

Chapter 3

Marriage in God's Plan

Getting Started

Assign the students to read Chapter 3, "Marriage in God's Plan." Use the following questions from the Student Text to guide a discussion of the chapter:

- Rank what you think would be the greatest benefits of married life.
- Tell about how a relationship of yours helped you to overcome self-absorption, egoism, or pursuit of your own pleasure.
- When you are in a new situation, what skills do you use to make friends?
- What does the phrase "in love" mean in your peer group?
- What is your best reason for practicing chastity?
- How would your peers react to a teen who chooses chastity?
- What are some things you can control right now to give you a greater chance for a happy and healthy marriage?

(See the Student Text for additional questions.) Then ask the students to read the following article.

Application Reading

<http://www.americamagazine.org/gettext.cfm?textID=1237&articleTypeID=1&issueID=313>

VIRGINITY LOST AND FOUND

By Julie A. Collins

While not every high school teacher regularly dons a purple stole, most of us have heard our share of confessions. In none of these remorse-filled conversations is there more poignancy than when the student realizes that his or her sexual choices are leading to one dead end after another. The popular message that has seduced this teenager is simple: the only moral issue in the world of recreational sex is consent. There is no cultural support for chastity, so sexual intercourse is as much a part of many teens' social lives as kissing was 50 years ago. This is certainly not true of every adolescent, but casual sex crosses into every group in a high school—you can find it among the intellectuals, the athletes, the artists, and the disaffected.

Discussion

Lead the students in a discussion of the following questions:

1. According to the author, why is there no such thing as "safe sex?" (There is no "safe sex," because nothing protects us from the self-disgust that can deaden our capacity for real intimacy. Recreational sex creates a world of the used and the users, a naked hell that leaves one convinced that love is illusion and fidelity a joke.)
2. What are two things that people need to do to recover their virginity after they have been sexually active? (Reconciliation with God, themselves, and others, and learning to recognize their patterns of desolation and their patterns of consolation.)
3. What characterizes times of consolation, according to St. Ignatius? What characterizes times of desolation? (In times of consolation we are most "ourselves": most true to our deepest hopes, desires, commitments—most effortlessly capable of loving God and others—and, most likely to make good decisions. In desolation we are least ourselves—we are likely to feel alienated from those we love, distant from God, and unknown to ourselves. We are prey to unsettling feelings that lead us to make rotten decisions.)
4. How can this self-knowledge help people remain chaste? (The point of understanding your patterns of desolation is that, with practice and prayer, a person can develop a "flashing light" that will begin to blink in one's consciousness as one treads this less than healthy path.)
5. The author says that those who are responsible for the spiritual formation of young people have got to be more vocal about promoting chastity, give teens some advice about how chastity can be lived, and help teens recover their virginity. What advice would you give adults for supporting teens in living the virtue of chastity?

Activity

Friendship Bingo

- For this activity, each student will need a sheet of paper, a pencil, and something to write on while moving around (such as a hardcover book or a clipboard).
- Introduce the activity by reviewing the summary points for the textbook section, “Love and Other Elements of Relationships” (page 82 of the Student Text). Note that the best love relationships are founded on friendship.
- Tell the students that they are going to play “Friendship Bingo” as a way of thinking about the qualities they seek in a friend. To create their bingo cards, have the students draw a grid on their paper that creates sixteen large rectangles. (One easy way to do this would be to fold the paper lengthwise four times.)
- Have the students spend some time thinking about the characteristics that they most value in a friend. They should write one characteristic in each box. As they work, ask guiding questions such as the following: What virtues do you look for in a friend? (Examples of some virtues are honesty, courage, hope, wisdom, and patience.) What interests would a good friend share with you? What kinds of activities would you like to do with a friend? How would a friend cheer you up? How would a friend respond when you were sad or lonely?
- When the students are finished creating their bingo cards, explain that the goal of the game is to fill their cards with the initialed signatures of other students who possess characteristics matching the ones listed on the bingo card. For example, Susie might have listed “likes skateboarding” and “good listener” among the friendship characteristics on her card. When the game starts, she might ask Tom: “Are you a good listener?” If Tom answers “yes,” he would initial the “good listener” square on Susie’s bingo card. If he answers “no,” she could ask him another question (“Do you like skateboarding?”) or move on to ask someone else a question. When the students have filled their card, they should say, “Bingo!” and sit down. (Other students can continue to approach them to fill their cards.)
- Start the game. You may want to end the game after half the students have bingo to avoid focusing too much attention on the remaining players.
- When the game is over, lead a discussion of the activity, using some of the following questions to get started: What characteristics of friendship did you see on other people’s cards that you might add to your own list? How did this activity challenge your preconceptions of other people in the group? How might our preconceptions of other people limit our openness to friendship? Which characteristics that you listed are essential in any friendship, and which are optional? Which characteristics would be especially important in a romantic relationship?

Additional Activities

- Have the students complete assignment #1, an interview of married couples, from the Assignments and Applications section of the Student Textbook.
- Have the students create artwork about the Song of Songs as described in assignment #3 from the Assignments and Applications section of the Student Textbook.
- Have the students create a skit based on the Wedding at Cana as described in assignment #4 from the Assignments and Applications section of the Student Textbook.
- Have the students write a letter to their future spouse as described in assignment #7 from the Assignments and Applications section of the Student Textbook.
- Lead students in the prayer service for following God’s way of love found in the “Extending the Lesson” section on page 92 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Have the students complete the “Marriage Musings” handout (Handout 17 in the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition).
- Have the students complete the “Love or Infatuation” handout (Handout 19 in the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition).
- Have the students complete the “Friendship Bridge” handout (Handout 22 in the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition).

Additional Resources

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy has a wealth of statistics about teen pregnancy: <http://www.teenpregnancy.org/>.