

### Section Three

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## STUDENT'S LESSONS for Grade 7

### *Directions for Use*

This section contains the blackline masters for each of the four lessons. Each lesson is numbered individually. The blackline master for each lesson can be removed from this notebook, copied, and returned to the notebook until the next use.

The lessons are:

**CLASS 1:** Vocation — God's call

**CLASS 2:** Modesty — A strong and thoughtful virtue

**CLASS 3:** Reconciliation in our years of growing up

**CLASS 4:** Christ and the courage to be pure of heart

**CLASS 5:** Personal Safety

# VOCATION — God’s call

## CLASS 1

### Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

#### Introduction

In this lesson we will reflect upon our first call by God to become followers of Jesus through baptism. We recall our baptism each time we renew our baptismal promises. Within the Christian life, each person tries to hear God’s call to a particular kind of life: marriage, priesthood, religious life, or single life. Once we accept a call, we commit to a closer way of life and are consecrated by God. We need chaste hearts regardless of the particular vocation we choose.



#### These are the things we will talk about in this first lesson:

- Each of us receives a **sacred call** from God through our baptism.
- *Our* baptismal promises represent our **response** to our vocation as Christians.
- Christ calls each of His baptized followers to a certain **individual** vocation.
- Every vocation involves a call, a **consecration**, and a commitment.
- **Every** vocation requires a chaste heart.

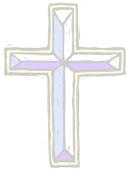
### Baptism — Our vocation to be CHRISTIANS

Each of us received a sacred call from God through our baptism: “Come to the fullness of life!”

God called us to be His own sons and daughters. He invited us to a better life: a life filled with faith, confident in hope, and strengthened by honest love.

He invited us to live a joyful life, filled with faith and love, a life that would make us worthy of sharing God’s life forever in heaven.

Baptism called us to walk in the ways of Christ. “Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1).



Every vocation involves a call from God. It involves also a willingness to consecrate ourselves to the life to which He calls us, and an enduring commitment to live in the ways God calls us to live.

If we were baptized as infants, we could not ourselves speak the promises involved in committing ourselves to God. So, others spoke for us. But we need to make this **commitment** personally and freely. Therefore, we are invited to renew this commitment, the "baptismal promises," at our First Communion, at Confirmation, at the Easter Vigil, and at the celebration of the Easter Season.

In reading the baptismal promises below, reflect on what your vocation to be a Catholic Christian means. Do you think much is expected in this relationship with Christ?

### **Baptismal promises: Our RESPONSE to our first vocation**

- † Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children? *I do.*
- † Do you reject the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin? *I do.*
- † Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness? *I do.*
- † Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth? *I do.*
- † Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? *I do.*
- † Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? *I do.*
- † The Church prays for us after we make these promises: "God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and has forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen"  
(Liturgy of Easter Sunday).

### **SPECIAL vocations within our Christian vocation**

Christ first calls all of us to be His followers and His friends. Then He calls us to a certain *kind* of life.

He has an *individual vocation* for each person He calls by name.

There are four general *kinds* of vocations we should think about.



## Marriage

## Priesthood

## Religious life

## Single life in Christ

Each of these has many forms, and Christ calls us to one of these vocations in a very special way. Each call is very personal and shaped by a love of God that cares about everything.

## Activity

Look at the chart on vocations on page seven of the lesson, and follow instructions on using the chart.

- 1 Complete the spaces by writing in the names of familiar persons.
- 2 Discuss this information.



### Call, CONSECRATION, commitment

Every vocation involves a *call*, a *consecration*, and a *commitment*.

God offers us the grace to recognize our calling. Each person receives a *call* that will be deeply fulfilling.

God knows the kind of life that will be best for us and which will be most pleasing to Him.

Few things are more important for us than this: coming to realize what kind of life God invites us to live.

We should come to a firm decision, and *consecrate* ourselves to the Lord in the work to which He calls us.

We make an enduring *commitment* to be faithful to Christ, and to all those we love, in carrying out our decision.

### MARRIAGE — a precious vocation

Most of us have grown up in families, and know something of what marriage is like.



The *call* to a married vocation comes gradually, as it does in other life vocations. There is much good and much happiness in a generous married life. And fathers and mothers have great tasks to carry out for each other, their children, and for the world in which they live. What are some of the good reasons one would have to accept a call to enter marriage?

The *consecration* of marriage comes when the man and woman make the generous **marriage promises** to each other in the presence of Christ's priest or deacon, and so confer the Sacrament of Matrimony on each other.

**Christ calls us to a certain kind of life.** The grace of the sacrament helps them to live a lifelong commitment, faithful to each other, as they establish a family and home blessed by the Lord.

**Vocation to the PRIESTHOOD**

The *call* to a priestly vocation has many stages. There is a quiet call in a man's heart, planted by God. One hardly recognizes it until he gets to know what it is that priests do. Once a boy or man gets to know some priests as friends, he begins to recognize that he too might like to live such a life. What are the things that priests do that seem attractive to you?

The *consecration* of a priestly vocation comes in ordination by the bishop, the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Only a man may be ordained to the priesthood.

And the *commitment* of a priest comes in living out his **promises** to care for Christ's people, to help them have strong faith, and to have courage and generosity in living lives dear to the Lord, and lives that are blessings for everyone.

**Vocation to RELIGIOUS life**

A *call* to religious life also comes quietly. Young people meet a sister or brother or a religious priest whose life and whose spirit seems very good to them. Sometimes they gradually realize how much they would also like to do the kinds of things that person does. They want to live a life as close to the Lord as that person seems to live. They, too, would like to teach, or care for the sick and homeless, and do it with the **freedom** one has when one has given everything to the Lord.

The *consecration* of religious life comes when one publicly vows to give all of life to the service of the kingdom of Christ through vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity.

And they show the *commitment* this vocation requires by living the generous form of life that is a close discipleship in Christ within a particular religious community.

## Vocation to SINGLE LIFE in Christ

There are many forms of single life in Christ.



The *call* to this life is also often far from dramatic. One comes to the conviction: Christ wants me to do certain things with my life that are important. Sometimes they are rooted in the love of a person who needs much care. Sometimes they are rooted in **devotion** to a kind of work which requires all their attention. They decide that neither marriage nor a religious life is the way of life for them. However, as for all, a life close to Christ is necessary.

They *consecrate* themselves to this service of Christ as they offer, gladly, the kind of life they judge God wishes for them.

And their *commitment* is carried out in the years of living a life not tailored for their own pleasure, but for doing good things for those they love, and for all God's people.

## Vocation AND sexuality

Every good life is lived with the whole heart, and with the energy that grace and love give us. Every vocation is rooted in love. One does not cease to be a real man or a real woman in following any certain kind of vocation. The special gifts and interests that flow from being a male or female should enter into the warmth and goodness with which every person lives a vocation.

Every vocation requires a chaste heart. But the form of a chaste heart differs with different vocations. No one can live a vocation of any kind without the freedom and self-control that **chastity** brings. People who marry need chastity to keep them faithful to each other and their children. Those who have never allowed or permitted self-control to rule their own hearts and lives find that every kind of commitment becomes too difficult. Without commitment they cannot have great love or great happiness.

Priests, religious, and single persons are called to embrace *chastity*. They can lead full lives without the physical sexual union that belongs in marriage. Their sexuality is expressed in other healthy ways in a chaste commitment to God.

No one should ever fear that he or she cannot be chaste enough to lead a generous and a happy life. The world urges people to care too much about pleasure and not enough about what love calls for, especially if that would require some **sacrifice**.

But no life is happy without love and generosity. Learning Christ's vision of love is important in learning how to live any kind of call that we recognize and choose.

## Activity



Give concrete examples of how a vocation to each *kind* of life can develop:

- ? *Observing* other people living this vocation, *what would attract* you toward each type of vocation?
- ? In what ways does God's *grace* help us: ways in which God can help me to become convinced that this is the right kind of life for me, and this is what God calls me to?
- ? In what ways you can *prepare to answer* God's call, and come to *consecrate* yourself to that vocation?

## TYING things together

**Remember what we studied in this lesson:**

1. In baptism we received a call from God to enter the life of Christ and His church.
2. The praying of our baptismal promises renews our call to follow Christ.
3. Each Christian is then called to live out a particular vocation through a chosen way of life.
4. Call, consecration, and commitment are the three components of each vocation.
5. Chastity of heart and life are a requirement for each vocation.

	<b>Married</b>	<b>Priest</b>	<b>Brother</b>	<b>Sister</b>	<b>Single</b>
<b>Identify someone you know:</b>					
<b>What are some of his/her characteristics?</b>					
<b>What do you see him/her doing that you might want to do?</b>					
<b>What questions could you ask him/her?</b>					



# MODESTY —

## A strong and thoughtful virtue

.....  
Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality



### Introduction

You can tell modest people:

- ✘ By the way they *talk* (the type of language they use).
- ✘ By the way they *act* and physically present themselves (in body language and style).
- ✘ By the kind of people they *are*.

#### These are the things we will talk about in this second lesson:

- Modesty, like courtesy, is a kind, thoughtful, and generous **virtue**.
- Modesty of heart and mind will lead to **modesty** in life.
- Modest persons **recognize** the need for proper and pure talk about sexuality.
- Modest persons see that the kinds of clothes they wear reflect **respect** for self and body.
- Modest persons are guided by their **faith** in selection of media, style of dance, and physical signs of affection.

### Modesty and COURTESY

Modesty is a kind and thoughtful virtue. Modest people treat their own bodies and minds with respect. They remember that God made us, and wishes to live in us, as in a temple.

Modesty respects other people too. It knows that other people are also dear to God, and should not be treated badly. They should not be spoken to as if they enjoyed impure words and ideas.

Modesty means not letting our language and our ways of dress and our behavior get out of hand. Modesty means not using foul language or behaving in a suggestive or indecent manner. Modesty guards **pure hearts** and honest feelings of caring about the importance of others.



Modesty is a generous virtue like courtesy. You know what real courtesy means. Courteous people want to treat others kindly. They do not want to ridicule or hurt others. When we care about people, we *show* this by being kind and gracious — that is, by being **courteous** to them. Modesty shows we have pure hearts.

Courtesy is a sign of love and caring. We like it when people who have good and kind hearts also show this in the everyday acts of their lives.

Modesty, like courtesy, is a good sign of something very good within. It is the sign of a pure heart. It is the sign of a person who respects others. Such a person knows that love, human feelings, and sexuality deserve respect.

## Discussion: Thinking about modesty and courtesy

Real modesty is a grown-up virtue. It shows we know how much we are worth, and how much other people are worth.



? Can you tell the difference between a kind or courteous person and a phony one?

? Have you met people who consider you important, and honestly want to treat you as someone special?

? Is there much kindness and courtesy among your classmates?

? Does using dirty language show that a person is “grown-up”?

? Does going to movies or playing video games that have really ugly violence, and sexual scenes that encourage impurity, increase our respect for other people?

? Do you think Christ cares about the kinds of thoughts and attitudes that we allow to grow in our hearts?

Modesty begins in a heart that cares rightly about things. Gradually, it gives us power to control how we talk and act.

People who are not chaste, who do not have pure hearts, do not have self-control either. They let themselves be **controlled** by their hormones and by thoughtless feelings. And they are also controlled by the pressures of other people.

## Discussion: Learning how to be in control

Let's think about things or people that are "out of control."

- When a car is out of control, can the driver make it go where he/she wishes?
- People who are addicted to drugs or alcohol may say: "I am doing just what I want." But are they really free, and "in control"?
- Would you like your life to be under your own control?
- Will the Lord help us run our own lives?

### Modesty in HEART and mind

Jesus taught us that it is the heart that counts most. If we have a really good heart, good words and good actions will flow out of it. But a heart that is impure leads to talk and conduct that is impure. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication.... These are what defile a man" (Matthew 15:19-20).

It is first of all our thoughts and hearts that must be reverent and modest. Then everything will go well with us.

That is why our choices of movies, television, music and websites make so great a difference. It is important to care about what enters deeply into our minds, imaginations, and hearts. Impure thoughts at times come innocently into one's mind. The world is not always chaste! But it is **important** what we *do* with these thoughts!

Our minds and hearts are important. If we *deliberately* entertain impure thoughts, we are doing something very wrong. We are doing something that hurts us and that offends God, who cares about us. If we watch movies and television shows that are indecent, our minds will gradually be filled with attitudes opposed to respect and love. And then, as Jesus says, evil acts will come out of our hearts too.

Remember that what we put into our hearts and memories will shape what our hearts become. If we put good and generous thoughts into our hearts, good things will come out of our hearts. If we put selfish and impure images into our minds and hearts, ugly things will spring from our hearts. The movies you go to, the television programs you watch, the magazines you read, the websites that you visit — they will shape lives!



## Modesty in SPEECH

Some kinds of language are out of place. Certain “street words” for people of certain nationalities or color are intended to be insulting, and are just outright hostile. Certain crude words which refer to intimate parts of the body are considered “street talk.” These words do not show the respect for our bodies that have been created by God for very special purposes.

Some street words for things that touch sexuality grow out of ugly attitudes toward sex. To use them is to suggest that sexuality is something base or cheap. The heart itself is wrong when it uses these words.

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### Discussion: Hurtful language

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Modest people know how powerful language is. Have you ever been hurt by words? Explain?

#### Proper dialogue about sexuality

Obviously, not all “talk” about sexuality is wrong. We need to have right and good ideas about sexuality as we grow up. Some sexual “talk” is necessary for that.

Several points need to be kept in mind: ❶ Such talk should be with the right people. ❷ It is good to be able to talk with parents, grandparents, and other good people who really care about us, concerning these things. ❸ Sometimes it is good to talk to our doctors about these matters.

#### Why is proper talk about sexuality important?

It is important because when we study the faith, Christ teaches us about the gift of sexuality.

#### Have you ever thought of this point?

In the strong secrecy of the confessional, we should not be afraid to talk about things that worry us about sexuality. What if someone should treat you in sexual ways that seem improper, or if you are afraid that you are doing something sinful? You should not hesitate to ask the priest confessor for help. When we get the light of truth on something as important as sexuality, we feel much better about it. But casual talk about sex in corners or on the school bus, in snickering ways, in “street talk,” is childish, wrong, and immoral for us.

It almost always makes us feel even worse and more confused. Never hesitate to talk about sexuality with the *right* people: your parents, priests, and teachers who care about you.

## Modesty in DRESS

The kinds of clothes we wear are often important signs. They tell people what kind of hearts and minds we have. They make it clear whether we respect ourselves and our bodies.



If our clothes are not expensive or stylish, that is not so big a deal. But if our clothes reveal that our minds and hearts are wrong, that would be important.

Modesty in dress reflects a good heart and good common sense. Different kinds of clothes are sensible and good for different kinds of situations. Much that would be very appropriate for recreation, swimming, and good times would be immodest in school and in church. Situations and occasions suggest appropriate clothing. Just as we have to **learn** good habits in eating, and good habits in sports, we have to *learn* good judgement in how to dress modestly. We learn from people who know how. Our parents, teachers, and older brothers and sisters often help us.

**Modesty reflects a good heart and good common sense.**

Some young people just like to wear what is "in." But then their parents may say that certain "in" clothes are not really modest. Sometimes you, too, may not quite understand and disagree. We should be willing to **listen**. Modesty and good sense in dressing have to be learned. Our parents do love us and care for us. And they share our faith, our thoughts, and our lives, far more than some fashion designers who make a profit from our purchases.

## Modesty in ACTION

We ought to be intelligent and let our faith guide us in everything. Faith teaches us about love, sexuality, and being responsible. Our faith should help us to decide what music downloads to get, what movies to see, and what television programs to watch. Some kinds of entertainment make people think of sex as something trivial, a way to exploit others for fun. They are far from what Christ teaches us about sexuality, and about **unselfish** and chaste hearts. But the attitudes that Christ teaches are far better, and make our lives work out much better.

Dancing can be a happy recreation. It can even be a form of art. It is meant to be a pleasurable and good experience. However, there are kinds of dancing that are meant to stir up selfish and wrong sexual attitudes. These types of dancing offend modesty, and simply do not reflect a life of faith.

Also, if we hug or kiss people we love because we are glad to see them, that can be entirely right and good. But obviously it is not modest to hug or kiss in ways intended to stir up wrong sexual feelings.



In all these matters, we much have good sense. The world is filled with different kinds of people. Some know and believe the truth taught by Christ concerning sexuality. Others treat sexuality as something cheap and unimportant. It is good for us to have our **hearts** open to what those who love us have to say to us about these things. We need hearts ready to listen to our parents, and to our best teachers, and to Jesus. None of this will make life dull and uninteresting. Good ways of living make life full and happy.

## Discussion: Modesty and a life of faith

We need to learn modesty well from Christ and from those who teach us about Christ. Modesty is a helping virtue that will keep our lives from getting confused.

- † Will faithfulness to Christ help us to be more respectful of one another?
- † What kinds of modesty do we need to think about, to help us have an atmosphere in our schools or with our friends that is more friendly to the spirit of Christ?

## TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. Like courtesy, modesty is a virtue which reflects kindness, thoughtfulness, and generosity.
2. Modesty begins in our hearts and minds.
3. Prayer and pure talk about sexuality reflect modesty.
4. Modest persons carefully select the kinds of clothes they wear out of respect for self and body.
5. Use of media, type of dance, and physical displays of affection each need to be guided by the virtue of modesty.

# RECONCILIATION in our years of growing up

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality



## Introduction

This class talks about the Sacrament of Reconciliation. First it points out that this sacrament is very important while we are growing up. Then it talks about the good things young people can get from going to confession. Finally, it talks about ways in which this sacrament helps us to face sexuality intelligently.

**These are the things we will talk about in this third lesson:**

- Jesus gave us the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** to help us grow to be the best we can.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation does several **good things** for us..
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a help in dealing with our **questions** and confusions over sexuality.

## A SACRAMENT for our years of growing

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is especially helpful for more mature people.

Jesus gave this sacrament to help us grow up to the be best we can be.

For now the stakes are higher. As we get a bit older, Christ asks **greater**, better, and more difficult things of us.

When we enter adolescence, we have more temptations to fall away from Christ. The shadows and images of television and movies often invite us to live selfishly and impurely. The **world** presents strange dangers in drugs, alcohol, hostility, and sadness of life.

But Christ wants us to have good lives and be HIS friends. He wants to help us to lie our lives strongly well.

## Christ's friends in the Gospels

We can notice the way Christ treated His friends in the Gospel. He knew each one of them from the heart. He made them His disciples, and He cared



about each of them from the heart. He knows you perfectly also, and cares about you. He wants you to be His friend and His disciple.

He knows that all who love Him, and want to be His faithful and **good friends**, sometimes fail Him. He knows that we are weak, and that we need His friendship and strength to live well.

All the apostles failed Christ at times. Some of the women who became his dearest friends had committed great sins, sins they came to hate. Jesus always forgave them with a generous kindness that would not let them be embarrassed by others (see Luke 7:36-49). Sometimes Jesus corrected friends firmly when they needed it (see Matthew 16:23). But He was always faithful to them, and let them know that He knew their hearts were **loyal**, even if they sometimes slipped. On the very night that they would all abandon Him, He looked instead into their hearts and told them how much He loved their friendship. "You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you" (Luke 22:28-29).

**We need  
Jesus'  
friendship  
to live well.**

Jesus cares about each one of us immensely, and is determined not to lose any of those whom the Father has given Him. "I have guarded them, and none of them is lost" (John 17:12), except one who over and over refused to let Jesus save him.

### **Is your FRIENDSHIP with Christ alive?**

Adolescent Catholics have many different kinds of relationships with Christ. Some are clearly and firmly His friends. They have never forgotten to pray. They have remembered the importance of keeping the commandments. They have realized that Jesus calls them to do great things in this world, and become worthy of eternal life.

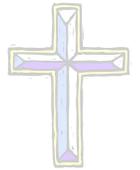
Others get mixed up as years go by. Some of them have difficult paths to walk. Sometimes their parents have unhappy times, and are not able to help them grow strong in prayer and faith, as would be best for them.

Some of them grow up in circumstances where temptations are very strong, and the forces of this world begin to capture their imaginations. They commit sin, and more and more fall away from knowing Jesus.

### **Will Christ always be a FRIEND to you?**

However much we may have fallen away from Christ, He never abandons us. He will not give up on us, but repeatedly calls us back to His friendship and grace.

On Easter Sunday the apostles, close friends of Jesus, were together, behind locked doors. They were afraid, because they thought those who had crucified Jesus would come after them too.



They had been told stories that Jesus had risen, but they did not believe the stories. They were also a bit afraid of seeing Jesus, because they had abandoned Him when He was arrested, and were too embarrassed to even be seen by Him.

But Jesus came and said not a word about their sins. He said simply: **“Peace** be with you.” Then He gave them His Holy Spirit. They knew that He knew their sins, and that He had forgiven them. He said to them also: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:23).

He said this because He was thinking of you and me. We would also commit sins, and be tempted to fall away from Him, with no good and safe place to go. So He wanted us to know that we can be **forgiven** all our sins, get to know Christ much better, and have our faith and our hope become strong by the power of the Holy Spirit. We receive this forgiveness and strength by going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### **GOOD THINGS the Sacrament of Reconciliation can do for you**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a very important sacrament for us. Some young people are a bit afraid of it (though it is a gift of peace) when they first experience it. Some people feel that it is useless for them. But this sacrament is most **important**, and perhaps more than at all other times in our adolescent years.

There are several things that the Sacrament of Reconciliation does for us. It takes away our sins. If we have committed really serious or mortal sins, it is the *only* way we have to get rid of our sins. It is the way Christ in his mercy has chosen for us as the way to get back to grace.

Even if we have no serious sins, Reconciliation does great things for us. It is a way of coming to Christ for courage and strength in all our trials. As we get older we may be seriously tempted to do really wrong things. But those who come to Christ in this sacrament often find the **courage** and grace not to fail Christ in difficult times.



Confessing makes our times of going to Communion more honest. Sometimes when we go to Communion our minds might be rather vague and unclear. We are coming to receive the Lord, who knows us perfectly. Sometimes we are not so sure about the state of our hearts and souls. We have committed sins, and let ourselves get vague and unclear.



But confessing through the Sacrament of Reconciliation straightens things out. When we confess honestly and thoughtfully, we tell Christ that we are sorry for things we know are wrong. His kindness gives us not only forgiveness, but also healing. When we confess regularly (perhaps once a month) we experience the great peace of Christ's friendship and **mercy**. And when we go to Communion then, we know that He knows us as His real friends.

## **RECONCILIATION helps us face sexuality honestly**

### **Reconciliation and sins of impurity**

Some people stop going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation when they grow into adolescence. Their minds often seem filled with impure thoughts. They say or do things of which they are ashamed. Sometimes they are not quite sure what is right or wrong. Instead of going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and getting their whole life straightened out, they just retreat into silence. In confusion, they may even dread going to Mass or Communion.

All of this anxiety is unnecessary. Confession is an **easy** and good thing. We ought to go to confession regularly if we want our faith to be strong, and our friendship with Christ to give peace of our lives.

### **How does one confess embarrassing sins?**

This does take some thinking. But the problem can easily be solved.

First of all, we need to remember that when we go to Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, he already knows everything. The priest to whom we confess serves as his instrument. Christ requires us to confess to his priest, so that we will be as willing to do something to get rid of our sins as we were to commit the sins. But Christ has made things easy for us. We can go to the priest with **perfect secrecy**. We can choose any priest we want. We can choose either face-to-face confession or go to confession anonymously, behind a screen. The priest has a most solemn obligation never to tell anyone, or to embarrass us, about what we say to Christ through him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### **Yes, but what do we say?**

Actually this is not very difficult. Some things young people can say about the sins they have committed are, for example: "I let myself deliberately think of impure things many times." "I went to a movie I knew would be full of sex, and it filled my mind with impure thoughts." "When I was bothered with impure thoughts, I committed a sin of impurity by myself." "When I was with a boy (or girl), we touched each other in impure ways." "I committed a sin of impurity with another person."

Sometimes we can begin our confession by saying: “Father, I am a bit **confused** and embarrassed about some of the things I am going to confess. Please help me if I do not do it correctly.” You can be pretty sure that he will want to do everything he can to help you if you say that. If you care about finding a particularly good confessor, that is usually easy. You might ask your catechist, or even your mother or father. Priests like to be kind to young people who are trying to be friends of Christ. They remember when they were young, and went through puzzling years, and they will want to help you.



## Outline: Remembering the “how” of confessing

“I forgot how to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.” Well, it is very easy to learn again.

When you go to confession within communal penance services, prayers are said together in the beginning, and then people go to confession to any of the priests who are hearing confessions. All the steps for confession are usually repeated by the priest so you will remember.

In going to confession by yourself, in your parish, this is how you are to approach the sacrament:

- † *Pray* — Speak with our Lord, and ask him to help you make a good confession. You can be sure he will not refuse this prayer.
- † *Examine your conscience* — Try to think honestly of the more serious sins you have committed, pledging to confess even what embarrasses you (for Christ will make it easy and will give you peace). You should have a prayer book or manual that gives a helpful guide to examining conscience, or your teacher or catechist can recommend one. Take the time to tell our Lord you are sorry before you go to the confessional, as thoughtfully and honestly as you can.
- † *Confess your sins to the priest* — The way you do this can be in your own style. You could begin: “Father, my last confession was about \_\_\_ months (or years!) ago. My sins are: \_\_\_”, and then tell him the sins you remembered in your examination of conscience.
- † *Pray an “Act of Contrition”* — Trying to speak from the heart. This is the most important part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Real sorrow means that we intend not to do the same thing over. If we have gone to impure movies, or skipped Mass on Sunday without a good reason, we should tell the Lord: “Help me, and I won’t do that again.”

It is always good to practice the “Act of Contrition” by saying it every night before going to bed.



## ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

† *The priest gives you a penance* — Usually this is a number of prayers to say. But it could be some other thing, like reading a chapter of the Gospels. If you do not understand the penance, or think you may not be able to do it, tell the priest. You will be happy to see how understanding he is.

The priest speaks words of absolution and, as he does, Christ Himself forgives you your sins. You leave the confessional, and perform the penance you have been given.

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## TYING things together

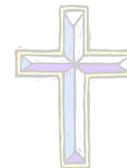
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**Remember what we studied in this lesson:**

1. The Sacrament of Reconciliation assists our growth toward maturity.
2. There are many benefits which are attained from the celebration of the Sacrament.
3. The sacrament aids us in answering our questions and realizing our confusion over issues of sexuality.

# CHRIST and the courage to be pure of heart

## Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality



### Introduction

Jesus taught pure love as the kind of love that makes the world better and fuller. Relationships of pure love take courage. Courageous love is not the kind of selfish love which can break dreams and fracture hearts. Christ calls us to live out the consequences of our sexuality through a life-style of chastity.

#### These are the things we will talk about in this fourth lesson:

- **Pure love** makes the world a better place.
- Courage is needed in **relationships** of pure love.
- Selfish, non-courageous love can lead to that lust which destroys **dreams**.
- A life of chastity is the proper **consequence** of our sexuality.

### Pure love VERSUS selfish love

Sometimes food is labeled “pure.” We know that this food can be eaten and enjoyed in safety.

Food is pure when it is not mixed with things that should never be in it. It is pure when there are no impurities like dirt or dead insects in it. **Pure** is better than impure.

Sometimes we see “pure gold.” Such gold is very precious and worth very much.

But sometimes what looks like gold is some cheap metal, just covered with a very thin layer of gold, or even only painted gold. Sometimes gold is mixed with cheaper metals, and then is not worth very much. Pure is better than impure.

Sometimes love is pure. Love that is pure is just love; it is not love trickily mixed with baser things. It is the kind of love that Jesus taught, the kind of love that makes the world happy, and heals things everywhere. Pure is better than impure.



Pure love is the love that shines in happy and good **friendships**. It is the love that gives joy of life.

“Love is patient and is kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude.... Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

There are many different kinds of impure love.

### **Sometimes impure love is love mixed with dishonesty.**

People often say they love others and pretend to care about them. But they are dishonest, and simply do not love in truth. Have you ever found people who only pretend to be caring and good?

### **Sometimes cheap love is mixed with selfishness.**

Imagine someone who wants to befriend another person, but not because he really likes him. He knows the other person has lots of money, and his family has many things he wishes he had. So he tells himself: I must cultivate this friendship, so I can get everything I can for myself out of this fellow.

Is this pure love? Is this guy a real friend? Have you ever seen “friends” who were like that?

### **Sometimes love is mixed with lust, with impurity.**

Think of a boy who rather likes a girl, and finds it fun to be with her. But, because he has listened to what some other people say, or has seen impure tactics in movies, TV shows, and on websites, he decides not to love her with a pure love, with a **love** that counts her as important, and wants her life to be happy and full of good things. Rather, he decides to use her to get gratification for himself.

He decides that he wants to touch or kiss her in really impure ways, or do other impure things with her. Perhaps she does not want to, because she knows that playing at sexual love in this way is bad in many ways.

She knows this is a dangerous situation. One thing quickly leads to another. It twists the heart from the kinds of happiness young people need to share, and presses toward the kinds of acts that cause great trouble. Quickly it leads to bitter and broken friendships. Sometimes it leads more quickly than anyone imagined to the kinds of acts that cause pregnancy, and sometimes cause terrible diseases. But even worse than this, it leads at once to distorting what love really is, and mixes something lustful and wrong into what should be pure love. And so it is very sinful, and does disastrous things to our hearts and souls.

But the boy tells himself: I can get around her. If I play my cards right, I can pressure her, and make her do the things she says she does not want to do.

Is this a pure kind of love? Is it **decent** and right?

## Happy and good sexual activity goes only with marriage.

Faith does not teach that sexuality is bad. Certainly not! It is God who created sexuality. And He made it something good and precious and joyful. But God calls us to respect His gift and use it rightly.



Sexuality is something dear and important, and made for important and **intelligent** purposes. It is not a game or an object to be toyed with.

God made sexual activity to go only with marriage. It must have the generous promises of marriage, made realistically by those able to keep the promises they make.

**Marriage  
is a  
lifelong  
promise.**

People who get married are planning something precious, something that takes courage and generosity. Sexuality was made to seal a love promised to last all the way to death. People promise then that they will give themselves to each other, and be **faithful** to each other, no matter what. "For better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, with these vows," the married couple says to each other, "until death do us part." I will never forsake you, never leave you. No matter what might go wrong, I will belong to you until I die.

And they are planning also to serve life. They know that God made sexual activity also for having children. And they marry to honor God's plan and have children. They want **children** whom they will love with all their hearts, and care for in all the long years of life. God created the family to be a man and a woman united in marriage, with their children.

The pagan world, often reflected in TV, movies, lyrics and websites makes a game of sex. But it is a sick and bad game. This treating sex so cheaply is what makes so much pain in this world. It causes the endless divorces we see. It causes abortion, the killing of tiny unwanted babies. It causes homes to be selfish and full of hurt.

But keeping hearts **chaste** makes it possible to have the generous love that makes good and strong homes. It makes people able, when they marry, to love each other all their lives. It makes them glad to have children, and care for them with love always.

Pure love, chaste love: this guards homes, and young people in love, and little children, and all good things in life.

## Relationships and PURE love

Courage is another name for bravery. It is a virtue, a good gift that God plants in the hearts of those who seek for it with all their hearts. We need courage to do good things that are hard to do, but which have to be done in order to save what is precious.



Courage does not mean never being afraid, or never having any fear at all, or never finding it difficult to do what is right. But **courage** means being determined, and able, to do what is good and right, no matter what it costs.

A brave father and a brave mother will do all they can to protect a little child being attacked by someone wicked. They will do this even if it is dangerous to do so. They will do it even if the person hurting the child is powerful, and may hurt or even kill them if they try to stop him. Good people do what is right and good even when they are afraid and it is dangerous. They are brave because they love so much the good people and good things that are at risk.



Brave people are the people with great hearts. They are the people who love generously, and will protect what they know love requires them to protect, not matter what.

Remember: **Bravery** does not mean being just bold, or doing foolish things that are dangerous. It means having a heart great enough to do the good things I should do, even if it is dangerous and very difficult to do so.

## Discussion questions

- Have you known stories of different kinds of courageous people?
- Have you known any people whom you think to be very brave?
- How can we become brave?

### Selfish love, sexuality, AND broken dreams

In this world, it always takes courage to have a pure heart for a whole life long.

One of the most important kinds of **courage** is the bravery to refuse to do wrong things, even if others tease or make fun of you, or threaten to hurt you if you do not.

### Think of some cases:

Lots of people sell drugs in Joe's neighborhood.

He knows that drugs are a bad business. But to begin to deal with them can mean making much money. There can be intense pleasure in taking some drugs himself (even though they are also terribly dangerous).

To sell and use drugs ruins lives. Deep down, Joe knows that.



But bigger and tougher guys than he is want him to run drugs for them. If he will not do it, they will make fun of him: "Mama's boy!" "Afraid to do anything that is exciting." "There is no other way you can make money to get the things you want." "We know you might tell the cops on us if you don't help us; you are dangerous to us if you don't join us." "You do this or you will regret it."

Can it take courage not to do things that everybody does? Can it take a great heart to refuse to do things that are the sources of pain everywhere, even if people pressure us to do so?

To live with **pure hearts** also takes courage.

Many TV programs, movies, songs, books and websites are created by people who disagree entirely with Christ. They do not believe in generous love, but in lust, in getting for yourself the pleasure you want, even if other people, and homes, and little children are hurt deeply by the cruel and selfish kinds of lust they live.

But these are powerful people. They make money on lust. They use their power to make fun of people who live generous and decent lives.

And, what is worse, many people we like, who are basically good people, are deeply affected by them. Some people close to us also pressure us and drive us to do what we know is wrong.

And, even worse, there is a traitor inside my own heart. Though I know Christ is right, and that being generous and having pure hearts is needed to guard honest love, and needed to **guard** families and homes and little children, I sometimes feel myself urged to go along with things that are selfish and wrong.

It often takes much courage to have a good heart. And when we turn to Christ we will find that courage. He gives us His grace and help to do what is right. Our desire to turn to God is itself a result of grace.

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## ? Question

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? How can I find God's grace in my life?



## Sexuality and its CONSEQUENCES

Christ is the one who gives us courage to be chaste.

He knows how hard it sometimes is to do what we know to be really right. He knows what it is to be made fun of, to be ridiculed, to be treated cruelly, for doing what is right.

Do you remember from the Gospels the times **Jesus** was made fun of? When people spat in His face? When they ridiculed Him in front of everybody, at especially painful times?

But Jesus also knows that a great and good life needs to be a courageous one. One of His most common words of encouragement to His friends was: "Do not be afraid!" He promised them, that if the odds seemed against them, and that it seemed too difficult to do what is really right and good, He would never abandon them.

Jesus promises us too. We need never be afraid that it will be too difficult to keep our hearts truthful and generous and pure.

The world will pressure us constantly to give up, and join the unhappy people who treat love as something cheap and wrong. But He will remain faithful to us, if we want to have hearts that are right.

We can be faithful to our friends, loyal to all that is good and generous, if we lean on the power of Christ's **friendship** and the grace He gives us. Remember, too, some of the places where we find Christ: in Communion; in prayer; in doing generous things for others; in confession.

A life of courage and pure love is the only proper consequence of our sexuality. All the temptations of the world cannot overwhelm us if we turn to Christ, follow His example, and ask for this help. It is possible — and it is far better — to live pure, chaste lives.

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### **TYING things together**

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**Remember what we studied in this lesson:**

1. The world is made better by lives of pure love.
2. Pure love takes real courage.
3. Love which is centered on the self can lead to misuses of sex.
4. Our sexuality is meant to be lived through lives of chastity.

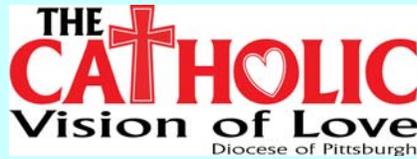
**THE**  
**CATHOLIC**  
**Vision of Love**  
Diocese of Pittsburgh

**Personal Safety**  
**Curriculum**

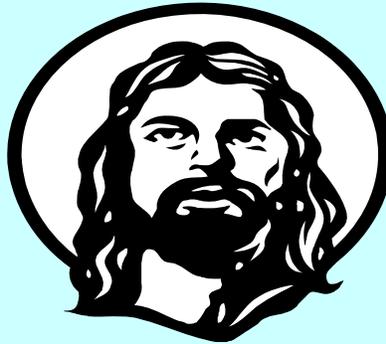


**Grade 7**

**Student  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade**



**COMMUNICATION BOUNDARIES  
OPENING PRAYER**



**Leader: We begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Reader: "Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" (Ps 25:5).**

**All: "Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" (Ps 25:5).**

**Reader: God, help us to know your truth, help us to learn to follow your ways, and to trust in all your words.**

**All: "Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" (Ps 25:5).**

**Grade 7**

**TALKING ABOUT  
SITUATIONAL EVALUATIONS**

10 minutes

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

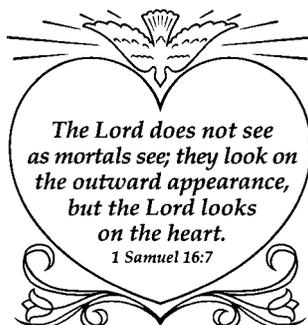
- Yesterday you heard that a girl from homeroom made herself sick after lunch. When you saw her coming out of the bathroom today, you remembered that some kids called her bulimic, and also heard that she got called to the nurse's office. Today after school, your friends were talking about it and didn't know that she got called to the nurse's office.
  - ⇒ Should you tell them about what you heard or that you saw her coming out the bathroom?
  - ⇒ What are some of the possibilities for gossip here?
- A teacher always hugs you after everyone leaves the classroom and sometimes asks you really personal questions.
  - ⇒ Is there anything wrong with that, why or why not?
- A friend from online asks you for your address and tells you that they love you even though you've never met them.
  - ⇒ Is that ok? Why or why not?
- Your friend's dad offers to drive you home without your friend and takes a very long way to your house. When you mention this to your friend, she gets weird and very defensive.
  - ⇒ Do you talk to your parents about this, or just ignore it?

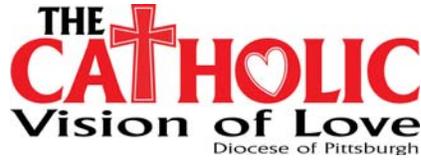
**Turn Page Over →**

- You spent the night at a friend's house this past weekend and something happened that you're not sure about. Your friend's brother and his friends were there, and they had some alcohol. Your friend drank some of the alcohol with the boys. They also were watching things on the TV that you know your parents wouldn't like. When you got home, your mom asked you how the weekend was and you said, "OK". You thought that telling your parents about this might get your friend in trouble. Now, you feel funny about going back to your friend's house and your mom keeps asking you why.
  - ⇒ What do you tell your parents?
  
- A friend takes your cell phone into the bathroom and sends a text message to someone else with it.
  - ⇒ Is this ok? Why or why not?
  
- ▶ Someone sends you a picture message on your cell phone of someone without their clothes on.
  - ⇒ Is this ok? Why or why not?
  - ⇒ Is this legal?
  - ⇒ What do you do and who do you tell?



**The phone is linked to who you are: whatever is sent or received on your phone is your responsibility. The possession or transmission of media with compromising images of minors is considered child pornography and is against the law. This is known as sexting and has certain legal ramifications, as well as social, emotional, and reputational effects. Boundaries identify responsibilities.**

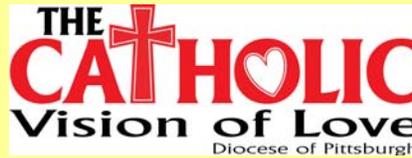




## **WHO DO I TALK TO?** **(And why or how could they help?)**

Parent      Teacher      Trusted Adult (who's that?)      Priest  
Doctor      Friend      Friend's Parent      Anyone  
else?

- ➔ **What if my friend tells me that he/she is in trouble?**
- ➔ **What if I know that my friend is doing something dangerous, even if it is online?**
- ➔ **What if I think that my friend is doing something dangerous?**
- ➔ **What if I think that someone is hurting my friend?**
- ➔ **What if someone keeps sending me text messages that I wouldn't want my parents to see?**
- ➔ **What if someone is making me feel uncomfortable online?**
- ➔ **What if I sent someone to someone online or through a text message that is embarrassing now?**



## COMMUNICATION BOUNDARIES CLOSING PRAYER

**Leader:** “Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created worthy”(Revelation 4:11) Let us begin honoring God’s creation in our prayer today, as we begin all things,

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

**Reader 1:** “Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (I Cor. 3:16-17). God, we offer to you our bodies. Help us to glorify you in all that we say, write, and do.

**All:** Give us clean hands, oh Lord.

**Reader 2:** “Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23); “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29) God, help us to guard our words, our thoughts, and our reactions to the people around us.

**All:** Give us pure hearts, oh Lord.

**Reader 3:** So give us clean hands and give us pure hearts, Let us not lift our souls to another. Oh God let this be a generation that seeks, Who seeks Your face, Oh God of Jacob.  
(From the song “Give Us Clean Hands” by Chris Tomlin)

**All:** Jesus, help me to love myself and my neighbor today, as you have loved me.

**Leader:** Jesus taught us how to pray to His Father, so let us together pray the Lord’s Prayer:

**All:** Our Father, who art in Heaven...Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

