

Formation in Christian Chastity

7th Grade: Happiness and Friendship

INTRODUCTION

The Seventh grade focuses on the principle that we are made for happiness and that freedom is made for the good, true and beautiful.

Our culture today presents a skewed version of happiness which it connects with unbridled freedom and pleasure-seeking. The Gospel, however, connects the law of the Lord with happiness and joy:

The law of the LORD is perfect, **reviving the soul**; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, **rejoicing the heart**; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. (Psalm 19:7-9) [emphasis mine]

It is true that for many years morality has been presented as a necessity for entrance into heaven. And, that is an objective truth. The Holy Father, following in the steps of St. Thomas Aquinas, teaches that happiness is the goal and end of the Christian life. In other words, the moral life is aimed towards our happiness. This does not mean the moral life does not require sacrifice and suffering, it means that the suffering and sacrifice is order to life-giving joy, "...I have come to give life and give it to the full. (John 10:10b).

It is important that as we present *Formation in Christian Chastity* that we not only teach but demonstrate in our presentation that morality is ordered to our joy and safety. Additionally, we need to engage our youth in discussing what happiness is and that their happiness is what Christ through his Church desires for us.

CATECHIST PREPARATION

SCRIPTURE TEXT

Deuteronomy 6: 4-5
John 10:10b and 14:14

KEY CONCEPTS TO COMMUNICATE

- Humanity is made for true and lasting happiness
- The moral life informs us of what true happiness consists, and that making proper use of our freedom leads to happiness.

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- The choice of friendships assist us in the moral life and what is best for us – body, mind and soul.
- Chastity is a spiritual power that helps us follow God’s call in our lives and thus discern our vocation.
- A sacramental life steeped in prayer is essential to forming solid friendships and chaste lives.

KEY TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

Beauty/Beautiful: That which instinctively appeals. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, "Beauty relates to the cognitive faculty; for beautiful things are those which please on being seen. Hence beauty consists in due proportion" (Summa Theologica, I, 5,4). There is, consequently, beauty not only in things material but also, and especially, in things spiritual. "Union in distinction makes order; order produces agreement; and proportion and agreement, in complete and finished things, make beauty" (St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, I).

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.)

Evangelion: This Greek term means "good news." Genesis 3:15 is the proto-evangelion of the first "good news" of Scripture and hope of salvation. It is reading the end of the story before the plot. This where we get the word evangelism and evangelist – to share or one who shares the good news.

Freedom: The immunity from determination or compulsion whether internal (from within a person's will) or external (from an outside source); the objective absence of constraint or coercion, notably with reference to civil society, as freedom of religion, assembly, and education.

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).

Good: In general, whatever is suitable or befitting someone or something. Practically, however, it is that which all things tend toward or desire. The good is

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the desirable, and therefore the object of the natural (or supernatural) needs or tendencies of a being.

Liberty: Freedom, but with stress on the person who enjoys or exercises the freedom. Liberty, therefore, is more the *subjective power of self-determination*; freedom is more the *objective absence of constraint or coercion*, notably with reference to civil society, as freedom of religion, assembly, and education.

Marital Act: It is the act by which a natural husband and natural wife give themselves totally to one another body and soul. This act cooperates with God the Father and sometimes God chooses to create a new human being through it.¹

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.

¹ The biological explanation is reserved to parents, in accordance with #133.4 of The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality. If parents ask for resources to help them in speaking with their children about human sexuality, there is a Parent Resource in appendix 2 of this program.

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Original Sin: Original sin is essentially the loss of the gift of sanctifying grace. Original sin means that it originated in Adam's actual fault. It is not a sin that is committed rather it is contracted because we did not do this evil deed but it is received from someone else. The result is concupiscence which meanings we have a tendency to sin. This is a pervasive weakness to avoid and/or not sin.

Sabbath: The sign of the covenant that God makes with creation demonstrating His commitment and faithfulness to provide and keep all things in being.ⁱ The "rest" in Genesis is not an act of tiredness but an act of exuberance and trust in humanity by giving it dominion and authority over creation. Practically speaking, the Jews lived this out by understanding that God is the author of all and precedes everything *prior* to "going to work". We share in His on-going act of creation.

Truth/True: Conformity of mind and reality. Three kinds of conformity give rise to three kinds of truth. In *logical* truth, the mind is conformed or in agreement with things outside the mind, either in assenting to what is or in denying what is not. Its opposite is error. In *metaphysical* or *ontological* truth, things conform with the mind. This is primary conformity, when something corresponds to the idea of its maker, and it is secondary conformity when something is intelligible and therefore true to anyone who knows it. In *moral* truth, what is said conforms with what is on one's mind. This is truthfulness and its opposite is falsehood.

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LESSON PLAN

1. Begin with a prayer invoking the Holy Family and their example of virtue (Suggestion follows):

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we love you very much. Yours was the perfect family, overflowing with goodness, peace, truth, and love. Please give us, and our families, the grace we need to be good and pure in thought, word, and deed. Help us to become holy by loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and help us to love our neighbor as ourselves for love of God. Finally, when our days on this earth have ended, please lead us safely to eternal happiness in heaven with God and all His holy angels and saints. Amen.

2. Provide an overview – what is the starting point and where are we going?
3. Set the stage for the study
 - a. **Question 1:** Why did God make us?
 - i. All answers (within reason) are correct as long as they relate to our happiness and service of him
 - b. **Answer 1:** He thought that we would like it!
 - i. Another way to say it is that we were made to “know Him, love Him, and serve Him so as to be happy with Him forever in heaven”
 - c. **Question 2:** Why does knowing, loving and serving God make us happy and prepare us for the life with Him in heaven?
 - i. The answers typically deal with going to church and works of mercy. Steer the conversations to those goals and aspirations in their lives.
 - d. **Answer 2:** Because God made everything and therefore it is theological. We may love and serve Him those our family, friends, the strangers we serve and in the activities we choose to participate in.
4. Lectio Divina: Scripture
 - a. Have a three teens read the following
 - i. Deuteronomy 6:4-5
 - ii. John 10:10
 - iii. John 14:15
 - iv. Proverbs 18:24
 - b. Highlight that readings guide us:
 - i. How to love God
 - ii. What it means to love and serve Him
 - iii. That He creates us and he loves us

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- iv. Friends are either good influences or bad
- 5. Study of Happiness
 - a. Read John 10:10 again and focus on living life to the fullest
 - b. **Question 3:** What does it mean to live life to the fullest? How do you know if you are doing it correctly?
 - c. **Answer 3:** to live life to the fullest is to enjoy the gifts God the father has provided for us in the way they were meant to be experienced.
 - d. Invite them to share great moments in their life that inspired wonder or just surprised them by joy.
 - i. **Question 4:** Has god given us a plan to live by that guarantees us maximum fulfillment and happiness?
 - ii. **Answer 4:** Yes. It is the 10 Commandments.
 - 1. Why are they called commandments? Why not suggestions?
 - 2. Use the example of a cell phone...
 - a. What is the purpose of a cell phone and how is it meant to be used?
 - b. Could you use as a:
 - i. Brick
 - ii. Water ski
 - iii. Paperweight
 - c. With the previous examples, though they are all true, is that a good use of the phone and why?
 - 3. Sacred Scripture is our "Owners Manual" and the 10 Commandments are a summary of the manual
 - e. Lectio Divina: Read Scripture Deuteronomy 5:6-21
 - i. Show that the 10 Commandments were given as two sets
 - 1. First three relate to God
 - 2. Second seven relate to relations with humanity
 - a. Note that the commandments one through three align with four through six and are related to each other.
 - ii. **Question 5:** Does the Father force us to obey these commandments and what do you call the ability to do or not do what he asks of us?
 - iii. **Answer 5:** No. Freedom also us to make a choice.
 - iv. **Question 6:** What is freedom? Give some examples?
 - v. **Answer 6:** Freedom is to do what we ought. In other words, it is the ability to choose what is good not only for us but for those around us as well.
 - vi. **Question 7:** Why is freedom important?

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- vii. **Answer 7:** Freedom is directly related to love. If we do not have the real ability to choose or reject a person or what is presented to us we cannot be truly free. In order to love, you have to have the ability to not want to love i.e., reject the person for something or someone else.
- f. Demonstrate via example how freedom and the 10 Commandments work together for our happiness, safety and well-being.
 - i. Use the following example (It is great if you have a whiteboard, chalkboard or flip chart to illustrate as you teach):
 1. Encourage the kids to imagine that they live on the top of a butte (think Arizona).
 - a. Tell them it is two hundred feet high
 2. Tell them that they are married and live at the top with their 12 children that love to play soccer.
 - a. Describe to them that the children do not like to play in the backyard because they are afraid they are going to fall off and land on the jagged rocks 200 ft. below (Yes, hyperbole works well with seventh-graders).
 - i. Remember, it is not the fall but the sudden stop that will take their life
 3. **Question 8:** How would you as a parent make it safer to play in the backyard?
 4. **Answer 8:** Build a fence around the perimeter.
 - a. Then tell them that the husband and wife build an eight foot fence around the perimeter but the kids complain that the parents are limiting their freedom by building the fence. Does that make sense?
 5. The 10 Commandments are like that fence.
 - a. By following them we will be able to live life to the fullest
 - i. We could play in the middle or the edges. Regardless, it is safe.
 - b. The 10 Commandments not only protect us but those whom we love or do not even know.
 - i. It encourages us to:
 1. Love people
 - a. Today we like to love things and thus treat them with great

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- respect and dignity. We make them greater than they are
2. Use objects
 - a. Today we use people out of convenience or to accomplish a goal when we should be loving them and helping them grow in holiness and wholeness
 - g. Remind them that God the Father has given us first parents then our friends to guide us and assist us become the men and women of God that we are designed to be.
 - i. The fourth commandment is the only one with a blessings attached to it: If we honor our father and mother, God the father will bless us with happiness and children
 - ii. Note: the word honor in the Hebrew is better translated as glorify
6. Since we now understand that freedom is meant to lead us heaven and then love people and use things in a correct manner, how does this help us discover our vocation?
- a. Tell the kids that Pope Saint John Paul II said that God the father has given a mission to every person that only they can fulfill.²
 - i. There is no Plan B. They are it and God the Father has no back-up plan.
 - b. **Question 9:** What is another name for a personal mission and what do you have to do to discover that mission?
 - c. **Answer 9:** Vocation. Live a life of virtue (Follow the 10 Commandments), pray and stay connected to the sacramental life of the Church.
 - d. What is a vocation?
 - i. This word comes from a Latin word "vocare," which means, "to call."
 - ii. There are four general types of vocations, or missions:
 1. Ordination to the priesthood or permanent diaconate
 2. Consecrated life
 3. Married life
 4. Single life vowed for the good of society or the Church
 - iii. Regardless of what one's general vocation is, the path that an individual takes to attain holiness will differ; however, all are called to holiness.

² *Christifideles Laici* (December 30, 1988), John Paul II

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1. To be holy is to be fully human in the manner in which God the father designed us to be.
 - a. Sin is like using a cell phone as a water ski. It might work but it:
 - i. Ruins it in the process
 - ii. Never allows it to be used to its full potential
7. To clearly hear the voice of God calling to us in our heart, it is very important that we live purely.
 - a. "Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a *grace*, a fruit of spiritual effort." ¹³² (CCC 2345)
 - b. Chastity is a spiritual power, and helps us live out our vocation by imitating the purity of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Chastity is not just from priests, deacons and sisters. Everyone, whether married, single, priest, or religious is called to live chastely – though one who is married would live out this virtue in a different way than one who is not married.
 - i. Chastity allows us to hear and see clearly what God the Father is saying to us in prayer and our daily life.
8. To live chaste and holy lives, it is very important that we choose our friends wisely.
 - a. We must never be unkind to anyone, but we must be careful to choose friends who want what is best for both our body and our soul.
 - i. We should ensure that our friends meet a certain criteria. Consider the following:
 1. Friends are not quick-tempered and therefore we are not always waiting for the next fight (Proverbs 22:24-25)
 2. Friends are not foolish. They make good decisions that assist to become physically strong, morally straight and mentally awake (Proverbs 13:20)
 3. Friends are not afraid to tell us when we are acting inappropriately or sinning (Proverbs 27:5-6)
 4. Friends love us for who we are (Proverbs 17:17).
 - a. It is important that our friends accept us for who we are, a child of God and a "soldier of Christ."
 5. Friends challenge us to be better than we are (Proverbs 27:17)
 6. Friends encourage our relationship with God and even pray for us (Job 16:20-21)

¹³² Cf. *Gal* 5:22

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- b. It is good to have friends who are of the opposite sex, as well as friends of the same sex.
 - i. While it is good to have friends who are of the opposite sex, this is the time to happily enjoy these friendships without the pressures of dating.
9. Our Lord called us friends and not slaves (John 15:15)
 - a. To be a friend of the King in ancient times meant you always had access to the King. Not even a King's wife had that type of access. To be a friend of the King was an official position which meant:
 - i. You did not have to you have to wait to be summoned to see him
 1. To approach a King without asking permission and being summoned was to be thrown in jail. In Persia, you were executed.
 2. Even a wife had to asked permission first and make an appointment
 - ii. You did not have to ask permission to speak to the King
 1. To speak without being spoken to would cause your immediate execution
 - b. Jesus desires us to speak freely with Him in prayer any time we want. Most importantly, He wants us to be able to hear His answer through prayer
 - i. Impediments to our hearing is called sin
 1. Jesus freely forgives us through confession
 - a. Without judgment
 - b. Without condemnation
 2. We are meant to experience His friendship through the sacraments
 - c. Invite the teens to use the sacrament and to begin listen to the Jesus

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Why don't we expect more of our friendships?
- What do you need to do to be a better friend?
- Who is a model in our lives of good friends?
- Why are friends necessary?
- Why does Jesus desire to be our friend?
- Why are we afraid to live out our Christian life and values in front of our friends? How can we start?
- Name four practical ways to be a good friend to both men and women.

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POST-BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES & REFERENCES

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Dominic Savio:

Dominic Savio was born in Italy in 1842. Dominic, who loved to pray, became an altar boy when he was just five years old. When he was twelve he met a holy priest who later was named a saint, St. John Bosco. Don Bosco ran a school for boys called the Oratory. Dominic joined the school. In those days, children were 12 when they received their First Holy Communion. On the day of his First Communion, St. Dominic wrote four simple rules for himself in his journal. The four rules were:

1. I will go to Confession and to Communion often.
2. I will keep holy the feast days.
3. Jesus and Mary will be my best friends.
4. I will rather die than commit a mortal sin.

He was very well liked by his schoolmates because of his kind and cheerful disposition. However, because of poor health, he had to leave the oratory and return home.

When he was just 15 years old, as he lay dying from sickness, he was heard to speak of the beautiful things that he was seeing. God was showing Dominic a glimpse of the marvelous reward awaiting him in heaven. After his death, Don Bosco wrote the story of Dominic's life. St. Dominic Savio is Patron Saint of Children.

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. **What is true freedom?** Answer: True freedom is the freedom to choose what is right and good.
3. **Why does God give us freedom?** Answers may include: Because He made us in His own image and this dignity includes freedom; Because He wants us to freely choose to love Him. True love is not forced, it must be openly received and given.

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4. **After reading the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:1-11, ask students what Jesus says our reaction should be if we are persecuted or “made fun of” for doing the right thing for His sake?** Answer: We should rejoice and be glad, for our reward will be great in heaven.
5. **To what does God call everyone?** Answers could include: God calls everyone to be holy; God calls everyone to live chastely; God calls everyone to give Him glory; God calls everyone to keep His commandments; God calls everyone to be happy forever in heaven.
6. **What is chastity and who is called to it?** Chastity is a spiritual power (virtue) that helps us to live out our vocation in a holy way by imitating the purity of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Everyone is called to chastity.
7. **Why does God send people to Hell? God has never sent anyone to hell.** He has however, respected their freedom to live a life on earth and in eternity separate from Him. He will not even force His company on us. We must choose it.
8. **Why do bad things happen to good people?** I do not know. That being said, we know that God respects our freedom so much that he allows us to misuse it. It is for this reason that we must be careful how we use it and encourage one another to choose the good, true and beautiful.
9. **Why does God choose to stop some bad things and not others?** I do not know. I do know that God the Father desires to bring good out of everything (Romans 8:28, 31-35) and that the questions of God are wiser than the answers of men (1 Corinthians 1:25, Proverbs 26:16, Job 38 – 39:30 and Job 40:1).
10. **Is it okay to be mad at God?** Yes, He can take it. We do though need to ask Him to help us understand the situation. When we do that, we tend to see that the problem is not with God but with us or another individual.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES FROM CHURCH TEACHING

CCC 1721: *God put us in the world to know, to love, and to serve him, and so to come to paradise.*

CCC 1733: *The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to “the slavery of sin.”²⁸ (C).*

CCC 825: *... “Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state – though each in his own way – are*

²⁸ Cf. Rom 6:17

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called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father himself is perfect.” (Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church 11 § 3)

CCC 2347: *The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as friends,¹³⁴ who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality.*

Chastity is expressed notably in friendship with one’s neighbor. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion.

REFERENCE BOOKS

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| • A Father Who Keeps His Promises | Scott Hahn |
| • An Appointment with God | Fr. Michael Scanlan |
| • Friendship: The Key to Spiritual Growth | Fr. John W. Crossin |
| • Theology for Beginners | Frank Sheed |
| • The Truth About Trouble | Fr. Michael Scanlan |

MEDIA CLIPS

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| • Chosen: Lesson 21, Seg. 1: How Do I Build Virtue? | YouTube or
Chosen Video series |
| • Alteration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed – Trailer 2 | YouTube |
| • Dress in My Place (<i>Rudy</i>) | Wingclips.com |
| • Fix Nothing (<i>Karate Kid</i>) | Wingclips.com |
| • Release Him (<i>Le Misérables</i>) | Wingclips.com |
| • Prisoner 24601 (<i>Le Misérables</i>) | Wingclips.com |

¹³⁴ Cf. *Jn* 15:15.

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Selected Bibliography

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd. Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

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

ⁱ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd (Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1997), §301