

LIFE SUNDAY CATECHESIS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Theme: St. Joseph - Practicing the virtue of chastity.

Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Expected Time: 30-40 Minutes

Introduction

Begin with a Prayer: Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father

St. Joseph, most chaste, pray for us!



1. What is chastity?

According to the Catechism of Catholic Church, “Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being” (CCC 2337).

Let’s break that down.

God created man as a body and soul composite. This truth is symbolically expressed in the Book of Genesis as, “then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust of the ground [his body] and blew into his nostrils the breath of life [his spiritual soul], and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7).

Only humans, of all God’s creations, possess both the sensory powers of body, as well as spiritual powers of knowledge and love (through intellect and free will respectively). Before the fall, man had perfect inner unity of his spiritual soul and material body. By this inner unity, man’s bodily instincts always remained subject to his intellect and will. Such perfection of inner unity was distorted once sin entered this world through man’s rejection of God. With sin came lust that distorted God’s plan of sexual expression as a means of authentic love.

Human sexuality is part of man’s bodily expression to share in God’s love with another person. God gave the gift of human sexuality for this sharing, and as a mutual lifelong gift between man and woman. For this reason, God unites man and woman in a lifelong commitment of marriage. Sexuality or sexual expression is thus at the center of human marriage.

In practicing the virtue of chastity, we use our intellect and will, to direct or order our sexuality away from lust, and toward the loving expression of mutual gift between man and woman in a marriage. Fulfilling that objective is the successful integration of sexuality within our life. It is a call to true and authentic love by means of what God calls as the “one flesh union” of man and woman, namely marital sex.

2. What are the sins against chastity?

God gave the gift of sexuality to respond to the call of true and authentic love between a husband and wife. If lust, instead of marital love, drives one’s sexual thoughts and acts, they become selfish and disordered, leading to sin. Sins against chastity include rape, pre-marital sex, adultery, masturbation, pornography, and intentionally encouraging lustful thoughts and desires (CCC 2351 – 2356).

Within marriage, husband and wife are called to practice chastity by being faithful to each other, and open to children in their sexual expression.

3. Is chastity repressive?

No, on the contrary, through the practice of chastity, a person is freed from disordered and selfish sexual thoughts and acts. The practice of this virtue orders a person's sexual desires toward that authentic love between man and woman, God established through marriage.

Chastity is [thus] the joyous affirmation of someone who knows how to live self-giving, free from any form of self-centered slavery. The chaste person is not self-centered, not involved in selfish relationships with other people. Chastity makes the personality harmonious. It matures it and fills it with inner peace. (PCF, The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family, December 8, 1995, #17)

4. How can I practice chastity?

To live a chaste life, is to live a life filled with love and joy. To do so, one must first pledge to live such a life. Chastity can be mastered only with the help of Holy Spirit, "Lord and Giver of Life". In the face of temptations, a chaste person reminds himself of his spiritual being and call toward authentic love. Through prayer, he can ward off the temptations from within or outside.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you created me in thy divine image. Even amid the sin that clouds my mind, help me to see in every human person thy precious image.

Lord, I pledge to honor my body, which you created to declare and express true, authentic love. Fill me with your Holy Spirit, so that my body, as temple of Holy Spirit, reveal God's love toward others.

Lord, I pledge to honor my sexuality, which you gave as a gift to express marital love, a sign of the final union between Christ and Church.

Lord, I pledge to honor others and see thyself in their being, so I may never view or use a human person for selfish desires or motives.

Lord, grant me a sincere heart and pure mind that I may be freed from every selfish thought, desire, and behavior.

Lord, in the face of temptation, help me to remember thy sufferings and cross, and to unite my struggles completely with your cross. Amen.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nTO7-004aM> (St. Joseph, Her most chaste spouse)

Activity: Ask students to read and study the life of St. Maria Goretti. Encourage students to think what inspired Maria to resist temptations even in the face of death.

Final prayer: Prayer to St. Joseph.

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you, God entrusted his only Son;
In you, Mary placed her trust;
With you, Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us, too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

St. Joseph, most chaste – Pray for us!



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