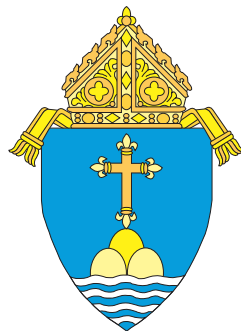


CREATED FOR LOVE

God's Plan for Life, Love, Relationships & Marriage



Respect Life Education Office - Archdiocese of Boston
www.RespectLifeEducation.com

Nihil Obstat: Rev. Thomas W. Buckley, S.T.D., S.S.L.

Imprimatur: Seán Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M., Cap.
Archbishop of Boston

September 3, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Respect Life Education Office would like to thank the following people and organizations for their contributions:

His Eminence Seán Patrick Cardinal O'Malley, OFM Cap., Archbishop of Boston

Developed by

Colleen Donohoe, Assistant Director: Respect Life Education

Photography

© 2014 Bethany Jacobs

© 2014 George Martell

Contributors

Cardinal Spellman High School

Ursuline Academy

Jason Evert

Collin & Meghan McBride

Peter & Therese Braudis

Reverend Matthew Williams

Seminarians of Saint John's Seminary

Seminarians of Our Lady of Providence Seminary

The Daughters of Mary of Nazareth

The Bettinelli Family

The Jacobs Family

The Kiley Family

The Lavigne Family

The McCarthy Family

The Redman Family

The Catholic Schools Office

The Office of Child Advocacy

The Office of Lifelong Faith Formation and Parish Support

Layout, Design and Printing

Pilot Printing

Respect Life Education, Archdiocese of Boston

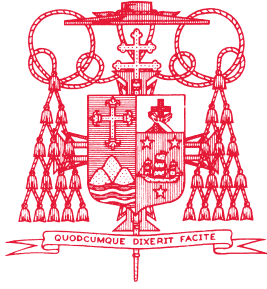
66 Brooks Drive, Braintree, MA 02184-3839

617-746-5864

www.RespectLifeEducation.com

© 2014 Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, A Corporation Sole, 2014.

Created for Love is a mandated Middle School Religion Curriculum designed to be integrated into the existing religion curricula in Grades 6, 7, & 8 in parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese of Boston. Please use this text along with the DVD that accompanies it to share the beauty of God's Plan for Life, Love, Relationships & Marriage. For more information, resources, and curriculum training dates, please contact the Respect Life Education Office at 617-746-5964 or visit www.RespectLifeEducation.com.



CARDINAL'S OFFICE

66 BROOKS DRIVE
BRAintree, MASSACHUSETTS 02184-3839
617-782-2544

November, 2014

Dear Friends,

One of the most important gifts we can hand on to our youth is the gift of our faith, which will help them understand God's plan for life, love, relationships and marriage. For the past eight years, the *Created for Love* chastity curriculum has been taught to 7th grade students in schools and parishes throughout the Archdiocese. I am pleased to announce that important revisions have been completed on the *Created for Love* curriculum that will now be available for all middle school students in the Archdiocese.

The revised chastity curriculum is the result of collaboration between the Offices of Respect Life Education, Faith Formation & Parish Support, Catholic Schools, and Child Advocacy. The revisions concentrate on the joy of living according to God's plan while highlighting the universal call to holiness through the discernment of one's vocation. New sections on vocations, family life and adoption allow for a more comprehensive, integrated model that will be woven into the existing religion curricula in schools and parishes beginning in Grade 6 and continuing through Grade 8.

Created for Love is of utmost importance in the moral development of our Catholic youth. It lends support to Catholic parents whose duty it is to raise their children in the faith. I strongly endorse *Created for Love* and its synthesis of sound Catholic moral teaching and hereby direct all parishes and schools in its implementation.

Our expectation is that *Created for Love* will be phased-in between January and June 2015, with all parishes and schools fully embracing this mandate by September 2015. Please give this curriculum your most serious attention.

In order to assist the schools and parishes of the Archdiocese, the Respect Life Education Office has been directed to coordinate all training and implementation with the support of the Offices of Faith Formation & Parish Support, Catholic Schools, and Child Advocacy. Grateful for your cooperation in incorporating *Created for Love* into our mission to teach God's Word and Truth, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

CONTENTS

1. Identity.....	1
a. Who am I? Discovering God's Gift.....	1
b. Created in the Image and Likeness of God	2
c. Created for Love	3
d. God's Creation vs. Culture.....	4
2. Living a Life of Love & Virtue.....	6
a. Love vs. Lust.....	6
b. Character Building: Virtue vs. Sin	6
c. Truth vs. Lie	7
d. God's Plan for Life, Love, and Relationships	8
3. God's Call and My Response.....	14
a. What is a Vocation?	14
b. Types of Vocations.....	15
c. Healthy Relationships & Healthy Marriages	19
d. Family as the First Church	27
4. Freedom & Happiness.....	30
a. License vs. Freedom.....	30
b. Caring for Body & Soul	31
c. God's Love & Mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation	37
d. Inspired to Discern & Answer God's Call	39
e. Created for Love Commitment Ceremony	40



Cardinal Seán: Welcome

LIVING A LIFE OF LOVE & VIRTUE

Love vs. Lust

Think about three things that you love.

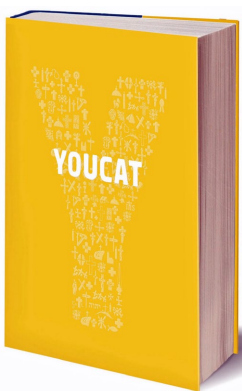
People are often confused with the true meaning of love. The definition of love has taken on so many different meanings. Now think about love as it was described in Chapter 1. Think about the characteristics of Christ's love for each of us.

Look at the things on your list. Does your love for these things compare to Christ's love for us? Often times we say we "love" something (pizza, chocolate, a musician, an actor/actress, a TV show, a song, etc.) but do we *truly* love those things or do we just *like* them very much? If we're careful about how we use certain words we can begin to have a better understanding of what the words truly mean.



#6 Teens Talk: Types of Love

Character Building: Virtue vs. Sin



A *virtue* is a good habit leading us to make good moral choices. Love is a virtue, often referred to as charity. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "a virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do [what is] good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself/herself.

The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his/her sensory and spiritual powers; he/she pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions." (CCC, 1803)

Love is a virtue that allows us to be unselfish and desire what is best for the other person. In an effort to bring about good and to do what is best for others and ourselves, we are often called to sacrifice our own wants and desires and put God and others first. We sacrifice for the ones we love so that we can help them grow in holiness and grow closer to God. Our purpose is to help each other get to Heaven! Imagine how much happiness would exist in this world if we all did good things for each other and treated each other how God intended? When we live virtuous lives and when we love others according to God's plan for life, love, and relationships, we grow toward

The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his/her sensory and spiritual powers; he/she pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

Heaven together...as one family under God! Jesus taught us how to live a life of virtue and He especially taught us how to love unselfishly. He was so unselfish that He suffered and died for us so that one day we may have eternal life with Our Father in Heaven.

St. Gregory of Nyssa once said, *“The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.”* Our world might laugh at the thought of that but with God’s grace we are able to grow in holiness and grow in virtue! We can’t do it on our own because as humans we are likely to be tempted to choose sin over virtue. We are easily distracted by the ways of our world and tempted to do things that are not of God’s plan. Think of examples of things associated with sin/fitting in...dressing and dancing immodestly, watching TV shows and movies that do not honor a person’s dignity, listening to music that has bad or disrespectful lyrics, etc. When Jesus was with His disciples, “Jesus looked at them and said, “For human beings this is impossible, but for God *all* things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26)



“The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (love) are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. They are infused by God into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as His children...” (CCC 1813)

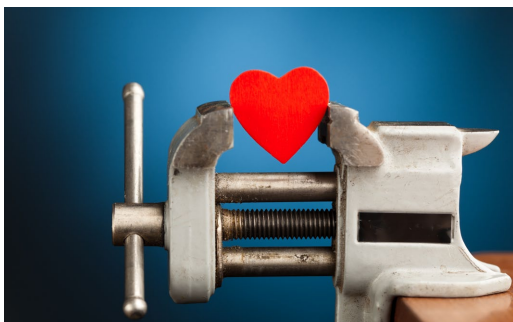
In other words, it will be very difficult to live a virtuous life without God! We need Him and we need His grace in order to follow His plan for life, love, and relationships! It is important that we stay close to God through the Sacraments (weekly Mass attendance and monthly confession) and that we pray to Him daily and ask for His grace to be able to lead a virtuous life. We might think we can do it alone, but we simply cannot. The virtue of love is a gift from God Himself since He is the author of love.



#7 Teens Talk: God’s Love for Us

Truth vs. Lie

Earlier in the chapter, we mentioned how often we confuse love with lust. So if love is a virtue then the opposite of love is lust. And the opposite of a virtue is called a vice. A vice is bad habit. A vice is immoral, meaning it affects



our moral behavior and can lead us to sin. Lust is an emotion or feeling of intense desire that can lead us to think about and even treat another human being like an object for our own pleasure. Lust is the opposite of love. Lust seeks to get, while love seeks to give.

How often do we say that we “love” another person...sometimes even if we’ve never met him/her. Think about the times we’ve misused

the word "love." "I loooove _____ (think of a celebrity, sports player, singer, actor, actress, etc.)" But do we really even *know* that person? We may enjoy the personality we see on TV or the music they sing or even the way they perform on the court, field, or ice and even perhaps how they look. But once again, we're misusing the word *love*. Sometimes what we're really doing is lusting after these people or things. Remember, lust is the



opposite of a virtue and it causes us to view human beings as objects for our own pleasure. When you say you "love" someone, be sure you're not confusing love with lust.

This is not uncommon in our culture today. We often use the word "love" when in reality it is "lust." Lust pretends to tell the truth but is really a lie. It's a lie because lust is not interested in doing what is best for another person. It seeks to get and not give.

Don't be fooled and don't allow others to fool you! You are a child of

God who is worthy of true, authentic, God-like love that will last a lifetime...not something fake that will never last!

Think of another popular phrase that says, "I *fell* in love!" We hear this all the time! Susan and Victor *fell* in love! But if we think about it, we're misusing our words again. Susan and Victor didn't literally *FALL* in love! Isn't "falling" something we try to avoid? Falling hurts! The way we describe one of God's most precious gifts is very important! It's not wrong when people use that phrase but we must be mindful of what we're really saying!



God's Plan for Life, Love, and Relationships



#8 What is Love? Pete & Therese

God teaches us that love is a *choice*! We don't really fall in and out of love! We *choose* to love or we *choose* not to love. Often times we can get swept up in the many emotions surrounding a relationship that it may *seem* like we're "falling in love." It even sounds a bit magical and romantic. But be careful and remember that *true* and

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. Love never fails. ~1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

authentic, God-like love is a choice! What happens when those emotions fade away and things start to get boring? Do we then “fall out of love?” That’s what many love stories, movies and songs portray, right? We may have even heard our friends or relatives use those terms. But true, authentic God-like love doesn’t fall. True, authentic God-like love makes a conscious choice to love another person. True, authentic God-like love doesn’t count the cost. True, authentic God-like love suffers for the other and makes sacrifices for the other. True, authentic God-like love wants what is best for the other person...*always*. The goal of true, authentic God-like love seeks to help the one we love get to Heaven!

So remember, *you* control whom you choose to love. You can’t just fall in and out of love but you *can choose* to love by your own *free will!* Think about the way Jesus loves us! Jesus willingly chose to die on the cross out of love for us. He didn’t just make this decision on a whim! He *knowingly* chose to suffer and die for our sake. He knew it would hurt and He chose to die for us anyway...so that we could be in Heaven with Him for all eternity. That’s how much He loves us! That’s how much we are called to love God and others.

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
~Philemon 4:8



#9 Teens Talk: Our Faith Teaches Us About Authentic Love

It’s never easy, but you *are* worth it! God made your heart to desire this kind of true, authentic God-like love and *nothing* else will *ever* satisfy your heart. Our hearts will always be broken if we try to replace authentic love with anything else!

God’s plan for our lives is based on what is true, good, and pure. God’s plan for life, love, and relationships is one that will always bring joy and peace to our lives.

Now that we understand that love involves our free will and that we deliberately choose love, it is important to remember that when we treat another human being like property or like an object for our own pleasure that we are violating their dignity as a human person. God created us from love and for love and therefore we should always strive to honor *His design* by respecting others and ourselves because every human person is made in the image and likeness of God. God knows that not every person is going to be your best friend, but there is never a reason to make fun of, bully, or look down on another person. We are called to treat every human person with dignity and respect from the moment of their conception until the moment of natural death. When we stay close to God in the Sacraments we begin to understand His plan and are better able to live according to it.



“Jesus makes charity (love) the *new commandment*...*When Jesus says: ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.’ And again: ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.’*” (CCC 1823)

Once we understand the meaning of the word “virtue” it becomes easier to understand the definition of sin. The *Catechism* teaches us that, “*at the core of sin is a rejection of God and the refusal to accept His love. This is manifested [shown] in a disregard for His commandments.*” (CCC 385-390) Have you ever felt rejected? Has anyone ever refused your love? It's not a good feeling.



In fact, it can break our hearts and leave us feeling quite lonely. When we sin, we are turning our back on God and rejecting His love. Sin separates us from God, our source of life and happiness.

You may ask, why in the world would we purposely choose the opposite of life, love, and happiness? It doesn't seem to make much sense, does it? But sin is sneaky! Sin masks itself so it seems fun and exciting!

Think of some examples of sin (turning away from God) that may seem like a good idea at the time, but later

we realize that the choice we made was not a very good one.

We can sin in a variety of ways...in our thoughts, words, actions, in the ways we are selfish and choose our desires over what is best for ourselves and others. We also sin when we are lazy and don't put God first. Remember earlier when we talked about how each human person is created body and soul? It's important to remember that what we do with our body affects our soul!



Our visible bodies express truth about our invisible soul.



#10 Teens Talk: God Gives Us Hope!



Think of the Eucharist for a minute. As Catholics, we are taught and we believe that the bread and wine that are brought to the altar during Mass become the *actual* Body and Blood of Jesus Christ! After the consecration, the bread and wine are no longer mere bread and wine even though their appearance doesn't change. In Holy Communion, we receive our Lord...His flesh and blood. They are not symbols but an actual gift of Himself. Jesus promised that He would never leave us so He gives Himself to us in the Most Holy Eucharist! He becomes



part of us; body and soul. WOW, what a precious gift! Jesus becomes One with us every time we receive the Eucharist! How cool is that? We actually participate in a miracle every time we receive Jesus in the Eucharist!

By receiving Jesus in the Eucharist and even by praying to and worshipping Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration, we are given special graces to



be more like Christ! Grace is a free gift from God that inspires us to lead virtuous lives.

It is through God's grace that we have the ability to love like He loves!

Now think about your own body. How does your body reflect the miracle of Jesus? Think about the ways in which we use our bodies. Jesus taught us to honor our body. When we receive His Body and Blood, He becomes part of us, and we become living tabernacles of our Lord!

Jesus then asks us to go out and teach others about God's love and about His commandments. So think again. Do I use my body to build up the Body of Christ? Or do I use my body to reject God's love by committing sin? Do I flaunt my body with tight or skimpy clothing or by the way I dance simply to attract the attention of others?

Do you know why we genuflect, kneel or bow when we enter a Catholic Church? In every Catholic Church, there is a tabernacle that safely protects the Eucharist...



"A woman is so sacred that she is a walking tabernacle which is why men get down on one knee to propose marriage."

~Archbishop Fulton Sheen

Jesus. We genuflect, kneel or bow every time we pass in front of the tabernacle because it is a special way to show honor and respect to the One who saved us! Ladies, do you know why men get down on one knee before they propose marriage to the woman they love? (See *Archbishop Sheen's quote to the left.*) We are all called to be living tabernacles...to be Christ



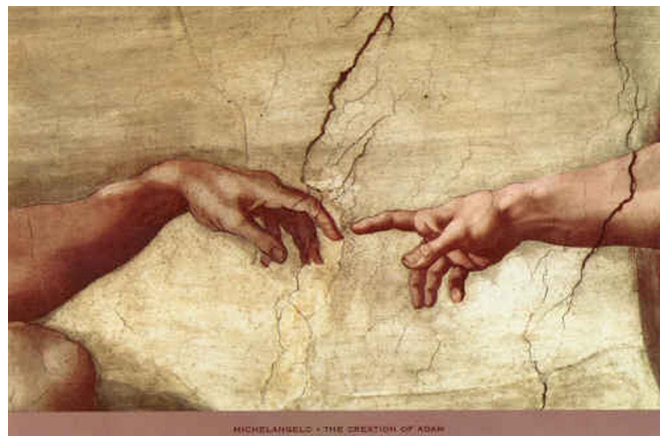
for others. Our bodies have the ability to express God's love to the world!

Discuss ways in which we use our body for good and ways in which we use our bodies for bad (i.e. handshake, hug, high five, genuflect, hitting, head butting, sexual activities outside of marriage).

Don't forget that committing a sin doesn't just happen with the things we say to one another, but also with the things we do...with our bodies. Our bodies were created to share God's love...in the way we live, the way we act, and in the way we love others.

We've spent a lot of time talking about how the human person is created in the image and likeness of God and how that means that we are called to show love. But *how* does God actually want us to show love? Our world certainly shows us many ways of how *not to* love! The world shows us how to use our bodies for selfishness, lust, and even how to abuse others. God's design and His plan for life, love, and relationships are *VERY* different than what the world portrays.

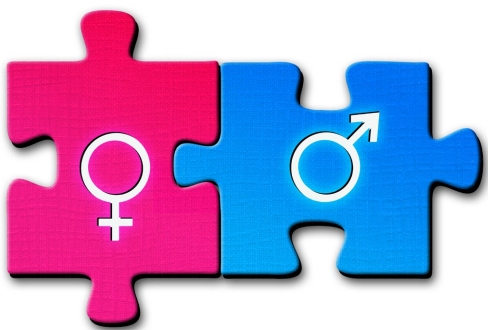
God designed us to be chaste. How many of you have ever heard of the virtue called, *chastity*? Chastity is the virtue that helps us to live according to God's plan for our sexuality. So often people hear the word chastity and think that the Church is giving us more rules to follow and that God doesn't want us to be truly happy...He just wants to control us. **TOTALLY** untrue! What may seem like a "rule" or "restriction" is actually a beautiful gift from God!



God designed a man and woman's body to share intimate physical love within the Sacrament of Marriage. Sexuality refers to how God beautifully made man and woman differently, yet complementary. ***"I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well."*** (Psalm 139:14) He did this on purpose and it is a good thing...it is all part of God's design! *Read The Creation Story in Genesis 1: 26-31.*



#11 Teens Talk: Authentic Love & Chastity



Complementary means that both man and woman have their own unique characteristics that make us physically different and also allow us to think and experience emotions differently. Men and women were created equally but they go together like two puzzle pieces. Two puzzle pieces that look the same don't fit together, they don't make a complete picture. God made man and woman to each be an image of Him, but He made us complementary so that together we more perfectly reflect Him.

The unique physical differences of men and women's sexuality make it possible for them to conceive children.

These differences exist as part of God's plan so that we can support one another and live in harmony in our relationships. Ever hear the old saying, "opposites attract?" This is probably true because, according to God's design, one person can make up for what the other is lacking.

God gave man and woman as a gift to each other, so that together we could more fully experience and express His great love! This love is so sacred that God created it to exist within its own Sacrament. He gave

Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate. ~Matthew 19:4-6

us the Sacrament of Marriage so we can experience physical love, or sex. Yes, God created sex! God created sex to be an expression of love between husband and wife that bonds them together and allows them to participate in the creation of new life. Wow, what a gift! Marriage is far more than a legal document that binds two people together...it is a lifelong covenant that unites two people together forever!



#12 What is Chastity: Jason Evert

#13 What is Love? God's Plan for Dating: Jason Evert

GOD'S CALL AND MY RESPONSE

What is a Vocation?

A vocation is a call or an invitation from God. Our first or primary vocation from God is to be holy. As our Creator, God made us in His image and likeness and called us into our very existence. In turn, we are called to be open to God's will and to trust in Him as our loving Father who created us in love and for love. One thing we know for sure is that belief in God and responding to His plan for our lives never leaves us disappointed! When we pray, live our lives for God, and stay close to the Sacraments, we become holy. Each and every human person is called to holiness. Each and every one of us is called to be a saint!

A vocation is a call from God. No matter what God is calling you to, each of us is called to live a life of holiness according to God's plan. Girls, maybe God is calling you to become a religious sister or a wife and mother! Whether a religious sister, or a wife and mom, rest assured God is calling you to greatness! Guys, do you think God might be calling you to be a priest? Perhaps God is calling you to be a husband and father! No matter what God is calling you to, it's exciting to think about your future and the awesome plans God has in store for you!



“Do NOT be satisfied with mediocrity! The world will offer you comfort. But you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness!” ~ Saint John Paul II

A vocation is different than a person's career or job. A job helps provide necessary things for you or your family like shelter, food and clothing. A vocation is much different because it is a calling from God that is unique and is meant just for you! There is no other person on earth that can fulfill your vocation!

God is calling upon you and your unique gifts to help bring His love to the world, one person at a time, as is the case of parents who care for their children and teach them virtues, and how to live a holy life.

It is important to remember that your vocation or call from God always comes *before* your job and your paycheck. This always involves sacrifice, but in the end, it is *always* worth it and is beneficial to you and your loved ones. Our vocation as husband or wife, parent, or priest or sister helps to sanctify us (make us holy). God gives each of us a unique vocation to help grow closer to Him and to help bring others to His Kingdom.



#14 What is a Vocation? Collin & Meghan

Ultimately, your vocation should help lead you to holiness. The particular job you do to help pay the bills may change over time but your vocation to holiness remains the same throughout your life. At home, at work, and at play we should always be striving for holiness! We don't act one way at Church or at home and then another way at work or school.

God's call to holiness is for every day, in all situations.

Types of Vocations

Sometimes it's difficult to know exactly what God is calling us to...priesthood, consecrated life, married life, single state. So many choices! We should always pray for God's guidance...this is called discernment. Discerning God's will for us demands faith, trust, and patience. No matter what vocation God is calling you to, each of us is called to take God's invitation seriously and respond with faith, trusting that God will give us *exactly* what we need in order to fulfill His will. Ultimately, we have to remain close to God in order to know exactly what vocation God is calling us to and to be given the grace to fulfill His call.

God may be calling you to many things in your life but one thing we know for sure is that God calls us to live a life of holiness. Living a life of holiness doesn't mean that you will never experience sin or suffering or be unhappy, sad, confused, angry or disappointed. What it does mean is that God is with us every moment of every day to bring us strength, comfort and peace. When we pray and receive the sacraments often we are given God's grace to overcome life's challenges and discover true happiness and joy in our vocation!

Guys, have you ever thought about becoming a priest? Do you know any priests? Perhaps you have seen your parish priest at Mass or perhaps he has visited your classroom from time to time. If you have spent any time with a priest, you will quickly realize that they are just "regular guys" like you who have an extraordinary call from God to serve His Church. They are "regular guys" just like you because they most likely were involved in similar activities that you are involved in...sports, music, video games, etc. when they were growing up.



#15 Vocations: It's Everybody's Business: Providence College Seminarians

In fact, he may still enjoy some of those same things (sports, video games, music, etc.) Just because he became a priest doesn't mean that he didn't (or still doesn't) lead a normal, typical life just like the rest of us. After all, he wasn't born a priest. The difference is that although a priest is a "regular guy," he has an extraordinary calling. In order to answer God's call he spent time discerning (seriously thinking and praying about) God's call for his life and discovered the great gift of the priesthood. When thinking about the priesthood, it is important to get to know priests. Maybe your family could invite your parish priest over for dinner? In doing so, you'll learn more about who he is and what led him to the priesthood. Maybe your parish has a Youth Group and you can talk to Father in that setting...or maybe just stop and chat with him after Mass on Sunday. You may discover what



an amazing life he has and you may even discover that God is calling YOU to that life too! Pray about it, talk to priests, and even think about attending a retreat day to learn more about the priesthood!

When a man is seriously considering entering the priesthood, he first enters a seminary. A seminary is a place where men live and go to school for a number of years (at least 4) to learn more about God and the Church while studying, praying and hanging out with like-minded men. Some seminarians start the process soon after High School and instead of going to a regular college they go to the Seminary College. Others may decide to enter the seminary after college and some even after holding a job for many years. Being a seminarian doesn't mean that you're automatically going to become a priest, it just means that you're discerning God's call. Some seminarians discover that God may be calling them to a different vocation... perhaps to marriage.



If God is calling you to be a priest, He is calling you to give your life to His Church...He is calling you to receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. God is calling you to help to make the world holy by bringing Christ to His people!



[#16 God's Call to Priesthood, Part 1: Mike](#)

[#17 God's Call to Priesthood, Part 2: Kevin](#)

The priest does this in a unique way by acting as Christ here on earth. Not long before Christ died, He called 12 men to be His apostles...to be His first priests here on earth. He entrusted them with the care of His Church and Her people. Jesus asked His apostles to leave everything behind and live a life serving the Church. The priest is the only one that can give us the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist! During the Holy Mass, it is the priest, who calls upon the Holy Spirit, to transform the bread and wine into the actual Body and Blood of Jesus Christ whom we receive in Holy Communion. The priest also acts *in persona Christi* when he hears our confession and offers absolution from our sins! What better gifts than to receive Jesus in the Eucharist and to have our sins completely forgiven and wiped away!

The priest today has that same responsibility...to care for the spiritual well being of God's people. At the ordination of a diocesan priest, the priest makes two vows or promises. He promises to live a celibate life (to not get married and to not have sex) and he vows to be obedient to the local Cardinal, Archbishop or Bishop who leads the Church. Some priests also take a vow of poverty promising to live a simple life without owning expensive things or living in lavish homes.

A priest foregoes marriage to a woman and leads a celibate life because in a very real way he is married to the Church. When a man is ordained to the priesthood he gives himself fully and completely to God and His Church. He is available 24/7 to serve God and His people. He sacrifices having a wife and children so that he can help us get to Heaven! He does this by offering us the Sacraments on a daily basis and by being readily available for whatever God calls him to do. For example, a priest may be called to the scene of an accident or to a hospital or nursing home to offer the Sacrament of the Sick to an ill or injured person. These calls can come day or night...and the priest must be ready at a moments notice to serve God's people. Some priests even serve in the military as military chaplains. They travel with the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard to offer spiritual support to the troops...both here and in foreign lands. When our troops are serving our country and are away from their families, the chaplain can offer a lot of comfort to these men and women when they're away from home and missing their families. The military base or ship becomes like a Church or parish because the priest is available to offer the Sacraments and spiritual guidance to those in need.



It is important to know that when God calls us to a vocation, he calls all of us...fully, completely, totally... 100%. When we talk about marriage later in this chapter, we'll talk more about what that means.

These are just a few of the many things that the priest offers to our Church and to our world! What an amazing life...what a heroic life...what a blessed life!



#18 My Vocation Story: Fr. Matt Williams



Now, remember when we talked about male and female complementarity and how God calls each of us to a unique vocation, one that can only be fulfilled by you and you alone!

Well God didn't forget you, girls! God may be calling some of you to consider entering the convent. In a unique way, the sisterhood complements the priesthood. When both men and women offer their unique gifts and talents to the world, our world becomes

a more beautiful and loving place! Girls, have you ever met a sister? Perhaps there is a sister in your school or parish?

Sisters live and work in the world in unique ways. Some are nurses, teachers, social workers and some assist the priests in the parish doing a variety of things. Sisters offer great gifts to our world by taking vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In a similar way that priests do, sisters devote their lives completely to Christ in service to His Church.

The sisters don't celebrate the sacraments the way priests do, but they are radical witnesses of Christ's love in our world. Through their unique work in the community and always remaining centered in prayer, the sisters bring the Gospel to those who may never hear it if it weren't for them! There are many different orders of sisters throughout the country and throughout the world. Some orders are dedicated to teaching the faith to young people, while some orders are dedicated to praying for the people in our world. Others are involved with helping the poor and homeless and some are working with young pregnant women who may need care, support, and love



during their pregnancy and after they give birth to their children. In a unique way, the sisters bring Christ to those that need Him most. God called upon Mary, our Blessed Mother, to bear the Christ child in her womb. There is no greater calling than to be the Mother of the Savior of the world! In a very real way, sisters offer a maternal presence to our world...much like our Blessed Mother, Mary does. Sisters fulfill a role that can only be fulfilled by the unique love and nurturing heart of a woman.



#19 God's Call to Religious Life: Daughters of Mary of Nazareth

Consider spending time in Eucharistic Adoration, which allows time in silence before the Lord, giving you the opportunity to get to know Jesus and to develop a relationship with Him to better hear and respond to His call.

Although some of you may be called to be a priest or religious sister, many are being called to marriage and family life so we will spend most of this chapter discussing God's plan for life, love, marriage and family.

Why are girls so drawn to books and movies that depict great love stories? Why are boys drawn to books and movies that depict nobility and courage? There's a reason! God designed it to be so. God designed our hearts to desire love that never ends...a love that is unconditional...a love that is pure and good!

If we were designed for this type of love, why do people often settle for less than the true happiness that God has planned?

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body. ~Genesis 2:24: