

22 — One in Christ

Objectives

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

- understand that Christ's relationships with others are based on self-sacrifice and service to others.
- state that sacramental marriage is the fulfillment of human relationships and the best model of Christ's love for us.
- recognize that the crowns in the Mystery of Marriage signify God's dominion over creation which He shares with each new couple

For the Catechist

The picture of marriage presented in this lesson is an ideal one. The details reflect the image of this sacrament uplifted in the New Testament, the model for all Christian marriages. Regrettably, some of the students might be from homes that do not reflect the ideal of a whole Christian family. Help the students realize that not all marriages are ideal. Help them see that broken homes are part of the brokenness of the world, a sign of the presence of sin in our midst.

Also, some children blame themselves for the disruption of their family life. They feel that their anger or hostility is responsible for the death or departure of a parent. Help the students realize that the sin of the world has touched not just them, but their parents, their grandparents and the entire society. Seeing the totality of sin in the world can help free children from the sense of guilt that they might feel.

Keep in mind that pre-teens are often ill-at-ease with the idea of love. They identify it either with maternal affection or the romantic love videos and television. For that reason, they might not be able to hear that "love" is a basic human relationship. Consider using terms like "caring for" or "caring about" with the students as they can relate more to these words than to the term "love."

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Vesper folder

Review: Easel or wall pad markers with the objectives listed

Introduction: Your church's crowns for the Mystery of Crowning, DVD, videos

Guided Reading: student text, pens, pencils, paper, chalk, and chalkboard

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

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

Activity B: "Scripture" handout, pens or pencils

Closing Prayer: Vespers folders

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner and distribute the Vespers folders.
- Pray the opening prayers found on the first page of the folder

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

- The gift of human sexuality has been distorted by sin.
- People who find joy and fulfillment in their relationship with God in Christ are free from the need to possess or dominate others.
- We can be delivered from abusing sex when we find the meaning to life in healthy relationships with God and His people.

3. Introduction

- Ask your priest if you could have the crowns used for the Mystery of Crowning.
- Have the students discuss the reason crowns are placed on the heads of the bride and groom. Help them realize that the man and woman become the king and queen of their own family that becomes a new unit in God's kingdom.
- Read the prayer that is said as the crowns are placed on their heads: "*Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor and give them dominion over the works of Your hands*"
- Write the following words on the board: common cup, rings, procession around the tetrapod, candles. Ask the students to discuss the significance of these words that relate to the wedding ceremony. (*Common cup—the two become one; rings—their never-ending love as they are wed; procession around the tetrapod—reminds us that marriage is a never-ending journey and their first steps as husband and wife are around the tetrapod, a symbol of Christ; candles—their love shines with Christ's light.*)

Supplementary Activity:

- Set up the television, DVD player, and the DVD *New Life in the Trinity* (Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma). [*Ask your priest if your church has this video or order it from God With Us Publications, 877-484-1600 or www.godwithusbooks.org.*]
- Show the marriage excerpt from counter 6:10 to 8:10 for the video [Or show excerpts from personal videos of the marriage ceremony in the Eastern Church.]

Background Reading (Christian Marriage)

"...Good and God-given and common to the whole world, marriage is transformed in Christ. Christian marriage is the marriage of two temples of the Holy Spirit, who are in the process of becoming the new creation, after the model of the New Adam. In baptism they have become sharers in Christ's victory over death, partakers of His divine nature and sharers in His royal priesthood. While every marriage is an instance of 'two becoming one,' in a Christian marriage it is two 'christs' (anointed ones) who become a new reality in the Lord. Entering the church carrying candles as at their baptism, their marriage is already something of the Kingdom...."

"As in any marriage Christian spouses are meant to support one another in the fortunes of life. In the Christian mystery this takes on a new dimension. The spouses are to be one in the pursuit of eternal life. Mutual support goes beyond the fulfilling of felt needs, but to the true fulfillment of human nature in the kingdom of God. As each believer is called to the restoration of human nature and reintegration to wholeness through pursuit of communion with God, so too the Christian couple is meant to find their fulfillment in common prayer and asceticism...." (ID 120-121).

4. Guided Reading, Pages 111-112, "Christ's Love"

- Read this section and ask the students to circle the words and phrases that show that marriage is loving and forever.
- Write the words on the board. (*Relationship in the Lord, new person, complete, two in one, unity, eternal*)
- Ask the students to make another list of words that advertisers and television shows use to talk about the marriage ceremony. Do these words have anything to do with lasting forever?

Guided Reading, Page 112, "Our Relationships"

- Read this section aloud.
- Ask if they think learning to live with family members today will help them in their future marriage. How?

Guided Reading, Page 112, "The Mystery of Crowning"

- Ask if anyone had been at a Byzantine wedding. Let them share what they remember.
- Read this section and discuss. If possible, go into the church to read this section and walk through the descriptions. Let the students walk from the back to the front to feel themselves getting closer to Christ.

5. Ancient 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: *Adam and Eve were created to show great love and to reflect the oneness of God; three people are in the Trinity and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one Person just as a husband and wife are two people who make one couple; probably learning to be equal always would be difficult*)

6. Icon Study

- Have the students read the commentary on the icon of The Wedding Banquet at Cana.
- Discuss what would they have thought if they were there.

Background Reading (Rite of Crowning)

"The lyrical view of the marriage of Christians is expressed in the rite of crowning as a return to Paradise. As the crowns are placed on their heads, the Church sings the words which the Scripture uses of our first parents, 'Crown them with glory and honor' (see Ps 8:6). The couple, like Adam and Eve, is brought together in the garden for communion with God. Mutual fulfillment, then, becomes a matter of helping one another in the struggle of living the Christian life.

"The human race's quest for fruitfulness in marriage is also transformed in the Christian mystery. The rite of crowning continually affirms in its prayers the marital goal of 'fair children, the fruit of the womb.' The fruitfulness of the Christian home, however, is not meant to guarantee us a man-made immortality. Rather it becomes a process of co-creating with God. Christian parents are called to see themselves as working with God to bring into the world offspring oriented to eternal life. Children are given that they 'in due time be counted worthy of spiritual light and be numbered among Your holy flock' (Prayer for a Woman Forty Days after Childbirth)" (*ID* 120-121).

7. Psalm 127 (128)

- Have the students read the information about this Psalm.
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of Psalm 127 (128) (see page 168).
- Ask the students to tape or glue this prayer 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. This journal entry focuses on Unit 3: Re-Creation. The students are asked to reflect on 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. Activity B: Scriptural Reflection

- Distribute the handout for this activity.
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 at the top of the page.
- Have the students divide into smaller groups and complete the worksheet.
- Ask them to develop short skits that show love as described in this passage in action.[Suggestions: A husband and wife cleaning the house and talking nicely to each other; parents and children at dinnertime talking about their day and encouraging each other; a husband or wife thinking about buying a present or certain foods that the other spouse would like]
- Present their skits to each other.
- Discuss whether these scenes are the ones we view on television shows and in movies. If not, why not?
- Encourage the students to write the thank-you notes mentioned at the bottom of the handout.

10. Summary

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

11. Closing Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner.
- Pray Psalm 127 (128)

Psalm 127 (128)

Happy are all who fear the Lord,
who walk in the ways of God.

What your hands provide you will enjoy;
you will be happy and prosper:

Like a fruitful vine
your wife within your home.

Like olive plants
your children around your table.

Just so will they be blessed
who fear the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Zion;
all the days of your life

That you may share Jerusalem's joy
and live to see your children's children.

Peace upon Israel.

My Personal Journal

Unit Three Review

- ✘ Christ is the fulfillment of all relationships. In marriage the two are made one in Christ.
- ✘ Christ is the model of faithfulness. He transforms a purely earthly relationship into a relationship in the Lord through the Mystery of Marriage.
- ✘ By their faithfulness and love for one another, husband and wife are a sign of the unending love of Christ for His Church.

What are some ways Christ shows us how to be faithful?

How does a husband and wife show their faithfulness to each other?

Identify one married couple whose love reveals Christ's love for His Church. List some of the ways they show this love.

Scriptural Reflection

"Love is patient, love is kind. It is not Jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

1 Corinthians 13:4-7



Think about ways you and your family can live out the love Saint Paul describes in Corinthians. Write specific examples of what your family can do.

Love is patient. _____

Love is kind. _____

Love is not jealous. _____

Love does not rejoice in what is wrong, but rejoices with the truth. _____

Love never fails.. _____

Write a thank-you note to one or more family members to let them know how grateful you are for their love.