

Formation in Christian Chastity

1st – 4th Grade: Created in the Image & Likeness of God

INTRODUCTION

The Church states with confidence that parents are the primary educators of their children. This is most true when we speak of the religious education. This teaching flows from the natural bond that exists between parent and child, and from the most basic teachings of our faith. Parents know their child best. While many parents seek the assistance of others to impart some of the systematic elements of education in faith, in Catholic schools or in parish religious education programs, they retain the primary duty to form your children in the faith. The Catechist assists the parent to teach the children their first prayers, and with their parents, will first experience the worship of God. The children also need to learn by word and example how to live responsibly in this world. This series is intended to assist in the formation of their children in the virtue of chastity.

The lesson plan for grades one through four are the same. Due to rapid developmental changes in the individual, the same program may be used with the young person hearing and understanding it in a different and deeper manner.

Why the focus on Chastity?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) introduces the discussion of chastity by calling it a “vocation” (See CCC #2337 ff). Chastity is the virtue whereby we regulate our use of sexual activity in accord with our state in life. This series **is not a sex education program**. We want to emphasize the good, true and the beautiful elements of the Christian life that are ours as followers of Jesus Christ. Every disciple observes chastity, though the manner of how it is observed varies according to our state in life. The married person, the priest or religious, and the young person all observe chastity, though in different ways. For example, a young person practices chastity by remaining pure in all of their relationships. A married couple observes a holy life in their exclusive commitment to each other. Priests and religious dedicate themselves exclusively to God. We want our children to grow up with a proper, healthy and holy understanding of themselves and their gift of human sexuality.

How will this program work?

This program is based on the premise that parents know their children, where they are in their own personal development, and can best judge when their child is ready for specific lessons or information. Additionally, this is designed to assist in develop an adequate anthropology of the human person.

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The natural innocence of young children may be protected. During the grades 2 through 4, parents will be the teachers. For each year, we will provide a series of ideas and recommendations for you to review with your children. These will outline some of the basic concepts that are building blocks to understanding a chaste life and one that looks forward to a holy family life for their future. In later grades (5 to 8), we will assist parents with some classroom activity to support some of what they will be teaching at home.

CATECHIST PREPARATION

SCRIPTURE TEXT

- Genesis 1 and 2
- Genesis 1:26-27 (Image and Likeness)
- Psalm 8:3-8
- 1 Corinthians 11:7
- Ephesians 1:6

KEY CONCEPTS TO COMMUNICATE

- God the Father creates the cosmos and all that is in it.
- God the Father created human beings in His image and likeness.
- God the Father created humanity as either male or female only.
- God the Father created us with a body, which we can see, and a soul which we cannot see. The visible reveals and makes known the invisible.
- We are designed to be His children and thus, be happy with Him forever in a love that never ends.
- God the Son, Jesus, redeemed us when we sinned against the Father.
- We are called to love each other as Jesus loves us.
- God the Father plan is that everyone has a mother and a father.
- God the Father calls all men to be spiritual fathers and some to be physical fathers as well.
- God the Father calls all women to be spiritual mothers and some to be physical mothers as well.
- God the Father has a plan for each person's life that only they can fulfill. This is lived out in one of four vocations (Main states in life which god calls people): Single (vowed), married, priesthood, and religious-life.
- God the Father is Jesus' father in heaven whom He loves and He is our father too.
- Jesus loves His mother Mary and his foster-father, St. Joseph and wants us to love him too.

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KEY TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

The following defined terms are for the catechist to better understand the terms within the lesson plan. It is our hope that the catechist is able to distill and communicate in their words to the student the principles of the terms. Words are important and we want to use the correct terms even if the fullness of the word is not completely understood. In many ways, some of our most important terms are meant to be understood in a progressive revelation. Each year the terms will be given a deeper understanding for the student.

Chastity: The virtue that moderates the desire for sexual pleasure according to the principles of faith and right reason. In *married people*, chastity moderates the desire in conformity with their state of life; in *unmarried people* who wish to marry, the desire is moderated by abstinence until (or unless) they get married; in *those who resolve not to marry*, the desire is sacrificed entirely. (Etym. Latin *castus*, morally pure, unstained.)

Community: A group of persons who share the same beliefs, live together under authority, and co-operate in pursuing common interests for the benefit of others besides their own members. The degree of common belief, living, and activity determines the intensity of the community and its distinctive identity as a human society.

Cosmology: Study of the universe as an orderly creation, and of the causes that operate in the world of space and time. It presumes that the world was made according to an all-wise plan and is being directed by an infinite Mind. (Etym. Greek *kosmos*, the world + *logia*, knowledge, science.)

Cosmos: Literally "in order" or "duly." Hence good behavior, government, or rule. Commonly applied to the universe as wisely arranged and ordered. "Cosmos" is the ordinary biblical Greek term for the world as created and directed by God. (Etym. Greek *kosmos*, the world.)

Ex Nihilo: Creating something out of nothing. This doctrine (CCC 296) teaches us that God called forth the universe and created everything from nothing. Because God has created everything (CCC 338), all things are theological and bear the fingerprint of God within its very nature. Taken together, creation reveals the various attributes of the Godhead.

Father: Theologically, a father is the principal one who produces of his own substance another person like himself. There is, consequently, a Father within the

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Trinity, who begets God the Son. But the triune God is himself spoken of as a Father, with respect to the rational beings whom he made to share in his own possession of knowledge and love. Among human beings a father is the male parent of his own children and, ultimately, the ancestor of all his progeny. In Church usage the term is applied to the early spokesmen and defenders of Christianity, bishops who attend regional and especially ecumenical councils, and priests in general or specific priests in their role as confessors or spiritual counselors of the faithful.

Friendship: Reciprocal love. In philosophical terms a friend is a person whom one knows and loves well and by whom one is known and loved for virtuous reasons. The biblical notion of friendship, in the New Testament, adds the feature of total selflessness after the example of Jesus Christ, whose love was generous, forgiving, and sought only the welfare of those whom he loved. The sharing of confidences is also part of the biblical understanding of friendship (John 15:15).

Lectio Divina: This Latin phrase literally means divine reading. An ancient practice for reading Scripture, the early Church Fathers also called it spiritual reading and was, and still is, a staple for daily prayer. In a 2005 speech, Pope Benedict encouraged the practice of Lectio Divina stating,

"I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of *Lectio divina*: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church - I am convinced of it - a new spiritual springtime."

There are many private/group techniques but at the core it is comprised of the following four steps: Lectio, reading of a passage or section of the Word of God; Meditatio, invoking the Holy Spirit and considering the giving passage; and Oratio, responding to the word through a movement of the heart; and contemplation, opening our heart and resting in God's presence to allow what He has spoken to take root. In a Bible study, this is most often practiced by reading the passage, providing a catechesis or framework for understanding the selection, reading the passage again and discussing/wrestling with what it is saying, and ending with a prayer of thanks. There is a tendency to want a commitment for immediate application. Life-changing commitments happen after a sufficient time of reflection. Participants should be encouraged think, pray and come back the next week with an application.

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LESSON PLAN

1. Begin with a prayer invoking the Guardian Angel¹ by asking the children to repeat after you (Suggestion follows):

Angel of God, my guardian dear, To whom God's love commits me here,
Ever this day, be at my side, To light and guard, Rule and guide. Amen.

2. God the Father made everything in creation:
 - a. Created it from nothing
 - b. Created it without effort
 - c. Sustains everything through His love
3. God the Father called forth creation:
 - a. Creation is made for us
 - b. A place to come in contact with Himself
4. God the Father created us for love, by love and through love
 - a. How do we experience this love?
 - i. Through the family
 1. Family is the place to learn to love, serve and grow in our natural talents and spiritual virtues
 2. Families are meant to be a mother and father in marriage
 - a. Some families do not look like this and God the Father can still work through them
5. God the Father loves us as we are and sees us as we will be. You are important to the God. He said so! Tell the children that:
 - a. **We are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27)**
 - i. **Question 1:** Ask what that means
 - ii. **Answer 1:** It means that we are different from all the other animals
 1. We can know: We name things, manipulate "things" to make something new and useful
 2. We can love
 3. We are spiritual (who we are) and material (what we are)
 - b. **We are truly children of God (1 John 3:1)**
 - i. Ask the children what this means...
 1. We are called to love, serve, share, heal, forgive, show mercy, become holy, etc.

¹ "From infancy to death human life is surrounded by their (the angels) watchful care and intercession. Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life. Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united to God." (CCC 336).

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- c. God the Father has a person, individual, loving interest in each one of us
 - i. He has made Himself accessible to us through Jesus
 - ii. He has made it possible to change by the power of the Holy Spirit
 - iii. **He loves us! (John 3:16)**
 - iv. He desires to be in relationship with us
 - v. **He wants to give us a better life. (John 10:10b)**
- 6. Suggested Activities:
 - a. Take the children outside for a scavenger hunt (Have them collect leaves, rocks, sticks, dirt, etc.).
 - i. **Question 2:** Ask the children, “Who made the items that you have collected?”
 - 1. At this age it is important that the activities are tactile; the senses of the child should be encouraged to be used to understand their environment.
 - ii. **Answer 2:** The answer is, “God.”
 - 1. It is important to share with the children that God the Father² created everything that we are able to see, hear, smell, touch and taste from nothing (*ex nihilo*).
 - b. Share with the children that God the Father teaches us about Himself through creation³
 - i. Ask them to describe the properties of particular “things” of creation and relate them back to God (Examples follow)
 - 1. Brightness of the Sun: God’s purity is brighter than the sun (Matthew 17:2)
 - 2. Whiteness of snow: There is no sin in God (Isaiah 1:18)
 - 3. Splendor of fire: Warmth and light provided by fire is like His love (Hebrews 12:29)
 - 4. Speed of Lightning: God is more powerful than lightning because (Job 37:15-16, Job 28:24, Jeremiah 23:24, etc.)
 - 5. Swiftiness of wind: God is everywhere and goes where He wills in power (John 3:8, Amos 4:13, Psalm 107:25, etc.)
 - 6. Depth of the Sea: His wisdom is beyond us and His love is beyond measure (Romans 8:39, 11:33; Ephesians 3:18)
 - 7. Stability of the Earth: His love and sovereignty does not change though we all tremble in awe before Him

² From the very beginning of a child’s catechesis, the general term “God” should be only used when speaking about all three persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

³ The breastplate of St. Patrick is an excellent prayer to teach that creation reveals various attributes of the Godhead. A copy has been included at the end of the lesson plan.

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(Hebrews 13:8, 1 Chronicles 16:30, Psalm 89:2, Psalm 93:2, Psalm 103:19, etc.)

8. Firmness of Rocks: His work is perfect and He is faithful without change (Deuteronomy 32:4, 1 Samuel 2:2, 2 Samuel 22:32, Psalm 62:2)
7. Tell the story of Jesus' birth.
 - a. Talk about Mary, Joseph, and how Jesus is special with His Father in heaven.
 - b. Perhaps the children could draw a picture of Jesus' birth, surrounded by Mary, Joseph, and the stable animals.
8. Have the children develop a coat of arms
 - a. Have four sections for them to design (Prepare the shield beforehand with it sectioned off)
 - i. Section 1: Draw their family
 - ii. Section 2: Their favorite attribute of God
 - iii. Section 3: What they want to do for God (Adventure or mission)
 - iv. Favorite place in creation
 - b. Help the children understand that they are the Princes and Princesses (1 John 3:1) of the King of Kings (1 Timothy 6:15). And their Father's Kingdom is the earth.
 - i. Ask them:
 1. How will they be good stewards and protect the earth?
 2. How will they protect their family?
 3. How will they strive to protect themselves?
 - ii. Share with them their weapons (Ephesians 6:10-18)
9. Close the class with a prayer to St. Joseph who is the protector of the family

St. Joseph, please obtain God's grace and protection for my family and for all families. Help us to love by giving of ourselves to others, avoiding selfishness, and living in peace with others. Help us to model our lives after yours by being humble, working at our tasks faithfully, by acting justly, and by loving mercy. Finally, help us by your prayers to live chaste lives, to be truly devoted to Jesus and Mary, to love and grow in our Catholic faith, and finally to be with our Lord in heaven. Amen.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Why did God make everything?
- How did God make everything?

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- Why did He give us families?

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POST-BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES & REFERENCES

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. **Why did God make us?** Answer: God made us to know Him, love Him, and serve Him so as to be happy with Him forever in heaven. This may also be summarized by the Nigerian Catechism that answers the same question by stating, “He thought that we would like it!”
2. **Does God love everyone?** Answer: Yes, God loves everyone, because God is love.
3. **Who is our neighbor?** Answer: In a certain sense, everyone is our neighbor, because every human being is made in God’s image and likeness. Not only that, but every baptized person is an adopted son or daughter of God the Father and is our brother or sister in Christ.
4. **Are the Biblical days of creation literal?**
Remembering that the Hebrews did not intend the creation account to be a chronological history but a recounting of the **principles** of creation i.e., God created everything from nothing, creation was created in an orderly fashion, creation was created for us to steward and participate in the creative and perfecting act of God, etc. That being said, the particular term for day used here in Hebrew is equal to about a thousand years – or a really long time. Theoretical physics can reconcile this creation account using the theory of the big bang and understanding that time was not a 24 hour day at the beginning of creation; however, this is only a theory.
5. **When were the angels created and how do more angels come into existence?**
The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) teaches us that at the moment of creation God created the visible and invisible. The CCC also teaches us that all the angels for all eternity were created at that moment with all the knowledge that they would need for their ministry and service to Trinity and all of creation.
6. **Do animals go to heaven?**
We know that there are animals in heaven. Animals, however, have material souls and therefore, once they die, cease to exist. While we know that there are dogs in heaven, it is not the particular dog that lived and then died.
7. **Do animals have personal souls?**
An animal does not have a personal soul. Animals are incapable of decisions (short of divine intervention – dog risking itself to save the little boy) that are contrary to instinct and its given nature (pigs do not fly, ergo the cliché, or more importantly, capable of figuring out how to fly). Likewise, animals do not have an intellect. This does not mean that

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animals cannot learn or do not have feelings, they do. Both of these attributes are common to all bodily beings; however, animals are incapable of conceptual thinking which is reserved for rational souls.

8. **Ultimately, how do we show love for our neighbor?**

We show love for our neighbor by doing good toward him and helping him/her get to heaven.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES FROM CHURCH TEACHING

- Creation of the material and the spiritual: CCC 327
- Adam and Eve as our original and only parents of all humanity: Doctrine (*sent. Certa.*) – The whole human race stems from one single human pair.ⁱ
- Animals have a material soul and irrational soul
- Humans have a immaterial soul and a rational soul therefore immortal⁴
- The human body and soul are unified and form one human natureⁱⁱ

CCC 296: We believe that God needs no pre-existent thing or any help in order to create, nor is creation any sort of necessary emanation from the divine substance. God creates freely "out of nothing":

If God had drawn the world from pre-existent matter, what would be so extraordinary in that? A human artisan makes from a given material whatever he wants, while God shows his power by starting from nothing to make all he wants.

CCC 299: Because God creates through wisdom, his creation is ordered: "You have arranged all things by measure and number and weight." The universe, created in and by the eternal Word, the "image of the invisible God", is destined for and addressed to man, himself created in the "image of God" and called to a personal relationship with God. Our human understanding, which shares in the light of the divine intellect, can understand what God tells us by means of his creation, though not without great effort and only in a spirit of humility and respect before the Creator and his work. Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness - "And God saw that it was good. . . very good"- for God willed creation as a gift addressed to man, an inheritance destined for and entrusted to him. On many occasions the Church has had to defend the goodness of creation, including that of the physical world.

CCC 327: The profession of faith of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) affirms that God "from the beginning of time made at once (*simul*) out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal, that is, the angelic and the earthly, and then (*deinde*) the human creature, who as it were shares in both orders, being composed of spirit and body."

⁴ CCC 1022

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CCC 1604: God who created man out of love also calls him to love – the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love.⁹⁰

CCC 1822: Charity [love] is the theological [God-given] virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

REFERENCE BOOKS

- A Father Who Keeps His Promises Scott Hahn
- Theology for Beginners Frank Sheed

MEDIA CLIPS

- God Made Me Perfect (*The Adventures of Toby: Making Friends*) Wingclips.com
- Creating the World (*The Adventures of Toby: Making Friends*) Wingclips.com

⁹⁰ Cf. *Gen* 1:27; 1 *Jn* 4:8, 16.

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John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2006.

ⁱ Ott, Ludwigg, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, (Rockford, IL: TAN Books) 96

ⁱⁱ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd (Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1997), §365