

Section Three

STUDENT'S LESSONS for Grade 8

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: Your vocation: To make the world a better place

CLASS 2: Living in a world that suffers from AIDS

CLASS 3: Christ and my conscience

CLASS 4: The Eucharist and love

CLASS 5: Personal Safety

YOUR VOCATION:

To make the world a better place

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

This world is clearly not in the condition it should be in, but Christ calls YOU to accept the responsibility to make it a better place. He wants YOU to do what you can to make our world mirror the Kingdom of God. YOU can make a difference, and YOU are not alone!



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

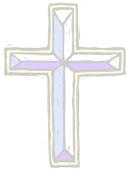
- As Christians we have a duty to **respect** the lives of all persons.
- **Activities** of irresponsible sex outside of marriage can very often lead to pregnancy and pressure persons to have an abortion.
- We must care about the lives of the children who are killed by abortion, and yet have **compassion** for those who decide for abortion.
- God **calls** us to choose the good — for life.
- We must also concern ourselves with actions of **justice** toward all persons.

A PRO-LIFE stand

As Christians we have a duty to care about and respect all people. Jesus told us that we would be judged by the way we have loved others. (See Matthew 25:31-46.)

Consider abortion. Abortion ends the life of a tiny baby in the mother's womb. You are bombarded with harmful television messages regarding abortion. You must know that abortion can only be overcome by **unselfish caring** and loving attitudes and actions.

We call a young newborn an "infant," but we call a baby before it is born a "fetus." A fetus is unquestionably a tiny human being. Everybody knows this, but sometimes people try to talk themselves into pretending that the fetus is just "a bit of tissue" or a mere part of the mother's body, like an appendix. This is simply not true! Perhaps you have learned how each person has a **distinctive** "genetic code." Every cell in the mother has the same genetic code, but every cell of the fetus is marked by its own genetic code, not the mother's.



The tiny fetus is your little brother or sister in the human family. The fetus is a very young human being — he or she has a face and a beating heart. The hands are tiny, and “perfect,” right down to the unique fingerprints. The brain is working. In fact, doctors can catch distinctive brain waves on a screen. Most of all, this fetus has an inner longing to live, to grow, and to be allowed to become its full self, just like you and me.

WHY are there so many abortions today?

Many people are irresponsible about sex. Sinful sexual acts of different kinds gradually lead people toward sexual intercourse (an act intended only for marriage). God’s plan for us is great. However, when we are selfish and irresponsible, everything is confusing.

Everyone knows that having sexual intercourse carries with it the potential for bringing new life into being. This is also true for people who use contraceptives. In fact, contraceptives fail more often for young people than for others. The passion for careless sex is so strong that the people involved often stop caring about anything but pleasure.

The result of this careless behavior may be conception of a child. The problem intensifies: This child will be an embarrassment . . . Our lives will change drastically . . . College is not an option . . . Where will I get the money needed to take care of a child? . . . What will others think of me?

To add to the pressure, many important and powerful people believe that it is OK to have an abortion. They do not believe in Christ or His message that every human life is **precious**. In addition, the performance of abortions becomes a large and profitable operation.

The outcome is an abortion — the killing of a precious human being.

COMPASSION is needed

We must care about the babies who are killed, and have pity on so many people who feel compelled to have an abortion. Young people today are pressured by television, movies, and magazines to experiment with sex. Even though sex is a precious gift from God, it is often treated as a toy. Consequently, young people find themselves pregnant and scared. The pressure seems too great, and they are blinded into thinking that an abortion is the only solution. Often they have deep and desperate regrets that affect them for the rest of their lives. They see cute, happy little **babies** and their minds flash back to the life they ended. Are the lives of such people happy? Do you think Jesus would help them, forgive them, and bring them back to a happier state if they came to Him?

Reflection: The problem of abortion

- ? Have you ever thought about the abortion problem? What do you think about people who gradually slip into such terrible decisions?
- ? How do you think the Lord feels about this? Did you know that our faith has always taught that abortion is a horrible sin?
- ? What is an excommunication? Did you know that people who have an abortion are excommunicated from the Church? Why? Will the Church welcome back and have compassion for people who are sorry for what they have done?



What is PRO-CHOICE?

Obviously God gave us the power to choose. “Before a man are life and death, and whichever he chooses will be given to him” (Sirach 15:17). Of course God calls us to choose good. To choose good freely is admirable, but to deliberately choose something that is clearly wrong was not the purpose of freedom.

Reflection: “A question of law”

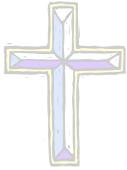
Laws should, first of all, guard the most basic rights: the right to life and the right to be free. Do you think it would be a better world to have slavery exist under the law? It is right and good to have a *pro-choice law to enslave* people? It is right and good to have a *pro-choice law to kill* an innocent, helpless unborn child? Should the laws say: No slavery and no killing of the innocent? Should we be active in pro-life work and help to free our country from this cruel practice?

Caring about JUSTICE?

Our care about the lives of people should also extend to concern with fair treatment and the chance for a better life for all.

Just as chaste hearts can more easily be concerned about guarding the lives of the **innocent**, so they can also more readily help the poor.

**Justice
means fair
treatment
for all.**



When we become unreasonable, fixed only on our own pleasure and comfort, we begin to think less honestly about what is really good. Our hearts become hard about everything.

People whose minds just concentrate on pursuing unchaste pleasures often do not find it very interesting to care about the poor and the needy. Those who care about what is right, and concentrate on what the Lord wants of them, very easily learn to have merciful hearts.

Reflection: The rich man and Lazarus

Read the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and the account of the Last Judgement (Matthew 25:31-46).

- What is it that makes people fail to even think about the poor and helpless?
- Do the people of this world who are wealthy have the responsibility to care for the poor as well as themselves? What does our Lord say about this?
- Do you think the rich man was happy when he was so interested in his own wealth and pleasure that he could not even notice Lazarus?
- Are we happy and pleasing to God when we look out just for our own pleasure in life?
- Who are the poor among us?
- Should we learn to see and recognize the poor and the suffering, and care about ways to help them?

Discussion: Jesus calls you to care about the poor also

- Are there practical ways in which you can care for the poor?
- Are there places near your home where food is made available for the poor, or shelter given to the homeless?

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

- 1.** As Christians we are called to live out a pro-life stand.
- 2.** There are many pressures on persons to commit the sin of abortion.
- 3.** We care about the lives of the unborn. We also need to have compassion on those who commit abortions.
- 4.** God calls us to choose for life.
- 5.** Our concern for life extends to acts of justice toward the poor.

LIVING in a world that suffers from AIDS

CLASS 2

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

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Introduction

Christ wants our lives to be richer and better. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly!" (John 10:10). Our lives are a gift from God and we are dignified beings. We should never live **beneath our dignity**. Those who understand sexuality and wisely try to live by grace, as Jesus taught, are more joyful people. They do not live beneath their dignity. They escape the sadness that results from sinful sexual activity and the many physical evils casual sex can cause. We need to challenge ourselves to think intelligently about these matters and resolve to never live beneath our dignity!



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

- AIDS is a fatal condition which can strike **anyone**.
- **Responsible** behavior avoids contracting AIDS.
- The HIV virus can be passed **unknowingly** on to others.
- "Safe" or "safer" sex is a **false** concept; it is immoral.
- **Unchaste** acts can also lead to the contraction of other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Chastity faces sexuality in a good and **intelligent** way.
- **Chastity** is a natural and good way to live.
- All persons are able to live the chaste lives to which **Christ** calls them in their state of life.
- Compassion is needed in **caring** for victims of AIDS.

AIDS and the CHALLENGE of living intelligently

AIDS is a disease that is always fatal. AIDS shows no prejudice. It can strike anyone.

AIDS means: *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*.

It is caused when HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) attacks the body's immune system. Thus it leaves the body unprotected against infections and diseases. There is presently no cure for AIDS.



One out of two hundred fifty persons worldwide now carries the virus. A new person in the world is infected every fifteen to twenty seconds.

This disease is transmitted chiefly in three ways:

- 1 Through sexual contact with a person who has AIDS or the HIV virus. (Many do not even know they have been infected with the virus as it can be many years before the virus is detected.)
- 2 By sharing drug-related items (like needles) with people who are infected with the HIV virus.
- 3 By receiving a blood transfusion from an infected person. (The likelihood of contracting the disease in this way is now almost impossible due to the safeguards instituted by blood banks several years ago.)

The AIDS virus does not travel through the air, nor is it contracted by casual contact with AIDS victims. Simply shaking hands or hugging does not transmit the disease.

How to AVOID getting AIDS

- ✓ Refrain from sexual activity before marriage.
- ✓ Remain faithful to your spouse in marriage.
- ✓ Refrain from illegal drug use.

The cost is responsible behavior. You would only be doing what good morality and good sense require anyway.

Note: During surgical or dental treatment in which the blood of one person gets in contact with the blood of an AIDS victim, one could contract AIDS. This situation is not likely, since health care workers are taking universal precautions to prevent such situations. This is something *extremely rare*.

Sometimes babies are born with AIDS because their parents contracted the disease. But AIDS normally is caused by irresponsible sexual conduct, and by the use of drugs.

Therefore, if you live a life of self-control that Christ calls you to lead, there is no reason to be fearful.

WHO has AIDS?

The HIV virus can live in the body for years before a person becomes ill. Therefore many carriers do not even realize that they are infected. Sadly, they have the potential to pass on the deadly disease to others unknowingly. The only **safe and responsible** solution is to refrain from all sex outside of marriage.

God has reserved sex for married people. In married love, each person commits faithfully to one person forever. The fact is that the strongest marriages are characterized by faithful, honest love. Chaste love is necessary for life. Only it can make homes happy.



WHAT is the “safe sex” concept?

Some say: “If you use a condom when you have sex with another person, you will be protected from the HIV virus. You can’t catch AIDS then. It’s safe!”

That is *far* from true or safe! Condoms very often fail! You are playing with your life in this situation. It is like playing Russian Roulette. You could kill yourself.

“Safe” sex is not safe. The only “safe” sex is **no sex** until marriage.

OTHER sexually transmitted diseases

- ▲ *Gonorrhea* — 1.3 million new cases annually in the United States.
- ▲ *Herpes* — 500,000 new cases annually in the United States.
- ▲ *Pelvic inflammatory disease* — 1 million new cases annually in the United States.
- ▲ *Chlamydia* — 4 million cases occur annually in the United States.

These are tragic diseases that need not be contracted. Often people who suffer from such diseases are unable to have children in later years when they deeply desire them. The consequences of many STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) are severe. A chaste life is the only escape from such tragedy.

Reflection:

Is the fear of AIDS or STDs the best reason for being chaste and avoiding illegal drug use?

Fear of AIDS and STDs can motivate people not to engage in dangerous behavior. To avoid evil out of fear is not the best reason for living well. There are far better reasons. Unchaste deeds are not only dangerous; they are also immoral, because they go against God’s revealed Word. Abuse of God’s gift of sexuality shows a lack of respect for love and life.

Think critically. Suppose you have the opportunity to beat a child, kick a handicapped person, or kill someone, but you refrain from such activity because there is a chance that you might get hurt or caught in the process. Is that the best reason for avoiding outrageous conduct? Those hurtful activities are immoral!

What is CHASTITY?

Chastity means getting personal control of your own life, by your own acts, your own feelings. It means not being driven by the pressures of peers, or by passions, when we know they are urging us to act in foolish ways. Chastity faces sexually intelligently.



Chaste married people use sexuality happily in marriage when it will really deepen personal and committed love, strengthen the home, and welcome with **love** the children born of acts of love.

Chaste single people lead full lives, but intelligently avoid the sexual conduct that deserves to be saved for marriage. Real chastity is comfortable and not confining, as all acquired virtues are.

Is chastity NORMAL?

Chastity is a natural and good way to live. It is at home with honest friendship and good times that do not exploit people in any way. God made sex good, but sexual activity requires mature, disciplined, and honest love within the marriage **covenant**. It is made for people who are mature enough to make a lifetime commitment to grow together in the generous love of marriage.

Is chastity too DIFFICULT for me?

Millions of people are chaste all the way to marriage, and faithful to their spouses in marriage. Ask your parents and grandparents about this. Ordinary people are quite able to be as chaste as love and life require — and to be happy in doing so. Do not be deceived by unchaste people, who have not tried seriously to live in the good ways the Lord calls us to live. Most people marry and promise to be faithful to each other for life. Some people choose to live as single people. They live vigorous and **good lives** in service to others, choosing simply not to engage in that sexual activity that is proper only in marriage. Other people become priests, sisters, and brothers who live lives of service by promising to remain unmarried and chaste. Christ is all-powerful, and He always promised to help us in whatever state of life we choose.

**Christ has
promised
to help us,
whatever
life we
choose.**

One important thing is to find interesting good ways of living. We can and should find ways of enjoying life with our friends. Good times need not lead to irresponsible acts that:

- Are gravely sinful and separate us from a friendship with Christ.
- Are hurtful to our lives and the lives of others.
- Keep us from understanding the true meaning of love and sexuality in a mature, sensible manner.



Avoid movies, magazines, TV programs and websites that are indecent. Why fill your mind with trash? Your imagination is too good and important to be filled with obscene thoughts. Let your imagination and memory find **creative and intelligent** ways of enjoying life. God made this world, and we are invited to cherish it.

Sinful actions always create great problems. Shoplifters, drug users, and those who commit sexual sins not only hurt others but they hurt themselves even more.

Christ taught good ways to live, not to make life difficult for us, but to make life full and happy.

Careless and casual uses of sex run into many serious problems. From foolish acts come unwanted pregnancies, diseases, the inability to understand the **true meaning** of love, and the inability to acquire the generosity necessary to be a good husband, wife, father, or mother.

You are called to something far better. Allow the Lord to help you make your own life a good one.

Discussion questions

- ? What about people who have already become sexually active? Can they get control and lead chaste lives again?
- ! Of course! All irresponsible and sinful activity can be overcome if we are seriously sorry and determined to live worthwhile lives. God is able to heal our lives and He cares about us. "Let go and go to God."
- ? It is really possible to refrain from sexual activity when we are attracted to someone?
- ! God's grace gives us unbelievable strength to do good. Our freedom and self-control sets us apart — *we are not* animals at the control of our passions!

HOW should we think about people who have AIDS?

AIDS is a terrible disease. If we caught so tragic a disease, no matter how, we would not want people to judge us severely. The Lord's Golden Rule requires us to treat others as we would wish to be treated. You ought to **care** about them very much. We have no right to look down on them or refuse to care for them. These are people bearing very severe crosses. We should try to see that they are helped. It is an injustice to refuse to help AIDS victims, as if they were not our brothers and sisters. They are!

TYING things together



Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. There is no cure for AIDS; it is a fatal condition.
2. We can avoid AIDS by avoiding sexual activity outside of marriage.
3. Many persons do not even know they have AIDS and pass the virus on to others.
4. There is no such thing as "safe" sex.
5. There are other sexually transmitted diseases besides AIDS.
6. Chastity is the best and most intelligent way of life.
7. Chastity is natural and good.
8. Christ offers us all the grace to lead chaste lives.
9. We must act with the compassion and justice of Christ toward all victims of AIDS.

CHRIST and my conscience

CLASS 3

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

In this class we study conscience. We study why it is so important that we respect conscience. We look at the way a good conscience helps us be at peace with sexuality. Finally, we think of the ways in which Christ gives light to our conscience.



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

- Good persons recognize the importance of having and developing a **good conscience**.
- Concerns about chastity are aided by a good and **honest** conscience.
- The conscience of a **Christian** will always be guided by the teaching of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The **IMPORTANT** of a good conscience

Good people like to know that what they are doing is right. They ask themselves questions like: Would it be fair to do this? Would I be a coward if I did not say what I thought?

As we grow up, we realize that people do wrong things when they just do not **think**. We do really bad things when we are afraid or unwilling to find out if what we are thinking or doing is right or wrong.

Sometimes people are afraid to think. A young man wonders if he could make easy money in a way that really is very bad — maybe it is by selling drugs, or even by stealing from someone who is old or poor. He may not want to dwell on the rightness or wrongness of his action because he wants the money so badly.

When we do not follow our **conscience**, we can do very bad things!

A girl wonders if doing something that an older person is pressuring her to do would be *very* bad. She does not want to think deeply about it, because she wants to please the other person, or to get what she thinks she might in return.



So by deliberately not being clear on what is good or bad, people do bad things. They very much hurt their own hearts and lives.

When we want lives to be proud of, we have to think honestly: Would this be OK to do? I may be just our own **hearts** that we ask. Sometimes we also ask our very close friends.

If we have learned to pray in personal words to Christ, we may even ask the Lord, "Is this right?"

**God gives
light to those
who wish it.**

It is not that we expect Him to speak in words we can hear. His voice is more gentle. He sends us His Spirit to help us realize what He wants us to know honestly. He stirs up our **memory** and our most honest thoughts. He helps us see for ourselves, in the light of His teaching and our faith, what things we should do.

Those who want to know what is good, and what God really wants of them, find how true it is that God gives light to those who wish to have it because He loves them.

Notice some of the words and the Second Vatican Council about conscience, from the teaching of **Christ** Himself:

When we enter our own hearts, God awaits us there. [In my conscience], I am alone with God, whose voice sounds in the depths. Always summoning us to love good and do it and to avoid evil, the voice of conscience can, when necessary, speak to our hearts more specifically: do this, shun that. For we have in our hearts a law written by God. To obey it is our very dignity; according to it we will be judged (Church in the Modern World, n. 16).

My conscience is the power God give me, when I care about what is good, to see the difference between what is good and what is bad. It is the power He gives me to tell what things I am thinking of doing are all right, or good, and what things are wrong.

How important is it that I think with my heart, in my **conscience**, before doing things that I may regret?

Of course, our consciences are our own, and we have to be serious in order to develop good consciences. We have to **care** about the truth, about what is really good. To follow conscience is to try to do what is really right and fair and good. Unless we care about what is good, we will never develop good consciences. Ultimately, we can hurt our lives badly.

To follow our consciences is also to do what the Lord wants us to do. He wants us to do what is really good, what will make our lives work out well, what we will be glad about when we look back on what we have done.

Honest and dishonorable ways of deciding what to do

People often lie to themselves about their consciences. When they are tempted to do something that is very wrong, they give strange excuses.



“My conscience tells me it is all right!” —Often they say this as a shabby excuse for doing whatever they feel like. They let themselves think: “If I really want to do it, it must be **right** for me. It must be my conscience telling me it’s OK.” If we think this way, we are just rationalizing. Whenever anybody wants to do anything wrong, this is the way the mind will try to justify it:

“Everybody is doing it.” — It is true that when lots of people do wrong things, we often feel it is all right because “Everybody is doing it. My peers would be angry if I told on them to the teacher, so I won’t do that.” “No one really cares if we stole from big stores or cheated on exams especially if we don’t get caught doing it.” “If **people** don’t blame me, I’m doing OK.” But we know that the point is not “Will my friends think this is bad?” Is it really bad despite what my friends think? And does God know it is bad?

In many places, people have tolerated different kinds of evil: slavery, Nazism, abortion. In different times, different kinds of wrong things seem so common that people act as if they did not notice. That is what people do with many misuses of sex in our day. Abuses of sex may lead to serious situations: AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and abortion. These can destroy homes and the peace and safety of young people. Abuses of sex can cause people to lose their faith and live in ways that cannot make them happy.

Reflection:

- ? If I know that Christ teaches in the Gospels, and in His Church, that something is very wrong, but my peers tell me it is all right, who is really right?
- ? When people do seriously bad things, have they first thought in their hearts, and given their conscience (and Christ) a chance to help them see if that is really all right to do or not?
- ? Many people do not believe in Christ. They do not care a great deal about what is really good or bad. Some songs and movies suggest to young people: “Doing these things (things Christ has taught are disastrous for our lives) is great!” Should we guide our lives by what such people say and do? Do we sometimes *need* courage to be faithful to Christ?



How a good CONSCIENCE faces sexuality

When people are entering adolescence, things that affect chastity often are the crucial things about which they need to have honest and good consciences.

Young people are pressured a lot, and often they can get confused in serious matters if they have not developed good consciences.

Sometimes we are tempted to think, though we know it is not true, that if lots of people are doing something, it is **OK** to do it.

For example, a lot of young people go to movies that have explicit sexual scenes, and this causes a lot of turbulence to their feelings. They may feel uncomfortable and confused. Letting our minds and imaginations get filled with such ideas and feelings seems wrong. "But, hey! Everybody is going to this movie. It's got to be OK." It will seem fine if I do not think about it very much, or if I do not talk with **Christ** about it.



Lots of young people do different kinds of things that they know would not please Christ. They get copies of obscene magazines, and daydream through them. They talk with one another about sex in ways that cheapen it. They show not respect for the people they talk about, or for the real meaning of sex as God created it. They talk in ways that make them feel ready to do things that they know they should not do.

Sometimes when the imagination is filled with obscene thoughts, they begin to handle their own bodies in ways that they vaguely know to be wrong. Sometimes when they are with a boy or girl they feel attracted to, they kiss or touch in ways that have really nothing to do with loving someone else. They are using someone else for their own pleasure in ways that are not right.

Thoughts about CONFESSING embarrassing sins

Sometimes we deliberately let our minds think about things that we are somewhat ashamed of. We would be embarrassed if other people could see our thought! Sometimes we do things we are ashamed of. We hope that some people we love and care about will never know we did these things.

Strangely, we often have boldness to commit sins, and then we do not have the **courage** to confess them!

We ought to ask God always for the courage to be able and will to confess sins of which we are ashamed. We are likely to want to stop going to confession, and even to be a bit upset by going to Communion (because the Lord knows our hearts and we know that after some sins we should go to confession before going to Communion).



Sometimes we just tell ourselves, "I haven't even any idea how to confess these sins. I wouldn't know what to say. Father would dislike me if I mentioned sins like these." But Father would not dislike you at all. He would admire the strength of heart you show, and he would help you if you tell him: "I am not sure how to confess these sins. . . ." Really it is easy enough to know what to say, if we first pray and **ask the Lord** to help us. It is not hard to say things like this: "I deliberately went to indecent movies (or watched some rather indecent TV shows), and then let impure thoughts in my mind for a long time." Or to say: "I did an impure act by myself," or "With a girl (or boy) friend of mine, I did some immodest kissing and touching." If we have asked the Lord to help us be sorry about these things, and resolved to do better in these matters, mentioning the sins will be easy, and confession will make us feel much better. God's grace will get us great strength in facing these temptations.

People should not be afraid of confessing embarrassing sins. The confessional is a place of absolute privacy. You may wish to confess "face to face." You can confess with the **privacy** the confessional screen gives. We ought to remember that it is really Christ to whom we are talking. Christ wants us to confess to priests, so that we, who sinned boldly, will also have some courage (which He will give us if we ask) to come to Him for forgiveness.

Christ's teaching and my CONSCIENCE

Christ teaches us how we are to live. He teaches us because He wants us to escape terrible problems and have a good life.

Jesus expects people who know who He is to pay attention to what He teaches. Notice in the Gospel of Matthew (14:27-31), how strongly Jesus blamed St. Peter for not believing Him and doing what He said, even though St. Peter clearly knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

What can we learn from the experience of St. Peter (Matthew 16:21-24) about how important it is to follow Christ's guidance, even if we are upset, and want to do something else? If we know who Jesus is, our Savior and our God, we know that He is right.

And when He teaches that deliberate impure thoughts are very sinful (Matthew 5:27-28), we know that is true. We know that we should not let deliberate indecent thoughts fill our minds.

When Jesus teaches that deliberate impure acts come out of our disordered hearts, and they corrupt us seriously (Matthew 5:19-20), then we know we must not do such acts. What the Lord teaches is not just "rules." He teaches us wise and good things that make our lives work well. It is good sense, for one who knows who Christ is, to believe what He teaches.



The conscience of one who believes in Christ will always be guided by what Christ teaches through His Church, much more than by what society, or those around us, says.

We will find that our minds get less confused, and our lives get happier, when we follow our consciences, and our consciences are formed in the light of Christ.

We find Christ's teaching in the Gospels. We find His teaching in what the Church teaches, for He is always with the Church, teaching in her. "...And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

- 1.** It is important for each person to have and to develop a good conscience.
- 2.** A good and honest conscience assists with concerns about chastity.
- 3.** The teaching of Christ guides the conscience of a Christian.

THE EUCHARIST and love

CLASS 4

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality



Introduction

The gift of the Eucharist is an eternal reminder of how much Jesus loves us. Jesus is most truly present with us in the Eucharist. We should always celebrate and receive the Eucharist with faith that is true. We need to have pure hearts and souls. In this sacrament Jesus promises us that He will help us in following Him.

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

- The Eucharist is a gift of **pure love** from Jesus to us.
- The **power** of Jesus' love is most apparent in the Eucharist.
- We must receive the **gift** of the Eucharist worthily.
- Serious impurities of heart, mind, and action make us unworthy to receive **Jesus** in Communion.
- The Eucharist gives us the grace to live lives of **chastity**.

Eucharist as gift of PURE LOVE

To be really happy, we have to know how much we are loved.

We feel good when our parents give us things we want. We feel **great** when we realize that they love us very much. If others in our class think we are intelligent, that pleases us. But if they really care for us, that makes our day.

Jesus loves us beyond all our imagining. Everything He did on earth, He did because He loves us. He even gladly suffered death for us. He did all this so that our sins could be forgiven and our lives could be healed and blessed. He did this so that we could be happy in this life and in eternal life.

Jesus never wanted to forget how much He **loves** us.

The Gospel tells us: at the Last Supper, on the night before He died for us, He thought of us. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (John 13:1).



The night before He died on the cross for us, He gave us the Eucharist. He gave this Blessed Sacrament to us so we would always remember how much we are loved. As He turned ordinary bread and wine into **His own presence**, which would be the food and drink that gives us life and gladness, He said: "This is my body which is given up for you. Do this [celebrate the Eucharist] *in remembrance of me.*' And likewise the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Luke 22:19-20).

Jesus wants us to receive Communion, because receiving Communion is receiving Jesus Himself. And He wants to be with us, as our most dear friend. He promised that those who receive this food and drink of Communion would live in Him, and that He would live in them (see John 6:56).

Eucharist and the POWER OF LOVE

In the Eucharist, Jesus Himself, the Friend who knows us best and most cares about us, is truly with us.

Jesus with us

"The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:51). "This is my body" (Luke 22:19).

The Church has always believed and known that Jesus is most truly with us in the Eucharist. The Eucharist looks like plain and ordinary bread, but it is Jesus. It is the **Bread of Life** and the Cup of Salvation by which Jesus gives Himself entirely to us in the Eucharist.

All the saints loved and drew near to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. One of the great teachers of faith, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, spoke of our faith this way in the fourth century: "What here seems to be plain bread is not bread — though it tastes like bread. But it is the Body of Christ. Strengthen your hearts by receiving this bread as spiritual food, and give gladness to your soul" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* 22).

The Paschal Mystery of Jesus is with us

When we gather about the altar at the celebration of the Eucharist, we are gathering around the Paschal Mystery of Jesus our Lord. He is really present on the altar. And He is there as the Savior who gladly died on the cross for us. He loved us immensely when He died for us. He gave us hope when He rose on the third day. And He is present at the altar with all that great love and hope.

In Jesus' heart still burns the love that made Him gladly die for us. In His heart is the great love that makes Him want to **heal** our lives, take away our sins, and make us His friends, worthy to live with Him forever.

In Communion we receive Jesus Himself. We receive the One who alone knows our hearts perfectly. We receive the One who cares about everything in our lives, because He loves us.



Eucharist AND sin

The Scripture tells us that we should always take care to receive Jesus our Savior *worthily* in Communion.

Of course, we certainly cannot be entirely worthy of so great a gift as that of Communion. How could I be worthy to receive into my heart my Lord and my God?

But the New Testament tells us plainly: We must seek to be **worthy** to receive Him! We must examine our hearts, and prepare them for Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). We should always come to this sacrament with faith. God gives us the gift of faith, so that we can recognize who it is that we are receiving in so great a sacrament. "It is the Lord!"

**We must
be worthy
to receive
Him.**

Two of the chief ways we prepare to receive Jesus are:

1. We must be in the state of grace.

That is, we must have that new life that God gave us in baptism. We must have in our hearts the love of God that we will always have if we keep mortal sin out of our lives.

When we want to go to Communion, we must be sure no mortal sin lies in our hearts. Mortal sin is very serious. To commit moral sins is to become selfish people, people who do not really love Christ with sincere hearts. And Communion is meant for people who love the Lord, the Lord who loves them so much, and loved them so intensely on the **cross**.

If we have committed a mortal sin since our last confession, we should make a good confession before we go to Communion. Those who have committed a mortal sin must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before going to Communion. In forgiving us, the Lord Himself makes us worthy to come to Him.

2. We should come to Communion in a prayerful spirit.

We should come to Jesus in Communion with thoughtful hearts. We should take time to remember who He is, how much He loves us, how good it is to be His **friend**, and how to receive Him. Before and after receiving Communion, we should take time to offer quiet prayer to God.

Impurities lead us away from the EUCHARIST

The Scriptures remind us why those who receive Jesus in Communion must have pure hearts and pure bodies.



Impure acts, when they are deliberate, are mortal sins. They take away the state of grace and they take the love of Christ out of our **hearts**. They make us unworthy to receive our Lord in Communion. To receive Communion while in the state of mortal sin is a very serious sin.

What sins of impurity are mortal sins? They are impure kinds of actions that one does by oneself to stir up lustful feelings in one's own body, or impure acts that one person commits with another person. Gravely sinful also are *deliberate* choices to want to engage in impure actions, or to take pleasure in them. Sometimes these deliberate desires are stirred up by deliberately filling our minds with indecent images by fixing our hearts on obscene images in truly indecent magazines or movies. Masturbation; viewing pornographic websites; engaging in passionate acts with others, all of these are very grave sins.

Remember: A mortal sin is always a sin committed with full knowledge of what we are doing, with full consent of the will. Certainly temptations alone are not mortal sins. If a lustful thought comes into one's mind, and one does not quite realize how wrong it would be to deliberately entertain it, a small hesitation is not a mortal sin. It is no sin at all, if we try gently to get rid of suggestions to do wrong things, when we realize that it is **important** for us to do so.

The New Testament reminds us that mortally sinful impure actions are especially wrong for those who wish to receive Jesus in Communion (1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 11:27-29).

Communion brings us closer to Jesus our Friend. When we receive Him in Communion, we come to "live in Him." He wants us to be wonderfully close to Himself. We live in Him, as branches live on the vine (see John 15).

Communion makes us so close to Jesus that He considers us as a part of His very self. If anyone loves us, Jesus counts that as loving Himself, because we are that close to Him. If anyone hurts us, Jesus counts that as hurting Himself. Remember how Jesus asked St. Paul, before conversion, when he was hurting the Christians: "Why are you persecuting me?" When we come to Jesus, when we receive Communion, we become part of His Mystical Body. We **belong** entirely to Him.

Now sins of impurity are said in Scripture to be especially shameful for this reason. Other sins are "outside the body" (1 Corinthians 6:18). But in sins of impurity, it is our own bodies that we treat shamefully.

But there is more. This body of ours, which we would abuse by impure actions, even becomes united with Jesus when we go to Communion. Our bodies become part of His mystical body. By impure acts, then, we would not only treat our own bodies shamefully but we would be treating the body of Jesus shamefully, too. That is why we must avoid such sins, or sincerely repent of them, before coming to Communion.

Happily, Jesus makes it possible and easy for us to have **pure** minds and bodies. And if anyone has sinned, He makes it easy for them to repent, and find forgiveness, before going to Communion.



The Eucharist EMPOWERS us to live chastely

Receiving Communion devoutly makes it easier for us to have pure and generous hearts, because in the sacraments God gives us His powerful gift of grace.

In this world, where there are so many temptations toward impure actions, people would not be able to have strong and generous and **pure hearts**, unless Christ helped them very much.

But Jesus does help us, even more than we need. Jesus *promises* us: It will really not be painful, it will really not be too difficult, to serve Me with generous hearts, if you come to Me for help.

If it should ever seem too difficult to be pure of heart, and still have happy and cheerful lives, we should remember His promise. His grace will make it easy for us if we come to Him.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy and my burden light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Remembering the PROMISES of Jesus

Jesus will not break His promise. He will always help us when we come to Him. We should come to Him in quiet prayer. We should come to Him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation if we have committed any sins.

But above all, we should come to Him in Communion. We should come to Him, trusting Him. We should come to Him, trying to receive Him as worthily and devoutly as we can.

Those who receive Communion often, with **prayerful spirits**, and as worthily as they can, will find it easy to be faithful to Jesus. They will find it easy to know Him well, and love Him. And they will find it easy to love one another, with pure and generous hearts.



TYING things together



Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. Jesus gives us the Eucharist as a sign of pure love.
2. The love of Jesus, the power of His cross and resurrection, is most present in the Eucharist.
3. We must always be worthy to receive Jesus in Communion.
4. Mortal sins, such as deliberate thoughts and acts of impurity, make us unworthy to receive the Eucharist.
5. Chaste lives are greatly strengthened by the promise of Jesus in the Eucharist.

THE
CATHOLIC
Vision of Love
Diocese of Pittsburgh

**Personal Safety
Curriculum**



Grade 8

Student

CATHOLIC VISION OF LOVE

8TH GRADE

BODY BOUNDARIES

OPENING PRAYER



Lord God,

You have made all humanity in your image, and have given us a share of your likeness. Help us to recognize that image and likeness in all people. Make us aware especially of those who find themselves subjected to inhuman conditions and unable to live in freedom. May we always remind the world, through our words and especially through our actions, of the dignity you have given us and of our responsibility to safeguard that dignity on behalf of all.

Guide us to protect the rights of all who have been victimized. May they and their families be protected from harm, may they be granted freedom from their oppressors, and may they be granted a full recognition of the dignity which is theirs.

Guide our nation, our state, our city, and all people and organizations, to work for an end to human trafficking and to all types of injustice as we seek to live as your children and as brothers and sisters to one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

TALKING ABOUT SITUATIONAL EVALUATIONS

- ▶ You and your friends have been on gaming sites online for a couple of years. Sometimes you play against other online opponents and talk while you're gaming. One of the players always says weird things to you, and added you as a friend on Facebook.

The pictures that this person has on their profile show other kids doing weird things that you don't think your parents would want you to be seeing.

- ⇒ What can you do and who can you talk to about this?
- ⇒ If this person starts to ask you for pictures, or sends you pictures of themselves or other people doing "weird" or private things, what would you do?
- ⇒ Is this something that you should tell your parents about?

NOTE: The possession or transmission of media with compromising or suggestive images of minors is considered child pornography and is against the law. This includes webcam and email, which has certain legal ramifications, as well as social, emotional, and reputational effects Boundaries identify responsibilities. Crossing these boundaries and crossing state lines with child pornography is a felony.

- ▶ Over the summer, you and your friends spent a lot of time in the pool. Your friend's neighbor was over at the pool a lot too. He would always watch you all swim and jump around. Sometimes, he would take pictures of you and your friends at the pool, but never let you guys see what the pictures looked like.

- ⇒ What do you think about this?

- ▶ 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 because it showed private things happening between adults. 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?

Turn Page Over —▶

Student Handout continued...

- ▶ 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?

NOTE: 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.

- ▶ Someone sends you a picture message on your cell phone of someone without their clothes on.

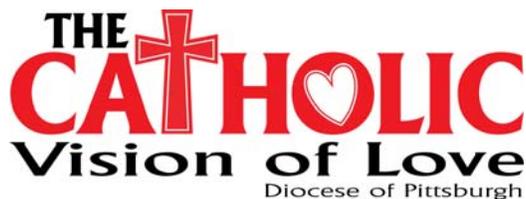
⇒ Is this ok? Why or why not?

⇒ Is this legal? What do you do and who do you tell?

NOTE: 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.



*The Lord does not see as mortals see;
they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7*



Internet Safety **WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR**

Predators and groomers use information that they gather about their victims (targets) to make them feel safe and liked. Some of the scenarios discussed in today's activities take a closer look at tactics that YOU can watch out for. Below is a list of things predators and groomers might use.

“Let’s go private.” (inviting the target to leave the public chatroom and create a private chat or move to instant-messaging or phone texting)

“Where’s your computer (location, what room) in the house?” (to see if the target’s parents might be around)

“What’s your favorite video game, television show, sports team?” (questions like these tell the groomer more about their victims so that they know what gifts to offer – e.g., concert tickets; Webcam, software, video games)

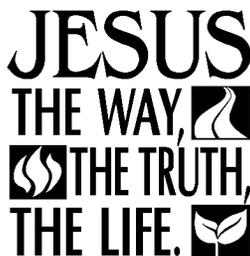
“I know someone who can get you a modeling job. (opens a doorway for inappropriate photos)

“You seem sad. Tell me what’s bothering you.” (sympathy leading to a false sense of trust)

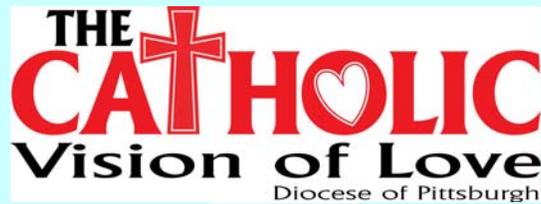
“What’s your phone number?” (asking for personal info of any kind – usually happens at a later stage, after the target (victim) is feeling comfortable with the groomer)

“If you don’t... [do what I ask], I’ll... [tell your parents OR share your photos in a photo blog / Webcam directory / file-sharing network]” (intimidation – used as the groomer learns more and more about the target)

“I have never loved anyone as much as I love you.” (playing on the emotions of the target, this sometimes will convince kids to do things that they normally wouldn’t even think to do)



Student



CLOSING PRAYER

EXAMINATION OF VIRTUE

Reader 1: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not.”
(Proverbs 3)

The virtue of **Prudence** reminds us that “It’s not about what I know, but about what I know to be true and Who I know.” God, present in my life today and all days, help me to trust you.

Group Reflection (Silent): What does it mean to trust God in EVERY aspect of my life? Why is that difficult for me? Do I fully trust in God’s love for me? Do I believe that He desires what is best for me? Do I trust that He will fulfill all His promises?

Reader 2: “Trust in the LORD forever! For the LORD is an eternal Rock. He humbles those in high places, and the lofty city he brings down.” (Isaiah 26: 4-5)

The virtue of **Temperance** helps us to remember to have peace and confidence in God. “When tempers flare and fear takes over, disciples remain calm and trust in the Lord.”

Group Reflection (Silent): Are there areas in my life where I am waiting for God to “prove” himself? What are the areas in my life that I have placed conditions on my trust? What are the conditions? Do I really believe that God has a plan for me?

Reader 3: Do I continue to trust God when He seems to delay in answering prayers? Do I trust that God’s love for me is bigger than my ability? “...but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength” (Isaiah40:3).

The virtue of **Fortitude** reveals the true meaning of strength, “Strength is determined not by bone and muscle, but by the human heart and God’s hand.”

Group Reflection (Silent): Do I really believe that God is big enough for all the challenges in my life? How have I made my heart stronger in Him? When have I relied on my own strength and abilities more than God’s providence?

Reader 4: Jesus Christ said, " I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (John 13:34). When it comes to loving another person, or loving God, the virtue of Justice makes me ask myself this question: "Who do I serve, myself, or do I serve my God?"

Group Reflection (Silent): Do I trust God with my future? Is it more about His will or mine? Do I trust God to guide and direct all my relationships? family? friends? dating? enemies?

Where do I need help letting go and letting God? Have I taken ownership over my mistakes and surrendered them before God? Have I completely entrusted my vocation to God's guidance?

Do I trust God with the ordinary moments of each day, not just the big decisions? I cannot trust someone that I do not know. Do I set aside time in prayer? Do I listen for God's voice? Do I look for His presence and direction?

Reader 5: God, help me to trust you with all of these things. With the intercession of Saint Maria Goretti we pray:

Dear Saint Maria Goretti! The world teaches that we must please others in order to be popular. Conscience demands that I please God more than one who asks an evil thing in the name of false love. Teach me by your example to instill into others a real respect for modesty and purity.

Reader 6: Through your powerful intercession, help me to make of this evening an occasion for helping others to become spiritually stronger. Grant that others may see in me reason to change their ways, if that be necessary, and that I may have the courage to resist any temptation to sinful conduct. Let others be led closer to Jesus and Mary by my example.

All: Oh Little Saint who wanted to be popular only with your Divine Master and His Blessed Mother, help me to imitate you. Amen.

All: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be....

Reader 1: Saint Maria Goretti,

All: Pray for us! In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers Found through: Friends of St. Maria Goretti USA - Br. Goretti Zilli, Director email: gzilli@maryknoll.org - P.O. Box 0043 Maryknoll, NY 10545-0043 www.mariagoretti.org Telephone: (914) 941-6372 – FAX: (914) 945-0715