



# *Student Worksheet*

## **Lesson 10: MASTERING LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

### *Opening Prayer*

#### **LEADER**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Lord God, from all eternity you show us an example of perfect trust and complete self-giving in the love of the Holy Trinity. Without beginning or end, you are love. Our relationships are wounded, our trust is eroded, and we need you to restore us to the kind of love for which we were created. Help us today to find practical ways to love and build trust. Give us the courage to be honest about our failings so as to grow and move forward. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

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### *Fr. Mike's Thought Train*

#### **THE BIG QUESTION**

How do we become a “master,” not a “disaster,” in a relationship?

#### **THE SHORT ANSWER**

Active constructive responses that build trust over time lead to healthy relationships. Being kind and present—making sure there is undivided face-to-face time with the other person—strengthens a relationship.

#### **THE BREAKDOWN**

- **Trust is the key to a relationship.**
- **How do you gain trust? Trust is built or destroyed over a series of moments that are commonplace, not complicated or heroic.**
  - \* *There are four possible ways to respond to someone's comment. Three create no connection between the persons, but the fourth is different.*
    - ‡ *Couples with active constructive responses were “masters” of their relationship ninety percent of the time.*
  - \* *The response that makes us “masters” of relationships is not heroic. Instead, it is just everyday kindness and politeness.*
    - ‡ *Fr. Mike tells a story about a couple who discovered the importance of “eyeball time” / undivided attention.*

- **We want to be heroic, but God is calling us to be humble by being kind to each person near us.**
  - \* *We are called to love people in our families and friendships the most, but we often treat them with the least politeness.*
- **If we want to master our relationships, we must learn how to build trust through a habit of undivided, polite attention.**

## *Talk It Out*

1. What did Dr. Gottman's study reveal about trust in relationships?
2. According to the second study Fr. Mike mentioned, what are the four ways couples respond to one another? Describe an active constructive response and discuss why it is important for building trust.
3. Does this research and application make sense to you?
4. Fr. Mike points out that the active positive listening that builds trust and leads to mastery in the art of relationship is simply being polite and kind. Discuss why we often find ourselves showing more politeness to strangers than to close friends or family. How can we correct this tendency?
5. Can you think of someone in your life who responds to you in an actively positive way?
6. Discuss why active listening is rare in relationships. What is one concrete suggestion you could make to help someone implement Fr. Mike's advice?

## *Hands On*

### **SKITS**

Divide into four groups. Each group will get a sheet of paper with one of the four ways of responding on the sheet (active destructive, passive destructive, passive constructive, and active constructive). Each group will then have five minutes to come up with a short skit depicting that mode of response. If your group is chosen, perform your skit. The rest of the class will guess which mode they are seeing.

## *Food for Thought* (Journal Prompts)

1. Write about your experiences with the four kinds of responses that Fr. Mike highlights. Identify the kind of response that is most prevalent in your home life. Reflect on how your level of trust is affected by this kind of response.

Active Destructive

Passive Destructive

Passive Constructive

Active Constructive

2. Pick a relationship and write about how you can grow in that relationship through daily attention to the other person.

### *Closing Prayer*

#### **READER (EPHESIANS 4:31-32)**

*“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

#### **LEADER**

*God, the Holy Trinity, is love. We are called out of the conflict, anger, and brokenness that so often can wound trust and harm our relationships. We turn to the love and kindness of God today as we pray ...*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*