

# For the Classroom – Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 8

## Lesson Plan 1

### Theme: Love and Responsibility

#### Objectives:

1. Students will learn that in the sacrament of Marriage, the husband and wife are called to make a total gift of self, one to the other.
2. Students will know that sex (the marital act), must always be open to life and love, and it is reserved for the sacrament of Marriage.
3. Students will understand that any sexual act outside of marriage is a serious sin.

**Note:** If a student asks what the marital act is, the teacher or catechist should simply state that it is the act by which a husband and wife give themselves totally to one another, body and soul, and that this act is so good and powerful, that God sometimes chooses to create a new human being through it. The biological explanation is reserved to parents.

Begin by noting that every year the Church sets aside the month of October as “Respect Life” month. Tell the children that you are going to talk to them about the best way to show their respect for themselves, others and God. This is by living a life of chastity.

Tell the story of the Martins given below.

#### **Louis and Azelie-Marie Martin:**

Louis and Azelie–Marie Martin were the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux. They lived in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 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 of true Christian love, devotion, and piety they set for their children.

(The following Opening Prayer, Scripture quotes, and quotes from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as well as the “Key Concepts” Reading are reproduced at the end of this Lesson for your distribution to your students. Recite the prayer together. Have the students take turns reading the Scripture quotes and *Catechism* quotes. Then, have the students read the “Key Concepts” Reading silently to themselves. Give them about 5 minutes for this.)

**Opening Prayer:** 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.

### **Quotations from Sacred Scripture:**

*Then God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.” God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them: “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.” (Genesis 1: 26 –28)*

*The LORD God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.” So the LORD God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man. So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called ‘woman,’ for out of ‘her man’ this one has been taken.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body. (Genesis 2: 18-25)*

### **Quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:**

*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. 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.’” (1604)*

*Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: “It is not good that the man should be alone.” The woman, “flesh of his flesh,” his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a “helpmate;” she thus represents God from whom comes our help. “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” 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.” (1605)*

### **“Key Concepts” Reading:**

God created man and woman in His own image, giving them great personal dignity. We were created to live in relationship with each other and to make a gift of ourselves to others. In the sacrament of marriage, the husband and wife are called to make a total gift of themselves to each other through the marital act. The marital act must always be open to life and love and it is reserved for marriage. True marriage can exist only between one man and one woman. There can never be a true marriage between a man and a man, or between a woman and a woman.

Sexual acts outside of marriage are grave sins. Some of these sins include adultery, premarital sex, and any other act intended to sexually arouse oneself or another. Use of pornographic materials is also sinful. Homosexual acts are always gravely sinful. If a person has committed a sexual sin, it needs to be confessed in the sacrament of Penance. This sacrament gives the grace and strength to live purely in the future. Each person must cooperate with this grace through prayer, going to Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation, regularly going to Confession, and by making the effort to live a good and holy life.

### **Discussion Questions:**

Question: 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.

Question: 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 our understanding. Because of our freedom, we can choose either good or evil. 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.

Question: Who was the first married couple?

Answer: Adam and Eve. (Jesus refers to this when speaking of marriage and the plan of God for human living. See Mark 10: 1-10.)

Question: True or False: True marriage can only exist between a man and a woman.  
Answer: True

Question: To what must the marital act always be open?  
Answer: To life and love

### **Activities:**

Ask the students to name some married saints. How did these holy men and women make a gift of their lives to God, to each other, and to the Church? Note: You will want to get a good book of saints and in your class preparation look up examples of saints who were married. There are many such examples: Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. Monica, St. Stephen of Hungary, St. Bridget of Sweden, St. Louis of France, St. Gianna Beretta Molla, St. Thomas More, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, to name just a few.

The Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph provide an example of a grace-filled marriage. List some of the virtues that are important to a grace-filled marriage. How do these same virtues help those who have a vocation to the priesthood, religious life, or single life? How do these virtues help us to live lives of chastity?

### **Summary:**

So far you have learned that in the sacrament of Marriage the husband and wife are called to make a total gift of self. You know that the marital act must always be open to life and love, and this is reserved for the sacrament of Marriage. Any sexual act outside of marriage is gravely sinful. However, God always gives us the grace to live chaste lives. We gain this grace primarily from Mass and the sacraments, through prayer, keeping the commandments, and through virtuous acts. If a person has fallen into sin, he should never despair. God's love and mercy are without limit. He always wants to reconcile us to Himself and He does this through the sacrament of Confession.

**Closing Prayer:** Pray the third Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Nativity, for the intention of holy families, modeled after the family of Nazareth.

## Opening Prayer

O Holy and Undivided Trinity,

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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.

## Quotations from Sacred Scripture

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