

Formation in Christian Chastity

8th Grade: Love and Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

The eighth grade focuses on the unique gift of friendship as expressed within the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony or Marriage. There is particular attention given to the virtue of chastity and the understanding of liberty and freedom.

Currently, within society, the question of marriage and what constitutes a marriage is in question. The Church cannot change the revelation of God that the Sacrament of Matrimony is visible sign (public), instituted by Christ (and therefore not able to be changed in its form and matter), entrusted to the Church (celebrated, blessed, and lived out in accordance with Church teaching) and to give grace (those goods of marriage that assist in revealing the love of Christ to His Church, furthering of human generation, the unity of the couple, and the edification of society by this foundational and stable community).

The Sacrament of Matrimony is protected and enriched through the virtue of chastity. Within society, chastity is equated with celibacy instead of the virtue necessary for rightly ordered friendships and relationships. Chastity and purity, modesty and decency are comparable in that they have the basic meaning of freedom from whatever is lewd or salacious. Yet they also differ. Chastity implies an opposition to the immoral in the sense of lustful or licentious. It suggests refraining from all acts or thoughts that are not in accordance with the Church's teaching about the use of one's reproductive powers. It particularly stresses restraint and an avoidance of anything that might defile or make unclean the soul because the body has not been controlled in the exercise of its most imperious passion.

Natural Marriage and the Sacrament of Marriage are essential the same with exception to the graces distributed proper to the sacrament. A natural marriage is a valid marriage.

The question of same-sex marriage and the various gender options that society proposes is not meant to be the focal point of discussion within this lesson. They are addressed by sharing our Lord's and the Church's vision of marriage and human relationships.

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CATECHIST PREPARATION

SCRIPTURE TEXT

Genesis 1: 26-28

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

1 Thessalonians 4:7

KEY CONCEPTS TO COMMUNICATE

- The sacrament of marriage is a vocation in which a natural man and a natural woman unite as husband and wife and are called to make a total gift of self, one to the other.
- The marital act (sex) must always be open to life and love, and this is reserved for the sacrament of marriage.
- Any sexual act outside of marriage is seriously sinful.
- The sacrament of marriage is assisted and protected by the virtue of chastity. Chastity constitutes real freedom and is necessary if one is to truly be free.
- The appropriate relationships at this developmental stage will include friendships with members of the same and opposite sex and will exclude dating.
- Modesty is an expression of chastity through dress, speech, actions and thought.
- Abuse is always wrong and that if anyone abuses or treats them in a degrading manner, they should immediately tell a parent or trusted adult.

KEY TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

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.)

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.

Liberty: Freedom, but with stress on the person who enjoys or exercises the freedom. Liberty, therefore, is more the *subjective power of self-determination*;

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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 husband and 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

Modesty: The virtue that moderates all the internal and external movements and appearance of a person according to his or her endowments, possessions, and station in life. Four virtues are commonly included under modesty: humility, studiousness, and two kinds of external modesty, namely in dress and general behavior.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

The following materials are encouraged to be available for the catechist to use during their session:

- Whiteboard or blackboard
- Multiple Flipchart pages in the event small groups are used to facilitate discussion and develop lists to be shared
- Television or computer and LCD in the event a movie clip is used.

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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BIBLE STUDY LESSON PLAN

LESSON PLAN

1. Begin with a prayer recognizing the gift of marriage and family (Suggestion follows):

O Holy and Undivided Trinity, we thank you for establishing the sacrament of marriage. Please bless us, and our families. Please bless all families! You gave abundant grace to the Martin family, so that the flower of holiness might blossom from their love. Please give us, and our families abundant graces that we, too, may be chaste and holy people – that we may be saints!

We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus and through the intercession of Mary, our Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, and St. Therese. Amen.

2. Provide an overview i.e., what is the starting point and where are we going?
 - a. Discussion of love and responsibility within the context of friendships and marriage
3. Set the stage for the lesson:
 - a. **Question 1:** What does it mean to be free?
 - i. All answers (within reason) are correct as long as they relate to making decisions and not being coerced in those decisions.
 - b. **Answer 1:** Freedom is to choose what we ought in accordance with the good, the true and the beautiful
4. Lectio Divina: Scripture
 - a. Have a student(s) read the following:
 - i. Genesis 1: 26-28
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
 - iii. 1 Thessalonians 4:7
 - b. Highlight the readings:
 - i. We are created in God's image and likeness and are made for relationship: ourselves and God; family, friends, society at large and the entire world.
 - ii. Immorality are those thoughts and actions that make us less than what or who we are and contradict the law of God.
 - iii. To be human is to be whole and holy which is to live within God's plan for humanity
 1. You can use the example of a cell phone by asking what a cell phone is for. After they answer, ask if it

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could be used as a paperweight, a weapon and/ or a water ski. Once they provide the answers, remind them that we know what something is by what it does i.e. what was it designed to do. In order to know how humanity is to become who and what we have been created to be, we need Scripture and Church teaching to inform us. Sacred Scripture with Church teaching is our instruction manual (BIBLE: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth) for us to become the men and women of God that He has designed us to be. Church teaching is not meant to restrict us but provide us the freedom to live life to the fullest in freedom and joy (John 10:10b).

5. Study of Creation:

- a. **Question 2:** How did God create us and what does that mean?
- b. **Answer 2:** God created us as male and female in His own image, giving us great personal dignity.
- c. **Question 3:** Scripture teaches us that we live with whom and/or what? What does that mean?
- d. **Answer 3:** We were created to live in relationship or friendship with each other, and to make a gift of ourselves to others within a proper order as provided through Sacred Scripture and Church teaching.

6. Study of Marriage:

- a. One expression of friendship is through the sacrament of marriage in which a natural man and natural woman are called to make a total gift of themselves as husband and wife through the marital act.
- b. The marital act must always be open to life and love and it is reserved for marriage.
- c. True marriage can exist only between one natural man and one natural woman. There can never be a true marriage between a man and a man, or between a woman and a woman. This does not mean there is not love but it is not marital love and should not be expressed as such.
- d. **Question 4:** What acts can limit or damage the special relationship that God defines as marriage?
- e. **Answer 4:** All answers (within reason) are correct as long as they relate to sins or breaks in relationship within or even before marriage.
 - i. In particular, all sexual acts outside of marriage are grave sins including:

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1. Adultery, pre-marital sex, and any other act intended to sexually arouse oneself or another.
 2. Use of pornographic materials is also sinful.
 3. Same-sex sexual acts (Homosexual) are always gravely sinful.
- f. All of choices in life are related to freedom. Because we are free we are responsible for our actions
- i. Ask, "Who has a younger sibling?"
 - ii. Then ask, "What if they came up to you and whacked you on the head" and, you ask them, 'Why did you do that?' What if they responded they didn't hit you, their hand did it. How would you respond?"
 - iii. Likewise, to be truly free, we must live chastely and purely.
- g. **Question 5:** What is the relationship that prepares you for marriage?
- h. **Answer 5:** Dating.
- i. **Question 6:** If dating prepares you for marriage, should you be dating now if you cannot be married any time soon?
- j. **Answer 6:** No. Dating is inappropriate until you are able to maturely evaluate your relationships with others. If you begin dating too early, it is difficult to resist the pressures others may put on you. This is the time to happily enjoy friendships without the pressures of dating.
- k. **Question 7:** How should you be preparing for future relationships at this time?
- l. **Answer 7:** By fostering the virtue of modesty.
- i. Ask students to assist in developing a list of how we are able to live modestly.
 - ii. Show the list on a board or flipchart and ensure that you break it up into the following categories:
 1. Dress (Clothing): Remind them that they are mysteries that are meant to be revealed not exposed
 2. Speech: Encourage them to walk away or stop inappropriate conversations. Men and women should not be objectified or degraded in speech (James 2:16). This includes social media.
 3. Eyes: Movies with inappropriate themes and scenes may be an occasion of sin. Remind them that pornography is addicting and many times causes permanent damage to the brain and relationships. Encourage them to limit and use their computers in public.
 4. Hearing: Music with inappropriate themes may be an occasion of sin.

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5. Touch: All actions that arouse are reserved to marriage and thus sinful outside of marriage and marital chastity.
6. Thoughts: We can commit all the sexual sins by entertaining impure thoughts. While a little overly simplistic, "You thought (entertained) it, you did it." (Matthew 5:28)
- m. Provide a story of a Saint(s) that was married and because of their relationship with Jesus and His Church, were able to accomplish great acts of love and self-giving.
 - i. Potential Saints could include:
 1. Louis and Azelie-Marie Martin (Parents of St. Therese)
 2. Our Lady and St. Joseph
 3. St. Ginanna Beretta Molla (Refused abortion and died from cancer)
 4. St. Thomas More (Loved his wife who wanted him to betray our Lord and the Church)
 5. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (Widowed)
 6. St. Monica (Abusive husband, overcame alcoholism and St. Augustine is her son)
 7. St. Stephen of Hungary
 8. St. Bridget of Sweden
 9. St. Louis of France
7. Proclamation of the Gospel
 - a. Jesus can to save us from the power of sin and death.
 - b. He wants us to be in relationship with Him in order that our relationships may be appropriate and healthy. Marriage is difficult enough and He desires to empower us to make good decision when we choose to be in an intentional and personal relationship with Him through His Church.
 - c. Regardless of our sins, especially sexual sin, there is the possibility of not only forgiveness but healing, wholeness and experiencing His love for us. Every sacramental encounter is a personal encounter with the living God in Christ Jesus.
 - d. Jesus Himself instructed us that when we sin, forgiveness may be personally experienced through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - i. All sexual and serious sins must be confessed.
 - ii. This sacrament gives the grace and strength to live purely in the future.
 - e. If we choose to exercise our freedom to cooperate with this grace through prayer, going to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, regularly going to Confession, and by making the effort to live a good and holy life, He will never disappoint.

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8. Thank them for their attention and close in Prayer (Suggestion follows):

Dear Saint Maria Goretti, You have given us a beautiful example of heroic purity and forgiveness. Help us and our families to love chastity and forgiveness. Through your prayers and intercession help us and our families to always be close to God and to receive His divine protection. Amen.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **True freedom means the freedom to do what?** Answer: True freedom means the ability to do what is good and right.
2. **True or False – By this stage of my life, I am mature enough to date.**
Answer: False – At this stage in your life you should be enjoying friendships with people without the pressures of dating.
3. **What should we do if people are having a discussion of an impure subject or if is telling an impure joke?** Answer: You should either change the subject or excuse yourself from the conversation.
4. **True or False – It is always sinful to use pornography.** – Answer: True, the use of pornography is always evil. Pornography degrades all those who are involved with it in any way.²
5. **What should a person do if he/she is a victim of abuse?** Answer: Immediately tell a parent or a trusted adult.
6. **Of the creatures on earth, which are made in God’s image and likeness?**
Answer: Of all of God’s creatures on the earth, the only one’s made in His image are human beings.
7. **What does it mean that we are made in God’s image and likeness?**
Answer: It means that we are made to live in communion with others, similar to the way that the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity live in communion with one another. It also means that, like God, we have an intellect, which is the ability to think, judge, and understand and that we have a will, which is the ability to deliberately choose or act based upon

² If a student asks if it is a sin if a person accidentally comes across an impure or pornographic image, the answer is no, since the act of committing a sin, by definition, involves a deliberate choice. However, if an impure image accidentally comes across one’s line of vision, that person then has a moral responsibility to avert his/her gaze from the impure image.

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our understanding. Because of our freedom, we can choose either good or evil. Note: God always wants us to choose the good and gives us the grace to do so, but he will not override our free will. He made us persons with freedom, not pre-programmed robots.

8. **What was the first married couple?** Answer: Adam and Eve. (**Note:** Jesus refers to this when speaking of marriage and the plan of God for human living. See Mark 10, 1-10.)
9. **True or False:** True marriage can only exist between a man and a woman.
Answer: TRUE
10. **To what must the marital act always be open?** Answer: Life and Love

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RESOURCES & REFERENCES

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Louis and Azelie-Marie Martin:

Louis and Azelie-Marie Martin are the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux. They lived in France in the 19th century. At one time, Louis had desired to be a priest and Azelie-Marie, a religious sister. Eventually the two met, fell in love, and were married. Together they had nine children, seven girls and two boys. Of these, five of the girls lived to adulthood and all of them became religious sisters, four of them Carmelites. Louis and Azelie were devoted to God, to each other, and to their children. Both endured much suffering, with Azelie dying while still a young woman. Louis lived a relatively long life, but endured much suffering in his last years. The couple passed on a great love of the Church and of purity to their children, the most famous of whom is Marie Therese, who is now known as St. Therese of Lisieux, or simply, "The Little Flower." St. Therese is one of the most popular saints in the Church. She wrote a famous autobiography entitled: *The Story of a Soul*, in which she expresses that the way she found to holiness was "the little way" of confidence (in God) and love of Him in the heart of the Church. She is patroness of the missions and in 1997, was proclaimed as a "Doctor of the Church." In her writings, St. Therese tells us of her parents' deep love of God and of the beautiful example they set for their children of true Christian love, devotion, and piety.

St. Maria Goretti:

St. Maria Goretti lived in Italy from 1890 – 1902. She was a cheerful girl, known to her friends and family for her love of God. When she was 12 years old, a young man, Allesandro, who was boarding with her family stabbed her fourteen times because she resisted his attempts to seduce her. As Maria attempted to defend herself, she reminded her attacker that he was committing a terrible sin and could go to hell. Maria survived for two days after the attack, during which time, she forgave Allesandro and asked God's forgiveness of him. While he was in prison for this awful crime, Maria appeared to him in a dream in which she forgave him and handed him fourteen white lilies, one for each stab wound. This caused him to completely reform his life. His first act after his 30 year prison sentence was to visit Maria's mother, Assunta and beg her forgiveness. She did forgive him. They were present together for Maria's canonization in Rome by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

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POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. **Why is same-sex marriage wrong?**

Our Lord has provided a plan for us that is meant to maximize our joy and friendships with one another. Though same-sex relationships share a type of friendship, it is not marriage and should not be referred to as such.

2. **What if the law says that same-sex marriage is right, don't we have an obligation to obey it?**

Original sin has caused great damage in human relationships and even how we think and act. Sometimes human laws contradict the Eternal Law of God. All civil law is meant to reflect the Law of God which is designed for us to live a life of joy that is full, faithful, fruitful and free. While we must respect the laws, we may not agree or obey them when they contradict the Law of God.

3. **Isn't the Law of God outdated?**

Scripture teaches us that Jesus is the "same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Since He designed us, He knows the best way for us to live a life full of joy. Example: Pretend you and your family live on the top of a mountain with a two hundred foot drop if you fall off the edge. Say you also erect a fence along the edge to allow your children to play safely but then your children complain that you are limiting their freedom. Did you limit their freedom? No. You are protecting them from the 200 foot fall and sudden stop they cannot see.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES FROM CHURCH TEACHING

- **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 Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. It is good, very good, in the Creator's eyes. And this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: "And God blessed them, and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"⁹¹
- **CCC 1605:** "Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone."⁹² The woman, "flesh of his flesh," his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to

⁹⁰ Cf. *Gen* 1:27; 1 *Jn* 4:8. 16

⁹¹ *Gen* 1:28; cf. 1:31.

⁹² *Gen* 2:18.

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him by God as a “helpmate”; she thus represents God from whom comes our help.⁹³ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”⁹⁴ The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been in the beginning”: “So they are no longer two, but one flesh.”⁹⁵

- **CCC 1734:** Freedom makes man responsible for his acts to the extent that they are voluntary.
- **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

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

- **CCC 2347:** 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.
- **CCC 2532:** Purification of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and of vision.

REFERENCE BOOKS

- | | |
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| • Love and Responsibility | John Paul II |
| • Theology of the Body for Teens | Jason Evert |
| • Theology for Beginners | Frank Sheed |

MEDIA CLIPS

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| • Chosen: Lesson 16, Seg. 1: What is Marriage? | YouTube or
Chosen Video series |
| • Better or Worse (<i>Fireproof</i>) | Wingclips.com |

⁹³ Cf. Gen 2:18-25

⁹⁴ Gen 2:24

⁹⁵ Mt 19:6

²⁸ Cf. Rom 6:17

¹³⁴ Cf. Jn 15:15

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- You Need Him (*Fireproof*) Wingclips.com
- Body, Heart and Soul (*First Knight*) Wingclips.com
- This is Real (*A Beautiful Mind*) Wingclips.com

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