



WORLD  
MEETING OF  
FAMILIES

2015 Philadelphia

Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 8  
LESSON PLANS

*based on*

PREPARATORY CATECHESIS FOR THE VIII WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

Love Is Our Mission:  
The Family Fully Alive

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Every attempt has been made to ensure that the activities and material contained in these lessons accurately convey the teachings of the catechesis *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* and that outside sources utilized are properly cited.

Possible supplemental lesson resources were selected for each lesson. Inclusion of the resources is not intended as an endorsement of a particular author, work, or organization by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia or the VIII World Meeting of Families.

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### *What is the World Meeting of Families?*

- The World Meeting of Families is a gathering of Catholic families from around the world for days of prayer, catechesis, and celebration of the gift of family.
- We are preparing for the 8th World Meeting of Families, which is the first to take place in the United States. It will be held in Philadelphia from September 22 - 27, 2015. All are encouraged to attend.
- The pope usually attends the World Meeting of Families. Pope Francis has been invited!
- Prior to a World Meeting of Families, a “preparatory catechesis” related to the theme of the gathering, is released. Catholics are encouraged to study this catechesis and to join the universal Church in prayer for God’s blessing on the event. The lesson plans in this booklet are based on the preparatory catechesis and are offered as a way to help communities prepare for the upcoming World Meeting of Families.

**Visit the World Meeting of Families website!**

[www.WorldMeeting2015.org](http://www.WorldMeeting2015.org)



## Dear Teacher or Catechist,

The upcoming gathering of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia provides an opportunity for the entire Church, and particularly the Church in the United States, to reflect upon the great gift of family.

The lesson plans in this booklet are based on the preparatory catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*. We invite you to read the preparatory catechesis, and then refer to the lessons for ideas on presenting the material to your students. The sections in the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) on marriage and family are succinct and accessible, and would also be helpful to study in preparation for teaching these topics.<sup>1</sup>

Catechesis takes place in the context of a particular culture and in particular circumstances. Thus, while the lessons presented in this booklet convey the content of the catechesis, local needs will likely require that you modify the methodology or language used in order to better help your students come to understand the Church's teaching. As Pope Francis wrote in [Evangelii Gaudium](#),

*"[T]he task of evangelization operates within the limits of language and of circumstances. It constantly seeks to communicate more effectively the truth of the Gospel in a specific context, without renouncing the truth, the goodness and the light which it can bring..." (45)*

Throughout the lesson plans you will see references to LIOM, which is an abbreviation for the preparatory catechesis, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*. Hyperlinks throughout the text provide possible supplemental materials.

Let us pray for each other and for a renewal of family life in our country and world!

<sup>1</sup> cf. paragraphs 2197 - 2257 (on family), 2331 - 2400 (on human sexuality), and 1601 - 1666 (on marriage)



Schools and religious education programs are encouraged to include parents in study and preparation for the VIII World Meeting of Families. The following letter could be adapted and customized for use in a school newsletter or parish bulletin. It would be helpful for teachers or catechetists to provide updates on the content being covered in particular lessons so that parents could continue the discussion at home.

Dear Parents,

Next year, from September 22 - 27, 2015, the United States is hosting an exciting event, the VIII World Meeting of Families, an international gathering of Catholic families for days of prayer, catechesis, and celebration of the gift of family. Pope Francis has been invited to attend this gathering. This World Meeting of Families will be held in Philadelphia, and you are invited to attend!

Since it is a special occasion of grace for the whole Church and for our country in a particular way, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Pontifical Council for the Family have made available a preparatory catechesis entitled *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* which draws its title from the theme for the gathering. This catechesis brings together in ten simple lessons the Catholic Church's teachings on marriage and family.

This catechesis has been adapted to lessons for elementary and high school students and we will be using these lessons with your child. We will keep you updated on the content being covered in class so that you can continue these important conversations at home with your children.

As you may also have heard from news reports, two meetings will discuss the Church's pastoral care of the family: first, in an extraordinary Synod of Bishops (or gathering of bishops from around the world with the Holy Father) which will be held in Rome in October 2014; and second, in the ordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops which will be held in Rome in October 2015. Truly, it is a time when the Church wants to support families and to help families in their indispensable mission!

Let us join together in prayer that God would be help, strength, healing, and hope to families in our country, and around the world, through the World Meeting of Families. God bless you and your family.







## Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten

### LESSON 1: CREATED FOR JOY

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*"We are more than an accident of evolution. We are greater than the sum of our biology. God exists. He is good. He loves us. He made us in his image to share in his joy. He is active in our lives. He sent his only Son to restore our dignity and lead us home to him"* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part I).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Define family as a man and a woman united in marriage and their children (*cf Catechism of the Catholic Church 2202*)
2. Explain that members of a family image God when they love one another
3. Explain that, when we love, it brings us great joy

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part I), white board or black board, paper, drawing utensils

#### **PROCEDURE (15-20 MINUTES)**

- 1. Opening Prayer:** Invite children to pray with you. Begin with a simple prayer, such as: *Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for living in our souls and for bringing the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit to dwell in our souls. We praise you for your great power and your tender love. Help us to grow in your love today as we say 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.' Amen.*
- 2. Pre-Assessment:** Begin a conversation with the children about families. Start with a question such as, "What is a family?"
- 3. Motivator:** Spend some time allowing the children to talk about their own families.
- 4. Content & Key Points:**
  - a. A family is a man and a woman who are married and their children.
  - b. Draw a simple image of a family on the board: father, mother, children.
  - c. God made us because he loves us.
  - d. So, when members of a family love one another, they are being like God.



- e. Discuss examples and ways that the children see members of their family loving each other.
- f. From the examples the children give, lead them to the awareness that when they love, they experience joy.

**5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Invite the children to draw pictures of families.

**6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Bring students together to share their pictures. In the course of the conversation, reinforce the definition of a family and that love brings joy.

**7. Closing Prayer:** Sing a song such as "Father I Adore You" or pray a simple prayer such as the Glory Be or a prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Replace conversation with direct instruction. Focus on the definition of a family and the fact that members of a family love one another.

### **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the child's understanding can be based on the pictures of families they drew and their comments about families in the closing discussion.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

*Lesson 1 Take Home Sheet*

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\* #456](#)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

[\*My First Prayers for My Family\*](#)

Maite Roche, Ignatius Press, 2010

This book introduces young children to the joys of family life through prayer.



**Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**  
*Lesson 1: Created for Joy*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned what a family is and that when members of a family love one another, they image God who is love. Below is a way you can help your child continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice together as a family.

1. Read Genesis 1 and 2 or a children's version of creation accounts from Scripture. Focus on creation of man and woman and God's command to be fruitful and multiply. In their love for one another and for their children, parents share in God's love for each of us.
2. Ask your child to think of specific ways he/she can show his/her love for dad, mom, each brother or sister. Help him/her put these ideas into practice.
3. Ask him/her to name ways that parents and siblings show love for him/her. Help him/her thank God, parents, and siblings for their love.
4. Talk with your child about the importance of forgiveness in the family. Although sometimes family members fail to love one another, we have to keep trying by forgiving when we have been hurt and asking forgiveness when we have hurt others.

## Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten

### LESSON 2: MISSION OF LOVE

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*“God works through us. We have a mission. We are in the world for a purpose—to receive God’s love ourselves and to show God’s love to others. God seeks to heal a broken universe. He asks us to be his witnesses and helpers in that work”* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part II).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Explain that God loves each person
2. Define mission as something important you are asked to do
3. Affirm that we have a mission to share God’s love for others

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part II), Bible, white board or black board, paper, coloring implements for the children, picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd

#### **PROCEDURE (15-20 MINUTES)**

- 1. Opening Prayer:** Invite the children to pray with you. Begin a prayer of your own choice or use the one printed below:  
*“Dear Lord, we have come here today to hear your Holy Word. Help us to learn how you want us to share your love with others. Amen.”*
- 2. Pre-Assessment:** Review content from the past lesson: definition of a family, members of a family are like God when they love one another.
- 3. Motivator:** Allow students to share stories about times when they were asked to do something important in their family.
- 4. Content & Key Points:**
  - a. God loves every person. Discuss ways the children know God loves them.
  - b. A mission is something important you are asked to do.
  - c. God has given each of us a mission, and it is to share his love with others.
  - d. We share God’s love with others by:
    - i. Telling them about God and how good he has been to us
    - ii. Loving others

- e. Discuss with the children examples of ways they can share God's love with others.

**5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Read the Parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-16) with the children and lead a conversation with the children about how the Good Shepherd loves and cares for the sheep. Invite the children to draw a picture of the Good Shepherd caring for the sheep.

**6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Invite the children to share their drawings of the Good Shepherd. Reinforce that God loves and cares for each one of us just like the Good Shepherd cares for the sheep.

**7. Closing Prayer:** Sing a song with the children or pray a simple prayer such as the Our Father or another prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Skip the activity with the Good Shepherd and focus on the definition of a mission and the mission we have to share God's love with others.

### **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the children's understanding can be based on the pictures of the Good Shepherd they drew and their comments about God's love and care for each person in the closing discussion.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Invite the children to share their drawings of the Good Shepherd with their parents. Ask children to bring in an object from home that represents God's love for their family (special crucifix, image of the Sacred Heart, parents' wedding picture).

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\* #144, 321](#)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

[\*Be Saints!: An Invitation from Pope Benedict XVI\*](#)

Pope Benedict XVI with Amy Welborn, illustrated by Ann Engelhart, Ignatius Press, 2012

Pope Benedict XVI teaches children that the true source of joy is friendship with Jesus and encourages them to become saints.

## Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten

### LESSON 3: THE HOLY FAMILY, LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*All families are called to be holy, each in their own way spreading the light of Christ. In this lesson, the children learn the names of the members of the Holy Family. Then, they consider ways that the members of the Holy Family acted in love and how their own families may choose loving actions as well. This lesson aims to stir up love within the members of the family so that they might then go and spread that love to others.*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Name the members of the Holy Family
2. Show how all families are called to imitate the Holy Family

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive (Part VII); Nativity figures of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, or religious art image of the Holy Family; coloring page of the Holy Family; white board or black board and appropriate writing utensils for it*

#### **PROCEDURE (15-20 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Say a simple prayer to the Holy Family. Recommended prayer: *“Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we love you. Please be with us and each of our families in a special way today. Amen.”*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the children what they already know about families. (Family is a man and a woman united in marriage and their children, members of a family have a mission to share God’s love)
3. **Motivator:** Show the Nativity figurines of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph or the image of the Holy Family and name each person with the children.
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. Together, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph make up the Holy Family.
  - b. Mary was Jesus’s mother. Discuss ways that Mary was a good mother (loved and cared for Jesus, fed him, made his clothes, protected him, taught him).
  - c. Jesus’ Father is God, but Joseph loved and cared for him while he was on earth. That is why he is called Jesus’ “foster father.” Discuss ways that Joseph was a

- good foster father (protected Jesus; provided food, clothing, shelter for Jesus and Mary; worked hard; spent time with Jesus; taught him how to be a carpenter).
- d. Allow the children time to share stories about how their mothers and fathers care for them.
5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Give the children time to draw their own picture of the Holy Family or to color a coloring page of the Holy Family.
6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Invite the children to share their pictures of the Holy Family. Review again the names of the members of the Holy Family and their roles.
7. **Closing Prayer:** *“Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, dear Holy Family. Bless our families. We want to be like you. Make us holy. Amen.”*

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Name the members of the Holy Family that are in the picture and briefly discuss their roles.

### **EVALUATION**

As they leave, ask the children to name the members of the Holy Family.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Ask the children to bring in a family photograph that can be displayed with the image of the Holy Family somewhere in the school or classroom.

*Lesson 3 Take Home Sheet*

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Holy Family\*](#)

Rev. L. Lovasik, S.V.D, and Rev. J. Winkler, OFM Conv., Catholic Book Publishing Company  
This book gives an introduction to the Holy Family appropriate for young children.



**Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**  
*Lesson 3: The Holy Family, Light in a Dark World*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned about the Holy Family and the fact that all families are called to imitate the Holy Family. Below is a way that you can help your child to continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice as a family.

1. Read any of the following stories from the Bible or a children's Bible:

**Matthew 1:18-25**

**Luke 1:39-45**

**Matthew 2:13-15 and 19-23**

**Luke 2:22-38**

**Luke 2:39-40**

**Luke 2:41-52**

**Annunciation**

**Visitation**

**Escape to Egypt and Return**

**Presentation**

**Life in Nazareth**

**Finding in the Temple**

2. Talk with your child about how each member of the Holy Family shared their love for one another (or, in the case of the visitation, for other relatives).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How was this an expression of God's love?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How can we imitate their love in our own daily lives?

*You may wish to conclude by praying the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary together as a family.*



## Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten

### LESSON 4: MOTHER, TEACHER, FAMILY—THE NATURE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*"The Church has institutional forms because she must work in the world. But that does not exhaust her essence. The Church is the Bride of Christ, a 'she,' not an 'it.' In the words of Saint John XXIII, she is our mother and teacher, our comforter and guide, our family of faith. Even when her people and leaders sin, we still need the Church's wisdom, sacraments, support, and proclamation of the truth, because she is the body of Jesus himself in the world; the family of God's people writ large"* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part IX).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Recognize that the Church is our mother, teacher, and family of faith
2. Explain that the Church is holy because she was founded by Jesus Christ, her teachings are holy, and her sacraments help us to become holy

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part IX), sacred image of Mary and the apostles at Pentecost (*Coptic Icon of Pentecost* is a good one and can be found on pg. 153 of the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

#### **PROCEDURE (15-20 MINUTES)**

- 1. Opening Prayer:** Begin with a simple prayer such as the Prayer to the Holy Spirit or a prayer in your own words, such as: *"Jesus, thank you for coming down from Heaven to teach us how to love. Thank you for dying on the Cross for us so that we may go to heaven someday. Help us to always remember that we are all children of God made to be with you forever. Amen."*
- 2. Pre-Assessment:** Ask the children what they know about the Church.
- 3. Motivator:** Show the children a sacred image of Mary and the apostles at Pentecost.
- 4. Content & Key Points:**
  - a. The Church is a family too. We become members of this family when we are baptized. In the Church, we are helping each other to become saints.
  - b. The Church is also our mother. That is why when we speak about her, we say,

- “she.” Discuss ways that Jesus cares for us through the Church (feeds us in the Eucharist, protects us from harm, heals us when we are sick...)
- c. The Church is also our teacher. Through her, Jesus teaches us about himself, his love for us, and how we should speak and act.
  - d. Jesus founded the Church. Because she is his Church, she is holy. She is also holy because she teaches us about Jesus and helps us to become holy.

**5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Take the children to visit the Blessed Sacrament in the Church and say a prayer together thanking Jesus for caring for and teaching us through his Church.

**6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Ask the children to describe one way the Church is our mother or teacher and one way we are part of the family of the Church.

**7. Closing Prayer:** End with a simple prayer such as the Act of Faith or a prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Replace conversation with direct instruction. Focus on the fact that the Church is our mother, teacher, and family of faith.

### **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the children’s understanding can be based on their comments during the closing discussion.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Give the children a coloring page of Pentecost or of Pope Francis to take home and color with their parents.

*Lesson 4 Take Home Sheet*

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) #147, 165, 179  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

[\*Our Holy Father, the Pope: The Papacy from Saint Peter to the Present\*](#)

Don R. Caffery, illustrated by Emmanuel Beaudesson, Ignatius Press, 2013

This book gives the history and meaning of the papacy in a way young children can understand.



**Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**  
*Lesson 4: Mother, Teacher, Family—the Nature  
and Role of the Church*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned that the Church is our mother, teacher, and family of faith. Below is a way that you can help your child to continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice as a family.

1. Read any of the following passages from the Bible or a children's Bible.

**Acts 1:12-14 and 2:1-4**

**Pentecost**

**Acts 2:43-47 and 4:32-35**

**Life of Believers**

2. How were the Apostles and other believers like our family?

3. How can we show that we too belong to God's family, the Church?

*Conclude by praying the Third Glorious Mystery of the Rosary (The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost) together as a family.*

## Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten

### LESSON 5: CHOOSING LIFE, SPREADING THE LOVE OF FAMILY TO OTHERS

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*"God made us for a reason. His love is our life mission. This mission changes our identity. If we choose to embrace this mission, we will have a new perspective on many issues, not just the family. To live the mission of the domestic church means that Catholic families will sometimes live as minorities, with different values than their surrounding culture. Our mission of love will require courage and fortitude. Jesus is calling, and we can respond, choosing lives of hope, joy, service, and mission"* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part X).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Name and give examples of how the family can witness to Christian living in the context of the home, neighborhood, parish, and local community

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part X), salty and unsalted foods for tasting such as crackers, popcorn, potato chips, etc. (see adaptations section if food is not an option)

#### **PROCEDURE (15-20 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Open with a simple prayer to the Holy Family such as: *"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, please send your love into our hearts. Please lead us in your holy ways that we, too, might be a light in the world. Amen."*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the children what they already know about families. As necessary, review the definition of the family and the mission of members of a family to share God's love with others.
3. **Motivator:** Have the children taste something that is salty and something that is not salty. For example, salted and unsalted crackers or popcorn or simply some salty Goldfish, chips, etc. Discuss the fact that salt makes food taste better. In the same way, families make the world better.
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. Discuss ways that families can share God's love with others in the *home* (doing

- something kind for another family member, apologizing when they have done something to hurt someone, etc.).
- b. Discuss ways that families can share God's love with others in their *neighborhoods* (spending time with neighbors, sharing food or other material goods with neighbors in need, taking care of neighbors' pets when they are gone, helping neighbors fix some part of their house or yard etc...).
  - c. Discuss ways that families can share God's love with others in their *parishes* (feeding the needy at Thanksgiving or Christmas, reading at Mass, sharing music books, bringing people who cannot drive to Mass etc...).
  - d. Discuss ways that families can share God's love with others *anywhere* (praying before meals when out to dinner, telling others about Jesus and the Church, being polite and kind to others etc...).
5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Allow the children to act out scenarios from the discussion about families being witnesses to God's love by their words and actions in the home, neighborhood, parish, and community.
  6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** *"Think of your family in your mind. Imagine your family acting in a loving way at home... in the neighborhood... in the parish setting... anywhere..."*
  7. **Closing Prayer:** *"Keep thinking of your family as we pray: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, dear Holy Family, make our family strong. Help us to love one another and to be witnesses to the world. May we be a light for others. Amen."*

## **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Focus on one or two of the points about the ways the family can bring love. For example, skip the one about acting loving at home since that was addressed in Lesson 3. Instead, focus on points *b*, *c*, or *d* under the Content and Key Points section.

Also, if you are unable to have salty food available for the opening of the lesson, use a light under a basket or other container and speak of the family being like a light instead of like salt. Tell about how the light needs to be seen and not hidden.

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the children's understanding can be based on their comments during the role-play activity.

## **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

*Lesson 5 Take Home Sheet*

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) #456-462

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

Parent Resources for Family Life:

[\*Faith, Family, Fun \(Loyola Press\)\*](#): Links on family activities, sharing the faith, etc.

[\*"Five Marks of a Catholic Family"\*](#): Article by Dr. Greg Popcak on five ways in which a Catholic family can be seen as such.

[\*Domestic-Church.com\*](#): Information and activities for celebrating the liturgical year at home.

## Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten

### *Lesson 5: Choose Life, Spreading the Love of Family to Others*

#### TAKE HOME SHEET

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned how love that is shared within the family becomes light of the world and salt for the earth. In the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part X), we are reminded of the beautiful mission of families: "...marriages and families that strive to love in unity and fidelity offer a vital witness in their homes, neighborhoods, parishes, local communities, and wherever they go, whether in service, work or play."

Invite your child to draw a picture in each box of how your family can be a witness in these particular settings. Help him or her to brainstorm ideas.

**At home**

**In neighborhoods**

**In parishes**

**Anywhere!**

## Grades 1 - 2

### LESSON 1: CREATED FOR JOY

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*"We are more than an accident of evolution. We are greater than the sum of our biology. God exists. He is good. He loves us. He made us in his image to share in his joy. He takes an active hand in our lives. He sent his only Son to restore our dignity and lead us home to him"* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part I).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Tell that each human person is made in the image of God and briefly explain what this means
2. Tell that God created us for joy and that, if we live as Jesus teaches us, we will experience much joy here on earth and supreme joy with God forever in Heaven

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part I), a Bible, a glass or clear plastic cup, a bottle of water (containing more water than the glass or cup will hold), bowl and/or towel to catch overflowing water, half-sheets of cardstock or large index cards (enough for each child to have one), colored pencils, crayons, or markers

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Pray your own words or use the following prayer: *"Thank you, Jesus, for becoming man and for teaching us how to love. Open our minds and hearts today so that we may know your deep and personal love for each one of us. Please help us to love you with all of our hearts. Amen."*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the children what they know about God.
3. **Motivator:** Ask the children, "Who in this class wants to be a happy person?" Explain that Jesus came because he wants us to be happy, too.
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. Read to the class 1 John 4:8: *"God is love."*
  - b. God is the source of all love, the source of all life, the source of all goodness.
  - c. Show the class the empty glass/cup and slowly pour the water from the bottle



into it. Tell them that the love of God is so great that it overflows in all creation. Let the water overflow from the glass/cup, using the bowl/towel underneath to catch it. Tell the class that, while the bottle of water may become empty, the love of God never does. It continually overflows for each of us.

- d. In this abundant, overflowing love God created each one of us.
- e. Read Genesis 1:26-27: *"Then God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'. God created man in His image; in the divine image he created him; male and female He created them."*
- f. Because we are made in the image of God, we each have a mind to know the truth, a will to choose the good, a soul that will live forever, and we are made for love.
- g. Having been made in the image of God, we must act as images of God if we are to be truly happy, truly full of joy, as God wants us to be. Jesus shows us how to do this.

#### **5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:**

- a. The song below can be used to help the children remember what they have learned. (to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell"; see hand motions to the side):  

<i>"I've got a mind to know the truth,</i>	<i>Point to head with two hands.</i>
<i>A will to choose the good,</i>	<i>Put two hands over heart.</i>
<i>A soul that will live forever,</i>	<i>Put both hands out to side.</i>
<i>And I'm made for love."</i>	<i>Put both hands out open in front of heart.</i>
- b. Write the verse from John (God is love) up on the board. Have the children copy it down on a piece of paper or index card and decorate it.

**6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the church and say a prayer together thanking Jesus for his love.

**7. Closing Prayer:** Say a simple prayer such as the Act of Love or another prayer in your own words.

#### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Cover only points *a-d* in the Content & Key Points section.

#### **EVALUATION**

Informal evaluation of the child's comprehension of the lesson will be based on the child's responses during the lesson as well as the key points he or she plans to communicate to his or her parents. You may formally assess the students by handing them an index card or sheet of paper and having them write or draw three things they remember from the lesson.

**BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY***Lesson 1 Take Home Sheet***SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) #1, 27, 30, 45, 355-359, 371-373, 661, 1023-1025  
Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

[\*Be Saints!: An Invitation from Pope Benedict XVI\*](#)

Pope Benedict XVI with Amy Welborn, illustrated by Ann Engelhart, Ignatius Press, 2012

Pope Benedict XVI teaches children that the true source of joy is friendship with Jesus and encourages them to become saints.



**Grades 1 – 2**  
*Lesson 1: Created for Joy*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents

Today your child learned that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and that, when we love, it brings us great joy. Below is a way that you can help your child to continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice as a family.

1. Together with your child, list things that make you happy.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Talk about which of those things are really necessary for a happy life and which we could live without if we had to.

**Necessary:**

**Not Necessary:**

3. Help your child understand that our relationships with others are the most important thing for happiness on earth—and that includes our relationships with God.

NOTE: If your child tends to focus on material things as necessary to happiness, ask if he/she would be happy to live alone with that thing. Help him/her see that things can only make us happy for a limited time before we get tired of them, people make us happy by loving us and being loved by us, and God makes us happy forever.

## Grades 1 - 2

### LESSON 2: THE MISSION OF LOVE

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*"God works through us. We have a mission. We are in the world for a purpose - to receive God's love ourselves and to show God's love to others. God seeks to heal a broken universe. He asks us to be his witnesses and helpers in that work"* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part II).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Tell that God gives us each a mission to love
2. List ways that they can share God's love with others

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part II), Bible, half-sheets of paper or large index cards for each child, colored pencils, crayons or markers

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Say a prayer in your own words or use the following prayer. *"Holy Trinity, you show us how to love. Thank you for sending Jesus to teach us how to love. Open our hearts today so that we may be filled with your love, goodness, and courage."*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the children, "What is a mission?" (something important you are asked to do)
3. **Motivator:** Allow children to tell stories about times they were asked to do something important.
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. God has given us a mission. Our mission is to love like Jesus loves and to tell others about his love for them.
  - b. Write J-O-Y on the board vertically. This acronym can be used to help the children remember that they must love Jesus, others, and themselves (Jesus, others, you).
  - c. Have a conversation with the children about ways they show love for Jesus, others, and themselves.

5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Read with the children one of the following verses from the Bible and discuss with them how this passage reveals God's love for each person: *Luke 15:11-32; Luke 15:3-7; Isaiah 66:13; John 11:35; Matthew 22:39; John 15:1; Matthew 22:1-14; Mark 10:46-52; Matthew 14:13-21; Matthew 26:26.* The children can then draw a picture of the scene on a piece of paper.
6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Bring the children together to share their drawings. Reinforce that God loves every person, and we are called to share his love with others.
7. **Closing Prayer:** Say a simple prayer such as the Act of Love or another prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit either all or part of the Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson section.

### **EVALUATION**

Informal evaluation of the child's comprehension of the lesson will be based on the child's responses during the lesson as well as the key points he or she plans to communicate to his or her parents. You may formally assess the students by handing them an index card or sheet of paper and having them write or draw three things they remember from the lesson.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

*Lesson 2 Take Home Sheet*

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\* #435](#)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006



**Grades 1 – 2**  
*Lesson 2: The Mission of Love*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned that God gives each of us a mission of love and discussed ways that they can share God's love with others. Below is a way that you can help your child to continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice as a family.

1. Read one of the following Scripture passages with your child in a Bible or a children's Bible. Discuss Jesus' love for each person.

**Luke 15:11-32**

**Luke 15:3-7**

**Isaiah 66:13**

**John 11:35**

**Matthew 22:39**

**John 15:1**

**Matthew 22:1-14**

**Mark 10:46-52**

**Matthew 14:13-21**

**Matthew 26:26**

**The Prodigal Son**

**The Lost Sheep**

**God's Comfort and Protection**

**The Raising of Lazarus**

**The Parable of the Wedding Feast**

**The Vine and the Branches**

**The Wedding Banquet**

**The Healing of the Blind Man**

**The Feeding of the Five Thousand**

**The Last Supper**

2. Encourage your child to draw a picture of the passage or of themselves loving as Jesus loved.

## Grades 1 - 2

### LESSON 3: ALL LOVE BEARS FRUIT

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*God has a plan for everyone, and this plan is called a vocation. God usually calls a person to marriage, priesthood, or religious life. While everyone is called to love, not everyone is called to marriage. Some people are called to forgo marriage for a greater good: God himself. All authentic love bears fruit and gives life* (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part VI).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Tell that God has a plan for them called a vocation
2. Recognize the differences between the vocations to marriage, priesthood, religious life

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part VI), one picture each of Mother Teresa, Saint Thomas More, Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, Saint Francis Xavier, and Saint Catherine of Siena, sets of holy cards of saints of different vocations, sacred image of saints of different vocations (*Adoration of the Lamb* from the Ghent Altarpiece by Jean Van Eyck is a good one)

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

- 1. Opening Prayer:** Pray your own words or use the following prayer: *"Dear Jesus, we praise you, we love you, and we thank you for your love. We trust in your plan for each of us. Please help us today to hear your voice and learn how to love you better."*
- 2. Pre-Assessment:** Ask the children what they remember from the past lessons (God created us out of love, we have a mission to share his love with others).
- 3. Motivator:** Show the children a sacred image of the saints in heaven of various vocations. Ask them to point out bishops, priests, sisters, married people.
- 4. Content & Key Points:**
  - a. God gives each person he creates a vocation. That means he has a plan for each person's life and he "calls" or invites each person to follow his plan for happiness.
  - b. God usually calls a person to one of three vocations: marriage, priesthood, or religious life. Some people are also called to live a life of service as a single

- person.
- c. Married persons are called to give their lives in loving one another and raising the children God gives them.
  - d. Priests are men who are chosen by God to give their lives in loving God and allowing Christ to speak and act through them to bring his life and grace to the members of the Church.
  - e. Religious are men or women whom God has called to give their lives in loving him, praying for the world, and serving those who are in need by teaching, nursing, or other works of service.
  - f. Show the pictures of Mother Teresa, Saint Thomas More, Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, Saint Francis Xavier, and Saint Catherine of Siena and discuss which vocation each one lived.

**5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Give the children a set of holy cards or pictures of saints of various vocations. Invite them to sort the saints by their vocations.

**6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Invite the children to share the sorting they have done. Talk about the different vocations they identified.

**7. Closing Prayer:** Pray a simple prayer such as a litany of the saints (each child names a saint of their choice) or a prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit the activity of sorting holy cards according to the vocations. Focus on the meaning of vocation and the three types of vocations.

### **EVALUATION**

Informal evaluation of the child's comprehension of the lesson will be based on the child's responses during the lesson as well as the work they do during the sorting activity. You could also ask each child to list the three types of vocations as they leave the room.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

The sorting activity could be sent home to do with parents.

*Lesson 3 Take Home Sheet*



**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) #322-329; 337-342  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

[\*St Francis of the Seven Seas\*](#)

Albert J. Nevins, Ignatius Press, 1995

[\*St Thomas More of London\*](#)

Elizabeth Ince, Ignatius Press, 2003

[\*St. Gianna Beretta Molla\*](#)

Susan Helen Wallace, F.S.P., Daughters of St. Paul, 2012

[\*St. Catherine of Siena\*](#)

Mary Fabyan Windeatt, TAN Books, 2009

[\*Pauline Books and Media\*](#) offers an excellent selection of children's books.



**Grades 1 – 2**  
*Lesson 3: All Love Bears Fruit*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned that God has a plan for each person called a *vocation* and the three types of vocations: marriage, priesthood, and religious life. Below is a way that you can help your child to continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice as a family.

1. Read with your child a book about one of the saints. Talk with them about how that saint fulfilled his/her vocation to love God and others.
  
2. What vocation did God give this person? (marriage, priesthood, religious life)
  
3. How did this person love God?
  
4. How did this person love others?
  
5. How would you like to imitate this person in your own life?
  
6. Find stories of other saints to read and discuss in the same way.

## Grades 1 - 2

### LESSON 4: LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*God calls each of us to be happy and holy. Because we suffer from the effects of original sin, sometimes it is unclear what will truly make us happy and holy. The Church and our family help us know what is good and what is bad for us. Our greatest model and help is Jesus. He shows us that perfect happiness and holiness requires great sacrifice and virtue. By our practice of virtue we can be lights in a dark world (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part VII).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Define sin and list some of its effects
2. Explain that the Church and family are helps to avoid sin and do good

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part VII); pictures of Saint Monica, Saint Augustine, and Saint Ambrose; coloring pages of Saint Monica, Saint Augustine, and Saint Ambrose

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Pray in your own words or use the following prayer: *"Dear Jesus thank you for this time you have given us to spend with you. We love you and adore you and desire to be with you forever in Heaven. Please open our hearts and minds so that we may come closer to you."*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Question the children about what they remember from past lessons (God created us out of love, mission to love, vocations).
3. **Motivator:** Ask the students, "We are all called to love, but does everyone always act and speak in a loving way?"
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. Sin is when we know something is wrong and we do it anyway. For example, you know that it is wrong to tell a lie. If you choose to tell a lie, then you have sinned.
  - b. Sin weakens our friendship with God and with others. It hurts other people, and

it makes us feel unhappy.

- c. Jesus founded the Church to lead us to heaven. He speaks through his Church to tell us what is right and what is wrong. He acts through his Church, especially in the Sacrament of Penance, to heal us when we do sin and to strengthen us to do what is good in the future.
  - d. God has also given us a family to help us avoid sin and do what is good. The members of a family pray for one another, give one another advice about what is good, encourage one another when they are doing what is good, and tell one another in a loving way when what is being done is a sin.
5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Tell the children the story of Saint Monica and Saint Augustine. Saint Augustine was living a sinful life, but through the prayers and counsel of his mother, he received the grace to change his ways and live a holy life. He was also helped by Saint Ambrose, who was a bishop and therefore a representative of the Church. The children could then color a picture of Saint Monica, Saint Augustine, or Saint Ambrose.
  6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Invite the children to share their pictures and tell why they chose the saint they did. In the course of the discussion, reinforce the fact that the Church and family help us to know what is right and to live a holy life.
  7. **Closing prayer:** Pray a simple prayer, such as the Act of Hope, or a prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Tell the story of Saint Augustine, and focus on the fact that, like Saint Augustine, we are helped by the Church and our family to know what is right and to live a holy life.

### **EVALUATION**

Informal evaluation of the child's comprehension of the lesson will be based on the child's responses during the lesson and the closing discussion. You may formally assess the students by handing them an index card or sheet of paper and having them write or draw three things they remember from the lesson.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Invite the children to share the pictures they colored with their parents and to tell them the story of Saint Augustine.

*Lesson 4 Take Home Sheet*

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#), paragraphs 2201-2233.

This section discusses the family in the life of the Church.

[\*Catholic Playground\*](#) offers a selection of free Catholic coloring pages.

*The Confessions of Saint Augustine*

Saint Augustine, translated by John K. Ryan, Image Classics, 1960.



**Grades 1 – 2**  
*Lesson 4: Light in a Dark World*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned that sin is when you know something is wrong and you do it anyway. The Church and our families help us to know what is right and wrong. Below is a way that you can help your child to continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice as a family.

*Read Luke 15:11-32 with your child and discuss the following points:*

1. What did the son do that was unloving?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why did he decide to return home?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did the father show love and forgiveness to his son?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What did the father tell his other son about forgiving his brother?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Talk with your child about the importance of forgiveness in family life.

## Grades 1 - 2

### LESSON 5: MOTHER, TEACHER, FAMILY—THE NATURE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*In the words of St. John XXIII, the Church is our mother and teacher, our comforter and guide, our family of faith. Jesus, the head of the Church, gave her to us to care for and teach us and to help us stay close to him (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part IX).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Recognize the Church as our mother and teacher
2. Recognize Pope Francis and the local bishops as successors of the apostles

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part IX), colored pencils, crayons, or markers, a picture of the apostles, a picture of Pope Francis, a picture of the local bishop, coloring pages of Pope Francis

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Pray your own words or use the following prayer: *“Dear Jesus, we thank you for your love. We ask you to be with us and to help us as we learn more about your Church.”*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the students, “What is the mission God has given us? (to share his love with others) Do we have to do that all by ourselves? (No, God gives us the Church and our families to help us)
3. **Motivator:** Show the pictures of the 12 apostles, Pope Francis, and the local bishop. Ask the children if they know who these men are.
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. Jesus loves us so much that He wants to help us with our mission to love like him. He gave us a very special gift to help us with this. This gift is called the “Church.”
  - b. The Church is made up of all the baptized persons. Even if we have different customs or languages, we are all united because we believe the same truths

- and we receive the same sacraments.
- c. When Jesus founded the Church, he gave 12 men, the apostles, a special mission. They were responsible for leading the other members of the Church and teaching them all that Jesus taught.
  - d. These men passed this special mission down to other men whom we call bishops. Tell the children the name of their local bishop and point out his picture.
  - e. There is also one special bishop, the bishop of Rome, whom we call the pope. Show the children the picture of Pope Francis.
  - f. Because Jesus teaches us and cares for us through the Church, we say that the Church is our mother and teacher.
5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Take the children to the church. Point out the picture of the pope and local bishop in the church building. Make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and say a prayer for Pope Francis and the local bishop.
  6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Review the names of the pope and the local bishop and their role to teach and care for us in the Church. Give the children a coloring page of Pope Francis to take home.
  7. **Closing prayer:** Say a short prayer such as the Act of Faith or a prayer in your own words. You could also use the following prayer: *"Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us so much by giving us the Church to take care of us. Please help us to always stay with your Church so that we may always stay close to you. Please bless Pope Francis and Bishop N. and help them with all of their needs. Thank you. Amen."*

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Skip letters *c*, *d*, and *e* under the Content and Key Points section. Focus on the definition of the Church and the role of the Church as teacher and mother.

### **EVALUATION**

Informal evaluation of the child's comprehension of the lesson will be based on the child's responses during the lesson. You may formally assess the students by handing them an index card or sheet of paper and having them write or draw three things they remember from the lesson or ask them to name the Pope and local bishop as they leave the classroom.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Suggest that the children write a letter or make a card with their parents for their parish priest, bishop, or Pope Francis, thanking him for all that he does to guide us in staying close to Jesus.

*Lesson 5 Take Home Sheet*



**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) #179-186

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

[\*Our Holy Father, the Pope: The Papacy from Saint Peter to the Present\*](#)

Don R. Caffery, illustrated by Emmanuel Beaudesson, Ignatius Press, 2013

This book gives the history and meaning of the papacy in a way young children can understand.

[\*The Story of Saint John Paul II: A Boy Who Became Pope\*](#)

Fabiola Garza, Pauline Books and Media, 2014

An illustrated life of Saint John Paul II and his ministry as the Successor of Peter.



**Grades 1 – 2**  
*Lesson 5: Mother, Teacher, Family—the Nature  
and Role of the Church*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Dear Parents,

Today your child learned that the Church is our mother and teacher in the faith and that the bishops are successors of the apostles. Below is a way that you can help your child to continue to think about this at home and to put it into practice as a family.

1. Read parts of the following Scripture passages with your child:

**Matthew 16:13-20, John 21:15-19**

**John 13-17**

**John 20:19-23**

**Luke 22:31-34**

**Peter**

**Last Supper Discourses**

**Authority to Forgive Sin**

**Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial**

2. What did Jesus instruct the apostles to do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What promises did he make to them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What were his special instructions and promises to Peter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How do bishops and the pope follow these instructions?

## Grades 3 – 5

### LESSON 1: CREATED FOR JOY

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*"We are more than an accident of evolution. We are greater than the sum of our biology. God exists. He is good. He loves us. He made us in his image to share in his joy. He is active in our lives. He sent his only Son to restore our dignity and lead us home to him"* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part I).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Affirm that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God
2. Recognize that Jesus reveals to us what it means to be human and that he restored our dignity

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part I), paper, pencils or other writing materials, Bibles for each student

#### **PROCEDURE (30-40 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Say a simple prayer such as a prayer to the Holy Spirit or another prayer in your own words.
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the students, "Why did God create us? (*that we can be happy with him in heaven, joy*)"
3. **Motivator:** Ask the students, "God created us for joy; how do we experience joy in our families, parishes, school, neighborhood?"
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. Read Genesis 1:1-27. Human beings are the only creatures that God says he made "in his image."
  - b. An image is something that "looks like" something or someone else.
  - c. God made us "in his image," so we must be like him in some way.
  - d. We are like God in that we have the ability to think (intellect/mind) and the ability to love/choose (will).
  - e. But, in order to truly "look like" God, we must use these abilities as he uses

- them—mind to think about what is true and good, will to love and choose what is good.
- f. After original sin, this has become hard for us to do (minds and wills weakened—hard to learn, sometimes hard to desire what is truly good). Discuss examples of this with the children.
  - g. Sin hurt us so badly that only God could heal us. Jesus, by his life, suffering, death, and resurrection restored God’s image in us.
5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Write the following Scripture passages on the board. *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life”* (John 14:6); *“I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10); *“God is love”* (1 John 4:16); *“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you”* (John 15:12). Invite the students to copy one of these passages onto a blank sheet of paper and draw an image of Christ crucified to go with it.
  6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Invite the students to share their drawings with the class and tell why they chose the Scripture passage they did.
  7. **Closing Prayer:** Say a simple prayer together such as the Act of Love or another prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit the Scripture passage activity. Focus on points *a-d* in the Content & Key Points section.

### **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the students’ comprehension of the lesson can be based on their comments during the lesson and during the closing discussion.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Invite the students to take their drawings home and ask their parents if they can be displayed somewhere in the home. Also, encourage them to share what they have learned in this lesson with their parents.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) #358-362

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

## Grades 3 – 5

### LESSON 2: MISSION OF LOVE AND CHOOSING LIFE

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*Purely out of love, God has created us in his image and called us to a covenant relationship with himself. This covenant is like a marriage in which God invites us to intimate communion with himself. Jesus is the Bridegroom who lays down his life for his bride, the Church. Even though we are often unfaithful to God, he is always waiting to receive us back with great mercy. The family, founded on the vocation of marriage, is called to image this communion of life and love that God has with his people. God gives families the strength to be missionaries who witness to God's love and the holiness of family life even in a culture that may resist it (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introductions to Parts II and IX).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Explain that God has made a covenant with his people
2. Describe the family as the domestic church
3. Discuss and pray about ways that they and their families can be missionaries and witnesses of this love in today's world

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Parts II and IX), image of the Holy Family, white board/chalk board, crucifix

#### **PROCEDURE (30-40 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Display a picture of the Holy Family and pray together the Prayer for the World Meeting of Families (back cover and page 49).
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the children, "What is a family?" (A man and a woman united in marriage and their children.)
3. **Motivator:** Ask the students questions about marriage, such as "Have you ever been to a wedding before?" "What do the husband and wife promise?" (To love each other forever, to be faithful to each other in hard times until death.), "When a husband and wife get married, what do they begin?" (A family.), "How do your mom and dad show that they love each other? How do they love you?" "How do you and your siblings love your parents? Love each other?"

**4. Content & Key Points:**

- a. God enters into a covenant with his people in the Old Testament. This is related to a marriage covenant, because God promised to love his people and be faithful to them forever, like a husband and his wife.
- b. The Israelites broke the covenant through their idolatry and by disobeying God's commands, but God remained faithful and received his people back with mercy.
- c. In the New Testament, God shows his desire to win us back by sending Jesus, the Bridegroom, to save the Church, his Bride.
- d. Jesus shows us that true love is sacrificial, enduring, and selfless. He establishes a covenant of love with all of humanity.
- e. The family should be an image of this love both in their relations with each other and in their relations with those outside the family.
- f. The family is called a domestic church because in the family children learn what it means to be members of the Church, the family of God. They learn from their family how to pray to their Father in Heaven, and from each other they learn what it means to love.

5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** After discussing the material, have the students write their own prayer to the Holy Family, asking Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to help their families to grow in love for God and for each other and to witness this love to other families. They can illustrate their prayers, if time permits.

6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Summarize the main points of the lesson, using the objectives above. Explain the take-home assignment (attached).

7. **Closing Prayer:** Have a few students share their prayers as a closing prayer.

**ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit the Methods & Strategies section and just have the students complete the *Lesson 2 Take Home Assignment*, which is similar. Have the students write their prayer to the Holy Family at home.

**EVALUATION**

Assess the students' understanding with the on-going questions throughout the lesson. Call on someone periodically to summarize what has been said so far. During the conclusion, ask review questions to assess students' overall understanding of key terms like *covenant* and *domestic church*. Their original prayers can serve as an assessment as well.

**BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

*Lesson 2 Take Home Assignment*



**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) #340

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006



**Grades 3 - 5**  
*Lesson 2: Love Is Our Mission*  
**TAKE HOME SHEET**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*With your family, pray the Prayer for the World Meeting of Families (next page). Share with them what you learned in class about the domestic church and how God wants us to love each other in our families. Answer these questions together and have mom and/or dad sign this paper.*

*Parent Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is one way parents can grow in love for each other, like Christ loved the Church?
  
2. What is one way the children in our family can love their parents like Jesus? How can the siblings in our family love each other better?
  
3. The Church has a special mission to preach the Gospel. Since our family is a domestic church, how can we preach (or show) the Gospel of love?
  
4. If the mission of a family is to love like God, how can we be *missionaries* who help other families to be a "community of life and love?"
  
5. What are some things in our world that make it hard to live a life of family love?
  
6. Why might some people not easily listen to us or follow our example? How can we help these people?



*Prayer for the  
World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia*

(as found in *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*)

God and Father of us all,  
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,  
you have made us  
your sons and daughters  
in the family of the Church.

May your grace and love  
help our families  
in every part of the world  
be united to one another  
in fidelity to the Gospel.

May the example of the Holy Family,  
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,  
guide all families, especially those most troubled,  
to be homes of communion and prayer  
and to always seek your truth and live in your love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us!

## Grades 3 – 5

### LESSON 3: LOVING IN GOD’S IMAGE AND LIKENESS

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*God is love. We are made in God’s image and likeness, and this means we are created to love like him. Love Is Our Mission. God created families as the way for us to learn how to love each other and give life generously. We mirror God when we do this. Families are not perfect, but God always offers mercy and love and gives us the grace we need each day* (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part III and VIII).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Discuss what it means to be made in God’s image and likeness and what the mission is that each person received at Baptism
2. List ways that one receives and shows love in the family in concrete actions
3. Recognize the ways God brings healing and help to families through the Church

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Parts III and VIII), Bible, chalkboard/whiteboard and chalk/marker or posters and markers for brainstorming a list

#### **PROCEDURE (30-40 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Begin with a short prayer in your own words or use the following: *“God, we know and believe that you are our Father and that you are with us today. Thank you for showing us how much you love us through our families. We want to thank you and love you in return. Please take care of our parents, our siblings, and all our relatives, so that one day we can all be with you in Heaven. Help us when we are not at our best, when we hurt each other, and when we need to forgive each other. Lord, thank you for our families. Please open our hearts and show us how we can love them better.”*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the students, “Who is God? (God is Love.) What does it mean to be created in God’s image and likeness? (We each have a soul and are created for love, so that one day we can be with God in Heaven.)
3. **Motivator:** Read the Bible passage from 1 John 4:7-8. If we want to be with God forever in heaven, we must learn to love.

**4. Content & Key Points:**

- a. God gave us both a body and a soul, and we must use both to express our love. We must show our love in action, by kind deeds.
- b. God made families to give us a wonderful way to learn how to love. We need God's help to love our families.
- c. Your parents show their love for you with both body and soul. Discuss examples as needed.
- d. No family is perfect. God knows that and still loves us.
- e. God loves us so much that He offers healing for our families through the Church.

**5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Using either a chalkboard/whiteboard and chalk/marker (whole-group), or posters and markers (small groups), have students brainstorm a list of ways they show love for their families, through their actions. Title it "God is Love; I look like God when I love my family." (*Some examples might be: I pray for my family. I help set the table. I encourage my family to go to confession. I help take care of my little siblings. I lead our family rosary. I do my chores without complaining. I ask Dad how his day was at work. I bake cookies for my brother.*)

**6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Give each student an index card or half-sheet of paper on which to make a spiritual resolution for how they plan to fulfill their mission of love in their family: 1) one way they are already good at showing love to their families that they want to continue to practice, and 2) one way they can bring more love to a weak area in their family life.

**7. Closing Prayer:** Pray a simple prayer such as the Our Father, or say a prayer in your own words. You can also use the following prayer: "*Father, thank you for sharing your incredible mission of love with each of us. We know and believe that we are called to bring our families closer to you and to your healing power. We believe in your love for us, no matter what we have done. We ask for your help and your grace so that we can be better members of our families. Help us to carry out our mission.*"

**ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Focus on Key Points *c*, *d*, and *e*, listed above. Highlight the students' mission to love, remind them that love makes them look like God, and brainstorm ways to live this out better.

**EVALUATION**

There are built-in assessments in this lesson. The students will show they understand the lesson in the following ways: 1) make a good list of ways they need to show love in their families, 2) write their own resolution for how to carry out their mission of love, and 3) participate in discussions on the lesson.

**BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Encourage the students to share what they have learned in this lesson with their parents.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[Catholics Come Home](#) offers many resources for families who have been away from the practice of their faith and who are looking for answers or support, especially information on the healing [Sacrament of Penance](#) and what it can do to transform their families.

["What Makes a Family Holy?"](#) Homily by Father Robert Barron

[Holy Family Values"](#) Homily by Father Robert Barron

## Grades 3 – 5

### LESSON 4: ALL LOVE BEARS FRUIT

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*In the Church, all are called to the vocation to love. By loving one another, seeds of love are sown throughout the world so that love can bear fruit. In this lesson, the children will first be rooted in the message of the Gospel that Christ has chosen each of us to bear fruit by staying close to him and then bringing his love to others. There are specific ways that he will call each person as one grows older, through the married life, the consecrated life, or the priesthood. This lesson links the understanding that all are called to love with an emphasis on vocational paths and the ways that each of these paths bear fruit in the world (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part VI).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Distinguish between the vocations of marriage, priesthood, and religious life
2. Explore ways that each vocation can bear fruit for God's Kingdom

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive (Part VI); pictures of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, Saint John Paul II, and Saint Gianna Molla or pictures of a married couple, a priest, and a religious sister or brother; poster paper and markers or a white board; a basket of various fruits that bear many seeds, books of lives of the saints*

#### **PROCEDURE (30-40 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Begin with a short prayer such as the Holy Spirit prayer or another prayer in your own words.
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask students what mission God has given them (to share his love with others).
3. **Motivator:** Point out one piece of fruit in the basket. Discuss the fact that there are seeds inside. Point out that this piece of fruit did not just appear; it grew on a tree, bush, plant, etc. which grew from a seed. From one seed, many seeds came.
4. **Content & Key Points:**
  - a. The seed is like our lives. We are called to love, and if we do that, our lives bear fruit.

- b. All men and women are meant to bear fruit by sharing Christ's love with others.
  - c. The vocations of priesthood, religious life, and marriage are vocations that Christ calls us to in order that we may bear fruit in accord with God's will for his Kingdom on earth.
  - d. Put out the pictures of Saint John Paul II, Saint Gianna Molla, and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (or a married couple, a priest, and a consecrated person) and give a brief introduction of each and how their lives bore fruit.
5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Break the students into small groups. Assign each group a vocation. Have the students find other saints who lived that vocation and create a poster telling about these saints and how their lives bore fruit.
  6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Invite the students to present their posters to the class.
  7. **Closing Prayer:** Pray a simple prayer such as an Our Father or another prayer in your own words.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit the poster activity. Focus on points *b* and *c* under the Content & Key Points section.

### **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the students' comprehension of the lesson can be based on their comments during the lesson, the posters they make, and the closing discussion.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Invite the students to take their posters home and share what they have learned in this lesson with their parents.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Fishers of Men\*](#)

Grassroots Films, 2006

This video gives an introduction to the priesthood and was produced for the USCCB.

[\*Light of Love\*](#)

Imagine Sisters, 2013

This video gives an introduction to the consecrated life as it is lived by five different communities of women religious.

## Grades 3 – 5

### LESSON 5: MOTHER, TEACHER, FAMILY—THE NATURE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*“The Church has institutional forms because she must work in the world. But that does not exhaust her essence. The Church is the Bride of Christ, a ‘she,’ not an ‘it.’ In the words of Saint John XXIII, she is our mother and teacher; our comforter and guide; our family of faith. Even when her people and leaders sin, we still need the Church’s wisdom, sacraments, support, and proclamation of the truth, because she is the body of Jesus himself in the world; the family of God’s people writ large”* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Introduction to Part IX).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Identify their Baptism as the day on which they were born into the Church
2. Brainstorm ways in which the Church nourishes us and gives us life
3. Identify ways in which they can share in the Church’s mission of teaching

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part IX), paper and pencils for students, whiteboard/chalkboard, whiteboard markers/chalk, blank paper, coloring supplies

#### **PROCEDURE (30-40 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Begin with a short prayer in your own words or the one here: *“Lord Jesus, grant me the grace to be faithful to your teachings and to the life of the sacraments of the Church. Help me to persevere in the promises and commitments that I make to you. Give me the courage to listen to the call that you placed in my heart at my baptism so that I may serve you faithfully in the Church and in the world.”*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Ask the students: “What does your mother do for you that supports/sustains your life?” (Cooks, clothes, teaches, takes care of injuries, etc.)
3. **Motivator:** Our mothers give us life and continue to care for our lives as we grow into adults. In a similar way, the Church gives us life in Christ and continues to care for this life as we grow in holiness.

**4. Content & Key Points:**

- a. We are born into the community of the Church as members of Christ's Body in the sacrament of Baptism; thus, the Church is our mother.
- b. As our mother, the Church has the responsibility of teaching us and forming us into saints. Her teaching authority preserves and hands on all that Jesus taught.
- c. Because our family members can also help us to know what Jesus taught and what is right and wrong, they share in the Church's mission.
- d. Our families are also called to share what Jesus taught with others in the world. Discuss ways that families can do this with the students.

5. **Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:** Have students write a thank-you letter to their parents in which each student expresses his/her gratitude to his/her parents for having him/her baptized into the Church. In the letters, the students should tell their parents how they will live their lives to show that they are grateful for this gift.

6. **Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:** Ask the students why it is good to know the date of their Baptism. Ask them to consider why they are proud to belong to the family of the Church. Have them share their thoughts if time allows. Explain that the World Meeting of Families will be a wonderful opportunity for Christians to come together as one big family and to learn from our mother the Church through the activities that are presented there.

7. **Closing Prayer:** Conclude with the Prayer for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia (back cover and page 49).

**ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit the letter-writing activity. Focus on the role of the Church to teach and care for us. This lesson could also be combined with Lesson 2 or 3, as this lesson overlaps with both.

**EVALUATION**

Be attentive to students' responses throughout the lesson and to what they say in their letters and in the closing discussion.

**BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Invite the students to give their parents the letters they wrote. Assign the students to find out from their parents the baptismal date of each family member. Have them make a list of these dates, post it in a prominent place in the home, and brainstorm with their families how they could celebrate these dates. Invite students to share the ideas they discussed with their families in class.



**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)

Part Three, Chapter Three, Article Three of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "The Church, Mother and Teacher"

[Epic](#)

Catholics Come Home commercial

This video details the history of the Catholic Church in a way that is attractive and inviting.

## Grades 6 - 8

### LESSON 1: CREATED FOR JOY AND THE MISSION OF LOVE

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*Each one of us is wanted and loved by God. God made us in his image, in a human family, to share in his love. We have a mission and a purpose in this world—to receive God’s love ourselves and to show God’s love to others, especially the members of our family. In this way, like Jesus, we can help God to heal a world broken by sin and selfishness (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Parts I & II).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Identify the dignity of human persons as founded on their being created in the image and likeness of God
2. Recognize the love of the Trinity as self-giving love
3. Recognize the love of the human family as reflecting Trinitarian love and sharing in the mission to love
4. Describe our mission in life as loving and serving God and our neighbor, beginning in our families

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Parts I and II), Bible, posters, markers, a picture of the Lincoln Memorial (large enough to be visible to the whole class), a quarter, the song “How Great is Our God” by Chris Tomlin

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Psalm 139: 1-4, 13-16

*“LORD, you have searched me, and you know me:  
you know when I sit and stand;  
you understand my thoughts from afar.  
You sift through my path and my rest;  
with all my ways you are familiar.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
LORD, you know it through and through...  
It was you who formed my inmost being;  
you knit me in my mother’s womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully, wonderfully made;*

*wonderful are your works!  
My very self you know.  
My bones were not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
fashioned in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes saw me unformed;  
in your book all are written down;  
my days were shaped, before one of them came to be."*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

**2. Introduction:** God has planned our entire lives. He loves us and cares for us. One of the ways God cares for us is by giving us one another, especially our families. So, coming up is a wonderful international event that will be hosted in the United States in September 2015: The World Meeting of Families! And you and your family are invited!

- The World Meeting of Families (WMOF) was started by Saint John Paul II in 1994 as a way to strengthen and support families around the world.
- The meeting in 2015 will be the 8th WMOF and the first to be held in the United States.
- The pope usually comes to the WMOF, and it is hoped that Pope Francis will be coming to this event.
- Children and parents from around the world will be invited to come to Philadelphia from September 22 – 27, 2015, to join in this celebration.
- This is a special gift for our country to host the WMOF, and we want to pray for its success and that God will bless families in our country and around the world.

In preparation for the WMOF, we will have special lessons on love and family.

**3. Pre-Assessment:**

Read Genesis 1:27. "God created man in His image; in the image of God he created them; male and female He created them." Ask: What does it mean to be created in the "image of God"? Do you think that being created male and female could be directly related to being made in the image of God? (Read Genesis 1:27 again, to assist the students.)

**4. Motivator:**

- a. Show the students a picture of the Lincoln Memorial and ask:
  - Whose image is this?
  - Whom do you think of when you see this image?
  - What is the purpose of the Lincoln Memorial?
- b. Likewise, show the students a quarter and ask:
  - Whose image is this?

- Whom do you think of when you see this image?
  - What is the purpose of the quarter?
- c. Finally, have any student come to the front of the room. Now ask:
- Whose image is this? (God's)
  - Whom do you think of when you see this image? (God.)
  - From whom else did he/she get his/her image? (His/her parents.)
  - So, can you name all of those who are reflected in this image (the student)? (The student's father and mother, and God, but also grandparents, etc.)
  - We come into this world with so many connections. Do we have a name for all those connections? (Our family.)
  - Yes. It is not just \_\_\_ (name of student) who is an image of God, but his/her *entire family*.
  - What is the purpose of this person? (To love, because God is love, and to love in community, in the family.)

*(Students may or may not be able to answer with depth. Try to lead them.)*

## 5. Content & Key Points:

- a. Pope Benedict XVI said on April 24, 2005:
- "Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is. We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary" (Homily for the Mass for the Inauguration of the Pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI).
- b. Genesis tells us that God has created us in His image and likeness. We are, each of us individually, created by the God who loves us and stamps us with His very image.
- Why would He do this? (To share his love.)
  - Why bestow on us such dignity? (Because he loves us and this love is a free gift that we could never deserve.)
  - Why does God not just give us life but also a family? (Because it is through our family, especially our mom and dad, that we will begin to understand love. Their love helps us to understand God's love. *Ask for examples.* They will also teach us about God in other ways. They will show us how to love.)
- c. God (the Holy Trinity) gives us a share in his life and mission.
- Given what we have discussed above, what is the mission of the family? (To love one another as God loves us. To love each other as the Divine Persons in the Trinity love each other.) Each of us has a calling to participate in the life of God. What is God's life? (It is his love, his giving of himself--self-gift: emptying himself to give to the other. The Father gives everything to the Son. The Son returns that love fully back to the Father. The love shared between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit.)

- d. The human family is modeled after the Trinity.
- How does the family reflect the Trinity? (The father loves the mother, the mother loves the father; together, the two love their children. This is an image of the way the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit live in a loving communion with one another. Each member of the family is called to make a complete gift of themselves to the other members of the family. For instance, when the husband loves his wife, making sacrifices for her, they participate in and mirror the very love of God.)
- e. Each day we have the opportunity to love with God's love and let His image shine through us. Is God's way of loving all about feelings?
- Is loving always easy and full of good feelings? No. Love oftentimes means sacrifice. Why? Because true love does not mean serving ourselves. We are tempted to sin, to give in to selfishness continually. We must resist this temptation with God's help. We must ask him to help us to *choose* to love, to give. Sometimes it will feel good to serve and make a gift of self to the other, but at other times it won't.
  - When it does not feel good, is it still love? Yes. Because making a gift of ourselves means putting another person's needs before our own. Love isn't mainly about feeling good. How do we know that? Look at the way Jesus loves us. Everything he did while he was on earth he did for us. He suffers and dies for us on the cross. He gives us the strength to love and serve others even when it is difficult.
  - What happens when we (or others around us) give in to sin and selfishness? It hurts others, especially our families. It makes us and others unhappy and distant from each other. Can you give some examples? What is the cause of the unhappiness in the world? Can it all be traced back to sin and selfishness?
  - What does sin do to our dignity? (Destroys it.) How can our dignity be restored? (By Jesus Christ. By our deciding to love again and not be selfish.) What are some ways we or other family members can be selfish in our families? What are some ways we can make a gift of ourselves in our families?

## 6. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:

- a. Share with the students the story of St. Gianna.
- Gianna Beretta Molla, born in Italy in 1922, made a heroic choice to give her life for the life of her baby. Her gift of self is an example to all people. Each day we are faced with choices that can either separate us from the self-giving love of God, or unite us with the self-giving love of God. Do we imitate God or do we give in to selfishness?
  - Gianna was married to Pietro Molla on September 24, 1955. They were very much in love, and God blessed them with three children. In 1961, when Gianna was pregnant with their fourth child, the doctors discovered a tumor in her uterus. Gianna, herself being a doctor, knew the complications in-

volved. If the tumor was not removed quickly, she would be at risk of dying. But, Gianna wanted the life of their child to come first. Gianna said, "If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child—I insist on it. Save the baby" (Father Thomas Rosica, "World Youth Day and the Media," in *Catholic Insight*, vol. 12, February 2004). Gianna would not allow the tumor to be removed, because she would first have to have an abortion. So, Gianna continued carrying the child and allowing the tumor to remain. About seven months later, on April 21, 1962, Gianna joyfully gave birth to their fourth child, a girl. Their daughter survived, but Gianna died of infection a week later, repeating the words, "Jesus, I love you." Gianna is an example of heroic self-giving love: she put her baby's life before her own.

### **7. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:**

- a. Posters: Ask your students: How would you teach this lesson about the Trinity, love, and the family to the Kindergarteners in our school? Make a posterboard diagram or picture. When you finish, we'll take some volunteers to present their sample lessons. Try to include specific examples of self-giving love from your own family.
- b. Reinforce with these questions:
  - Whose image are we created in? (God's) Anybody else? (Our parents')
  - What type of love do we see in the Trinity?
  - What is our mission or purpose together with our family?

### **8. Closing Prayer:**

Sing (or allow the students to listen to) the song, "How Great is Our God" or Read 1 John 3:1.

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Instead of making posters, have students share with the class (or write in their journals) a specific way a member of their family has loved them and so helped them to experience God's love.

### **EVALUATION**

*Option 1:* Evaluate the students' understanding of self-giving love in the family and the Trinity from their responses in the discussion section of the lesson.

*Option 2:* Challenge the students to list ways that our culture tries to pass off counterfeit "love" as authentic self-giving love. Ask them to identify concrete examples of counterfeit expressions of so-called "love" and have them explain why they are not true expressions of love according to this definition of self-giving. How are these types of love outside of (or even against) the family?

**BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Encourage students to share the information about the WMOF with their parents and siblings. Ask them to consider the possibility of attending as a family.

Have the students keep a list of times they see their moms, dads, and siblings participate in self-giving love. After a week, have the students write a simple letter to mom, dad, and siblings thanking them for the specific ways they saw them make a gift of themselves. Have them write a journal entry thanking God for the way love is manifest in their family.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Catechism of the Catholic Church\*, Paragraphs 1, 27, 234-260, 689-690](#)

These paragraphs give further information regarding God's work of creating us in His image and likeness and how we participate in the love of the Trinity.

[\*Homily of Pope Benedict XVI, April 24, Vatican Website\*](#)

This is the homily quoted in the Content and Key Points section.

[\*Biography of St. Gianna, Vatican Website\*](#)

This is the full story of St. Gianna.

[\*Theology of the Body: Middle School Edition\*, Ascension Press](#)

This program is a great resource to help middle school students and their teachers to better understand the Theology of the Body.

## Grades 6 - 8

### LESSON 2: THE MEANING OF HUMAN SEXUALITY— THE TWO BECOME ONE

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

*\* Some of the content presented in this lesson might not be appropriate for younger students. For these students, it is recommended that this lesson be adapted or eliminated, depending on the judgement of the appropriate supervisor and the local curriculum guidelines.\**

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*Our human bodies have a beauty, dignity, and mystery that mere objects do not have. Because we are created in the image of God, our bodies also express this image—they express our spiritual souls and our mission to love in the family. God created us male and female; he created male and female for one another. God planned that when the two become one flesh in marriage, the possibility of new life would open the way to a family where that new life would be loved, nurtured, and challenged to grow according to the principles of God's own way of loving. The self-centeredness of a merely romantic-passionate love could never serve as the foundation for a strong marriage and a strong family; rather, marriage must be built on the interior freedom and strength of a man and a woman who both want to give to one another the self-giving, merciful love that continually overcomes resentment, sacrifices with generosity, is patient with human fragility, and relies upon Jesus Christ and the grace in his sacraments (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Parts III and IV).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Recognize the spiritual significance of the physical world in order to understand the spiritual significance of the human body
2. Recognize the human body as the physical manifestation of man's mission to love and the conjugal act as an expression of a self-giving love that calls for genuine maturity (free of self-centeredness) and sacrifice
3. Explain the Sacrament of Marriage in terms of the grace it offers to transform the spiritual attitudes of husband and wife

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Parts III and IV), whiteboard or poster board for gathering activity, *Lesson 2 Worksheet*, and pens



**PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)****1. Opening Prayer:**

Invite the students to take a few moments and think about something in the created world (something in nature) that makes them think of God. Explain that during the prayer they will be invited to thank the Lord for that sign of his love. Begin with these words from Psalm 19 and Psalm 35 or with your own words:

*"The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The sky proclaims the work of his hands...Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies."*

*God, we thank you and praise you for your beauty manifest in the world around us. Thank you for ... (allow the students to name aloud or in silence the places where they see God). Thank you, Lord, for all of this beauty! Thank you for these signs of your love for us. Open our hearts to see you surrounding us with your love. Open our hearts to love others as you do. Amen.*

**2. Pre-Assessment:**

Before beginning the lesson, ask the students:

- a. What does it mean when someone gives another person a red rose? (*Love.*)
- b. How could a person give the same message communicated above using their body? (*Giving a hug or a smile to the other person. Putting your arm around the other person. Doing something for the other person.*)
- c. Which is more powerful, things "said" with objects or things "said" with our bodies? Why? (*Things said with our bodies. Because our bodies are more connected to us. Our bodies express ourselves in a way objects cannot.*)

**3. Motivator:**

- a. Write on the whiteboard (or on a poster board) two columns labeled as follows:  
(Left Column):  
Romantic-Passionate Love  
  
(Right Column):  
Deeper Human Love (God's Love)
- b. Ask the students to start naming characteristics of Romantic-Passionate Love; as they name characteristics, write them on the board. (*Fun, happy, exciting, butterflies, desire, may be possessive, full of emotions, self-conscious, etc.*) If you need to further prompt the students, ask what kinds of things Romantic-Passionate Love concentrates on or thinks about. (*Can be superficial, self-centered, thinks about how to dress and how I look, could be lustful, could be demanding of the other person, etc.*)
- c. Ask the students to think about how God, their best friends, and their parents love them. How does a couple that has been happily married for 30 years love each other? So, what are the characteristics of Deeper Human Love? (*Patient, forgiving, self-sacrificing, serving/helping the other, knows and accepts the other*)

as they are, accepts bad habits and all, *faithful, merciful, caring, puts the one they love before themselves.*) If you need to further prompt the students, ask how does Jesus love us? How does that older married couple love each other? What are things that they would have in common with the way Jesus loves us? (*Suffers for the other, accepts difficult things, is not demanding, does not complain or fight for "what I deserve," generous, gives until it hurts, doesn't give up, is willing to die for the other, full of a deeper joy, strong, courageous.*) Continue to try to prompt the discussion until you have most of the answers in italics above.

d. Final questions:

- Which one of these kinds of love (Romantic-Passionate or Deeper Human Love) could serve as a foundation for a life-long marriage and a healthy family life?
- Why?
- Do you remember being forgiven by someone and understanding through that forgiveness how much they love you? (Would anyone be willing to share an example? Or, the teacher may share an example.)
- Which kind of love do you want to receive?
- Which kind of love will make you happier longer?
- Which kind of love did God make you for ultimately?

#### 4. Content & Key Points:

- a. Distribute the *Lesson 2 Worksheet* and have the students complete the worksheet as the lesson progresses. The *sections indented and in italics* represent the words on the worksheets. Underlined words indicate the answers that fill in the blanks on the worksheet.

##### **Who am I? What am I made for?**

Pause to allow the students to guess what goes in each blank.

##### **God's response to my questions:**

*You are my creation, and I created you in my image and likeness. This means you are the only creatures who have the power both to love and to forgive. I created you with a body and a soul. I created you as either a male or a female for a specific purpose. I created you out of love, and I created you for love.*

b. Discussion:

- How are we different from all other creatures? (*We have the power to love and forgive.*) How is forgiveness related to love? Why is forgiveness something so powerful? How is forgiveness like God's way of loving?
- Think of your family members. What do they need more from you, your love or your forgiveness? Why?

**Creation:** *Everything that God creates is good. Created things are signs of*

*God's love and care for us. The most powerful signs of this love are other human persons.*

c. Discussion:

- Think again about those things in the created world that make you think of God. The human person is an even more marvelous creation. Are there particular people who help you to think of God and turn to him? How are they able to do this?
- We are made to love. How do other people play a role in our mission to love? *(We need other people to love. If there were not other people, we would not be able to love anyone other than God and ourselves. Other people, especially our parents teach us to love by loving us first. We learn to love by example. Jesus' example is the best of all, but our parents give us the first example. When we are loved by others, it makes us want to love in return. It gives us strength to love in return.)*

***Image and likeness:*** *I am able to love and forgive like God! I am made to live in a communion of persons just as God does. So I have a mission to love like God—to love God and my family first, and then to love others.*

d. Discussion:

- How is God a loving communion of Persons? *(He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Three Divine Persons are always going out to each other in love.)*
- The communion of love we are all born into is the family. What makes loving our family members difficult/challenging? *(Our own selfishness, wanting to spend time on electronics, lack of communication, etc.)*
- What are specific ways you can build up the love in your family?

***Body and Soul:*** *I am a human person created with a body and soul. My body and soul are not separate rather they are united. My body reveals or expresses my soul. My body is sacred because it is a sign of God's loving plan for me.*

e. Discussion:

- How do our bodies express the love our souls want to give? *(We can hug someone or smile at them; we can perform acts of service, like talking to someone, helping with work. We can also give love through the corporal works of mercy and sacrifices, perhaps even martyrdom.)*
- Why is it wrong to hurt or abuse our own bodies or the bodies of others? *(Because our bodies are sacred. Our bodies are united to our souls. To hurt or abuse another person's body—or our own bodies—is also to hurt or abuse the soul.)*
- What are ways we can show more respect for our own bodies and the bodies of others? *(Taking good care of our bodies, eating right, exercis-*

*ing, not abusing substances, dressing modestly, looking at others with the dignity they deserve, not looking at others like objects and judging them.)*

**“Male and female he created them.”:**

- A. My sexuality (maleness/femaleness) has a purpose. It reveals the way I am called to love God and others.
- B. Chastity: The virtue of chastity helps me to love in the way that God has designed for me to love. True love wants what is best for others. Chastity helps me not to be selfish in my love for others.
- C. Complementarity (comes from the word “complete”): Men and women are made for one another. Their bodies and souls complete one another. Only together can they bring new human life into the world.

f. Discussion:

- Why did God make us male or female? (*So that we would recognize that we are made for love and that we need each other. So that we could have a family, a loving communion of persons that images God.*)

**Marriage:**

- A. *Marriage is a public vow before God that husbands and wives make to love each other as God does, to be faithful to each other, and to be open to new life.*
- B. *The love in marriage goes beyond feelings. It is a commitment to love each other every day until death.*
- C. *Their love for each other is called to be patient, forgiving, self-sacrificing, and generous. Their mission is to mirror the love that Jesus has for the Church. Their mission is mercy. They have to be merciful to each other as Jesus is merciful to us.*
- D. *This is impossible without grace. Marriage is a sacrament. This means the husband and wife have to use grace to love each other every day until death.*

g. Discussion:

- Why does marriage require the husband and wife to be faithful until death? (*Because love is faithful. God’s love is faithful. The dignity of the human person is such that each deserves a life-long, faithful love. A temporary love is not worthy of the human person. Also, children need their married parents to have a strong and faithful love for each other. This helps the children to understand what love really is and to know how to love.*)
- Why does the love in marriage have to go beyond feelings? (*Feelings don’t last forever. Marriage can be difficult. There will be problems and selfishness. If the spouses just want to get what they think they deserve, the couple will be miserable.*)

- Why does the couple have to be merciful to each other? Why do they have to be patient, forgiving, self-sacrificing, and generous? What would happen if they were not merciful to each other?
- What are ways that you have seen or experienced mercy at work in your friendships or in your family?
- We need grace to be merciful and to love generously. Where does this grace come from? (*From Jesus Christ on the Cross.*)
- Where do we go to get this grace? (*The sacraments, especially Baptism, Confession, and Eucharist.*)
- What is the special source of grace married couples have to love one another? (*The Sacrament of Marriage*)

h. The last part of the worksheet:

Allow students to brainstorm and discuss with each other the last set of blanks on the worksheet:

*Pope Francis says that family members need to use three words/phrases with each other all the time. These three words/phrases are*

- A. Please
- B. Thank you
- C. Sorry

## 5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:

- a. Have the students complete the student companion worksheet as the discussion progresses.
- b. Allow the students to really engage in the discussion and ask questions that foster a deeper understanding of these concepts.

## 6. Conclusion and Reinforcement Closure:

- a. *Review:* Go back to the top of the page where “God’s response to my questions” is located. Reread each sentence; as you finish one sentence, ask the students how they would explain what it means based on the class discussion. (This can be done as a class or in pairs while you survey the room and listen to student responses.).
- b. *Reinforce:* Explain the homework assignment found at the end of the worksheet:  
**Homework:** *Discuss with your family why Pope Francis’ three words are so important in family life. Below, write down what your family members shared:*

Encourage the students to include as many family members as possible in the discussion. They may even want to list who said what on their homework sheet.

## 7. Closing prayer:

You may use these words or your own prayer:

*Lord we thank you that you reveal your love to us in so many ways—in creation, in our families, in our own bodies, in love and forgiveness—in mercy. We thank you especially*

*that you have written into our bodies our mission to love and forgive. Help us always to love according to your plan. Give us the courage and grace to be merciful like you. Amen.*

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

- Shorten the discussion section of each topic.
- Omit the Conclusion and Reinforcement.

### **EVALUATION**

Use the discussion questions throughout the lesson as well as the concluding activity to assess student understanding of the major themes.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

*Option 1:* In addition to the homework assignment, challenge the students to implement these three words in their homes. The students could make signs of the three words to hang up around their houses as a reminder to the whole family of their call to love one another.

*Option 2:* Our bodies express our mission to love. Challenge the students to go home and perform acts of love that are wordless, such as giving a family member an extra hug or smile, helping with chores around the house without being asked, or spending less time on technology and more time interacting with family members.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

["How to Give a Chastity Talk"](#), ChastityProject.com

Teachers and parents would benefit from these tips for spiritual and practical preparation for giving a chastity talk to students (when those students are ready for such a talk).

**Grades 6-8***Who am I? What am I made for?***Lesson 2 Worksheet****God's response to my questions:**

You are my \_\_\_\_\_, and I created you in my \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. This means you are the only creatures who have the power both to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_. I created you with a body and a \_\_\_\_\_. I created you as either a \_\_\_\_\_ or a \_\_\_\_\_ for a specific \_\_\_\_\_. I created you out of \_\_\_\_\_, and I created you for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Creation:** Everything that God creates is \_\_\_\_\_. Created things are \_\_\_\_\_ of God's love and care for us. The most powerful signs of this love are other \_\_\_\_\_.

**Image and likeness:** I am able to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ like God! I am made to live in a \_\_\_\_\_ of persons just as God does. So I have a \_\_\_\_\_ to love like God—to love \_\_\_\_\_ and my \_\_\_\_\_ first, and then to love \_\_\_\_\_.

**Body and Soul:** I am a human person created with a body and soul. My body and soul are not \_\_\_\_\_, rather they are \_\_\_\_\_. My body \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ my soul. My body is \_\_\_\_\_ because it is a \_\_\_\_\_ of God's loving plan for me.

**"Male and female he created them.":**

- A. My sexuality (maleness/femaleness) has a \_\_\_\_\_. It reveals the way I am called to \_\_\_\_\_ God and others.
- B. Chastity: The virtue of chastity helps me to \_\_\_\_\_ in the way that \_\_\_\_\_ has designed for me to love. True love wants what is \_\_\_\_\_ for others. Chastity helps me not to be \_\_\_\_\_ in my love for others.
- C. Complementarity (comes from the word "complete"): Men and women are \_\_\_\_\_ for one another. Their bodies and souls \_\_\_\_\_ one another. Only together can they bring new human \_\_\_\_\_ into the world.

**Marriage:**

- A. Marriage is a public \_\_\_\_\_ before God that husbands and wives make to \_\_\_\_\_ each other as God does, to be \_\_\_\_\_ to each other, and to be open to new \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. The love in marriage goes beyond \_\_\_\_\_. It is a commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ each other every day until \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. Their love for each other is called to be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. Their mission is to mirror the love that Jesus has for the \_\_\_\_\_. Their mission is \_\_\_\_\_. They have to be \_\_\_\_\_ to each other as \_\_\_\_\_ is merciful to us.
- D. This is impossible without \_\_\_\_\_. Marriage is a \_\_\_\_\_. This means the husband and wife have to use \_\_\_\_\_ to love each other every \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_.

Pope Francis says that family members need to use three words/phrases with each other all the time. These three words/phrases are

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

**Homework:** Discuss with your family why Pope Francis' three words are so important in family life. Below, write down what your family members shared:



## Grades 6 - 8

### LESSON 3: CREATING THE FUTURE & CHOOSING LIFE

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*The love between a man and a woman is ordered toward marriage, and marriage is ordered toward procreation. Every baby is the definition of hope. Babies bring life to the family (the domestic church), and the parents help their children to discover their unique roles in the Body of Christ by teaching them about God's infinite and unfailing love. Parents show their children that God made us for a reason, for a mission. Our mission is to love, using the strength given to us by God's love and grace. In a culture where faith is unsupported, families and parishes are called to bear witness to the faith and to be counter-cultural—loving life and loving in community (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Parts V & X).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Discuss what a baby needs in order to grow and be nurtured to realize God's plan for his life
2. List the qualities that parents need in order to raise their children to be healthy and holy
3. Define the family as the "domestic church" and explain with clarity what that means as a counter-cultural reality

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Parts V and X), Bible, picture of a baby, paper, pens or pencils

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

##### **1. Opening Prayer:**

Read Luke 18: 15-17

*"Now they were bringing even infants to Jesus that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.'"*

*"Dear Jesus, we invite you to be with us here today, and we ask in a special way that you fill our families with the best of blessings. Enrich us with your holy grace. Grant that our parents may faithfully and constantly live the patient and merciful love you gave to*

*them on their wedding day. Fill them with the spirit of wisdom and inspire them to impart your wisdom to us, their children. Make us obedient, docile, and loving, ever grateful for the gift of our family. And, Lord, each of us has some anxiety, fear, or suffering which we would like to offer to you on behalf of our family. We place those things, which weigh upon our hearts, at the foot of your Cross. Make our families healthy, holy, and life-giving, so that as a family we might give glory to you. Amen"* (Adapted from Reverend George A. Kelly. *The Catholic Family Handbook*, New York: Random House, 1959).

## 2. Pre-Assessment:

Ask the students:

- a. How does marriage help the husband and wife to grow in love?
- b. How do children help the husband and wife to grow in love?

Share answers and discuss.

## 3. Motivator:

- a. Show a picture of a baby and say: "I propose to you that a newborn baby is **the definition of hope**. How is it that a baby is the definition of hope?"

*Possible leads for this discussion:*

- *A newborn baby has his whole life ahead of him; he's made no mistakes.*
- *He is a human person with the same dignity as any other, with the same rights to be loved, to live, and yet he is still growing into his potential as a human person.*
- *Right now, in his infant state, we don't know how he's going to turn out, but we have great hope for his future to be healthy, happy, etc.*

## 4. Content & Key Points:

- a. Write on the board or project a working definition of hope: "**hope = trusting in a promise to be fulfilled.**"
- b. *(Refer to the baby boy picture.)* When a new baby is born, a promise is there waiting to be fulfilled. There is great hope wrapped up in this tiny human being.
  - He has his life before him: education, athletics, friends, personality, faults, ideals, dreams, habits, pet peeves, maybe a wife or a priestly vocation, possibly a family, and definitely an eternal destiny.
  - He has his own unique place in the world and in God's plans. So much is wrapped up in this little baby.
  - But before any of this unfolds, babies begin immediately to give life to the marriage—they bring hope! (It is true that not every married couple is blessed with children. These couples without children are called to bring life into the world in a different way. Some give foster children new hope and a new life through adopting them. Some become more involved in the parish or in the community, taking on special charitable works. All men and women are called to give a self-sacrificing, life-giving love.)

- c. One of the beautiful things about this baby (like other babies) is that he is also breakable, vulnerable, and dependent. He needs his parents for everything. He has so much growing to do.
- He has the potential of being healthy and happy, moving toward his eternal destiny.
  - But, he also has the potential of being dysfunctional, unhappy, and unhealthy.
  - He is dependent on the love and nurturing of his family.
- d. No family is perfect. But by their love and by teaching us about God, our parents help us to grow and develop.
- What do you think are some key elements for a happy, healthy family? *(A strong marriage, parents who really love and sacrifice for each other, parents who know they need God and depend on him for their strength.)*
  - The key to raising happy, healthy children is teaching them about God and about what it really means to love. The parents—by their love for their children and for each other—teach their children about love. They teach their children how to have a relationship with God. What are some things your parents have taught you about real love or about God? How did they teach this to you? (Share and discuss answers.)
- e. In our day and age, raising a family that loves God is counter-cultural—it is rebellious. It means not only rejecting the evil that is all over our culture but also recognizing how the culture is influencing us each day.
- What are ways the culture is influencing you toward evil or away from what is good? *(Movies, computer games, television, the internet, can make us think that things are more important than people; we are influenced to be materialistic and selfish; we are made to focus on what we look like or on what we want people to think about us. The popular culture encourages us to rebel against our parents and to doubt our faith in God and in the Church. The popular culture doesn't seem to help families or marriages; it actually seems to attack them.)*
  - What are areas in our life where the culture is influencing? Where do we need to be on our guard? *(With the types of people we choose as friends, with the forms of entertainment we choose—like games, movies, music, television shows, magazines, websites, etc.)*
  - What are some questions we could ask ourselves about these areas of possible influence? *(Does this game/movie/show/relationship bring me closer to my family or does it take me away from my family? Is this influence hostile to my faith? Am I making a compromise to my faith, or to who I am, by engaging in this aspect of popular culture—this type of music, entertainment, etc.?)*
  - Who can help you to make these decisions and judgments? *(Our parents and our teachers.)* Your parents want to help you and to be there for you. They want to give you the tools you need to make careful and correct

decisions about what is out there in our culture. Your parents want to provide for all your needs—not just your material needs, but also your emotional and spiritual needs. They want to help you grow in faith and in love most of all.

- Because of this, the family is actually called “the **domestic church**,” meaning that your family is a “little home church.” Just as the big Catholic Church takes care of you spiritually, so your family is called to take care of you spiritually so that you can grow into the happy, healthy, holy person God wants you to be. In fact, God wants your entire family to all become saints, even in the midst of a culture that is ignoring God more and more. He wants your family to be a great sign of hope to the whole world.

**5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:**

a. *Activity*

- Place the students in small groups.
- Ask the students: “What does this baby need throughout his life in order to be a healthy human person destined for sainthood? What do his parents need?”
- Have them make a T-chart in their small groups with the paper and pen/pencil:

What the baby needs	What the parents need
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
<i>etc.</i>	

- After a few minutes have the students share their thoughts with the whole group. Some possible leading responses might be:
  - The baby needs: love, attention, security, affection, discipline, kindness, faith, guidance, prayer, a relationship with God, etc.
  - The parents need: loyalty to each other, mutual support, love, faith, mercy, forgiveness from each other, fidelity, commitment to each other, selflessness, sacrifice, generous self-giving, a relationship with God, etc.

**6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:**

- a. Sharing of charts: Discuss the charts that the small groups created. Have students share some key ideas with the group.
- b. Discussion:
  - Why is a relationship with God so important to being healthy? (*God shows us what it is to love and he helps us to love. God is the creator and author of*

*human nature. We become more who we are meant to be when we conform to the One who created us in His image.)*

- How does the family help our relationship with God? *(In the family we learn to love, how to give and take, how to be loved. The family is a reflection of the communion within the Trinity, and within our family, we learn how to enter into communion. We learn to stop complaining and start giving.)*
  - How does the Church help the family foster a relationship with God? *(Through giving us grace and strengthening our family faith. Through offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every Sunday, through making Confession and Eucharist, Baptism and Matrimony available to us, by preaching the Word of God.)*
  - What aspects of our culture seem to fight against the family? How?
  - What can families do to be a living witness of life and love to the popular culture, which is at times at odds with the Gospel message? *(Be a witness of prayer in the public sector, share the faith with others, do things together to serve others and the larger community, be loving and joyful witnesses of Jesus Christ, etc.)*
- c. *Resolution:* Have the students make a resolution to be a counter-cultural family. Ask them to decide what aspects of the popular culture (exploitation of sex in media and movies, abortion culture, culture that excludes God and prayer, even degrades the name of God, etc.) they most would like to counter, and have them write statements beginning with "I will counter... by..."
- Example A: I will counter the secular culture by saying "God bless you" to cashiers and/or store employees.
- Example B: I will counter the attack on marriage by praying each day for couples on the brink of divorce.
- d. *Compose a prayer:* Then have the students write a prayer for their family to be a family of joy, love, and peace in the heart of the universal Church. Encourage them to post this prayer in a prominent place (e.g., their mirror or door) so that they will pray for their family every day.

## **7. Closing Prayer:**

### ***Prayer for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, 2015 (as found in LIOM)***

*God and Father of us all,  
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,  
you have made us  
your sons and daughters  
in the family of the Church.*

*May your grace and love  
help our families  
in every part of the world  
be united to one another  
in fidelity to the Gospel.*

*May the example of the Holy Family,  
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,  
guide all families, especially those most troubled,  
to be homes of communion and prayer  
and to always seek your truth and live in your love.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us!*

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit creating a chart and just discuss “what the baby needs” and “what the parents need” together as a group.

Omit Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure.

### **EVALUATION**

*Option 1:* Have the students demonstrate their understanding by identifying how and why certain influences in the secular culture are destructive to the family. This could be done through (A) a tag-team speech (groups present the information in a tag-team format), (B) written in an essay, or (C) written in large bullet points on a poster.

*Option 2:* Evaluate the students’ understanding from their responses in the discussion section of the lesson.

### **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

*Option 1:*

Interview a member of your family about his or her own experiences of faith. Use the following questions and add your own.

Who taught you about God? What helps you to strengthen your faith? What is your favorite passage from the Gospels about Jesus? What is your favorite way to pray? What is one piece of advice you could give to people my age about faith? Add your own questions.

*Option 2:*

Invite your family members to pray with you in an out-of-the-ordinary way. Here are a few ideas (choose one that you have never done together as a family): pray together before a meal; go to Sunday Mass together; go to a daily Mass together; go to a church for Eucharistic Adoration together; visit a particularly beautiful or historic church or shrine together; pray the Rosary (or a decade of the Rosary) or the Divine Mercy Chaplet together; read the Sunday Gospel (or daily Gospel) together aloud and then discuss it.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**[\*We're on a Mission From God\*](#)

Mary Beth Bonacci, Ignatius Press, 1996

In this book, Mary Beth Bonacci joins with John Paul II in bringing young Catholics to a clearer understanding of the Church and their role in it.

[\*Because God Is Real: Sixteen Questions, One Answer\*](#) (Chapter XI "Why do we have families?")

Peter Kreeft, Ignatius Press, 2008

The book is very accessible to young people and presents the Catholic Church's doctrine in a clear and simple manner.

[\*YouCat English: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#)

Christoph Schonborn, ed., Ignatius Press, 2011

This catechism was created for young people. It is complete with beautiful pictures and easy-to-read explanations of the Church's teachings. It is written in numbered paragraphs parallel to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

## Grades 6 - 8

### LESSON 4: ALL LOVE BEARS FRUIT

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*Every human person is called to holiness and to bear fruit in their vocation—whether they are married or celibate (priests, nuns, sisters, or brothers). Within the Church God calls certain individuals to marriage and family life. He calls certain men to be priests in order to make Christ present to his Church through the celebration of the sacraments. He also calls men and women to the religious or consecrated life in order to bear the fruit of love in ways that married persons cannot (paraphrased from the Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, Part VI).*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Discuss how certain vocations to celibacy (such as the priesthood and consecrated life) bear fruit in love
2. Read the vocation profiles of priests and consecrated men and women
3. Explain the vocation of celibate men and women to give their lives to the Church by foregoing marriage and instead making a total self-gift directly to God
4. Explain how celibate men and women bear fruit for the Kingdom of God

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part VI), Bible, internet connection; means of watching an online video together

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

1. **Opening Prayer:** *A Prayer of Mother Teresa (adapted from John Henry Newman)*  
*"Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with your spirit and love. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of you. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus. Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others."*
2. **Pre-Assessment:** *Ask the students the following questions:*  
What is your impression of priests and sisters in the Church?  
Who are they, and what do they do?



Why do you suppose there are priests?  
Why do you think God calls men and women to religious life?

**3. Motivator:** Watch one or both of the following (depending on time available):

- a. [“Fishers of Men: Catholic Priesthood”](#): On the Catholic Priesthood (Length: 18:22; or, watch only from the beginning until 7:35)
- b. [“Light of Love—Trailer”](#)—On the Consecrated Religious Life (Length 2:25)

**4. Content & Key Points:**

- a. Every human person’s mission is love. Love leads to holiness and happiness. But love and holiness are possible only when we live in communion with others. In order to be holy, we must love, and in order to love, we must have someone to love. Holiness always involves a complete self-gift, living one’s life for another.
- b. God calls different people to live out this mission to love in different ways. The way God calls us to live is called our “vocation” (our calling in life).
- c. There are two basic categories of vocations:
  - The Married Vocation—In this vocation, men and women are called to love and self-giving through a life-long, faithful marriage; if God gives them the gift of children, their love and self-giving extends to their children. All married people are called also to give life and love in other ways outside their immediate family. They are called to give in their parishes and communities.
  - The Celibate Vocation—In this vocation, men and women are called to love and self-giving through living a “celibate life” (a life in which they do not get married or have sexual relationships). Here are three sub-categories of the celibate vocation:
    - Holy Orders (Ordained Men)—This includes bishops, priests, and deacons
    - Consecrated Life (Religious Life)—This includes nuns, monks, sisters, fathers, and brothers
    - Dedicated Single Life—This is often a temporary vocation, because individuals can shift out of this vocation and into the married vocation. For some people, it will be a permanent vocation.
- d. Ask students to compare and contrast these different vocations. The most important common trait is that all are called to holiness, to become saints. Each involves a self-gift to others. This is done in different ways, however. In marriage, a couple makes a self-gift to one another. In Holy Orders, the self-gift is made to Christ’s Church. In Consecrated Life, the self-gift is made to Jesus himself, especially by serving others. The important common quality to emphasize is that *all* are called to selflessly give themselves to another, in order to live in a communion of love.
- e. Have students discuss why they think anyone would want to become a priest or

a nun. Is this a natural calling? Discuss how this is a *supernatural* calling, which means that it's a special gift from God that comes with special graces from God. A religious vocation is an invitation from God to freely enter into a special relationship with him.

- f. Ask the students what the differences are that they see between the world's idea of "not being married" and the Church's idea of celibacy? Point out that in the eyes of the world celibacy is about what you don't have – a spouse or children. But in truth, celibacy is about commitment to Christ and bearing fruit through love of neighbor. Celibacy is not about looking out for only myself as the world might suggest, but about giving oneself totally to all God's children. Pope Francis is a wonderful example of this. When we truly understand celibacy, we see that it is not about an individual alone but about a gift to others. Celibacy is not about loneliness and isolation; it is about being a gift to others.

### 5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:

- a. The best way to have the students understand the vocation of a priest or a religious is for them to encounter a priest or a religious. Print out and have the students read the vocation stories of men and women who have become consecrated. Divide them into groups and give them the narratives. Below are links to a few good vocation stories you can print for them. Links to vocation stories:
- [\*Mother Dolores Hart\*](#)
  - [\*Sister Bethany Madonna, S.V.\*](#)
  - [\*Brother Efrain, OCSO\*](#)
  - [\*Sister Marie Celine of Mary, Handmaid of the Lord & Sister Edith Marite of Our Lady, Ark of the Covenant\*](#)
  - [\*Sister Faustina of Merciful Love, O.C.D. & Sister Emily of the Mother of God, O.C.D.\*](#)
  - [\*Sister Anne Catherine, O.P.\*](#)
  - [\*Father David Endres\*](#)
  - [\*Msgr. Charles Pope\*](#)
- b. As the students read the vocation narratives, have them answer the following questions, either on paper or orally:
- Describe briefly how this person felt that Christ was calling him or her to religious life or the priesthood.
  - What is one thing that is particularly striking about the narrative you read?
  - How is joy a central theme to the profile you read, and where does that joy come from?

### 6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:

Have the students answer these questions either in a discussion format or as a journal entry: How are the married life and the celibate life both ways to love and bear fruit? How do priests and sisters love in a way that is similar to the way parents love? How

do priests and sisters love in a way that is different to the way parents love?

## 7. Closing Prayer:

### ***Prayer for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, 2015 (as found in LIOM)***

*God and Father of us all,  
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,  
you have made us  
your sons and daughters  
in the family of the Church.  
May your grace and love  
help our families  
in every part of the world  
be united to one another  
in fidelity to the Gospel.*

*May the example of the Holy Family,  
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,  
guide all families, especially those most troubled,  
to be homes of communion and prayer  
and to always seek your truth and live in your love.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us!*

## **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson.

Omit the videos.

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluate the students' understanding based on their responses to the questions in the Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure section.

## **BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Have the students bring this lesson home by encouraging them to pray for priests and religious and for an increase of vocations. Have the students talk to their families to find ways to encourage and support their parish priests and other consecrated persons they know.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Familiaris Consortio\*](#), *Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*

Pope John Paul II, 1981

[\*Vita Consecrata\*](#), *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Consecrated Life*

John Paul II, 1996

[\*YouCat English: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#)

Christoph Schonborn, ed., Ignatius Press, 2011

This catechism was created for young people. It is complete with beautiful pictures and easy-to-read explanations of the Church's teachings. It is written in numbered paragraphs parallel to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

## Grades 6 - 8

### LESSON 5: LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*God created the family to be "a school of love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, mutual respect, patience, and humility in the midst of a world darkened by selfishness and conflict. In these ways, the family teaches what it means to be human. However, many temptations arise which try to coax us into forgetting that male and female are created for covenant and communion" (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* Introduction to Part VII). The Church resists anything that threatens Christian marriage or the family.*

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Describe the family as a school of love
2. Identify evil influences that serve as obstacles to love
3. Determine effective ways of eliminating or avoiding these evil influences
4. Explain how the Church provides ways for families to grow in love and to be a "light in a dark world"

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part VII), note cards (enough for each student), poster board or a whiteboard, pens or pencils

#### **PROCEDURE (30 MINUTES)**

**1. Opening Prayer:** *Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (RSV edition)*

*"Love is patient and kind;  
love is not jealous or boastful  
it is not arrogant or rude.  
Love does not insist on its own way;  
it is not irritable or resentful;  
it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.  
Love bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."*

**2. Pre-Assessment:**

- a. *Preparation:* Before class, write the title of this lesson, "Light in a Dark World," toward the top of the whiteboard/poster.

b. *Ask the students:*

- What have you learned about our mission to love?
- According to Saint Paul in the passage you just heard for the opening prayer, what is love like? *As they respond, write the list on the board in a contained area. (You are eventually going to draw a box around the words.) Words may include patient, kind, not rude, forgiving, compassionate, humble, etc.*

### 3. Motivator:

- a. Pass out note cards and give these directions: On your note-card, write your name on one side. Then look at the list on the board, and on the other side of the note-card write down a place where you find at least one of these words lived out. For example, if your grandmother is really patient, you could write: Grandma's House; or if your youth director is very kind, you could write: Youth Group. Please know that I will read these place names aloud in class, but I will not identify who wrote it.
- b. After picking up their note cards, read the place names aloud. Then ask the students rhetorically, "Do you know where this love is supposed to be lived out each and every day?" Turn to the board and draw a box around the words, then draw a triangle on top of the box to form the shape of a house.
- c. Write "Home" above the box and next to "Light in a Dark World." Then say, "Each of our homes is supposed to be a place where love lives—a light in a dark world."

### 4. Content & Key Points:

- a. *Families as Schools of Love*— Jesus desires our families to be "schools of love," and so the Church also desires that our families be "schools of love," because Jesus and His Church are one.
  - *Discussion:* What do you think the Church means when she says families should be schools of love? Allow the discussion to be led by the students. Lead them to an understanding that "school" does not mean a place for math lessons and homework; rather "school" in this case means a place where we first learn to live out our mission to love. Instead of learning math in that school, we learn love there. We are challenged to grow in love there. Try to get them to think of concrete examples of love lived in the family based on the words from Saint Paul used for the opening prayer.
- b. *Obstacles to Love*— Return to the drawing on the board and ask the students to think of things that do not belong in the home, the "school of love." Explain that any influences that would not bring love and instead bring division or sin do not belong in the home. They are obstacles to love and to our mission to love.
  - *Discussion:* Give an example first: write the word "selfishness" on the board somewhere outside of the house. More examples: "fighting with siblings" and "movies with bad language." First allow the students to think in silence, then ask them to share their ideas with another student and analyze *whether* their idea is an obstacle to love and *why* it is an obstacle to love. After a few minutes of sharing and analyzing, go around the room, and if you hear

good examples, ask the student(s) to go to the board and write it outside of the house.

- c. *Source of Obstacles*: Look at the board together and ask the students, "Is it hard to keep these obstacles outside of our homes? If so, why?" Lead them in a discussion about the Fall and original sin. Baptism took away original sin from our souls, but we still have the effects of sin. We are still easily inclined to sin, to be selfish, and to take pleasure in things in a disordered way.
  - *Discussion*: What are we created for? Are we created to choose evil or to choose love? Help the students to see that rejecting evil is worth the effort so that our families can truly be schools of love where our mission to love is carried out.
- d. *Defeating Obstacles*: Explain: Every family struggles to keep evil influences out of the home. We are in a battle against sin and the Evil One. The Good News is that Christ defeated evil when He rose from the dead, yet we all have the privilege in our lives to fight against evil with Jesus so that we can get to Heaven.
  - *Discussion*: [If you have time to develop the lesson further, skip this discussion and go directly to "Methods & Strategies that develop the lesson" below]
  - What are some ways to help our families defeat evil and grow in love? (*Answers may include, growing in self-giving, having mercy and forgiving others, generosity, "justice, compassion, forgiveness, mutual respect, patience, and humility" [LIOM Introduction to Part VII], courage to turn away from things in the culture that are evil or harmful to the family, the discipline to turn away from "me" time and spend more time to others, family prayer time, rules regarding watching TV and the use of electronics, instituting family game time, working on certain virtues together, etc.*) What are some specific ways that the Church gives us to help our families defeat evil and grow in love? (*The Mass and the other sacraments, family-building events/opportunities, Catholic schools, the example and help of the Saints, service and mission opportunities, holy water, the opportunity to study aloud together Church teachings on marriage and the family as found in the Catechism and other Church documents, etc.*)

## 5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:

### a. Option 1:

Put the student in pairs. Ask the pairs to think of a short skit in which a lesson of love is learned in the family. Provide an example: Mom asks you to wipe the counter, and you whine and complain. Then an older sibling may say, "When you whine and complain, the whole atmosphere of the house becomes negative, and it bothers mom. Let's work on not complaining."

- Give the students no more than seven minutes to think of a scenario and practice their skit, then allow them to act it out in front of the class.
- In this way, you can be sure that they understand how love can be made concrete in family life.

*b. Option 2:*

- Allow the students to work in pairs to answer these two questions: (1) What are some ways to help our families defeat evil and grow in love? (2) What are some specific ways that the Church gives us to help our families defeat evil and grow in love?
- Be sure to give an example first: For example, the Church gives us the sacraments to help us grow in love. Allow each pair to present their ideas for defeating obstacles to love in their homes. Look for responses such as family prayer time, rules regarding watching TV, instituting family game time, working on certain virtues together, holy water, studying aloud together Church teachings on marriage and the family, etc.
  - Be sure to include these (above) if the students do not list them. As a class, evaluate whether the ideas would be effective.
  - Help them to see that we need God's grace to overcome these obstacles.
  - If there is time, discuss what it means to say that our homes should be "a light in a dark world."
  - Guide the students to conclude that sin brings division and darkness and love brings unity and light to the world because we are created for love. Families filled with love can show the world how to fulfill our common mission to love in communion with others.

## **6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:**

*Explain:* The Church cares so much about the family that she helps us to defeat evil so that families can be "schools of love." The Church desires that our homes be "a light in a dark world." Jesus is the most precious gift that we have. He is Love, and so Love must be protected in our homes. *[On the board draw the Eucharist (simple circle with a cross in the middle) in the middle of the home.]* Just as Saint Joseph and Mother Mary protected Jesus in their home in Nazareth, we must protect him in our families. But he also protects us! Jesus is the source of all love. He gives us the strength to defeat evil and to learn to love. We must give him permission—and even invite him—to live in our hearts and in our homes so that we can fulfill our mission to love.

## **7. Closing Prayer:**

*Mother Mary, we turn to you as we end our lesson. Your home in Nazareth was a true school of love. Be with us and our families. Be a mother to us and teach us how to defeat sin and evil influences so that Love can live in our homes. And we pray together, Hail Mary, full of grace...*

## **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson.

Omit Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure.



**Extend the lesson for a mature class:**

- *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part VII), on which this lesson is based, discusses specific behaviors that are obstacles to our mission to love. The document includes a section on pornography, contraception, and same-sex attraction. These issues are not treated directly in this lesson, but if the students you are teaching are at a maturity level that is able to receive and understand the Church's teachings on these issues, you may include them in the *Obstacles to Love* section of this lesson plan.
- Or, you may see the *Grade 9-12: Lesson 7* in this series of lesson plans and adapt it to your students.

**EVALUATION**

You can evaluate whether your students understand these objectives through their questions/responses during the class discussion and the brainstorming sessions.

**BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

*Option 1:* Have the students write Saint Paul's Canticle of Love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a) on a poster and decorate it to hang up in their homes. You could have them do this during class time or at home. Then ask them to read/pray it with their families and choose one of the virtues (i.e. patience, kindness, etc.) from the canticle to practice as a family. They could choose a different virtue each week or each month. Then, if one member of the family sees another family member practicing this virtue, they could write it on a sheet of paper and place it near the poster of Saint Paul's canticle. Each week/month, the family could read the lived examples of virtue in their homes. Hopefully this would encourage growth in virtue and an awareness of others who are growing in virtue in the home.

*Option 2:* Have the students take the words from Saint Paul's Canticle of Love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a) to their families. At home, they can discuss it with their families in order to find examples of how they live each of those characteristics of love in their home. They should write down each example. For instance: "Patient—Mom waits patiently for my practice to be over when she picks me up," or "Not boastful—My brother never flaunts that he gets better grades than me," etc. Decide as a family where you should hang these examples up so that you can continue to add to them.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

[\*Familiaris Consortio\*](#), *Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*

John Paul II, 1981

This document is a great resource. Part One, "Bright spots and shadows for the family today" is particularly pertinent to this lesson.



[Lighthouse Catholic Media](#) has great resources (videos, books, etc.) for parents and teens who want to grow in their understanding of the faith so that the faith can be lived out in their homes.

*YouCat English: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Christoph Schonborn, ed., Ignatius Press, 2011

This catechism was created for young people. It is complete with beautiful pictures and easy-to-read explanations of the Church's teachings. It is written in numbered paragraphs parallel to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

## GRADES 6 - 8

### LESSON 6: A HOME FOR THE WOUNDED HEART

**Note:** While this lesson conveys the content of the preparatory catechesis, teachers and catechists may need to adapt the language and methodology of the lesson out of sensitivity to issues and circumstances the students may be facing.

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

*"Many people, especially today, face painful situations resulting from poverty, disability, illness and addictions, unemployment, and the loneliness of advanced age. But divorce and same-sex attraction impact the intimate life of the family in especially powerful ways. Christian families and networks of families should be sources of mercy, safety, friendship and support for those struggling with these issues"* (Preparatory Catechesis for the VIII World Meeting of Families, *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* Introduction to Part VIII).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will

1. Discuss what makes the teachings of Jesus regarding divorce and same-sex attraction "hard" sayings
2. Examine the attitudes we are called to exhibit toward those who struggle with these issues
3. Recognize that each one of us personally also finds an aspect of Jesus' teachings to be hard
4. Identify methods of providing and building a culture of mercy, friendship, and support within the Church community

#### **MATERIALS**

*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* (Part VIII and IX), Bibles, Lesson 6 Worksheet

#### **PROCEDURE (40-50 MINUTES)**

**1. Opening Prayer:** *Read Luke 6: 17-19*

*"He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them."*

*Lord Jesus, you are our Healer and our Savior, we ask that in a particular way you heal any wounds that we may have and any wounds that our family members and friends may have. We praise and thank you for your compassion, mercy, and love. Help us to bring your compassion, mercy, and love to others. In your love, you forgive us of all of our sins. Help us to forgive others, especially the person we are having the hardest time forgiving. Amen.*

**2. Pre-Assessment:**

Ask the students:

- a. Have you ever been hurt by someone else's sin or selfishness?
- b. Have you ever hurt someone else by your sin or selfishness?
- c. There is no need to answer the questions aloud or discuss them further. As long as the students recognize that both questions should be answered, "Yes," continue with the lesson.

**3. Motivator:**

We are all wounded by other people's sins and by our own sins. Jesus wants to heal us. But Jesus also wants us to help one another to heal. Just like we can hurt others, we can also help others to heal.

As we go through our discussion today, try to find the answer to these questions:  
How does Jesus heal us? How do we help to heal each other?

**4. Content & Key Points** (See Lesson 6 Worksheet):

Have the students complete the worksheet as the lesson progresses:

- a. "Hearing the hard sayings of Jesus" (LIOM 146-149): Read aloud LIOM 147 (below):

*Some of Christ's hardest sayings deal with marriage, sexual desire and the family. Jesus' teaching about the indissolubility of marriage shocks not only the Pharisees but his own followers: "If that is the case...it is better not to marry," murmur the disciples. (Mt 19:10) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus not only deepens the teaching of the Decalogue, but, as the New Moses, he calls his followers to a radical transformation of their hearts: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you everyone who looks at a woman in lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Mt 5:27-28)*

- b. The disciples of Jesus obviously found it difficult when Jesus told them that divorce is not allowed. He also told them that adultery and lust are also against God's commands. He wants us to seek a deeper, inner purity, not just a seeming purity on the outside.
- c. Discussion:
  - We can find that it is hard for us to accept this saying of Jesus—that we must not look at others in an impure way. We may find it hard when Jesus tells us not to hate others ("He who hates his brother is a murderer"—1 John 3:15.). Just as these sayings of Jesus may be hard to us, other sayings of Jesus are hard to other people. For instance, some find Jesus' teaching on divorce to be very difficult.
  - What are some of the things that *make* Jesus' teaching so hard? (*Temptations and habits of sin; we don't understand why Jesus is teaching it; parents or people we love are divorced; sometimes people change after marriage;*

*sometimes it isn't safe to stay married; sometimes people don't love each other anymore; selfishness; etc.)*

- What are some of the reasons that Jesus' and the Church's teaching on same-sex attraction is hard? *(We feel like we are judging people; we know and love people who are attracted to the same sex; it seems mean to tell them they are wrong if God 'made them that way'; they can be in loving and committed relationships too, it's mean to deny them the "right" to get married, etc).*
- d. Brainstorm reasons as a class (or in small groups) about why Jesus and the Church insist on these teachings, even when they are hard and unpopular. For instance, sometimes it is hard not to hate people, to think impure thoughts, or to look at someone lustfully. Why don't Jesus and the Church just give up on these teachings and throw them out? After all, they make people feel bad. *(When we do the wrong thing, we end up feeling bad anyway—or we feel worse than bad. God made us and knows how we will be truly happy. Jesus and the Church love us too much to lie to us or let us do things that are ultimately bad for us, Jesus and the Church want us to be truly free, happy, and get to heaven; if the Church won't teach us what is right, then why would we need the Church? Isn't that one of the major reasons Jesus gave us to the Church? –to continue his teachings about right and wrong?).*
- e. *"The Church is a field hospital"* (LIOM 150-157): Discuss what a field hospital is with the students. Then discuss what it means that Pope Francis compared the Church to a field hospital after battle. The Holy Father said:  
*"It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds....And you have to start from the ground up"* (quoted in LIOM 150).
- f. Discussion:
- If people are suffering, the first priority is to get them to a doctor. In the Church, the first priority is to get people who are suffering to Jesus, the Divine Physician. What is the meaning of Jesus as the Divine Physician? *(Jesus is God. He is Divine. He is also a doctor for our souls, so he is a physician. Jesus is able to heal people and perform miracles. He also heals our souls through forgiving our sins and loving us).*
  - Pope Francis asks us to start healing the wounds. How can we do this? What is the wound at the root of all other wounds? *(The root wound is lack of love. When a person is not loved, they begin to look for love in the wrong things—drugs, bad relationships, alcohol, bad forms of entertainments, etc.—but these bad things only make them more wounded. If we have an attitude of love and compassion toward people who are wounded, we will be imitating Jesus' example. And, we will hopefully help wounded people to see that we are wounded, and everyone is wounded in some way either by their own sins or*

*the sins of others. No one is alone. Jesus is with us and he gave us each other and the whole Church too. No one of us lives Jesus' teachings completely and perfectly. We need Jesus' help to do this and we need each others' love and support.)*

- How do the hard sayings of Jesus and the Church actually bring about healing? *(In suffering the difficulties of living these teachings and loving one another, we must encounter and rely on Christ. If we turn to Him, He can heal us. He also uses the love we have for each other to begin that healing process.)*
- g. *"With patience and forgiveness, the Church helps us heal and grow"* (LIOM 158-163): The Holy Spirit gives us the healing power of God's grace. This grace can help us accept and live the hard teachings of Jesus. With the students, brainstorm ways the Holy Spirit makes Jesus present to us in the Church *(in the sacraments, the Mass, in the Bible, and through the official teachings of the Church).*
- h. Discussion:
- What are ways we "wounded" members of the Church can find healing in Jesus, the Divine Physician? *(Confession, the Eucharist, reading the Bible, prayer, the Rosary, asking the saints for help, works of charity for others, doing small sacrifices and other acts of love for God, having holy friends who help us to do the right thing and to avoid sin, etc).*
  - How can becoming a true friend of Jesus help us love him and understand that he really wants what's best for us? *(When we know Jesus and what he asks of us, we see that following him and his way of loving actually makes us happier; once we experience this happiness on a small level—like when making a sacrifice for someone else makes us feel good—we begin to want to try the more difficult things he asks, believing they will lead us to a deeper happiness. So, we try to be pure in our thoughts and to love rather than hate. This brings us more peace and more joy. We find Jesus is with us in our living of his ways. The more he is with us, the more we have strength to live like him.)*
- i. *"Catholic Teaching depends on Catholic community"* (LIOM 164-173): It's easier to do the right thing when we are surrounded by others doing the right thing. Discussion:
- What are some examples of positive peer pressure or times when your friends have helped you make the right decision?
  - Why should we help each other to grow in holiness? Can we become holy alone? Can a person just by himself or herself become holy?
- j. Explain that we need to help each other, because Jesus wants us to help each other. Jesus gave us each other. He unites us to each other especially through the Church. All of us are sinners, and all of us need the help of the other members of the Church. We need each other's good example and each other's support. Just as all of us are called to fight for chastity (the pure and proper use of our sexuality) according to our state in life, all of us are called work toward

holiness with God's help.

### **5. Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson:**

- a. *Option 1:* Have the students make a list of specific difficulties encountered by people who are divorced or experience same-sex attraction (*loneliness, financial difficulties, feeling excluded*). Next to each item, have them write a way other members of the Church can help someone experiencing that difficulty (*include them in your parties, dinners, spiritual and social gatherings; invite them to Mass and to Bible study; offer them your friendship, participate in Church service/mission activities together; pray together, etc.*).
- b. *Option 2:* Have the students list ways that their church is already doing a good job making sure no one in the Church, no matter what struggles they have, feels lonely. How does their Church make everyone feel included, loved, and important? What are some ideas for ways that their Church could improve? How can you contribute to this improvement?

### **6. Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure:**

- a. *Part 1:* Answer these questions either in class discussion or in a journal entry
  - How does Jesus heal us?
  - How do we help to heal each other?
- b. *Part 2:* Give the students the opportunity to do the following:
  - Name one specific way you can be a better friend to a particular person and help them choose what is right.
  - Name one specific way you can be a better example and better friend in general.
- c. *Part 3:* As a class, plan an event that includes everyone, single people, families, divorced people, etc., and allows everyone to feel included and part of the parish.

### **7. Closing Prayer:**

*Thank God for the wonderful gift of friendship and ask Him to help each person always be strong in loving others, living a holy life, setting a good example, and being friends with Jesus.*

### **ADAPTATIONS**

*If your time is limited:*

Omit Methods & Strategies That Develop the Lesson.

Omit Conclusion & Reinforcement Closure.

### **EVALUATION**

Check the worksheets the students completed.

**BRINGING THE LESSON HOME TO THE FAMILY**

Have the students go home and discuss the content of the lesson with their family. If their family includes parents (or if they have family friends) who are divorced or experience same-sex attraction, ask them what has been and/or would be helpful in supporting them in their struggles in life. Write these things down and bring them back to share with the class.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES****["A Big Heart Open to God"](#)**

Pope Francis interview with Antonio Spadaro, S.J. (printed in *America* magazine)

This is the article of an interview with Pope Francis in which he likened the Church to a field hospital.

**["Catechesis on Homosexuality: Making the Distinctions"](#)** by William Newton in *The Sower* [International Quarterly Catechetical Journal], (Vol 31, No. 3) July 2010.

**[YouCat English: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)**

Christoph Schonborn, ed., Ignatius Press, 2011

This catechism was created for young people. It is complete with beautiful pictures and easy-to-read explanations of the Church's teachings. It is written in numbered paragraphs parallel to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.









## Prayer for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, 2015

God and Father of us all,  
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,  
you have made us  
your sons and daughters  
in the family of the Church.

May your grace and love  
help our families  
in every part of the world  
be united to one another  
in fidelity to the Gospel.

May the example of the Holy Family,  
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,  
guide all families, especially those most troubled,  
to be homes of communion and prayer  
and to always seek your truth and live in your love.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us!

~ from ***Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*** ~