

Chapter 2

Morality and Sexuality

[*The Marriage at Cane* by Master of the Catholic Kings]

In this assignment, students will be led to reflect upon their ideas about romance and marriage in light of Catholic teaching. They will examine whether what the Church believes corresponds with their ideas about relationships. They will also engage with what it means to “date” and “discern” a future married commitment.

Pass out the worksheet. Have the students answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper. After the written portion of this exercise, the answers would provide ideal material for a group discussion of these issues.

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1. What does the idea of a “healthy relationship” mean to you? When you think of a romantic relationship – past, present, or future – what are some signs that you would be on the right track in regards to finding a partner who loves and cares about you? What would be some warning signs or red flags? Is a similarity in religion and worldview the most important thing, or are there other considerations that should be brought to bear? What are they? How would you know if another person is “the one”?

2. The Catholic Church believes that marriage has two purposes: the union of the spouses (intimacy and love) and the procreation and raising of children. When you envision a romantic relationship for yourself, does it correspond to what the Catholic faith teaches? Why or why not? Do you think your relationship would be successful if your partner had other beliefs about marriage than these? Why or why not?

3. Based on the teachings of Jesus, the Catholic Church believes that marriage is a permanent commitment that is dissolved only with death. Do you believe this? Why or why not? Is this a realistic belief in today’s day and age? And what is an annulment? Do you know anyone who has remained married for a very long time – how long? Do you think it was hard for them to stay committed to each other in the midst of life’s changes and difficulties? Why or why not?

4. Since the Church believes that sexual love belongs in the context of marriage, what then is the purpose of dating? In other words, what are you “discerning” (i.e., trying to figure out) by dating someone? Do you think sexual activity before marriage can get in the way of truly knowing a person before marriage? Why or why not? Finally, what does it mean to commit to a person? Can you fully commit to a person before you’re married to them? What is the role of sex in marital commitment and why is this important?