

Session 1 Leader Guide

Read Genesis 2:4-9. What does this passage tell us about mankind's relationship with God? *Here we see that God made man different from the rest of creation. He breathed His own breath into Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden to have an intimate relationship with him.*

Read Genesis 2:18-25. What can we discover about mankind from this passage? *It was not good for man to be alone, so God fashioned a woman for him by taking a rib from his side to make her. She was the only one **not** created from nothing or dust but taken from Adam himself. In this way, God instituted marriage to be between a man and a woman before the fall into sin. Marriage is a one-flesh union, and there was no shame in their nakedness. Therefore, God intended men and women not only for intimacy with Him but also with others.*

Read Genesis 1:27-28. What blessing and privilege does God give to the first husband and wife to be fulfilled within their marriage? *He blesses them with the words, "Be fruitful and multiply." He thus declares that marriage is the institution in which children are to be conceived and born. The Lord could have kept making people out of dust and ribs, but God shared His creative work with Adam and Eve by including them in the act of procreation.*

Read Genesis 3:1-13. What was the result of Adam and Eve believing in the lie the serpent told them? *The perfect intimacy they had with God was severed. This immediately resulted in their self-consciousness about being naked. This was shame for the first time, hence the fig leaves.*

Read Genesis 3:14-19. Who is the first one to be addressed by God about this situation? What does God promise in verse 15? What was the other consequence of their actions which has been passed on to all of humanity? *The serpent (Satan) is the first to be spoken to, and God promises that he, the evil liar, will be defeated by the One (meaning Jesus) who will descend from the woman. This was the first of many promises throughout history that God gave us in His Word. The other consequence of Adam and Eve's actions is that all mankind is not only severed from God, but also, the blissful, intimate relationship they had with each other is ruined. This total corruption and estrangement we have with all of creation is called original sin.*

What are some of the cultural movements or buzz words that you hear today? *Answers may vary, but here some I came up with social constructionism, social imaginary, wokeism, post-modernity, post-Christianity, the sexual revolution. (I have included a few notes about cultural movements below.)*

What are some life issues affected because of our worldly philosophies today, especially those which seem to be centered on LGBTQ+ ideology? *Answers could be a long list including divorce, abortion, infertility, same-sex marriage, transgenderism, pornography addiction, premarital sex, pedophilia, sex trafficking, etc.*

- What does the Bible say in response to cultural norms?

1 Corinthians 1:20 *Philosophers are FOOLS.*

James 4:4 *Friendship with the world makes us adulterers and enemies of God.*

1 John 2:15-17 *For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world. This world is dying along with all its desires, but not those who do the will of God.*

- What is the will of God?

Romans 12:2 *To not be molded or formed by this world but by the Word of God.*

John 15:9-17 *To abide in Christ so that His love can fill us, and we can bear good fruit knowing that because of God's great mercy, we, poor miserable sinners, are children of God.*

Ezekiel 33:11 *God desires us all to turn back to Him and have eternal life.*

- What does our culture say about Harry's life issue of transgenderism?
1. How does our culture today define gender? *Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. From the Oxford dictionaries now: gender is the male sex or the female sex, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones, or one of a range of other identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.*
How do you think gender would have been defined in the past, perhaps 50 to 100 years ago? *Definition of gender before 1882--The Oxford Etymological Dictionary of the English Language of 1882 defined gender as kind, breed, sex, derived from the Latin ablative case of genus, like genere natus, which refers to birth. If you research the etymology of the word gender, you discover that the word gender, until the 1970s in academia and until the 2010s in the general populace, had an identical meaning to sex. Gender meant sex.*
 3. What does the Bible say specifically about Harry's life issue of transgenderism?
 - **Genesis 1:27** *(created male and female by God) In Matthew 19:4 (Even Jesus makes the same statement, validating Genesis)*
 - **Deuteronomy 22:5** *(wearing garments of the opposite sex) Since male and female are visibly distinct, wearing clothing that is specifically designated for one sex gives the appearance of reversing God's natural order. In today's context, the drag queen scenarios come to mind. For example, men who want to put on underclothing that is designed for women or the reverse.*
 - **Leviticus 12:2, 5, 7; 15:33; 27:3, 4, 7** *(making constant distinctions between male and female)*
 - **Genesis 6:19; 7:3, 9, 16** *(distinction even of male and female animals)*

Notes about cultural terms that might help in discussion:

Social constructionism is difficult to define but generally, social constructionists believe that conventional knowledge is not necessarily based on objective, unbiased observations of the world.

“Twenty years ago, philosopher Charles Taylor introduced the idea of the ‘social imaginary.’ Social imaginary, Taylor explained, consists of the set of values, institutions, laws, and symbols through which people come to picture or ‘image’ what their society is like and what’s possible (what can be imagined) within their society, that is, imagined within the given plausibility structures of that society. ‘Given plausibility structures’ means that there are limitations, of course, to what the prevailing modern society wants everyone to believe constitutes modern reality. Those limitations are conceptual and moral in nature, directing the imagination to desired outcomes—outcomes that agree with the values, institutions, laws, and symbols of modern society’s plausibility structure. It’s a self-reinforcing loop. Contemporary imaginations, consequently, are not unbounded and free, but very much captive to what society’s plausibility structure permits to be expressed as reality—a reality without God and a morality without transcendent reference. Everything in modern society is now adjudicated by some form of this rationale: What is human is natural. What is natural is good. Therefore, what is human is good. Institutions (usually driven by economic factors or pressures of value conformity) capitulate to the parameters of the plausibility structure or, in other words, they become merely human institutions with no interest in connecting with transcendent realities. The social imaginary comes to envisage education as a secular endeavor, promoting irreligious values. Films, music, literature, and even consumables (like clothing) manifest and materialize the social imaginary. And so, the social imaginary holds sway over many formerly faithful Christians, who find it more plausible to imagine themselves in a Tesla or their toes in the sand of Cancun, or even their cremated ashes scattered over their favorite lake, than to imagine the blood of Jesus in the baptismal font or their bodies resurrected on the Last Day.”

Taken from Christian Culture; a Magazine for Lutherans Winter 2023 article entitled “Sanctified Imagination” by Rev. John J. Bombaro, Ph.D.

Wokeism is another term used to describe the liberal progressive ideologies and policies that attempt to address systemic injustices and prejudices. It is usually used in a disparaging manner; in other words, people who subscribe to these ideologies and policies don’t call themselves “woke” but usually refer to themselves as open-minded and sensitive.

In addition to this, we also have terms such as Post-Modernism: truth, meaning, and individual identity do not exist. They are social constructs. Post-Christianity: the situation in which Christianity is no longer the dominant civil religion of a society but has gradually assumed values, culture, and worldviews that are not necessarily Christian. Post-Christian tends to refer to the loss of Christianity’s monopoly in historically Christian societies to atheism or secularism.

The sexual revolution: The **sexual revolution**, also known as the **sexual liberation**, was a [social movement](#) that challenged traditional codes of behavior related to sexuality and [interpersonal relationships](#) throughout the developed Western world from the 1960s to the 1970s. Sexual liberation included increased acceptance of [sex](#) outside of traditional heterosexual, monogamous relationships (primarily marriage). The normalization of [contraception](#) and [the pill](#), [public nudity](#), [pornography](#), [premarital sex](#), [homosexuality](#), [masturbation](#), [alternative forms of sexuality](#), and the legalization of [abortion](#) all followed.

from Wikipedia