The purpose of the SINGLE LIFE talk is to present a healthy view of singleness as an expression of Christian life and as an option open to everyone. Whereas Christian marriage may be a future reality for most participants, the SINGLE LIFE talk is an opportunity to address the blessings and the challenges of single life in terms of lifestyle, relationships, and life calling. Since participants already live the single life, the talk offers both present and future tense dimensions. The talk challenges the participants not to view their single state as a waiting period. Instead, they can see themselves as complete creations having the ability through Christ to live their lives for God. When and if God calls them to enter into the covenant of Christian marriage, their marriage will be stronger for having used their singleness as an opportunity to grow, to develop values and healthy relationships. What is important is not that we make a decision at this time about being single or married, but that we trust our future to God, live whole lives with Christ, and use our situation most effectively to serve God and neighbor. The SINGLE LIFE talk should be given by someone who is comfortable being single and who honors Christian values, including an affirmation that the proper place for sexual intercourse is within the marriage relationship.

At the close of the talk, the LD collects written questions from the participants. These questions serve as the basis for a question-and-answer-period with the SINGLE LIFE speaker.

The outline elaborates on the meaning of the points, not to provide a script but in order to stimulate the speaker in developing the talk in his or her own words. Personal examples are to be used as the speaker feels comfortable and as they fit the text. This talk is designed to last 15-20 minutes. Visual aids help convey the major points of the talk.

There is no reflection guide for this talk.

**Special note on a single layperson who has served as a model Christian.**

Eduardo Bonnin of Majorca, Spain, one of the founders of the three-day short course in Christianity (of which Chrysalis is an expression), chose to be single rather than marry as the way he could serve Christ most fully. He is the second of ten children, a layperson, and a fruit export tradesman. In the mid-1940s, he was one of seven young men who prayed and wrote for five years to develop the course. He and his friends devoted themselves totally to Christian action in society and to the development of Christian leaders. In 2000, at age eighty-two, Bonnin still was going strong, living out his lifelong commitment to Christ.
Guidelines for discussion time on Single Life—10-15 minutes

Know the procedure.
During the moments for silent reflection on the talk, the Single Life speaker moves to the hallway while the young people prepare their written questions. The LD will give you an opportunity to read over the questions before returning to the conference room. In the conference room, you may conduct the discussion time by reading the questions yourself, or you may have the LD read the questions for you. Try to respond to every question in some manner. Limit your responses to written questions so that no one is given special attention.

Prepare yourself ahead of time.
Decide ahead of time how open and honest you can comfortably be about sensitive, personal issues. Anticipate the most personal and challenging questions. In your talk do not allude to any area of concern, conflict, weakness, or trouble in your relationships that you do not desire to talk about further later. The young people will want to revisit that very area of your life.

Stay on schedule.
Such a discussion could go on forever, so watch the time. The ALD will help with this task. Keep the talk and discussion on schedule. For the sake of time, group similar questions and decide which questions you want to address first. Keep your answers brief. The young people are asking for answers, not stories.

Anticipate commonly asked questions.
Listed below are a few questions participants commonly ask. Think through your responses to some of these questions ahead of time.
1. Do you ever feel scared of being alone?
2. Do you ever feel awkward doing things with couples? Do you have good friends who are married? How do they treat you as a single person?
3. How can you relate to youth whose hormones are raging?
4. Should you date Christian guys/girls or date just anyone?
5. Have you started having sex, or do you plan to wait until marriage? Why or why not?
6. How do you deal with loneliness? What do you do when you feel lonely or empty?
7. When you are out with couples, do you feel left out? How do you deal with that?
8. How can you know the difference between infatuation and love?
9. Are you looking for someone now? Would you be happy to be single the rest of your life?
10. How could you use your single life to become closer with God?
11. If you choose to stay single, how do you deter all the well-meaning married couples who keep trying to pair you up?
12. What do people mean when they say, "One is a whole number" when referring to singleness?
13. How do you deal with peer pressure to have sex, even from other Christian friends?
14. Do you think God will really forgive me for having premarital sex? What if I know now it was wrong?
15. Do you accept the idea of being single, or are you always looking for a mate?
16. How do you quench your sexual desires and stay pure?
17. If a person gets a divorce, is it a sin for him or her to remarry?
18. Is it easier to be a Christian when you are single, since you don't have to worry about dragging a family to church?
ALD—“With a clean sheet of paper, pen in hand...”; followed by the before-talk chorus, at which time the speaker will enter the conference room (participants should be standing for the chorus). The speaker will ask the participants to join in “The Prayer to the Holy Spirit” found on the last page of the Chrysalis Worshipbook. The speaker will then ask the participants to be seated.

Introduction

- Tell a personal or true story about a person whose expectations for his or her life didn’t turn out the way he or she had planned.
- Give up-to-date statistics on the number of people choosing single life over married life. The challenge for you right now is not how to live as Christians in marriage but how to live as Christians in singleness.

“My name is __________________________, and the title of this talk is SINGLE LIFE.”

I. Each person is a unique creation of God.
   A. We are called to be the unique persons God has created us to be and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in whatever state we find ourselves, single or married.
   B. Yesterday we talked about marriage. Life does not begin when you get married, as some people seem to imagine. Life with Christ begins now while (most of) you are still single.
   C. For some of you singleness, rather than marriage, may turn out to be the state in which you live much of your life or even choose to live all of your life.
   D. It’s okay to be single. It’s okay to remain single, if God leads you that way. Singleness does not always equal “unmarried.” “Unmarried” implies incomplete. For many people, single life is a whole, full, and faithful life.

II. Persons are single for many reasons.
   A. The “waiting game.” Some are in a state of waiting and searching for the right mate. These persons are single only because they are “not yet married.” But be careful not to wait so long as to miss the possibilities of living fully while still single!
   B. Single again. Some are single as a result of circumstances, such as death of a spouse or divorce. Many single adults are single parents. They may or may not choose to marry again.
   C. Single by choice. Some are single because they prefer to be. Marriage (or remarriage) does not seem right, at least not right now. Or they like the independence of singleness.
   D. Single by calling. Some people feel they are called to live for Christ as single persons (Matt. 19:10-12). The Apostle Paul favored singleness for the freedom it gave him to
serve God most fully, though he acknowledged that his way would not be the best way for everybody (1 Cor. 7:7, 32-35).

III. Tell your story of being single.
A. Why are you single?
1. What were your dreams for adult life? Did you choose the single life, or had you thought you would be married?
2. As a young person, what were your feelings toward adults who were single?
3. Was singleness a conscious choice, a commitment, just the way things worked out, or the result of difficulties and circumstances in your life?
4. At what point did you accept your singleness as an okay place to be, the place God wants you to be for now, or as a life commitment?
B. What blessings and burdens have you experienced as a result of being a single person?
1. What pressures and attitudes do you experience from others? (such as labeling, wanting acceptance, longing to be loved, alone at holidays)
2. What are the myths and stereotypes about singles you have encountered? (such as only being half a person)
3. What do you encounter in society, church, and vocation that is generally oriented toward married couples? (such as holidays, teaching, restaurants)
4. What challenges for living as a Christian does singleness present to you? What opportunities does it offer for living as a Christian?

IV. Give some sound advice, based on your experience with the single life as an expression of Christian life. Speak to some of the following themes. Share your experiences, struggles, and insights where appropriate.
A. It is okay to be single.
1. Singleness is not a stagnant waiting period. It doesn’t mean that you are only half created. Single persons are whole persons. You can be single and be close to God just as much as someone who is married.
2. Singleness can be miserable, just as married life can be miserable. Single life can also be complete with meaningful relationships and unique opportunities to give and serve.
3. There are two steps to being satisfied with singleness.
   a. When you accept that you could be single for the rest of your life.
   b. When you stop listening to the world, and listen to God.
B. Staying single has its advantages, at least for a while.
1. Discovering who you are. Some people marry before they have matured as persons. Some jump from one marriage to another without taking time to find out who they really are.
2. Growing spiritually. This can be a time to seek God freely, to define goals, and to discover the path for your life.
3. Learning to think for yourself. After you leave home, singleness requires learning to think and make decisions for yourself.
4. Becoming a mature young man/woman before making major commitments to marriage and family.

C. You can enjoy close relationships as a single person, while remaining true to Christian values.
   1. Everyone, whether single or married, needs a network of close relationships. Single persons must find places to meet healthy people who share common values and aims in life.
   2. Relationships can be fun, satisfying, and close without being sexually intimate. This is normal, healthy, and responsible.
   3. It is important to learn to “read” relationships, enjoy different kinds of friendships, manage different levels of intimacy with integrity.

D. Relate ways you live out your Christian call and express your gifts for ministry as a single person.

V. In closing: Unlock the secrets God has in store for you.

A. Seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33).
   1. Don’t be anxious now about whether you will be married or single.
   2. Focus your life on Christ and his kingdom. Trust that God will provide as you seek to live God’s will. Let everything else find its proper place.
   3. Ask Christ where he wants you. Where will you be an ambassador for Christ?
   4. Don’t go looking for love; rather, look for ways to give God’s love to others. From the abundance of love, God will give you the relationships you need.

B. Discover your call and gifts for service.
   1. What are your gifts and talents, the things you enjoy doing most?
   2. Check out where your gifts and your concerns match a human need in the world. What human needs concern you and pull at your heart strings?

C. How will you and God shape your life so as to serve Christ faithfully, to live your life creatively, and to contribute positively with your life?

VI. Leave the participants with a sentence or phrase to let them know they are a complete creation as single individuals.