

Name _____ Date _____

Handout 4-A

The Rite of Matrimony

Rite of Matrimony

All stand, including the bride and bridegroom, and the priest addresses them in these or similar words:

My dear friends, you have come together in this church so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of the Church's minister and this community. Christ abundantly blesses this love. He has already consecrated you in Baptism and now he enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. And so, in the presence of the Church, I ask you to state your intentions.

The priest then questions the couple about their freedom to commit to each other, faithfulness to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children:

N. and *N.*, have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage? Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?

Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

The priest invites the couple to declare their consent: each answers the priest's following questions separately.

Consent

Since it is your intention to enter into marriage, join your right hands, and declare your consent before God and his Church.

(The couple joins hands.)

The bridegroom says:

I, *N.*, take you, *N.*, to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

The bride says:

I, *N.*, take you, *N.*, to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

Receiving their consent, the priest says:

You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in his goodness strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessings. What God has joined, men must not divide.

R. Amen

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Priest:

May the Lord bless + these rings which you give to each other as the sign of your love and fidelity.

R. Amen

The bridegroom places his wife's ring on her ring finger. He says:

N., take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The bride places her husband's ring on his ring finger. She says:

N., take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Name _____ Date _____

Handout 4-B

Bible Search: The Family

Read the following passages from the Bible. Then summarize them in the spaces below.

Genesis 2:18–24

Exodus 20:12

Proverbs 13:1

Proverbs 23:22–25

Sirach 3:1–16

Sirach 30:1–6

Luke 2:51–52

Ephesians 5:25

Name _____ Date _____

Handout 4-C

Catholic, Gay, and Doing Fine

This article originally appeared on the blog Little Catholic Bubble (<http://littlecatholicbubble.blogspot.com>). The author writes under the pseudonym Steve Gershom.

I have heard a lot about how mean the Church is, and how bigoted, because she opposes gay marriage. How badly she misunderstands gay people, and how hostile she is towards us. My gut reaction to such things is: Are you freaking kidding me? Are we even talking about the same Church?

When I go to Confession, I sometimes mention the fact that I'm gay, to give the priest some context. (And to spare him some confusion: Did you say "locker room"? What were you doing in the women's . . . oh.) I've always gotten one of two responses: either compassion, encouragement, and admiration, because the celibate life is difficult and profoundly counter-cultural; or nothing at all, not even a ripple, as if I had confessed eating too much on Thanksgiving.

Of the two responses, my ego prefers the first—who doesn't like thinking of themselves as some kind of hero?—but the second might make more sense. Being gay doesn't mean I'm special or extraordinary. It just means that my life is not always easy. (Surprise!) And as my friend J. said when I told him recently about my homosexuality, "I guess if it wasn't that, it would have been something else." Meaning that nobody lives without a burden of one kind or another. As Rabbi Abraham Heschel said: "The man who has not suffered, what can he possibly know, anyway?"

Where are all these bigoted Catholics I keep hearing about? When I told my family a year ago, not one of them responded with anything but love and understanding. Nobody acted like I had a disease. Nobody started treating me differently or looking at me funny. The same is true of every one of the Catholic friends that I've told. They love me for who I am.

Actually, the only time I get shock or disgust or disbelief, the only time I've noticed people treating me differently after I tell them, is when I tell someone who supports the gay lifestyle. Celibacy?! You must be some kind of freak.

Hooray for tolerance of different viewpoints. I'm grateful to gay activists for some things—making people more aware of the prevalence of homosexuality, making homophobia less socially acceptable—but they also make it more difficult for me to be understood, to be accepted for who I am and what I believe. If I want open-mindedness, acceptance, and understanding, I look to Catholics.

Is it hard to be gay and Catholic? Yes, because like everybody, I sometimes want things that are not good for me. The Church doesn't let me have those things, not because she's mean, but because she's a good mother. If my son or daughter wanted to eat sand I'd tell them: that's not what eating is for; it won't nourish you; it will hurt you. Maybe my daughter has some kind of condition that makes her like sand better than food, but I still wouldn't let her eat it. Actually, if she was young or stubborn enough, I might not be able to reason with her—I might just have to make a rule against eating sand. Even if she thought I was mean.

So the Church doesn't oppose gay marriage because it's wrong; she opposes it because it's impossible, just as impossible as living on sand. The Church believes, and I believe, in a universe that means something, and in a God who made the universe—made men and women, designed sex and marriage from the ground up. In that universe, gay marriage doesn't make sense. It doesn't fit with the rest of the picture, and we're not about to throw out the rest of the picture.

If you don't believe in these things, if you believe that men and women and sex and marriage are pretty much whatever we say they are, then okay: we don't have much left to talk about. That's not the world I live in.

So, yes, it's hard to be gay and Catholic—it's hard to be anything and Catholic—because I don't always get to do what I want. Show me a religion where you always get to do what you want and I'll show you a pretty shabby, lazy religion. Something not worth living or dying for, or even getting up in the morning for. That might be the kind of world John Lennon wanted, but John Lennon was kind of an idiot.

Would I trade in my Catholicism for a worldview where I get to marry a man? Would I trade in the Eucharist and the Mass and the rest of it? Being a Catholic means believing in a God who literally waits in the chapel for me, hoping I'll stop by just for ten minutes so he can pour out love and healing on my heart. Which is worth more—all this, or getting to have sex with who I want? I wish everybody, straight or gay, had as beautiful a life as I have.

I know this isn't a satisfactory answer. I don't think any words could be. I try to make my life a satisfactory answer, to this question and to others: What are people for? What is love, and what does it look like? How do we get past our own selfishness so we can love God and our neighbors and ourselves?

It's a work in progress.