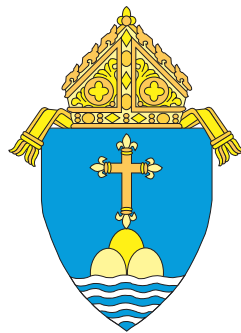


CREATED FOR LOVE

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



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

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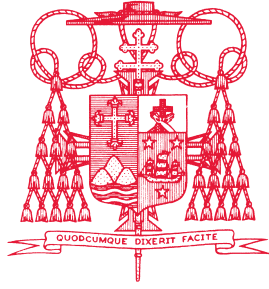
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Created for Love is a mandated Middle School Religion Curriculum designed to be integrated into the existing religion curricula in Grades 6, 7, & 8 in parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese of Boston. Please use this text along with the DVD 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

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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

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Cardinal Seán: Welcome

Healthy Relationships & Healthy Marriages

Sadly, some people have been taught that they don't deserve good and pure love. Our world often teaches us an inaccurate meaning of love through the selfishness portrayed in TV shows, movies, music, magazines, and even sometimes by the way others treat us. When our hearts have been broken and disappointed, we begin to change. We begin to believe the lies that the world teaches. We begin to trust more in what the TV shows, movies, and magazines are saying about love and we slowly turn away from God's loving plan. We start to believe that what the world has to offer is somehow better and will make us happier.

But God never stops calling us to follow His plan! He never gives up on us! No matter what we have done or what has been done to us or how long we've turned from Him, He is *ALWAYS* awaiting our return with open arms! Why? So He can get His own way? No! He never gives up on us because He loves us and He wants us to experience the kind of love He designed for us...love that will bring true and authentic happiness and joy to our lives...love that will lead us to spend eternity with Him in Heaven!



Beloved, let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. ~1 John 4: 7-8

You probably already know that love is often distorted in our world. Some people choose to live and act contrary (opposite) to God's plan by the way they treat others. Sometimes people will say they love someone and pretend to be kind to them but in reality they are treating the other person as an object for their own selfish pleasure. This is not part of God's plan and we always deserve better than being treated like an object! We deserve the joy and happiness that comes with living according to God's plan.

Remember in the last chapters how we talked about the differences of love and lust and God's design for love, marriage and sex? We've come to realize that not everyone knows about God's plan or maybe they've decided to follow their own selfish ways instead of God's ways. When others make decisions that turn away from God, we can sometimes be hurt by their choices. We can be hurt in a variety of ways...some more serious than others. One of the most important things to remember is that if someone else does something to hurt you...sexually, physically or emotionally...you are never to blame! You have done nothing wrong! No matter what they try to tell you or how they try to convince themselves, or you, that what they did was right, you *know* right from wrong! If someone is hurting you in any way, please tell a trusted adult immediately. If they don't believe you or don't listen right away, tell another trusted adult and keep telling them until they listen and do something to help you. You have absolutely nothing at all to be ashamed of if someone else is taking advantage of you. Any type of abuse is a horrible crime...not only according to state and federal laws but especially according to God's laws. God does not want you to be hurt...that is *never ever* part of His plan! Abuse to the human person makes God

hurt too so remember that He has placed good and loving people in your lives to ensure your safety and care. Go to them so they can help you! Never ever stay with someone who hurts you...in any way! You deserve hope, healing, and authentic love...not fake love that only seeks to hurt and destroy God's plan. Regardless of what others have done to hurt us in the past, we can still experience healing and authentic love by staying close to God and by doing our best to follow His plan for life, love and marriage.

Holy marriage is a vocation. God knew that marriage was SO important and SO crucial to our society that He elevated it to a sacrament. It's not just a legal contract uniting a man and a woman, but it's a sacrament that unites a man and woman according to God's plan.

A vow is a sacred promise to live and act a certain way. In the case of marriage, the couple is promising to live according to God's plan for life, love, and marriage.

When a couple comes to the Catholic Church to be married, the priest or deacon asks them a series of questions before they exchange their vows.

1. ***(Name) and (Name), have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?***
2. ***Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?***
3. ***Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church?***

After the man and woman give their consent (by saying "I do") to the above questions, they exchange the following vows before God, the priest and/or deacon, and their family and friends. The couple may choose to use either of the following vows:

I (insert name) take you (insert name) to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

I (insert name) take you (insert name) for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.



Read the questions and vows again. Spend time thinking about each word and what it means. Think about some examples of how the vows may play out in everyday life (i.e. sickness/health, love/honor, good times/bad, love and honor *all* the days of my life).



#20 A Forever Love: Pete & Therese

Look back at the questions the priest/deacon asks the couple before they exchange vows. These questions indicate the four components in God's plan for marriage and sex.

1. **Free:** *Look back to question #1 during the marriage ceremony:* Each person must *freely* enter into the covenant and not be coerced by another person. Like Christ's love, our love must ALWAYS be freely given. Without freedom it is impossible to love. Therefore the only way for sex to be an act of love would be if it were freely given between husband and wife in a committed marriage. It can never be forced, paid for or given with conditions.
2. **Total:** *Look back to questions #1, 2, & 3.* Each person gives his or her *total* self to the other...fully...100%! Like Christ's love, our love must ALWAYS be total. When marriage and sex is an act of love, both persons give their entire selves with their mind, heart, body, soul, masculinity, femininity, potential fatherhood or potential motherhood. During sex, the language of the body says, "I give my *whole* self to you. I accept all that you are and I will love you forever." If ANY one of these things is missing, then it is not love...it is a lie. It is incomplete.
3. **Faithful:** *Look back to question #2.* Each spouse remains *faithful* to the other in word, thought and deed...until death. Our love like Christ's love must ALWAYS be faithful. We know that Christ never leaves us. He never strays from us...even when we sin. His love was faithful to the point of death on the cross for our salvation. Likewise, we must die to ourselves and die to selfishness. Sex can only be an act of love if the couple is faithful to one another in thought, word, and deed. Husband and wife are to offer their entire selves to the other person...as a gift. This is only possible if they offer that gift ONLY to one another.
4. **Fruitful:** *Look back to question #3:* Each person is open and willing to accept children into their marriage and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church. Our love, like Christ's love, must ALWAYS bear fruit. Sex offers the couples the opportunity to be co-creators with God and to participate in the creations of a new person through their act of unitive love.

When we follow God's plan for life, love, and marriage, ALL four of the components must exist. We don't pick and choose which one is convenient and which isn't...God's plan is a package deal. When we accept and do our best to follow His plan, God's grace will sustain us!

Couples must respect the fact that sex offers us the power to create new life. Therefore, we must always be open to the gift of new life. If we are not open to the gift of life, then the act of sex cannot be fruitful and also does not spiritually unite the man and woman as God designed. For couples that are not open to the gift of life, sex becomes selfish instead of selfless.

Once you understand what the vows mean and once you understand the four components of marriage and sex, you begin to understand that marriage truly is a *sacred* covenant...one that is meant to reflect God's love in our world!

Saint John Paul II explained (in *Familiaris Consortio*) that marriage does three amazing things when it's lived according to God's design:

1. *A holy marriage shows God's total, undying love for the world. It doesn't have conditions but instead is a complete and generous gift! (Look up John 3:16)*
2. *A holy marriage shows Christ's love for the Church. Jesus offered the complete gift of Himself when He died on the cross for each of us. With Jesus' death came new life. When Jesus died, the Church was born to continue His life saving work here on earth! Jesus' death allows us the opportunity to live eternally with God in Heaven!*
3. *A holy marriage changes society for the better. When husband and wife love each other sacrificially and when they welcome children into their family, they are showing love like God loves us and like Christ loves the Church. Through the Sacrament of Marriage, the couple is showing Christ's love to the world while they themselves grow in holiness.*

In the Gospel of Mark, the evangelist remind us, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." (Mark 10:9) So how does a man and woman live up to these vows when things become difficult or stressful? What happens when the honeymoon is over and the issues of real life begin to settle in?



#21 What is Marriage: Jason Evert

Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined. ~Matthew 7:24-27



When a man and woman keep Christ at the center of their marriage, they are given the graces of the sacrament to help them overcome the difficulties that come their way. Like the Scripture passage states, you must build your lives on a solid foundation...that foundation is a life lived for Christ. It doesn't mean that you will never struggle or suffer or that sickness or hardship won't be a part of your life. It means that even in the midst of all the difficulties in life and in marriage, God will always give you exactly what you need exactly when you need it most! We just need to trust in Him and give Him permission to work in and through us...and that's the same for marriage couples!

They must remain close to God through prayer and sacraments and invite Him into their marriage to give them the grace to endure every moment, especially when it might be easier to turn the other way.

The notion of building your life on a firm foundation...on solid rock ...begins NOW! The way you live your life right now is preparing you for how you will live your life later...in whatever vocation God calls you to. By keeping Christ at the center of your life and putting Him first, we begin to discover God's plan for life, love and relationships.

If you play a sport, musical instrument or participate in an extra-curricular activity that involves a game, performance, or competition, you know that in order to do well and succeed then you must practice. You can't just show up to your soccer or baseball game and expect to do well if you haven't practiced. Even the professionals still practice daily.



The same goes for our spiritual life with God. If we don't practice living according to God's plan for life, love and relationships NOW then we can't expect things to go well later. God gives us the sacraments in order to help keep us holy. The sacraments, the Ten Commandments and the virtues are like a GPS that helps to keep us on track. We can't expect to live according to God's plan when we only participate in the sacraments once in a while...or when we only pay attention to a few of the Ten Commandments. Living a life of holiness is not easy...but neither is playing in a competition or a game! Each requires dedication, commitment, and hard work. But with holiness we have God's grace to help lead us, especially on those days when we haven't "practiced" enough...on those days when we may have fallen into sin instead of virtue.



Living a life of holiness and living according to God's plan for life, love, and marriage means that we know the truth about authentic love.

Authentic love doesn't use or abuse another person. Authentic love doesn't violate another person's dignity by using another person's body before or outside of marriage. Some people think that they have to live according to our world's standards in order to fit in or be "cool." God is calling us to a better way! God is calling us to fit into His world...to seek Heaven above all else!

When we date it is important to remember the very purpose of dating! Does anyone have any ideas of what dating is meant for?



#22 Dating & the Road to Marriage: Collin & Meghan

The real purpose of dating is to discover whom God wants you to marry! If God is calling you to marriage, then know that He has chosen your spouse for you from the moment of your very existence in your mother's womb! God has a plan for you! Now think about dates that either you've been on or other's you know have been on...are they honoring God's plan? When we date, are we keeping God at the center of our relationship? Or are we trying to fit in? Are we trying to be "cool" by saying we have a girlfriend or boyfriend? If you're not ready for marriage, then chances are you're not ready for dating. You don't have to date to be "cool" or to fit in...even though our world might be telling you otherwise! It is completely normal for guys and girls at your age (and older) to be just friends! Try it...just be friends with the opposite sex. Learn to hang out, talk, play sports, be silly, laugh together and pray together!

After all, this is "practicing" for what marriage is truly all about! Don't you want to be best friends with the one you're going to marry? If your answer is yes, then you have plenty of time to date later in high school, college and after college. There is no rush. You won't be seen as "uncool" or unpopular but instead you can focus on God's call and in doing so, God will lead you to the right person that He has just for you! Until then, don't settle for less. Don't compromise yourself by sharing your body with anyone except the one you're married to...til death do you part. Whether or not you are dating anyone now or will be in the future, dating is meant to help us discover what qualities we want in our future spouse. It is not a time to use each other selfishly and "test drive" each other as if we were new cars. Yes, you may have strong feelings and desires for another person when dating and you or your date may profess love for the other, but hold up! Remember... true, authentic God-like love will *never* take from you what belongs to your future spouse! True, authentic God-like love will never ask you to live together (cohabit) before you're married. True love respects and honors your dignity and finds other fun and healthy ways to express love.

Think of some healthy dating options that steer away from physical intimacy

You are a gift to your families and to our world. Consider yourself as total gift to your future spouse. Remember what we talked about earlier...***your visible body expresses truth about your invisible soul.*** How you act, how you speak, how you dress, and how you dance all influence the gift. When we dress modestly we are respecting ourselves enough to not share our bodies with the world because we know that God made our bodies sacred. We know that our visible body expresses truth about our invisible soul. When girls wear bikinis, low cut shirts, shirts that show off their womb (stomach), wear tight clothing, shorts or skirts that leave nothing to the imagination, what are we expressing to the world? Our bodies are sacred. They are a gift. They are not meant to be objects to be flaunted so that others will look at us or even so that others will like you or ask you out.



#23 Chastity: Saying YES to Love! Collin & Meghan

Do you really want to date a guy who is only interested in your body? That is not true and authentic love...it's lust. Ladies, have enough self-respect to dress modestly and don't be afraid that guys won't talk to you. Practice the virtue of modesty and the right guy, the one that God has chosen for you, will see your real beauty that goes *far* beyond your body!

Fast forward now to those who say that they're truly in love! We so often hear a person in love say that he or she is my soul mate that "completes me!" Whether it's in a movie or in a love song, the notion of a soul mate that completes you sounds really romantic and sweet! But think about what we talked about in the last chapter. Another person doesn't "complete you." God completes you! God created you whole, not in pieces or fractions! You can't expect to take part of yourself (50%, 60%, 75%) and commit to another person because that person deserves *all* of you...all 100%! Relationships, love, and marriage is not a 50/50 equation. It involves 100% of a person. Think of your favorite singer or sports player. If he/she only gave 50% of what they are capable of, chances are, their fans would be pretty upset with them! You expect that person to give 100% of who they are... realizing that this doesn't mean that the person is perfect or that in giving that 100%, that there will be a perfect result. We simply want to see the effort. It's the same with love and relationships. Would you stand at the altar on your wedding day and say, "I do" to a person who said, "I will love and honor you sometimes, when I feel like it." Or "I will love you only when you're healthy, pretty or handsome, rich, young, etc." Of course we wouldn't marry someone who isn't willing to commit 100% to our future because we know our hearts were made for true, authentic, unselfish love.



The bottom line is that we can't be perfect and we will make mistakes, but with God's help, He will complete the equation. When God is put first above everyone else, He completes us and allows us to give 100% to whatever it is that we are committed.



#24 Christ-Centered Relationships: Collin & Meghan

#25 Role Models of Authentic Love: Collin & Meghan

#26 UPDATE! WE ARE MARRIED!! Collin & Meghan

As we mentioned earlier, marriage is meant to reflect God's love in the world. Jesus said, "*Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*" (Mark 16:15) Jesus commanded us to be witnesses of His love to the world! For the married couple, this is done by the way the spouses love one another and by the way they welcome, love and care for their children. Children learn how to love by watching their parents. One of the best things a father can do for his children is to love and respect their mother. It is in the family that the child first learns to be unselfish and to begin living for God and others instead of themselves. Just think you may be the only Gospel that someone reads!

It is within the bond of marriage that God intended for man and woman to express their total love for one another. Man and woman express God's love to the world by the marriage vows they live out on a daily basis.



They do this in many ways but one of the ways is through the marital act. God created sex (the marital act) 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. The two purposes of marriage are *unity and procreation*...or bonding and babies. These two things cannot be separated or they no longer remain part of God's plan. God's plan is that through the marital act, the man and woman are bonded *and* are open to the possibility of new life...a child. It's

not one or the other...it's both/and.

God knew what He was doing when He created the sacrament of marriage to help protect one of the most sacred acts! When you engage in the sacred marital act your body is making a promise to the other person. You're not just having sex with a body...you're having sex with a soul. The sacrament of marriage "supplies" the graces necessary so that husband and wife unselfishly give of themselves to the other person.



#27 God's Plan for Dating, Marriage & Parenthood: Brian & Siobhan

If the marital act is about bonding and babies, how does the bonding occur? Remember how we talked about male and female complementarity? Man and woman were designed to fit together like two puzzle pieces...to complete God's plan for life, love, and relationships. In doing so, they are bonded to one another for life. This bonding happens due to a hormone called oxytocin. Oxytocin is a hormone that acts like Super Glue and is released when two people become intimately involved with one another. When a man and woman engage in the marital act, they are bonded ever more closely. During birth, that same hormone, oxytocin, is present which bonds a mother and child together in a very intimate way.

Oxytocin also helps explain why when people engage in the marital act outside of marriage (premarital sex) and then they breakup...it makes it extremely difficult. They have given something to the other person that was never theirs to begin with...and are now bonded like Super Glue. It becomes extremely heartbreaking and difficult to move on from that relationship. It is similar to a mother who is separated from her child.

The vocation of marriage is a sacrament of communion and mission. ~CCC 1210-1211

When one man and one woman enter into Holy Matrimony they become one with God and with each other. Their mission is to grow in holiness together and to be a sign of God's love to the world. The husband and wife have a duty to keep Christ at the center of their marriage so that their family can grow in holiness and reach Heaven. They do this by praying together and receiving the sacraments frequently. The grace they receive from the sacraments will help them during difficult times when they will need to sacrifice for the sake of each other or for their children.

In addition to the vocations of marriage, priesthood and consecrated life, some may be called to live in the single state. Living as a single person allows you a greater opportunity to serve God and one another. You can use this time to grow closer to Christ and hear where He is calling you to serve. Perhaps God is asking you to serve Him by working in a full time Church ministry to help others learn more about Him. Matthew Kelly says, "Singleness is a time in all of our lives for a reason. Some are single for a time. Others are called by God to singleness as a way of life. Regardless, don't waste your precious single years. You will never have a better opportunity to serve [God and His Church] than when you are single!"

Family as the First Church

Have you ever thought of your family as a "mini-Church?" The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that when a man and woman marry and welcome children into their marriage, they are replicating God's love for the Church. Every child comes from one father and one mother. As a member of a family, a child is taught the basic values of how to get along in that family as well as the larger society. The family is like a child's first school where we learn how to live in relationship to one another.

As members of a family we learn to respect, to love, and to treat one another responsibly even when we sometimes do not get along or when we argue and disagree with one another. We first learn these values within the family structure but these important values form a foundation upon which we learn how to interact and treat one another throughout our entire lives.

The family unit is irreplaceable. It is the basic core of human society that teaches us how to live, love, and be Christ to one another.

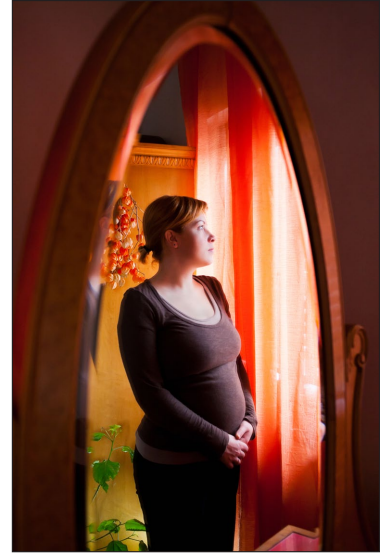
Sometimes we don't always get along with our family members. Parents may argue, siblings argue or children don't agree with their parents' decisions and vice-versa. Yet we are still called to respect and love one another just as Jesus did. Jesus taught us this best in the ways He showed kindness and love toward those that were often mocked, made fun of, or disliked. Jesus Himself was even mocked, made fun of and crucified on a cross. Even in those moments, He still showed us how to love. Recall His words from the cross: **"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."** (Luke 23:34) We learn to be loving and respectful by looking to how God loves His Church.



Parents are called to raise and teach their children about the faith. They do this by acting like a "miniature Church" in the ways they reflect God's love by the way they act, speak and treat one another and in the ways they treat their children. Remember, ideally marriage is meant to give glory to God and show the world a small taste of what our relationship with God will be like in Heaven. Children learn how to act, how to speak, how to love and how to respect others by watching their parents. (CCC 1655-57, 2201-2208, 2249)

and supportive counseling, a mom and dad are able to make a loving choice to place their child with an adoptive family who will be able to provide for their child in ways that they have always imagined.

The Catholic Church and the Bishops have vowed to support and assist those in the adoption process and to ensure that the process maintains the dignity of all involved. The Bishops agree that adoption is, “a gift to the child who receives a new family, to the new parents who receive a child to love and to raise, and to the biological parents who, in self-sacrificing love, have done all they can to provide their son or daughter with a good home and a bright future.”



#29 Trusting God's Plan for Families: Kevin & Rose Maria

FREEDOM & HAPPINESS

License vs. Freedom

How many of you can't wait to get your driver's license? In a few short years, many of you will have achieved that goal. Discuss reasons why you look forward to getting your driver's license (i.e. greater independence, etc.).

But think about it...just because you have your driver's license, doesn't mean you have the freedom to go *wherever* you please, *whenever* you please, with *whomever* you please. Your parent(s) still has rules you must



abide by and so does the state. For instance, in many states, new drivers are not allowed to drive beyond a certain hour at night and they are not allowed to drive with friends in the car until they reach a certain age. You also must wear your seatbelt at all times and never use a cell phone or text when driving. These rules, put in place by the state, are there for your safety and wellbeing. Your parent(s) most likely will have additional guidelines that you need to follow. Again, these are in place for your safety and wellbeing. Sometimes it may seem like you're being "smothered" by rules...at school, at home, by the state, and even by the Church. But think for a minute about these "rules." If you begin to understand why they are in place, you begin to understand that when following the rules, it actually brings you more freedom!



You see, there is a difference between freedom and license. License is the permission to do something (i.e. drive) but freedom allows us the ability to choose what we *ought* to do, not just do what we *want* to do. If we all did whatever we *wanted* to do, our world would be in chaos. For instance, if you decided that you didn't feel like stopping at the red light, there is a very good chance that you could crash into another car and hurt yourself or

someone else. Even if you didn't cause an accident, a police officer would most likely pull you over and give you a ticket. If you repeatedly break the rules of the road, you could lose your license to drive and even spend time in jail. You have the "license" or choice to disobey the law, but your freedom would be taken away.



[#30 Freedom vs. License: Fr. Matt Williams](#)

The same is true with God's plan for life, love and relationships. Often times we hear people say that the Church is just full of old-fashioned "rules!" However, God's plan goes way beyond a "bunch of rules." We have

the freedom to choose to follow God or not. God is always a gentleman and never forces us to do anything we don't want to do. God's loving plan is simply an invitation to learn the truth about ourselves and others.

After all, who knows more about us than the One that created us and brought us into being? Read the parable of the rich young man in Matthew 19:16-22

In the parable, the rich young man had the freedom to choose, but freedom alone did not make him happy. He went away sad because he made a bad choice. He chose material possessions over God.

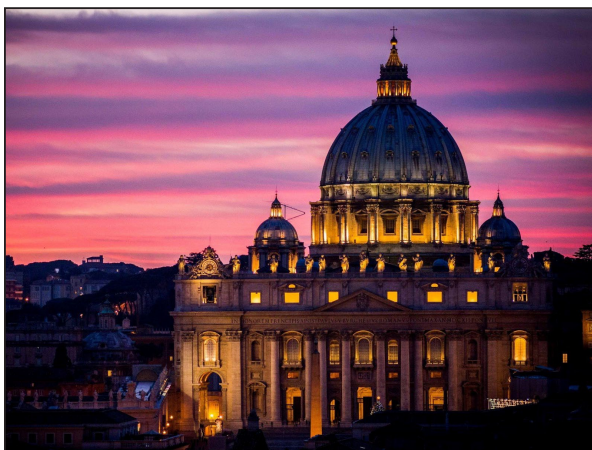
God offers us a plan that He devised for our greatest good...a plan that is sure to bring us happiness and peace in this life and the next. Like we said earlier, you have the freedom to love God or to turn from God. The choice is entirely yours.

Consider St. Augustine, who as a young man, strayed from God for many years. He was leading a sinful life and eventually had an awakening and turned back to God. One of his most famous quotes is one where he speaks from his own experience. "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O Lord." St. Augustine tried to live his life differently than what God had planned. He thought he knew best so he went about doing sinful things and discovered that he wasn't happy at all...instead, he was miserable, lonely and sad. When he turned back to God the Father and began to lead a life of virtue, he found true happiness, joy, and peace. Choosing anything less than God, makes us less free to follow the truth. And the truth helps us to know what we ought to do.

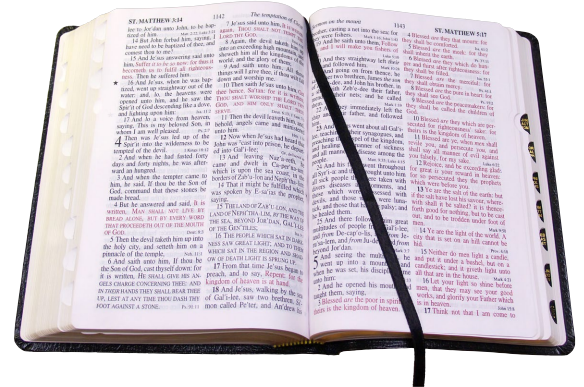
When we decide to follow God, we choose love. We choose love for God, others, and ourselves. In caring for our body and soul, we are saying "yes" to God's plan for our lives. We care for our body and soul by forming our conscience. Our conscience is the deep place within us where we are alone with God. Conscience is that interior place in our hearts where we make decisions based upon truth and not what everyone else is doing (peer pressure). By forming our conscience and living according to God's plan, we discover true freedom!

Caring for Body & Soul

Caring for our body and soul and developing our conscience is a big responsibility. When we follow our conscience we don't base our decisions on feelings alone. If we make choices based on our feelings we will most



certainly be left disappointed because our feelings can constantly change. But God's Truth *never* changes. Forming our conscience is a life long task. You don't just wake up one morning and say, "Oh, today's going to be a good day, because I *finally* formed my conscience!" No, each day is a day where we decide to say "YES!" to God's plan or yes to our own plan. Each day is an opportunity to start new! The best way to form (and keep informing) your conscience about what is right and what is wrong is by consulting reliable sources. One of the most reliable sources for forming our consciences correctly is the Catholic Church.



Jesus Himself gave the apostles and their successors, the bishops, the authority and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to teach Truth in His name. This means that God's plan for life, love, relationships, and marriage is revealed to us through the Church's teachings.

Consider the Fifth & Sixth Commandments. The Fifth Commandment states that, "You shall not kill." This commandment seems pretty straight forward, right? Then why do so many people willingly break this commandment? Every time we turn on the news, we hear stories of people getting mistreated, attacked and even killed. This happens because some people in our world have lost proper respect for the dignity of the human person. They do not understand that each and every person is created in the image and likeness of God and should be treated as such.

If we take a moment to look into another person's eyes and actually see Christ in them, how could we possibly say or do something mean to that person? How could we bully or make fun of another person if we take the time to see Christ in him/her? Instead we are often blinded by jealousy, fear, anger or any number of feelings. But remember, we don't make decisions based on our feelings because our feelings can change. We must make decisions based on objective truth because objective truth never changes. God created each of us for a special purpose and He expects us to speak, act and live with dignity while respecting ourselves and every human person.

Have you ever heard of the Golden Rule? "Treat others, as you want to be treated." We should always keep that in mind when dealing with others...especially if we're having difficulty being kind to another person.

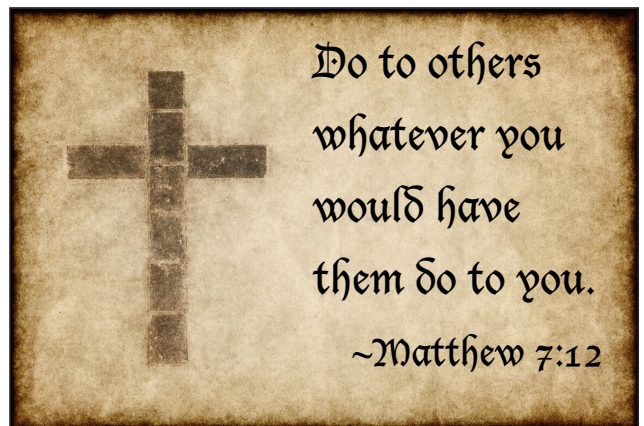
We have talked about how God has a special purpose for our lives and how if we follow His call, it will lead to authentic happiness and peace.

But did you know that God has a plan for your life from the moment your life begins! Science tells us that all human life begins at conception...when a child is conceived in his/her mother's womb. *All* human life is sacred at *every* stage. The fifth commandment tells us that we should never participate in anything that frustrates or disrupts God's design. If we are not treating every human life with the utmost dignity and respect at all times, then we are violating the Fifth Com-



mandment. Of course, this means that we don't kill another human person, but it also means that we don't hurt them, make fun of them, gossip, disrespect or bully them in any way!

One of the biggest offenses against the Fifth Commandment is the tragic loss of human life through abortion. Abortion is the intentional taking of the life of an unborn baby before he/she is born. More than one million abortions are performed every year in the United States. Usually when a woman becomes pregnant, it is cause for great rejoicing and celebration and she gets quite excited to share the news that she is having a baby. Her family and friends typically celebrate the baby by hosting



a baby shower or decorating the baby's bedroom. Sometimes, a woman may be surprised or afraid when she discovers that she is pregnant and going to have a baby. Perhaps she is very young, still in school, not married and she may be fearful of what her parent(s) or others would say if they found out she was having a baby. She may feel embarrassed by her pregnancy if she conceived her child outside of marriage...outside of God's plan.



Perhaps she doesn't feel ready to be a mom or perhaps she fears that financially she cannot afford to care for her child. Maybe she feels that having a child will interfere with the plans she had for her own life. Although all of these circumstances and feelings are very real and understandable, it is very important for her to take a step back and think about what is happening. She may be overwhelmed with emotions and she may have many people telling her what she should and should not do.

Some people closest to her (parent, boyfriend/husband, sibling or friend) may try to persuade her to end the pregnancy through abortion so that she can continue to live out her life as she had previously planned. This is the time that she needs to spend some quiet time with God in prayer. When she takes a step back and allows God to enter this experience with her, hopefully she will realize that even though she didn't plan to have a baby or perhaps doesn't feel ready, that our loving and merciful God will be with her every step of the way.

The world often tries to convince us that there is only one option...there is only one way out of this kind of "problem" and that is by "terminating the pregnancy." It is legal to abort a child in the United States and in many countries throughout the world. But be careful. ***What is legal and even what is popular is not always moral or right.*** Sadly, when civil laws are constructed, God's plan for life is not usually taken into consideration.

Having a baby isn't a "problem" and "terminating a pregnancy" is actually ending a human life. From the moment of conception, a child is FULLY human, and simply needs time to grow and be nurtured so he/she can be ready to enter the world. Just like a newborn baby and a growing child need to be cared for (fed, loved, sheltered), the unborn baby needs and deserves the same.



#31 The Miracle of Life: Catholic Media House

Pray, trust and believe that God always has a plan...even when things seem too difficult to bear. God's plan *always* involves life and love and never destruction and despair. Abortion ends a child's life and changes a mother's life forever. *There is always another option and we should never make such a big decision based on fear, on feelings or based on what someone else is trying to convince us to do.* Your life and your child's life is far too precious and sacred to purposely make a decision to end it.

There are places you can go and people who will help you...even if everyone around you (parent, boyfriend, husband, etc.) is trying to convince you to do otherwise. *The most important thing to remember is that you are*

never alone! Our Church offers help through the *Pregnancy Help Office* that has specially trained people willing to help you and your baby! They offer *completely confidential* help by way of referrals for medical care, financial support, adoption information, counseling and the ongoing support that you and your baby deserve during your pregnancy and even after your child is born.



Having a child will certainly require sacrifice and may change your future plans, but change isn't always a bad thing...it can be a blessing in disguise. A child can bring much joy into the world and can always change our world for the better when embraced and loved the way God intended. If desired, you can continue your education and achieve your hopes and dreams, but with different timing and in a different way than you may have originally intended. Every child is gift from God and He asks us to receive His gifts with grace and treat His children with dignity and respect.



Sadly, sometimes even doctors may try to convince parent(s) to choose abortion for their child. Maybe medical tests might lead them to believe that the baby is going to be born with a disability or not be able to function exactly the way other people do. An important thing to remember is that sometimes these medical tests can be wrong...in more ways than we can imagine.

Take for instance, the case of little Julia who was born with Down Syndrome. Julia is a beautiful, intelligent, loving and sweet baby girl. Although her parents didn't know their baby was going to be born with Down Syndrome, they couldn't imagine life without her! Thankfully God gave Julia such a loving family to care for her and help her to grow! She is already making the world a more beautiful place with her big beautiful smile and infectious laugh!



#32 Respect for Every Human Life: Katie & Julia

#33 God Gives Us What We Need: The Kiley Family

Having a child with health issues is certainly not what any parent desires, but seeing every human life as a gift, regardless of the challenges, is exactly what brings joy to our lives! Look at Julia's family...they have their challenges but they love her unconditionally and know that the gift of Julia's love and beauty can change our world for the better! Very sadly, 90% of the time preborn babies like Julia are diagnosed with Down Syndrome, they are aborted before their parent(s) ever truly understood the gift that their child would have been to their families and to our world.

Do you remember the video clip from Paula, the local high school student who was adopted? She is grateful to her birth parent(s) every day because they chose life! Certainly it wasn't an easy situation for her birth parent(s)



but look at the beautiful young woman Paula has turned out to be! Her birthmother deserves a lot of credit for that! Without her heroic choice to place her daughter with a loving, adoptive family, the world may not have known such a beautiful person! Adoption is always a beautiful, loving alternative to abortion.

Remember, God calls us to life and love and whatever the circumstances that lie before us He promises to be by our side to help us through every situation and God's promises never fail! Even when the circumstances don't appear to be ideal, there is always hope!

God is calling each of us to make the unselfish choice to embrace, protect and love life...at all stages...from conception until natural death. This includes how we embrace the lives of those who are sick, disabled, elderly, dying, and all those who the world may consider not worthy of our love and resources. God reminds us that every human life is worthy of love, respect, and protection. Trust Him and trust His plan!

The LORD says, 'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.' ~Psalm 32:8

The Sixth Commandment, "You shall not commit adultery" reminds us to be faithful to God's plan for marriage. As we previously talked about, marriage is meant to last a lifetime...til death do you part. Sometimes, selfishness takes over and can lead people to disobey the 6th commandment. Adultery is when a married man or married woman chooses to be unfaithful to their marriage vows and have sex with someone who is not their spouse. Our world typically refers to this as "cheating" on your spouse or having an "affair." Obviously this is a disruption of God's great plan for marriage. It is not at all what God intended.



#34 Teens Talk: Sex is a Gift from God

God's plan is designed so that the couple spends their entire lives together being faithful and monogamous (having only one sexual partner in marriage). God has this plan in place to secure our happiness and the well being of family life and society. God knows that stable marriages and families contribute to our society in a positive way and make the world a better place.

Sometimes, lust enters into people's lives and can frustrate God's design. Remember that the things you do now are preparing you for your future vocation! So practice virtue, not lust. This includes not participating in things like "sexting"—texting/sending inappropriate pictures of yourself or someone else. This also includes



not dressing or dancing inappropriately, not watching TV shows, movies, video games or listening to music that objectify the human person. There are so many influences in our world that tempt us to turn from God's plan. Using our body or another person's body for lust or pleasure is *not* part of God's design and lead to great brokenness and unhappiness in our world.

God's plan for sex in marriage is an opportunity for husband and wife to give of their whole selves to one another completely. However, if a couple has sex, but they are not open to new life, then the sexual act is not *total* or *fruitful*. If a couple uses contraception, then they are both denying new life and holding back a part of themselves, which is their potential motherhood and fatherhood—their fertility. Through sex the body speaks a language, and it says, "I give my whole self forever. I hold nothing back, and I accept all that you are." If the couple contracepts, then their bodies are telling a lie because they are not giving their entire selves, and they are not accepting the potential motherhood or fatherhood of the other person. The marital act must always intend to express love *and* be open to new life. Using contraception violates *both* purposes of sex... bonding and babies.



[#35 Teens Talk: Sex is for Marriage](#)

[#36 Modesty Respects Your Beauty & Dignity: Daughters of Mary of Nazareth](#)

That doesn't mean that every couple has to have many children. It is important for couples to be responsible for each child they conceive. So how does a couple avoid having more children than they can be responsible for without using birth control? The Church offers a solution called Natural Family Planning (NFP). NFP uses the woman's monthly fertility cycle to determine when she is most likely to conceive a child and when she is not likely to conceive. While remaining open to God's plan and using their own self-control, couples can work with the natural cycles of a woman's body to determine the number of children they have and to space out births. An important thing to know about artificial birth control is that the chemicals taken by the woman are meant to work against her natural cycles while NFP naturally works with them.

The use of artificial contraception to prevent pregnancy and the use of "protection" such as condoms and other devices used to try to prevent disease simply make it possible for a couple to have selfish sex instead of having free, total, faithful, and fruitful relations as God has planned!

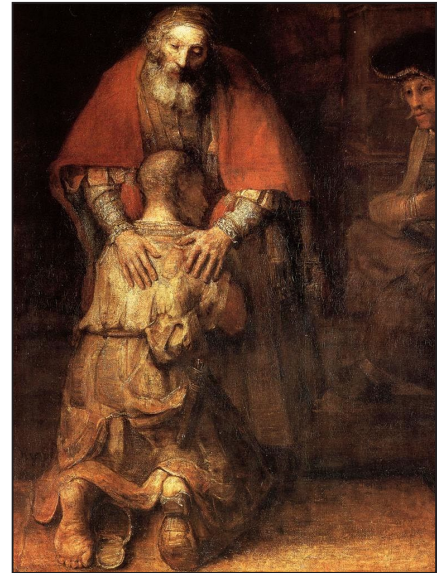
When you truly love another person, you will wait for them until marriage. When you truly love someone, you don't need to "protect" yourself from them! You protect yourself from enemies and people that want to cause you harm...not people that love you! Authentic God-like love, gives. It never takes.

Pornography (the exploitation of the human body for sexual pleasure) is a horrible and sinful way that *completely* disrespects the human person in every way possible. When a person looks at pornography, they are not

looking at a person's soul. Instead they are selfishly looking at a human person simply for what they have to offer on the "outside." They are treating the human person like an object and completely disregarding the dignity with which God created the person. Sadly, a lot of young people, unmarried and even married people become addicted to pornography. Once they start viewing pornographic images, it can become difficult to stop. Pornography is sinful and harms our relationship with God and convinces us to disrespect the human person, which is a violation of the Fifth Commandment and can lead to a violation of the Sixth Commandment. Be a better man. Be a better woman. Always defend the dignity of the human person and don't get caught up in worldly desires that frustrate God's plan. It only leads to unhappiness, broken families and disorder in our world. God created you for better! He created you for more! He created you to become a Saint! Care for your body and treat it like a temple! Care for your soul and in doing so lead yourself and others to Heaven!

We have talked about a lot of issues and some topics that may leave your heart a little "heavy." Perhaps some of these issues relate to your lives and either choices you have made or choices that those you love have made. But please don't feel badly...please don't be sad or fearful. God never abandons us and He wants more than anything for us to turn to Him...even if we had turned away from Him in the past! No matter where you've been, no matter what you've done or had done to you, *ALL* that matters is where you go from here!

The beauty of our Heavenly Father is that He remains loving and true even if we stray from Him. He awaits us with open arms. **Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Luke 15:11-32.** Just as the Prodigal Son's father welcomed him home with open arms, so does Our Father, Our Lord, Our Savior. God is ALL loving and merciful!



We mustn't forget to care for our soul the way we are taught to care for our bodies. We are taught to eat healthy foods and stay in shape by exercising our bodies. But what are you doing to care for your soul? Our Church offers us so many great ways to ensure our souls are healthy too! Remember, what we do with our bodies affects our souls and how we care for our souls also affects our bodies!



#37 You are Worthy of Love: Jason Evert

God's Love & Mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

We have talked a lot about some of the beautiful sacraments (Eucharist, Holy Orders and Marriage) that our Lord offers to us. One of the most important sacraments we can take advantage of is the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession/Penance). In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives us of our sins so that we can begin anew! "God writes straight with crooked lines." God loved us enough to send His only Son into the world to suffer and die for us so that we could have the opportunity to live eternally with Him in Heaven. Even though Christ



suffered and died, He still didn't leave us in this world alone. He gave us the sacraments, the Church and the holy priesthood to help us to grow in holiness; to help us grow closer to Him.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest acts *in persona Christi* or in the "person of Christ" and offers us God's forgiveness and absolves us of our sins. The Lord simply asks that we come to Him in the sacrament with humble hearts to confess our sins and to do penance. Penance allows us the opportunity to repent of our sins through prayer and/or action. Of course, any time we admit that we have done something wrong

it can cause us to be embarrassed or even make us nervous, but be not afraid. We never need to be fearful of God's love and mercy. He offers it to us freely and without reservation because He loves us *that* much!

A priest can reassure you that he will keep your confession completely confidential since that is one of the duties of his priesthood. He is never allowed to break the seal of confession by disclosing sins confessed during the Sacrament. There are specific Church laws (Code of Canon Law) that prohibit a priest from revealing any information shared between a priest and a confessor (the person confessing his/her sins). The priest is there to represent Christ in a non-judgmental, loving way. You will have an opportunity to pray together with the priest and he may offer you advice and particular ways to grow in holiness so that you can avoid those particular sins in the future. The reality is, we are all human and sin is part of the human condition. However, this should not cause us to give up or just accept that we are destined to do wrong things. No, instead we should always strive to be close to God and His plan! We should always strive to be Saints! Will we fall short from time to time? Of course we will.



It is at these times, that we should RUN, not walk, to the most beautiful Sacrament of Reconciliation! Don't wait weeks, months, or even years! The sacrament is available to you *anytime* you need it and as *often* as you need it! And if you're like most human beings, then that is quite often! It is a good habit to make regular monthly confessions. This will help you grow closer to Christ, to better understand His plan for your life and to better live out God's beautiful vocation. It will most certainly lead you closer to sainthood!

Remember that saints were sinners too...but they changed their ways by putting their selfishness aside and seeking God first. They sought out Jesus and allowed Him to transform their lives by forgiving them of their sins and wiping their hearts clean so they could be free to love Him, love others and love themselves as God created us!



#38 God's Endless Love & Mercy: Jackie

Inspired to Discern & Answer God’s Call

Now that you have learned more about God’s plan for life, love, relationships and marriage, you have an important job! Learning about God’s loving plan doesn’t end here! It actually just begins! You are invited on a wonderful journey, full of ups and downs, but one that is guaranteed to bring you more joy and love than your heart can imagine! You were created by love, for love, to give love! So pray often, love like God loves and be holy like the saints!

You are now invited to commit to living according to God’s plan for life, love, relationships and marriage by participating in the *Created for Love* commitment ceremony with your classmates. Perhaps your teacher may want to invite your parish priest and your parents to be present for this special occasion. Ladies you are encouraged to go out and buy a white candle as a sign of your commitment to save yourself until marriage. Remember that your purity is a beautiful gift from God. Do not light this candle until you present it to your husband on your wedding night, as a symbol of your sacrificial love for him. Gentlemen, honor the love and commitment your female friends have made and do the same in thought, word and deed. Be a strong man of God who seeks to love authentically the way God intended.



#39 God’s Plan Brings Happiness: Kevin



Bonus Video Clips

Teens Talk: Desire for Love is Normal

Teens Talk: Respecting Life & God’s Plan

Q & A with Jason Evert

Modesty: Inviting Others to Value You in Proper Order

Dating: What’s the Rush?!

Identity: Everyone Is Loved by God & His Church

For Girls: Inviting Boys To Treat Me With Respect

For Girls: Your Heart Deserves Beautiful & Healthy Relationships

For Girls: Dressing Appropriately—Be A Good Example!

For Girls: Standards—Raise the Bar!

Please also visit www.RespectLifeEducation.com for more videos and resources for students, teachers and parents.

Created for Love Commitment Ceremony

Leader: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to come together and learn about the gift of Your great love for us. Help us to know and follow your plan for our lives and to keep your commands, knowing that they are given to us out of love to help us to grow in holiness and live a happy life. You know us better than we know ourselves and You know better than we do what will make us truly and authentically happy. We trust that in following Your plan, it will lead us to eternal life! Give us the grace to trust in Your great mercy when we fail to follow Your path, and remind us always of the great dignity you have bestowed on every human life.

Leader: Heavenly Father, we commit ourselves to You today. We give You all that we are and ask that You help us to remain strong in our pursuit of the truth.

All: Heavenly Father, thank you for creating me in Your image and for giving me immeasurable worth. Please give me the grace to grow in holiness by keeping my heart pure, so that I can love as I was meant to love. Trusting in your great mercy, give me the strength to reconcile with You when I fall and to be open to Your plan for my life, always remembering that Your plan will bring true happiness. Amen.

For those who desire to follow God's plan for life, love, relationships, and marriage, by making a solemn commitment, please read aloud the following promise.

From this day forward, I will seek to follow God's plan for life, love, relationships, and marriage. I will seek God's help to keep my heart, mind, and body pure by saving the gift of my sexuality for my future spouse or to make a gift of myself in the vocation to which God calls me. I will do my best to live a virtuous life, knowing that all I see, hear, say, and do should reflect the love of God and dignity of every human person. I will respect and protect all human life, especially those who cannot protect themselves. If I struggle or fail, I will trust in God's mercy and try again.

Leader: Lord, bless these young men and women, and help them grow in the gift of Your Love and Truth each day. We ask these things in Your name. Amen!