

Unit 4: Marriage

Essential Question: What can be done to appreciate human worth and accept responsibility for one's actions and success in family and work life?

Lesson Problem: What is a healthy marriage? What components promote marriage success?

National FCS Standards

(Refer to: <http://nasafacs.org/national-standards--competencies.html>)

Content: 1.0 Career, Community and Life Connections

Comprehensive Standard: 1.1 Analyze strategies to manage multiple roles and responsibilities (individual, family, career, community and global).

Competency:

1.1.4 Analyze potential effects of career path decisions on balancing work and family.

Content: 6.0 Family

Comprehensive Standard: 6.1 Analyze the effects of family as a system on individuals and society

Competencies:

6.1.5 Analyze the role of family in developing independence, interdependence, and commitment of family members

6.1.6 Analyze the effects of change and transitions over the life course.

Content: 13.0 Interpersonal

Comprehensive Standard:

13.1 Analyze functions and expectations of various types of relationships.

Competency:

13.1.4 Analyze factors that contribute to healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Comprehensive Standard:

13.2 Analyze personal needs and characteristics and their effects on interpersonal relationships.

Competencies:

13.2.2 Analyze the effect of personal need on relationships.

13.2.4 Analyze the effects of life span events and conditions on relationships.

Comprehensive Standard: 13.6 Demonstrate standards that guide behavior in interpersonal relationships.

Competency: 13.6.1 Apply critical thinking and ethical criteria to evaluate interpersonal relationships.

Kansas Family and Consumer Science Competencies

Content: Family Studies (22208/22218)

Benchmark: 5.2 Analyze roles and responsibilities of parenting

Competencies:

5.2.3 Analyze the global and demographic influences on families today and in the future.

5.2.6 Compare and contrast the economic factors and impact of family situations on it's members (i.e. divorce, military

Benchmark: 5.4 Evaluate external support systems that provide service for parents.

Competency:

5.4.1 Identify community resources and services available to families.

Benchmark: 5.5 Analyze functions and expectations of various types of relationships.

Competency:

5.5.1 Analyze processes for building and maintaining interpersonal relationships in families

Benchmark: 5.6 Examine personal needs and characteristics and their effects on interpersonal relationships.

Competency:

5.6.4 Analyze the effects of life span events and conditions on family relationships.

Benchmark: 5.7 Demonstrate standards that guide behavior in interpersonal relationships (family, split living arrangements, homelessness).

Competency:

5.7.4 Demonstrate critical thinking and ethical decision making when making judgments and taking action

Content: Human Growth and Development (45004/45014)

Benchmark: 12.3 Analyze strategies that promote growth and development across the life span

Competencies:

12.3.1 Analyze the role of nurturance on human growth and development.

12.3.2 Analyze the role of communication on human growth and development.

Benchmark: 12.4 Analyze functions and expectations of various types of relationships.

Competency:

12.4.1 Analyze processes for building and maintaining interpersonal relationships across the lifespan.

Benchmark: 12.5 Examine personal needs and characteristics and their effects on interpersonal relationships.

Competency:

12.5.2 Categorize the effects of life span events and conditions on relationships.

Basic Skills (red font/highlight): **Language Arts**, Math, Science, Social Studies

21st Century Process Skills (red font/highlight):

- **Thinking & Problem Solving:** **Critical Thinking, Problem Solving** (Flexibility), Creativity (Innovation)
- **Information Literacy and Communication Skills:** **Communication** (Media Literacy, Technology)
- **Leadership and Collaboration:** Leadership (Initiative) , Management (Productivity), **Goal Setting , Decision Making**

Learning Objectives: The learner will:

- Analyze benefits and challenges of long-term relationships
- Examine processes for increasing marriage success.
- Determine the legal guidelines for marriage in Kansas

Vocabulary:

Marriage
Marriage Contract
Life style
Legally Binding
Cohabit
Divorce

Instruction

Bell Work: (5-10 minutes)

(Post or project question(s) on the board as students enter the classroom.)

*How is a wedding different from being in a marriage?
Why is there a marriage contract?
What characteristics do you think are needed for a successful marriage?*

(Use a random calling system to ask students for their responses. Share these questions will be answered in this unit.)

Introduction (anticipatory set):

Teacher: Introduction to Marriage (15 minutes)

Everyone has some ideas of what marriage is like. These may have come from television, movies or people you have observed. The concept of marriage varies considerably throughout the world and much could be said about marriage in other countries. We are going to begin with looking at marriage in the U.S in this unit. Today, we will begin with learning what perceptions you have about it.

Marriage Pre-test (Pretest 4.1) (10-12 minutes)

Let's begin with a quiz--Marriage Fact and Fiction.
--(See Pretest 4.1)

Learning Process (with Activities):

Teacher: Marriage Fact or Fiction (30 minutes)

A. In the U.S. a shift has occurred in the last 40 years. Fewer people are getting married, and the age for getting married has been inching up over the years. For women, the average age for getting married went from 20.9 in 1971 to 26.5 in 2011 For men, it went from age 23.1 to 28.7. (Available from: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/ms2.xls>)

However, most people do get married at some point in their lives. And many who don't get married would like to. (*Keider, Rose M. and Renee Ellis, "Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009", --* <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-125.pdf>)

(Discuss the MARRIAGE FACT OR FICTION pre-test. Refer to the teaching resource 4.2. Assign students to take notes using technique desired.)

B. Key to Marriage Success (20 minutes)

(Refer to the classroom text you have available about benefits and challenges of long-term relationships and marriage.)

Marriage in the United States has been proven to have a number of benefits including financial, social, health-related and legal.. *(Refer to Teacher Resource 4.3 "Key Advantages of Marriage". Create a list on newsprint as you discuss some of these benefits. Post in room)*

Some people avoid getting married because they fear that the marriage won't work and they will have to get a divorce. Many people believe that the divorce rate is climbing, when it has actually declined since the early 1980s.

Although the divorce rate may not be as high as many people think, the impact of divorce on adults and children is real. It's important for you to be informed about the marriage challenges so you can take that knowledge with you as you make decisions about your future relationships. Instead of being crippled by fear, you can be equipped to create a healthy long-term relationship if you chose to and avoid being in a situation where you feel that the only way out is a divorce.

Activity #1: Marriage Challenges (45 minutes)

(Pre-preparation: Locate stickers for wall walk. Determine how many and what they mean if colors are used.)

Directions:

1. Divide students in groups of 3 or 4.
2. Hand out “Marriage Challenges” (Handout 4.4)
3. Assign them to read the text regarding this topic and/or provide other articles from reputable sources.
4. Have them brainstorm issues that might make marriage more complicated, writing their answers on large newsprint. Have each group post their list on the wall and involve the entire class in a wall walk.
5. Discuss similarities and differences between the lists they produced and the answers to their pretest answers and discussion (Refer to Teacher Resource 4.2 notes for answers.)
6. Assign students to keep this handout as a reference.

Activity #2: Relationship Interviews (15 minutes plus allowed assignment time) (Handout 4.5)

(TEACHER NOTE: This activity was also suggested in Unit 1: Healthy Relationships. Review and determine if an alternative activity would be better. Consider making this into a panel discussion. Refer to Optional Activity-Guest Panel 4.8 for more directions.)

“In this assignment, you will interview three people who are or have been in a long term marriage. This will be an informal discussion with people who feel comfortable sharing their personal experiences. You won’t need to take any notes. You won’t be asked to discuss any specific information in class although you will be asked to share what you have learned.”

Once interviews are completed, review the assignment, leading a class discussion about similarities and differences in interview answers.

Ask the class: why they think some people have different experiences than others? Refer to previously covered information to answer any questions this created.

Activity #3: Marriage Scenarios (30 minutes) (Group Activity 4.6)

(Teacher Note: If Unit 3: Personal and Family Relationship Planning was covered before this unit, refer to the relationship planning information.)

Directions:

1. Divide class into groups of 2-3.
2. Give each group copies of one of the marriage scenarios.
3. Ask each group to read the scenario and discuss as a group the questions.
4. Referring to the information covered in this unit, assign students to answer the questions and be prepared to share their answers.
5. *Optional: An assignment could be to rewrite the scenarios to reflect a relationship that would create a more successful and healthy long-term marriage. Refer to information shared in this unit and unit 3 if selected.)*

C. Legal Marriage Contract In Kansas

(Pre-planning: Create an outline or questions to go along with the teaching resource 4.7 “The Legal Side of Marriage in Kansas” that can be used to guide note taking and student engagement. One might also want to develop a power point to share the information.)

Activity #4: “Getting Married in Kansas” (10 minutes)

1. Post this question “What are the requirements of getting married in Kansas?”
2. Ask students to jot down their answers to share, or identify teams to create a compiled list.
3. Post newsprint or create a power point slide to capture their responses. *(Allow comments about weddings to be listed, but then share what is being talked about is the marriage contract, a legally binding document between two people. It is not referring to the wedding event.)*
4. Share with the class they will now learn what is required or allowed in Kansas regarding marriage.

Review the notes provided in the teaching resource “ The Legal Side of Marriage in Kansas” (Teaching Resource 4.7) with the class, allowing time for students to complete the outline, questions, etc.

Conclusion:

A. Review all content through a method of choice.

Debriefing Questions: *(You may want to consider these as assessment questions rather than part of a classroom discussion.)*

Technical:

- What are three advantages of marriage?
- What are three issues that can cause complications in marriage?
- What are the legal requirements for marriage in Kansas?
- What is the role of a marriage counselor?

Interpretation:

- Why is it beneficial for marriages to last?
- Why do children benefit from healthy marriages?
- How does society benefit from healthy marriages?

Reflective:

- How can I prepare myself for a healthy marriage?
- What are some things I can do to give my future marriage the best chance for success?

Assessment:

Assign participation grades.

Interview Assignment completion

Debriefing question answers

Reflection Paper on topic “What makes a Marriage Healthy”. Grade assignment following local school writing assessment tools.

Marriage Fact or Fiction Pretest--Handout the pretest, assigning students to analyze their answer, and writing paragraphs to support if each is fact or fiction and how they know (referring to the unit information shared).

Optional:

Re-administer the Marriage Fact or Fiction Quiz (reorganize the questions) to assess change of knowledge.

Teaching Resources:

- Copen, CE, Daniels K., Vespa U, Mosher WD. “First Marriages in the United States: Data From the 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth”, National Health Statistics reports No 49. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr049.pdf>
- Kreider, Rose M. and Renee Ellis, “Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009.” *Current Population Reports*, P70-125, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2011. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-125.pdf>
- Kansas marriage laws info (© 2012) :(http://www.usmarriagelaws.com/search/united_states/kansas/marriage_licenses/)
- Kansas statutes on marriage - http://kansasstatutes.lesterama.org/Chapter_23/Article_1/#23-106
- United States Marriage license guidelines (© 2012) <http://usmarriagelaws.com/>
- Stronger Marriages.org - great website for research based articles on the benefits of marriage. <http://strongermarriage.org/>
- The Effects of Divorce on Children—NC Extension Service-- <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/pdfs/fcs471.pdf>
- *(See Unit 8: Parenting Law for additional references.)*

Materials:

- Newsprint and markers
- Variety of labels (for wall walk)
- Supplies (bottled water, snack bar...) for Guest Panel (if selected)

Handouts:

- 4.1—Pretest “Marriage Fact or Fiction”
- 4.4—Marriage Challenge Handout
- 4.5 Relationship Interviews Assignment
- 4.6—Group Activity—Case Studies (one page per small group)
- Worksheet from Handout 4.7 (*Teacher to create their own*)

FCCLA Integration: (www.fcclainc.org *Affiliated chapter is required to use these materials.*)

Power of One: Family Ties

National Program: Families First

FCCLA STAR Events:

- Interpersonal Communications
- Focus on Children
- National Programs in Action—Families First
- Community Services Project—Healthy Relationships Project

Optional Activity: Guest Panels (45-60 minutes plus panel organization)

- Married Couples (See teaching planning resource provided)—to discuss what makes their marriages work
- Marriage Counselors/Clergy—to discuss intervention strategies and the work they do to help.
- Divorced/Separated Individuals—to talk about their experience and what they learned about relationships. (Be cautious with this selection due to nature of topic and students who may be from separated couples).
- Covenant Marriage—(Refer to your text for definition.)

Marriage **FACT OR FICTION**

Directions: Review each statement. Identify if you feel it is a fact or fiction regarding marriage by placing a check by those which are fact.

1. The years since 1970, people in the United States have been getting married at younger ages.
2. The majority of adults are married.
3. Of those adults who are married, most have been married more than once.
4. Over the last 20 years the divorce rate has continued to climb.
5. Having a baby while she's single has an impact on whether or not a young woman will ever get married.
6. Married people are no happier than single or divorced people.
7. Married couples who are having relationship struggles should not count on having a child as a way to solve relationship issues.
8. Married people are physically healthier than those who aren't married.
9. When you get married, you tend to have fewer financial resources than when you're single.
10. Most young couples who are not married at the time they have a child together do not plan to get married in the future.
11. Young mothers will typically marry the father of their children even when they don't trust them.
12. Couples are more likely to follow through on their plans to marry when the fathers continue their education beyond high school.
13. Research has indicated that women are more likely than men to end the relationship because of ongoing conflicts.
14. On average, children are better off when their parents are married than when their parents are single or living together.
15. When parents' divorce, children don't suffer any significant negative consequences.
16. Living together before marriage is the best way to test compatibility.

Marriage Fact or Fiction Pretest Answers (with discussion points)

- 1. In the years since 1970, people in the United States have been getting married at younger and younger ages.**

Fiction. It's actually the reverse. People are delaying the age at which they get married. In 1971, the average age for women to marry was 20.9 and for men it was 23.1. In 2011, the average age for women was 26.5 and for men 28.7 (Available from: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/ms2.xls>)

- 2. The majority of adults are married.**

Fact. Nearly 57 percent of adults are married - 10 percent are separated or divorced, 7 percent are widowed, 19 percent have never married and 6 percent are living with a partner. Marital status varies greatly among racial/ethnic groups. (See under Teaching Resources for more information--“*Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009*” p. 16. Dept. of Commerce, Economics and Statistics, 2011)

- 3. Of those adults who are married, most have been married more than once.**

Fiction. Most adults have married only once (See under Teaching Resources for more information--“*Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009*” p. 19. Dept. of Commerce, Economics and Statistics, 2011)

- 4. Over the last 20 years the divorce rate has continued to climb**

Fiction. Although many people believe that the divorce rate continues to increase, it has, in fact been declining since 1981 for people born in 1955 or later. (The National Center for Health Statistics)

- 5. Having a baby while she's single has an impact on whether or not a young woman will ever get married.**

Fact. Women who have a child without being married have a 40 percent lower likelihood of ever getting married. (Levin- Epstein, J. Center for Law and Social Policy, *To Have and to Hold: Congressional Vows on Marriage and Sex*, March 2005 <http://research.policyarchive.org/13870.pdf>)

- 6. Married people are no happier than single or divorced people.**

Fiction. Married people are more likely to say that they are happy with their lives in general and less likely to say they are “not too happy.” They also report less depression and anxiety than people who are single or living with a partner. In fact, in marriages where the partners say they are unsatisfied, if they stay married, 5 years later most rate their marriages satisfactory. (Waite, Linda and M. Gallagher. *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier and Better Off Financially*, Copyright, Broadway Books, 2001)

- 7. Married couples who are having relationship struggles should not count on having a child as a way to solve relationship issues.**

Fact. The birth of a child often affects marital harmony and requires adjustment. Because newborn children have so many needs, one or both parents must spend time taking care of the child. The time they spend taking care of their newborn reduces the time they can spend together doing couple things. Spending less time alone as a couple can create challenges for even the healthiest marriages. (Belsky, J. (1986). *Transition to Parenthood Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality*, 20, 56-59)

8. Married people are physically healthier than those who aren't married.

Fact. Married adults are less likely than other adults to be in fair or poor health; to suffer from serious psychological distress; or to smoke, drink heavily or be physically inactive. However, married men are more likely to be overweight or obese than other men. Schoenborn CA. *Marital status and health: United States, 1999-2002: Advance data from vital and health statistics; No 351.* Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics. 2004. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad351.pdf>).

9. When you get married, you tend to have fewer financial resources than when you're single.

Fiction. In general, both men and women tend to be better off financially when they marry because they have access to their partner's current and future income. When women are married to men with decent incomes, they generally are better off financially than their non-married sisters. If they separate or divorce, their situations are often worse. (Waite, Linda and M. Gallagher. *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier and Better Off Financially*, Copyright, Broadway Books, 2001)

Married men often earn 10-40 percent more than single men, and the longer they stay married the fatter their paychecks. Why? Married men tend to lead more settled lives. They miss work less often and are more likely to be focused on supporting their families. For couples who have limited employment skills and low incomes, getting married will not necessarily lead to an improved financial situation unless one or both person can get a decent job. (Wendy Sigle-Rushton and Sara McLanahan, "For Richer or Poorer," Center for Research on Child Wellbeing - Working Paper #01-17-FF, Princeton University, July 2001)

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.197.1918&rep=rep1&type=pdf> .

10. Most young couples who are not married at the time they have a child together do not plan to get married in the future.

Fiction. There is an important Fragile Families and Child Well Being study of 3700 unmarried couples taking place in 20 large US cities. The study is telling us a lot about couples' relationships with each other and their children over time. The majority of these mothers and fathers say they have plans to marry in the future. Most of them were romantically involved at the time of their child's birth. Fathers tend to be more optimistic about getting married than mothers. (Marcia Carlson, Sara McLanahan, Paula England, and Barbara Devaney, "What We Know about Unmarried Parents: Implications for Building Strong Families Programs." Washington., DC: Mathematica Policy Research, January, 2005; © 2008 - 2013 National Healthy Marriage Resource Center)

<http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/resource-detail/index.aspx?rid=1707>) and (Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Copyright © Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, All Rights Reserved, <http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/>)

11. Young mothers will typically marry the father of their children even when they don't trust them.

Fiction. This is a powerful finding from the Fragile Families study and other work with similar populations. A woman's attitude about whether "her" man can be trusted is a big factor in the break up of the relationship.

Women in the study who had this attitude were less likely to stay in the relationship, to live together or to get married.

12. Couples are more likely to follow through on their plans to marry when the fathers continue their education beyond high school.

Fact. Education is a factor that makes men more attractive as a possible husband.

13. Research has proven that women were more likely than men to end the relationship because of ongoing conflicts.

Fiction. Men seem to have a harder time dealing with conflict. They also have a hard time dealing with competing demands if they have children from other women. Men are less likely to commit or marry when their relationship has high levels of conflict and when they have children from other relationships. (Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Copyright © Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, All Rights Reserved, <http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/>)

14. On average, children are better off when their parents are married than when their parents are single or living together.

Fact. Although most children raised by single parents end up doing just fine, children are generally better off when their biological parents are married, living in the same home and have a loving, healthy marriage. This is partly because married parents tend to be better educated and earn higher incomes. Having more money reduces stress and makes it easier for parents to spend time with and nurture children. Children tend to have better emotional development when their parents are married. Married parents also tend to get more support from their extended families and friends. Parental conflict has a negative impact on children regardless of whether the parents are married or not, but child abuse and domestic violence are more likely when parents are not married. Children are more likely to end up in poverty if they grow up in a one-parent home, versus those who grow up in a two-parent home. (Familyfacts.org, ©2013 The Heritage Foundation) <http://www.familyfacts.org/>

15. When parents divorce, children don't suffer any significant negative consequences.

Fiction. While it is true that most children of divorce are able to effectively deal with the disruption divorce brings to their lives, divorce impacts children's behavior, emotional state, and academic performance. Adjustment problems appear to happen for several reasons: lack of positive contact with noncustodial parents, loss of family income, and less positive relationships with their custodial parent. In some cases, disruption and conflict in the marriage prior to the divorce contributes heavily to the child's problems. Children seem to do better when they can continue to live in a home that is financially secure and have parents who respond to their emotional needs. [Desrochers, J. E., NASP Resources: *Helping Children achieve their best*, (© 2004 National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814—(301) 657-0270. Reprinted from *Helping Children at Home and School II: Handouts for Families and Educators* (NASP, 2004), available from the [NASP Bookstore](#).] http://www.nasponline.org/resources/parenting/divorce_ho.aspx

16. Living together before marriage is the best way to test compatibility.

Fiction. Marriages that begin by cohabiting have 50 to 100 percent higher disruption rates than marriages without premarital cohabitation. Those who live together report poorer relationship quality than their counterparts in marriage. About 40 percent of cohabiting relationships end before marriage; the longer a couple lives together, the less likely they are to marry. A study showed that the longer that couples lived together before

marrying, the more likely they were to resort to heated arguments, yelling, and throwing things when conflicts arose in their subsequent marriage. Women who cohabit before marriage were 33 percent more likely to have a marriage that ended in divorce or separation. (Familyfacts.org, ©2013 The Heritage Foundation)

<http://www.familyfacts.org/>

TEACHER RESOURCE 4.3

Key Advantages of Marriage:

(Source: Refer to “Teaching Resources” at end of unit plan.)

Financially:

- * Getting married often makes economic sense. Two can live more cheaply than one. Married people often work harder, earn more and save more.
- * Marriage has been linked with happiness. Research has proven when personal life is in order, work life is more satisfying. This can lead to longevity with a company and advancements within it.
- * Marriage can offer the ability for one spouse to move more easily from career to career because the other can be the bread winner during the transition.

Socially:

- * Once a couple gets married, friends and family members tend to be more willing to offer support and assistance when it’s needed.
- * Married couples tend to spend time with other married couples and include opportunities for events that single people do not have.

Legally:

- * Married people have certain legal rights that single people do not, for example:
 - Married parents, both mother and father, automatically have full legal parental rights as well as the obligation to support their children, even if the marriage ends in divorce.
 - Community property is owned equally by both spouses.
 - You can file taxes separately or jointly.
 - They can be covered by their spouse’s insurance plan.
 - Their spouse can give consent for medical treatments when you can’t.
 - They have a right to inherit their spouse’s property even without a will.

Health-related:

- * Marriage often brings companionship, long-term friendship, increased health and happiness, comfort and care over their life time.
- * Children tend to fare better when their parents are married. Although most children raised by single parents end up doing just fine, children are generally better off when their parents are married, live in the same home and have a reasonably healthy marriage. Why? One reason is that married parents tend to earn higher incomes. Having more money reduces stress and makes it easier for parents to spend time with and nurture children. Married parents usually get more support from their extended families and friends. Children tend to have better outcomes, including better educational achievements, better health, are less likely to enter the criminal justice system and less likely to be divorced themselves later in life.

(Source: Refer to teaching resources at end of unit.)

Marriage Challenges

Common Issues: Married couples tend to fight about: money, children, sex, use of time, division of tasks, and infidelity. It's important to communicate your expectations about these issues before getting married and to make a joint plan for managing these issues in your marriage.

Tougher Problems: Sometimes individuals have problems with drugs, alcohol, mental health issues, serious anger and violence problems, and so on. When issues like this exist, outside help is really important. These are also red flags that say, "Stop, and consider whether getting married right now (or at all) is a good idea."

Step Children: Having a child from a former relationship often strains a new marriage in several ways. There is increased financial strain because the child receives support from the non-custodial parent. . The permanent involvement of the other parent in the couple's life can lead to relationship conflict. The addition of step parents and step grandparents can also add challenges.

Here are some other factors that make getting married more challenging:

- * Pressure to marry because of an unplanned pregnancy
- * Limited education and limited job skills
- * High levels of conflict in the relationship
- * Relatives who do not approve of the marriage

Questions to Answer before getting married:

1. Why get married? - Discuss your reasons for getting married, what makes a good husband, what makes a good wife, what makes a good marriage, and what is most important to you in a marriage.

2. What are your expectations? - Discuss what you expect from one another - how you will communicate, how you will solve problems, how you will manage household tasks and so on.

3. Do you want children? - Discuss if you want children, how many, when, what role you think a mother plays, what role you think a father plays, how you will divide child-raising tasks, how you will discipline your child, and how you think children might change your relationship.

4. How you will manage family finances? - Discuss your attitudes about money: decide whether to keep your money separate or together, work out a budget, decide how you will keep track of and pay bills, make a plan to save, talk about donations to charity, and make a plan to put your affairs in order (insurance, wills, etc.). Lack of financial consensus can lead to big disagreement later.

5. What lifestyle do you expect? - Discuss how you want to live as a couple, where you'd like to live, what you want to do socially, and what is important to you about work, home, family connections, individual time.

6. What are your future goals? - Discuss the long-term goals you have, individually and as a couple. Identify specific steps each of you will take to progress toward these goals.

7. What role does religion play in the relationship? What values are important to you? - Discuss morals and values important to you; the role of religion (if any) in your relationship; differences the two of you have and how you will deal with them.

The Role of Pre-Marital Education or Counseling:

There is so much to talk about and work through before getting married. Most couples either don't take the time or don't know how to tackle all of these important topics. Having someone like a marriage counselor or minister guide you through this process is so helpful. These are professionals trained in working with adults to find common ground and rebuild relationships. They also can provide insights and address individual issues before the marriage which can save it later on.

Occasionally, couples recognize during counseling that they should not get married! Wouldn't you rather reach that conclusion before rather than after saying, "I do"?

Relationship Interviews Assignment

Directions: Select someone you know that is (or was) in a long term relationship/marriage. You can interview both or only one. Ask them the following questions.

NOTE: Answers will not be shared in class, but do be prepared to share what this assignment taught you about marriage.

Interview Questions:

- * How old were you when you met your spouse?

- * What was your relationship like in the beginning?

- * How did you decide to enter into a long-term relationship?

- * How involved was your family in the decision?

- * Do all long-term relationships have challenges? How is it best to handle them?

- * How is your relationship different from when it began?

- * How is your relationship the same as when it began?

- * What advice would you give teens today about making a marriage work?

Case Scenarios

(Source: Refer to teaching resources at end of unit.)

FOUR COUPLES CONSIDERING MARRIAGE

Scenario #1 Christopher and Ashley

Christopher and Ashley met at a cookout two years ago when Christopher was 23 and Ashley was 21. Christopher had his son, Max, with him at the cookout and Ashley was really impressed with how loving Christopher was with Max. The two of them really clicked. In fact, Ashley fell in love with both Christopher and Max. Christopher works in sales, and Ashley works as a counselor in an after-school program for youth. He brings home \$700 every 2 weeks, and she brings home approximately \$550. For financial reasons, both Christopher and Ashley live at home with their parents. Every month Christopher pays \$300 for child support and another \$150 for health insurance. He spends as much time as possible with Max, at least 2-3 times a week and every other weekend. He and his ex-wife Emily have a good relationship. In fact, Ashley sometimes complains about how well they get along . . . She sometimes feels threatened by Emily. When she communicated this to Christopher, he told her that if he still loved Emily, he never would have divorced her. Recently, Christopher asked Ashley to marry him.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1 What are the things that Ashley and Christopher have going for them?

- 2 What would be the advantages of getting married?

- 3 How might marriage affect them financially?

- 4 What are the things that Christopher and Ashley need to work out before they get married?

- 5 How do you think Christopher's child support issues will play out in their decision?

- 6 What could they do before getting married to make sure that their marriage is as strong as possible?

Scenario #2 Elisabeth and Jose

Elisabeth and Jose fell in love in the 11th grade. They broke up a few times but always got back together. They have a strong bond and enjoy many of the same things. Jose believes that no one understands him the way Elisabeth does. He just feels good when he's with her. Elisabeth loves Jose's sense of humor and his generosity. They argue mainly about how much time to spend together. Jose has always loved sports and hanging out with the guys. He also got involved with another girl one time and although it's never happened again, Elisabeth can't forget it and tends to bring it up when she gets mad. When they graduated, Jose joined the Air Force and Elisabeth enrolled in a local college but continued to live at home. When Jose completed basic training, Elisabeth was able to go visit him. A few months later, she found out she was pregnant. They decided to get married during his next leave.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1 What do Elisabeth and Jose have going for them?

- 2 What are the advantages of getting married for them?

- 3 What will make getting married more complicated for them?

- 4 What do they need to work out before getting married?

- 5 How will getting married impact their child support and paternity situation?

- 6 What could they do before getting married to make sure that their marriage is as strong as possible?

Scenario #3 Raymond and Lena

Raymond and Lena are young professionals in their mid-20s. Both earn around \$25,000 a year. They each have their own apartment. Neither has a lot of extra money so they spend a lot of time at each other's apartments. Both are very satisfied with the relationship and would like for it to be permanent. Raymond wants to have a lot of children. Lena isn't sure she even wants to have any, but she feels sure that he would be a great guy to have a child with. Recently, Lena suggested that they move in together to save money for a nice wedding in a year or two. Raymond suggested that they go to the courthouse and get married and then move in together. He thinks they could have a reception later.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1 What does this couple have going for them?

- 2 What would they need to work out before getting married?

- 3 What would be the advantage of getting married right away?

- 4 What would be the disadvantages of getting married right away?

- 5 What do you think they should do and why?

- 6 What could they do before getting married to make sure that their marriage is as strong as possible?

Scenario #4 Jeremy and Lilia

Jeremy and Lilia, both in their early 20s, are in a committed relationship. Jeremy has his bachelor's degree in social work. He loves the work but it doesn't pay as much as he would like. He plans to get his Master's degree in Social Work because better paying jobs require a master's degree. Lilia has an entry level job with a small computer company. The pay is not very good but there are plenty of opportunities to move up. Lilia also has a plan. She wants to get her bachelor's degree in Information Technology, and her company will pay 50 percent of her tuition costs. Right now both Jeremy and Lilia continue to live at home with their parents. Neither of them has been good about saving. Lilia buys a lot of clothes, and Jeremy goes clubbing a lot. They both dislike being in this situation, because they can't do what they want and still have to answer to their parents. They are truly best friends and give each other understanding and support whenever times are tough. From time to time, they've talked about getting married. But both feel like they should get themselves more together before they take that big step. Last week Jeremy and his mother had a big argument about dishes he'd left in the sink. He made up his mind that he was going to move as soon as he could. When Lilia came over that evening he was combing through the want ads looking for a cheap apartment. She could see how unhappy he was. Lilia said that maybe they should just go ahead and get married. Maybe there was a way for them to work together as a team to help each other accomplish their goals. Jeremy asked Lilia to marry him, and they set a date six months away.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1 What strengths do you see in this relationship?

- 2 What would Jeremy and Lilia gain from getting married?

- 3 What are some potential problems they might encounter in their marriage? What can they do to prevent these problems?

- 4 What can they do to make sure their marriage gets off to a strong start?

- 5 What kind of plan can they put together so they both get to accomplish their individual goals?

- 6 What could they do before getting married to make sure that their marriage is as strong as possible?

The Legal Side of Marriage in Kansas

(TEACHER NOTE: Create an outline or a series of questions for guided notes.)

- * **Where you get a marriage license** - Either the bride or the groom must go to a county clerk's office in person to apply for a marriage license. The fee in our county is \$_____ *(Research and fill in before beginning this section.)* Once the ceremony is over, the bride, groom and witnesses sign the document. This document is then filed as it is a legally binding contract. It remains legally binding until one of the partners dies or divorce documents are filed and finalized. A divorce is the legal end of the marriage contract. Note that any time the court system is involved, fees are charged.
- * **Applicant Requirements** - Applicant must be the bride or groom. Both applicants need not be present. Applicant must swear under oath:
 - The applicants are not related (i.e. 1st cousin or closer).
 - The applicants have no legal marriage contract or spouse presently. (If divorced, decree must be filed over 30 days prior to the application.)
 - The applicants know of no other reason why they should not be legally married.
- * **Age Requirements** - You must be 18 years of age to marry on your own. If you are between 16 and 18, you must have parental consent from both parents or a court order granting permission to marry. If you are younger than 16, you must have a court order granting permission to marry. Having a child has no effect on these age limits.
- * **Residency requirements** - You do not have to be a resident of Kansas to get married in Kansas.
- * **Waiting period** - There is a 72-hour waiting period from the time of getting a marriage license to the marriage ceremony.
- * **Fees** - Marriage licenses will be \$50-\$85 (depending on the county). Most counties require this paid in cash (no checks).
- * **Who can perform a marriage in Kansas?** - The following are authorized to be officiating persons:
 - Any currently ordained clergyman or religious authority of any religious denomination or society;
 - Any licentiate of a denominational body or an appointee of any bishop serving as the regular clergyman of any church of the denomination to which the licentiate or appointee belongs, if not restrained from so doing by the discipline of that church or denomination;
 - Any judge or justice of a court of record; any municipal judge of a city of this state; and any retired judge or justice of a court of record.
 - The two parties themselves, by mutual declarations that they take each other as husband and wife, in accordance with the customs, rules and regulations of any religious society, denomination or sect to which either of the parties belong, may be married without an authorized officiating person.

(Source: Refer to teaching resources at end of unit plan for additional resource information.)

[http://www.usmarriagelaws.com/search/united_states/kansas/marriage_licenses/;](http://www.usmarriagelaws.com/search/united_states/kansas/marriage_licenses/)
http://kansasstatutes.lesterama.org/Chapter_23/Article_1/#23-106;
[http://usmarriagelaws.com/\)](http://usmarriagelaws.com/)

Common Law Marriages

A common law marriage is a marriage by agreement of the two persons without any formal ceremony or license. A common law marriage will be recognized in Kansas if the couple considers themselves to be married and publicly holds themselves out to be married and if they are legally eligible to marry. No minimum period of cohabitation is required. Common Law marriages are subject to the same legal obligations and privileges that apply to marriages with licenses. Once a common law marriage is established, the couple must get a court ordered divorce to terminate the marriage. (Kansas Bar Association--Marriage and Divorce: © 2013 Kansas Bar Association) http://www.ksbar.org/?marriage_divorce

Living Together Without Marrying

Unmarried couples living together have become more common. In Kansas it is no longer illegal for persons of the opposite sex to live together and share a sexual relationship without being married. However, couples living together should be aware that although they avoid the legal obligations of marriage by doing so, they are also denied the legal protections of marriage. If you choose to live together without marrying, you should be sure that you understand your legal rights and obligations if you buy or sell property together, have children, sign a lease or a contract, or make other important commitments.

You should know that an agreement, either informal or written, that establishes your rights and responsibilities to each other, may not be legally enforceable. If you have questions about any of this, you should talk with a lawyer. Realize any legal contact will come with a fee charged.

Individuals of the same sex are not permitted to marry in Kansas, but may enter into legal obligations together, including parenting. . (Kansas Bar Association--Marriage and Divorce: © 2013 Kansas Bar Association)
http://www.ksbar.org/?marriage_divorce

Divorce vs Separation

(Teacher Note: If you wish to add a discussion regarding divorce/separation, this might be the place to do so.)

OPTIONAL CLASS ACTIVITY 4.8

GUEST PANEL—Marriage Promotion

(Teacher Note: The panel could be marriage counselors or others who provide intervention help, but for this example, marriage promotion is being identified.)

Goal: The goal of this activity is to better understand the realities of marriage or marriage relate topics:

PLANNING:

- 1 Learn school policies on guest speakers and panelists.
- 2 Review the suggested questions or create your own for panelists and select which to ask the panel members.
- 3 Invite 4-5 couples to participate in the panel discussion. Strive to find individuals who represent diverse backgrounds, ages, and ethnicities and a variety of histories (first marriage, second marriage, couples who lived together prior to marriage, blended families, etc.) Consider inviting appropriate members of your staff, board, or any advisory committees to serve on the panel. Or you might contact local faith-based organizations who often have members who are willing to donate time to such activities.
- 4 Make sure panel members understand the goal of this session, which is allowing for the group to see what a real marriage looks like, but not deterring them from marriage.
- 5 Review the questions from the teacher resource that you are going to ask each couple prior to the session. Also be sure to call and remind the panelists a few days before and perhaps on the day of the event.

PROCEDURES:

- 1 Explain to the group that today they will have a chance to talk to a variety of married couples who are willing to talk honestly about their experiences with marriage.
- 2 Have the panel members introduce themselves by sharing:
 - * Their names and ages and ages of their children (if they have children)
 - * How long they have been married
 - * Why they chose to participate on the panel
- 3 After the panel has finished their introductions, ask the students to introduce themselves to the panel members and share their names and ages.
- 4 Explain to the group that you have prepared some questions for the panel members, but that the discussion is informal, and participants are encouraged to ask their own questions as well. Let panelists know that they don't each have to answer every question.
- 5 Begin asking questions you selected from the leader resource. Be sure to stop your questioning after about 20 minutes so you can open up the discussion to the group at large. Encourage participants to ask anything they want, making it clear that panelists have the right to pass if something is too personal or uncomfortable for them.
- 6 When time is up, thank the panelists for sharing their thoughts and time with the group.

SAMPLE PANEL QUESTIONS:

(Teacher Note: An alternative is to have the class write their own questions to ask.)

- 1 How did you know that your spouse was “the one”?
- 2 How did you decide to get married?
- 3 Why did you decide to get married rather than live together?
- 4 What was your wedding like?
- 5 What did your marriage vows mean to you?
- 6 What were some things that changed in your relationship after you married?
- 7 What were your biggest challenges in the early days of your marriage? How did you handle those challenges?
- 8 How do you deal with conflict?
- 9 What do you think are some of the characteristics of successful marriages?
- 10 How do you deal with a former spouse?
- 11 How do you deal with extended families?
- 12 Have you ever considered divorce?
- 13 How do you handle finances in your family?
- 14 What do you think has to be in place for a relationship to last?
- 15 How do you deal with a blended family (yours, mine, and ours)? For those of you who have children outside of the marriage, how do you deal with the child’s other parent?
- 16 What material things did you have when you got married? What have you acquired since you got married?
- 17 Has your marriage fit your fantasy of the “ideal” marriage?
- 18 How would your life have been different if you had not married?
- 19 How would your children’s lives have been different if you were not married?