

For the Classroom – Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 8

Lesson Plan 2

Theme: Love and Responsibility

Objectives:

1. Students will learn what constitutes real freedom, and that chastity is necessary if one is to truly be free.
2. Students should understand that appropriate relationships at this stage will include friendships with members of the same and opposite sex, and will exclude dating.
3. Students will know the importance of dressing and acting modestly.
4. Students should understand that 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.

Continuing your discussion of Chastity and Respecting Life. Tell the children you are going to tell another story about a saint, St. Maria Goretti.

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 twelve 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 to forgive 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 thirty-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.

Opening Prayer: 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.

(Prayer may be omitted if both lessons are being taught on the same date.)

Review:

So far, you've learned that marriage is a sacrament instituted by God in which one man and one woman are to make a complete gift of themselves to the other and that their married love is to always remain open to life and love. The marital act is reserved for marriage. Any sexual act outside of marriage is gravely sinful. Going to Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation, receiving the Holy Eucharist frequently, and going regularly to Confession helps us

to continue to live purely, or to be reconciled to God and the Church if one has fallen into grave sin. Now you will learn what real freedom is; that this is a time for you to cultivate friendships, but not to date; and the importance of modest speech, dress, and behavior.

(The following 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.)

Quotations from Sacred Scripture:

Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6: 18-20)

For God did not call us to impurity but to holiness. (1 Thessalonians 4:7)

Quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

Freedom makes man responsible for his acts to the extent that they are voluntary. (1734)

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.” (1733)

The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends, 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. (2347)

Purification of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and of vision. (2532)

“Key Concepts” Reading:

God’s love for us includes freedom. True freedom means the freedom to do what is good and right. Because we are free, we are responsible for our acts. We cannot be truly free if we are not living chastely and purely.

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.

The virtue of modesty helps us to preserve the integrity of our person. We should avoid public discussions of private matters. If this happens, we should change the subject. If that is impossible, we should excuse ourselves from the conversation. We must look away from immodest images, people, and things. It is always sinful to use pornography, whether in pictures, magazines, or the Internet. Television, movies, and music that have immoral themes can be an occasion of sin. We should search out movies and TV shows with wholesome, moral themes. It is always sinful to physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse anyone, or to treat them in a degrading manner. It is always wrong for anyone to physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse you or treat you in a degrading manner. If this happens, tell a parent or trusted adult.

Discussion Questions:

Question: True freedom means the freedom to do what?

Answer: True freedom means the ability to do what is good and right.

Question: True or False: By this stage of my life, I am mature enough to date.

Answer: False. At this stage in my life I should be enjoying friendships with people without the pressures of dating.

Question: What should we do if people are having a discussion of an impure subject or telling an impure joke?

Answer: You should either change the subject or excuse yourself from the conversation.

Question: 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.

Note to teachers: 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 gaze from the impure image.

Question: What should a person do if he is a victim of abuse?

Answer: Immediately tell a parent or a trusted adult.

Activities:

Make sure every student has a Bible. If there are not enough Bibles for everyone, have them share with a partner. Students are to read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7. Every time that St. Paul uses the word "love," such as "Love is patient, love is kind," students are to silently insert the name of a friend in place of the word "love." So, for instance, the student has a friend named "Jane." The student would silently read, "Jane is patient, Jane is kind." Tell them to think about (but not to share aloud) if they think their friend is patient, kind, not jealous, not inflated, not rude, does not seek their own interests, is not quick-tempered, etc. This activity is complementary to the "examination of conscience" they did this using the same passage in sixth

grade and it is a good way to evaluate a friendship. They may also follow this up by once again silently inserting their own name as they did in sixth grade.

Ask the students to reflect on a movie they have seen recently. Each student should ask himself the following questions:

1. What was the theme of the movie?
2. Was it a moral theme?
3. Did the characters in the movie treat others with dignity and charity?
4. Did the characters in the movie use others or treat them in a degrading manner?
5. Did the characters in the movie behave in a chaste and modest way?
6. Does this movie help or hinder my spiritual growth?

Summary:

Today you have learned about freedom, what a gift it is and the responsibilities that come with it. You have also learned that this stage in your life is for building and deepening true friendships with the same and opposite sex without the pressures of dating. You know that modesty involves keeping private things private, whether in dress or in conversation. You know that the use of pornography is a grave evil which degrades people and which has destroyed many marriages and families. It must be avoided!

Finally you have learned that abuse is always sinful. You must never abuse another in any way and it is never acceptable for anyone to abuse you. If this happens, immediately tell a parent or a trusted adult. Remember the two great commandments. "The first and greatest is this: That you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul and all your strength. The second is like it: You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:29)

(The following Closing Prayer is reproduced at the end of this Lesson for your distribution to your students. Recite the prayer together.)

Closing Prayer: Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us!

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!

St. Joseph, pray for us!

St. Maria Goretti, pray for us!

St. Gianna Beretta Molla, pray for us!

St. Dominic Savio, pray for us!

St. Therese of Lisieux, pray for us!

St. Thomas Aquinas, Patron of Catholic Schools and of Chastity, pray for us!

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, help and protect us and our families!

Quotations from Sacred Scripture

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“Key Concepts” Reading

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