

Lesson 35 – Matrimony

Grades 6-8

Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 35 in the Baltimore Catechism.

Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “As a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you” Isaiah 62:5

Leader: Jesus, You have raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. You grew up in the Holy Family, in the loving home of Mary and Joseph. Help us to understand your purpose and your vision for marriage, so that we can honor it. Amen.

Together: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening:

This lesson is about the sacrament of matrimony, God’s vision of marriage, and its deep meaning. To begin getting students thinking about the topic, tell them that they will be discussing the primary purposes of marriage. Give them five choices and let them discuss, and maybe even vote on, what they think are the two primary purposes of marriage:

- a) Self-fulfillment
- b) Having someone that is fun to be with
- c) Financial security
- d) Raising godly children
- e) The holiness of the spouses

The correct answer is the last two choices. All of the options are good, but the primary purposes are raising children to love God, and the holiness of the

spouses. It is important to note that although we must be open to children, not every marriage is blessed with children. Some people are medically unable to have children, for example. That does not lessen the meaning of their marriage.

Watch the Lesson 35 Video on Catholic Brain

Comprehension Questions: *Note: These questions are asked after the video, just to check student comprehension. They are not discussion questions, but be sure students understand the answers to these questions before moving on*

1) What is matrimony?

The sacrament through which God joins a man and a woman in marriage until death.

2) Sacramental marriage is a sign of the union between Christ and what?

The Church – this is really important! It helps us understand the dignity of marriage as well as the Church’s teachings about marriage. A Christian marriage is meant to be a sign to the world of the intimate union between Christ and His Church.

3) What are the effects of the sacrament?

An increase in sanctifying grace, and the grace to faithfully live out the marriage vows

4) What is the unity of the sacrament?

This means that a person can only have one spouse, while that spouse is alive. Marriage is exclusive. A person may be remarried if his or her spouse dies.

Discussion Questions: *Note: These questions are for student discussion. The students should consider these questions and comment on them. There are some key points included in this lesson, after each question, that you can use to help guide their discussion toward truth. It’s important that the students think about and discuss these things, but that they don’t leave the discussion with false impressions about what is true.*

1) How can we discern a vocation to the married life?

Marriage is a vocation, which means it is a call. Discernment should include prayer, the sacraments, an attitude that is open to God’s plan, perhaps a spiritual director.

2) How should one prepare for the sacrament of matrimony?

Prayer and the sacraments, hopefully with the person to be married to; practice virtues, especially chastity; meet with a priest and go on an engaged couples retreat, etc.

3) Why is our approach to dating and courtship so important?

Dating is a preparation for marriage. We learn how to act with respect and honor toward the opposite gender. We must practice virtue, particularly chastity, and not disrespect our future spouse and marriage by sinful practices while dating. It is good to pray for one's future spouse, whoever that person might be, while remaining open to whatever vocation God may call one to.

Go Deeper:

In this section, take a look at the nuptial blessing prayed over a couple at their wedding. It is broken into three main sections. Divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the sections. Ask them to paraphrase the meaning of their section of the blessing, and share as a whole class when each group has had a chance to finish.

The Nuptial Blessing

May God the eternal Father keep you of one heart in love for one another, that the peace of Christ may dwell in you and abide always in your home.

May you be blessed in your children, have solace in your friends and enjoy true peace with everyone.

May you be witnesses in the world to God's charity, so that the afflicted and needy who have known your kindness may one day receive you thankfully into the eternal dwelling of God.

Activity:

Write a recipe for a successful marriage. Imagine you are a baker creating a recipe, but instead of making a cake, you are making a marriage. For example, instead of flour, you might add three cups of patience. Get creative!

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Lord, You have called us into a covenant with You. Help us to understand Christian marriage as a sign of that covenant, and may we always honor and respect the sacrament of Matrimony. Amen.

Together: 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.