

20 — Man and Woman: He Created Them

Objectives

By the end of this lesson students will be able to ...

- understand that human sexuality is of God.
- state that from the beginning God created man and woman as unique beings.
- recognize that man and woman continue to support and bring each other to fulfillment.
- state that the Fathers of the Church see this relationship of man and woman reflecting the relationship of the Trinity.

For the Catechist

This unit, "Growth in Personhood," emphasizes the acceptance of our sexuality as part of God's plan. The basic Christian assumption toward human sexuality is the same as toward the rest of creation—it is good because it comes from God. Nevertheless, it is fallen because of sin. In Christ it is redeemed and transformed into a vehicle of His saving presence and a proclamation of the kingdom to come. The lessons in this unit ask the students to see that growth in our sexuality is part of our being deified, becoming one with Christ; therefore, our sexuality is to lead to our transformation as we share in the reign of God on earth. Regretfully, these ideas are contrary to the constant bombardment of sex as something that sells television shows, movies, books, and just about anything else. Hopefully, this unit's lessons help the students discover God's plan for our sexuality and our life with Him.

Included in the first two lessons are excerpts from Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*, a doctrine on sexuality that was presented during the first six years of his papacy (1979 to 1984). John Paul II presented during his "Wednesday audiences" a series of talks about the human body and sexuality. These talks, compiled into book form called *Theology of the Body*, develop the meaning of our bodies and of sexual desire as they relate to the purpose of our existence. *Theology of the Body* helps answer "*Who am I? What is my purpose in life? What is love all about?*"

For this unit "Growth in Personhood" that includes growth in sexuality, catechists need to work closely with parents either by meetings or individual contacts. Parents need to be aware that theology, not biology, is the purpose of this unit. It is the parents' responsibility and right to present the "facts of life" to their children; however, knowledge of these facts is presumed for this discussion. Suggest that parents should discuss these facts before the unit begins

*****A letter explaining the content of this unit is found on the last page of this lesson (page 157). This letter should be sent home to parents before the lessons begin.**

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Vesper folder

Review: Easel or wall pad markers with the objectives listed

Introduction: Paper, pencil

Guided Reading: student text, pens, pencils, paper

Vespers: Folders, prayer sheets, tape or glue, scissors

Activity A: "Journal," and Journal folders and pens or pencils

Closing Prayer: Vespers folders

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner and distribute the Vespers folders.
- Ask one student to choose the opening prayer.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

- We expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
- Our body as well as our spirit will share in the glory of God.
- The Book of Revelation is the source of much of the information about the Second Coming of Christ.
- Christians will rejoice on the day of the Second Coming for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

3. Introduction

- Ask the students to divide into two groups and ask the one group to list male qualities and the other group to list female qualities. [Suggestions: compassionate, aggressive, kind]
- Have the groups share their lists and help them discover that both men and women do share the same qualities.
- Ask the students to circle any qualities that might be different. Discuss how these differences can cause problems between men and women.
- Read the following aloud:

God created man and woman so that they may complete and enrich each other's life. God blessed them and created them to live in harmony with each other.

- Discuss the following by having the students refer to specific details:

1. *Do the television shows and movies of today show men and women living in harmony with each other? Which ones do and which ones do not?*

2. *Do the songs and music videos and video games of today present ways men and women complete and enrich each other's lives? Which ones do and which ones do not?*

3. *Is there anywhere that you can go in today's world to find men and women living in harmony as God planned?* [Hopefully someone says in marriage—with their parents and grandparents as examples.]

Background Reading (Our Desire for Union)

"The truth is that God made us to desire sex, and that is a good thing. Our sexual desire is not merely a hormonal reaction in our bodies, but a deeply rooted attraction to the beauty we see in others. Our sexual desire is a gift from God, who put the desire for union with another in us. God created us male and female so that we can learn to make a sincere gift of self to another. The union between man and woman is intended for marriage, which is a foreshadowing of the union that will ultimately satisfy us—the union with God in heaven. When teens start dating at thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen years old, they are often entering a ten- to fifteen-year period of dating, since most people don't marry until their late twenties or early thirties. Chastity is a challenge even when you are not dating. Spending ten to fifteen years in search of a spouse is a whole lot of time to stand on the edge of a cliff without ever falling off. In other words, our desires for union are very good, but we must respect them and learn to channel them into genuine love" (*Theology of the Body, Teens 23*).

4. Guided Reading, Page 101, "God's Original Plan"

Read this section aloud.

Guided Reading, Pages 101-102, "Our Human Sexuality"

- Ask all the students to read aloud the Scripture. The other paragraphs could be read by one student or by the catechist.
- Discuss how the image of the creation of woman from Adam emphasizes the need for man and woman to support and complete each other. Encourage the students to discuss if this is the way students their age see relationships with each other.

Guided Reading, Page 102, "Differences"

Read aloud this section. Encourage a discussion of how adolescents can help each other grow in their image and likeness to God. (*Support each other in sports and scholastics; have fun together; compliment each other rather than ridicule*)

5. Wisdom for Today

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the information on this page. Have the students write their answers to the questions and share them with the class.

[Suggestions: Our body makes visible the invisible—the spiritual and divine; our body makes visible God's creation of man and woman; we can encourage each other to live as God asks— not the way other people and television shows say we should act.]

6. Icon Study

- Have the students read the commentary on the icon of The Holy Trinity.
- If possible go into your church to find this icon. Ask the students to stand directly in front of it. Then ask the students to see themselves sitting at the table and completing the circle.
- Ask them to share how this image of their sitting at the table could help them make good choices in life.

Background Reading (Our Sexuality)

"The fulness of God's vision for sexuality, as for the rest of life, is the only normal practice for those who are on the road of deification, who have been made holy in baptism. Our bodies are not divorced from this sanctification: they too are holy and destined for transfiguration at the resurrection. Any behavior which makes of the Christian's body less than consecrated is inappropriate, even sacrilegious. This is St. Paul's reasoning when he says, 'Do you not see that your bodies are members of Christ? ... Every other sin a man commits is outside his own body, but the fornicator sins against his own body. You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within.. ..'(1 Cor 6:15, 18-19)...."

"Our sexuality, then, cannot be cut off from the rest of our life in God. Just as one cannot be sick and healthy at the same time, we cannot be committed to the ways of the old creation and the ways of the new creation at the same time. Just as raw material must be changed and recast to make a finished product, so too our old nature must be remade, transfigured in Christ. The process of deification takes what is of the earth in us and turns it into something else, the experience of God. This is where we must find the Christ approach to sexuality. We must transcend the self-centered, self-limiting and carnal aspects of sexual activity to bring this part of our nature into our new life where all is being transformed after the image of the risen Christ" (*Shown to Be Holy* 76-77).

7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about troparia.
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of the Troparia (see page 155).
- Ask the students to tape or glue these prayers onto a new page in their Vespers folder.

8. Activity A: My Personal Journal

For this unit the personal journal page includes a summary of the faith perspectives presented in each of the previous units: Creation, the Fall, Re-Creation, and Living on in Hope. The students are asked to reflect on how they are living out these faith perspectives.

Distribute Worksheet A along with pens or pencils. Have the students complete the worksheet in silence (or you can play religious music if available) and place it in their folder. Plan accordingly, but they should need no more than 5 minutes to complete the journal entry.

9. Summary

Review the lesson. Ask if they are any further comments or questions about today's topics.

10. Closing Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner.
- Pray the Troparia.

Troparian for the Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ

Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshiped the stars have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to recognize You as the Orient from on high. Glory be to You, O Lord!

Troparion for the Feast of the Theophany

At Your Baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed, for the Father's voice bore witness to You by calling You His "beloved Son," and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words, O Christ God. You appeared and enlightened the world. Glory be to You!



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My Personal Journal

Unit One Review

- ✘ Life is good because it is of God.
- ✘ God created all things by His wisdom and power and saw that they were good.
- ✘ God created man and woman in His own image and likeness.
- ✘ Man and woman are continuously growing in the image and likeness of God. They are becoming more God-like.
- ✘ Because God created male and female, the qualities possessed by both are good.

Write a list of ways you are growing in the image and likeness of God. For example, write specific details rather than just say you help people (What people? When? How?).

Write a list of good qualities possessed by both males and females.

What are some ways that you let other people know that you believe "Life is good because it is of God"?

Dear Parents,

Thank you for helping _____ become an active member of our church by attending class this year. *We Become God-Like*, the title of this year's book, announces the goal of all Christians. We are called to grow in the image and likeness of God which is called theosis in the Eastern Church. The students have been learning about Creation, the Fall of Adam and Eve, and Re-creation through Jesus Christ. They are discovering how to become the person that God calls them to be.

The final unit for this year is called "Growth in Personhood." The lessons are the following:

- "Man and Woman: He Created Them" focusing on human sexuality
- "Brokenness in Relationships" focusing on problems in relationships
- "One in Christ" focusing on the Mystery of Marriage
- "Unmarried for the Kingdom" focusing on celibacy

Each lesson helps the students learn about the teaching of the Church that emphasizes the dignity of men and women. These lessons will help them learn to look to Christ and to you for their answers rather than look to the media and "friends."

Included in the lessons are references to the teaching called "Theology of the Body" that explores the meaning of our bodies and of sexual desire as it relates to the purpose of our existence. These teachings are the result of the "Wednesday audiences" of Pope John Paul II. These addresses that talk about the human body and sexuality were later compiled into book form which was the first major teaching of Pope John Paul II. His vision of the body is a key to understanding the meaning of our lives:

"The body, in fact, and it alone is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery [of God] . . . and thus to be a sign of it."

We have the privilege of being your child's teachers; however, our role in passing on the faith is second to yours. Saint John Chrysostom called the home "the domestic church." Your home and everything you say and do is a lesson for your child.

We are looking forward to an exciting and blessed unit that will help young people learn to live out their lives in Christ.

Sincerely,