family is the school of love, peaceful families can help bring about a peaceful world. They began the Marriage Blessing so that we can be connected back to God's lineage - God's family - and pledge to build relationships rooted in love that reflects His/Her values. However, the beauty of the blessing is that it is meant for everyone! All races, cultures, and faiths are invited and encouraged to dedicate their marriage to God.

During the Marriage Blessing ceremony, couples drink Holy Wine and are sprinkled with Holy Water to symbolize the break from Satan's lineage and the recreation of roots back into God's family - to God's lineage. Children who are born from couples who received the Blessing are called *blessed children*, because they are now created new into God's lineage. Through the Blessing, every person is able to give birth to blessed children and raise a family with God's values and standards.

When we look at the world today, we can see that many romantic relationships end with break ups, hurt, and pain. But God's original plan for the Marriage Blessing was that it is the place in which a man and a woman can inherit and carry out the love of God. God exists with what we call *dual characteristics*, masculinity and femininity, and so the union of a man and woman represents God in His/Her entirety. Getting Blessed is a statement that says we will love as God intended and create a family that helps to create a peaceful and better world.

// Section Recap: We inherit so many things from our parents - both good and bad. If we do not work on fixing our bad habits and issues, we will eventually bring that into our marriage and pass that onto our children. Focusing on our own personal growth before the Marriage Blessing is critical to your success with your future spouse. The Marriage Blessing is a time to

vow that we will work towards loving others and building a family as God originally intended.

Growing with Our Future Spouse

Being in a Blessed Marriage gives you the opportunity to grow into a more well-rounded and loving person. Through the ups and downs of a Blessed Marriage, you learn to love your spouse unconditionally and see them from God's point of view. You will help your spouse grow further and change positively through your relationship. But even more importantly, you will find opportunities to challenge and grow your own character. That's the beauty of a Blessed Marriage - that you and your spouse will grow your character together and your ability to love one another. Throughout your marriage, you will create new memories with one another, share joy together, and give each other strength and comfort during difficulties. True Parents have taught us that over time, you will become like one body - each spouse representing a foot of one body. And together, you will leave footprints of love for humanity and for God.

// Section Recap: A Blessed Marriage is a great opportunity to not only love and be loved by someone special, but also allows you, and your future spouse, to help each other grow into better people. You'll have someone to lean on, find comfort in, and experience new things with.

About the Process

Right now, you are still at an age where you should be working on molding yourself into the best version of you. Take this time of your life to figure out how you can grow and improve yourself so that when ready, you'll be able to offer so many amazing qualities to someone else. So, what is the next step when you actually want to start making that commitment?

The Matching process is an intentional, family-driven engagement process that generally takes place prior to the Blessing³. This is when individuals mentally and spiritually prepare for and find their future spouse. Focusing on including God and your family, you can connect with other individuals who are looking to make the same commitment as well. Once you have taken time to really get to know this person and you and your family feel it is right, you can then get *matched*, or

³ <https://bfm.familyfed.org/matching/the-matching-process/>

engaged. Then, as an engaged couple, you both work together to prepare for the Blessing.

Thinking about this whole process can be a bit daunting. However, it will be some time from now before you feel ready to begin this process. But the key thing to remember is that the first step is to stay connected to your parents. They are the ones who will help guide you in creating the right process for you. If you have trouble communicating with your parents about this important topic, you can also talk to another elder figure in your community who can act as a mediator and support you and your parents during this process.

Here are some general tips and information to keep in mind regarding your future Matching and Blessing Process:

- If you have feelings about a friend who you think might be a good candidate for your future Matching and Blessing, tell your parents about it.
- If you have concerns about the matching process, talk with your parents and decide how you can work together to make both of you feel more comfortable throughout the experience.
- The matching process can take a significant amount of time. Make sure you go into the process for the long term result, and not the short term payoff.
- There are many resources available to you and your parents at <http://bfm.familyfed.org>

The Matching and Blessing may seem like a long ways a way, but remember that the process begins now. This is your time to work on your relationship with God, your family, and become the kind of future spouse you want to be!

// Section Recap: Your future spouse will be the person that you continue to grow, love, and enjoy life with. It is a big step to take, and can be quite scary, but communication with your parents is the key to making sure that the process goes smoothly and successfully.

Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

Is there a married couple in your church community, or elsewhere, that you admire? What do you admire about their relationship?

How do you think the Blessing can be an important step in your future?

What do you hope your future marriage will look like? What kind of relationship do you envision for yourself?

This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

1. Continue completing your 3 hours of service internship with your local community.
2. Complete a 7 Day prayer condition with your parents this week. Focus on the 4 points of the Il Shim Pledge:
 - I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.
 - I will strive to inherit the Unificationist traditions of honoring True Parents, upholding the value of the Blessing by maintaining my sexual purity until the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.
 - I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.
 - I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.
These things I pledge before God, True Parents, my parents, and my community.
3. Complete the 10-Year Vision Worksheet in your packet.

Tips for Parents:

- The prayer condition should be completed together as parents and child. Your child might be apprehensive to pray together with you, so you may have to take the lead in the completion of this condition. This is also a great opportunity for your child to learn how to pray from you.
- The 10-Year Vision worksheet is a chance for your child to think about what kind of life they want to have in the future, and what they can do now to get that point in their life. Try talking them through their worksheet with encouragement. Listen to their dreams and find ways to support them to accomplish those goals!

10- Year Vision Worksheet

Think how old you will be 10 years from now and think about what type of life you want to have.

1. Briefly describe what you hope your life will be like in each of these areas:
 - a. Family & Relationships (*Married? Children? Friends? Family?*)

 - b. Education & Career (*School? Job? Industry?*)

 - c. Hobbies & Travel (*How will you spend your free time? Where you will live?*)

 - d.

2. Based on your above descriptions, determine at least one specific goal for each of these areas. For instance, married with 1 kid, working at a law firm, play basketball in my free time.
 - a. Family & Relationships:

 - b. Education & Career:

 - c. Hobbies & Travel:

3. Make 2-3 intermediary steps that will help you achieve each of these goals:
 - a. Family & Relationships:

 - b. Education & Career:

 - c. Hobbies & Travel:

Session 9 Reading: Plugging In

There's a common concept in our society that teaches us if you give your time, energy, money, and resources to others, you will end up with less than what you started with. But if we all lived that way, what kind of a world would we be living in? Do we really want to live in a place where people focus only on their own needs and don't take care of others? That kind of world is not the one God designed for us, and it doesn't benefit us as a whole either. So there must be something false about this concept. The Divine Principle teaches us that the universe was designed with the spiritual law of *give and take action*. What this means is that God created the universe with the law that you get something in return when you give to others. Simply put, if you give to others, you will receive from others. God made this a spiritual law, so you can count on the fact that it will never change.

Feeding Your Spirit

So what do you get in return when you give to others? You may very well receive external things such as gifts, money, or acts of kindness. But that's not what the law of give and take action is talking about. When you give to others, you create a spiritual relationship between your soul and the soul of the other person. It's your spirit that is able to reap the biggest benefit from giving to others, and we call this benefit *vitality elements*. Vitality elements are the nourishments that your spirit receives when you give to others. Just like your physical body needs food, air, and water to grow and survive, your spiritual body needs vitality elements that come from serving others. Although vitality elements are a spiritual element, your physical body is able to reap the benefits of them through your spiritual body. There's a special mutual relationship between your spirit body and physical body that allows this to occur. That's why you feel happier and better about yourself after you do a service project, volunteer your time, or go out of your way to help someone. God created the law of give and take action so that you would be happier as a result of giving to others!

Our society tends to promote the importance of achieving personal success in terms of money, status, and lifestyle. It's likely that as a result of growing up in this society, you've been taught to take care of your own needs and look out for yourself first before looking out for others. But one of the cornerstones of the Unificationist faith is that we believe living a life of service is an essential part of becoming an ideal person. We believe that living for other people is the way in which you become a better person. That's because when you put the needs of others before your own, you learn to see from God's viewpoint and to love the world the way God loves the world.

// Section Recap: When you selflessly give to others, you, in turn, provide your spirit with the fuel it needs to grow. Just like our physical body needs food and water, our spirit needs vitality elements, which comes from serving others. When you put others before yourself, you learn to love others as God loves.

Living for the Sake of Others

True Parents have taught us that the way to create true peace and happiness in the world is by *living for the sake of others*. When we live for the sake of others, we receive positive energy and blessings from God. God is ready to support you in your life when you are able to support others first. Additionally, if you are able to think from someone else's point of view and understand their heart, you will have learned to love with true love. This is what we call the *culture of heart*, which is a culture that centers around making decisions based on our love-centered relationship with others. If each person in our world practiced this type of culture, we would have a thriving world of peace and joy.

There are many different ways that you can serve the world and your community. An important part of taking responsibility for your life of faith is finding ways that you can contribute that also inspire you and make you feel fulfilled. Some people may find fulfillment in playing in their church band,, some may find fulfillment in making food for people, others may find it by greeting church-goers at the front door. The point is there is no wrong way to serve and live for others, but it's your job to find the best place for you to plug in and give!

Another way of serving your church community is by tithing. Unificationists are encouraged to offer at least one-tenth of their income as a way of showing God that He/She is more valuable to them than money. God can then see your selflessness, and will want to bless you in return. It can be hard to give our money, because money is a necessary part of our lives. It's the way in which we are able to feed, clothe, and house ourselves and our families. It's not as if God needs money, but we offer our money because it's important to us. In order to make a sincere offering to God, we must offer something that is of high importance to us. It's easy to give small things, but it takes a lot of strength to give our hard-earned money. So even in moments of financial difficulty, it's even more important to continue to tithe so that God can feel your heart and bless you in your situation.

// Section Recap: Today's culture is more focused on the *self*. This is not the culture that God intended. When we care for others, we begin to create a culture of heart. One way to give back to your community is by finding how

you can use your talents and passions to improve your church. Another way is by tithing, which shows God that you are able to give one of the most valuable things for something greater.

Building Your Church

At this point in your life, you are still young and are watching other people run your church. However, in 10-15 years, it will become *your church*, and you will have more power and resources to lead it in a positive direction. Someone in your II Shim class may become the Pastor one day. Someone in your II Shim class may become a Sunday School teacher, a Youth Pastor, the church bookkeeper, or the church clean up team. One day you and your peers will be running the church, and that means you will have the ability to make it the kind of place you want to be part of. That process starts now. What kind of church community do you want to raise your future family in? How can you help make that happen now?

You have your own spirit that needs to grow and it's your job to take care of it, just like it's your job to make sure you eat, get exercise, and take care of your physical body. One of the best ways to let your spirit grow consistently is by getting involved in your local church. It can be hard to put yourself out there, but the reward of serving your local community is priceless. You will feel happier, build deep relationships with others, and become a part of creating the community you want to be part of. You bring a unique perspective to your community - one that only you can provide. You are needed in building a better world, and that opportunity can start now!

// Section Recap: You may be young, but soon enough, your church will be *your church*. Now is the time to think about how you can contribute to help create the church environment you'd like to see. Also, when you begin to plug into your community, you will also be able to meet other people and build deeper relationships.

Personal Reflection Points

How can you make service a part of your regular life?

What area of ministry could you see yourself contributing to in your adult life?

What kind of relationship and/or involvement would you like your future family to have with the church community?

This Week's Homework:

1. Be aware of your attire for graduation:
 - Girls can wear dresses, skirts, or nice pants with a blouse.
 - Boys can wear a suit or collared shirt with dress pants.
2. Complete 3 hours of service internship with your local community if you haven't already.
3. Write a 3-5 sentence blurb about what area of church ministry inspires you that will be used in the Il Shim Graduation program. Send it to your Il Shim Leader as soon as possible so that he/she can include it in the graduation.
4. Write a personal pledge to your parents or guardian that will be read during the graduation. The whole class will read the Il Shim pledge together, but the personal pledge will be a vow that will be read to your parents/guardian during the ring ceremony. Your personal pledge should have 3-5 points, and should reflect the type of commitment you want to make to your parents/guardian from now on.

Tips for Parents:

- Your child is writing a personal pledge/vow to share with you during their graduation. There will also be a time for you to share a personal pledge/vow to your child during their graduation. Your pledge should include 3-5 points that reflect the type of commitment you would like to make to your child from this point forward. Here are a few examples to get you started:
 - I promise to love you no matter what happens and to listen and respect your point of view.
 - I pledge to trust you and be your biggest cheerleader in life.
 - I will strive to guide your life of faith so that you can live a fulfilled life.

Session 10: Graduation

Make sure to arrive 1 hour early to graduation so you can go over the program and rehearse your exit. You will sit in the front row during the ceremony.

Attire: This is a big moment for you, so dress to celebrate your achievement! You should dress semi-formally: girls can wear dresses, skirts, or nice pants with a blouse, and boys can wear a suit or collared shirt with dress pants.

1. **Songs**
2. **Prayer**
3. **Message**
4. **Ring Ceremony**
 - [Parent Vow](#)
 - [Youth Vow](#)
 - [Ring Ceremony](#)
 - [Hugs & Photos](#)
5. **Participant Pledge**
 - I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.
 - I will strive to inherit the Unificationist traditions of honoring True Parents, upholding the value of the Blessing by maintaining my sexual purity until the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.
 - I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.
 - I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.
6. **Community Pledge**
 - We promise to be examples of healthy relationships with God, True Parents, and our Families through our daily habits and testimony.
 - We will strive to create an atmosphere of love and encouragement as you grow and prepare for your future life as a Blessed Family.
 - We commit to making space for you to be involved in our community so that you can express your God-given passions and talents.
 - We believe in you, trust you, and are very excited to see the things you will accomplish!
7. **Prayer**
8. **Cheers of Mansei**
9. **Recession and Refreshments**