**INTRODUCTION**

Our society teaches thought that we are to love things and use people. This essentially narcissistic approach has led to a culture in which love is hard to define and even service of our neighbor requires a reward i.e., Service hours for Key Club, honor society, etc. This lesson is aimed at understanding that the Father loves us, and therefore should love others in the same sacrificial manner.

God the Father, who is love (1 John 4:8), loved us into being. In fact, one could say that God is always thinking about and loving us because He sustains our existence. To be made in His image is to have a particular relation to Him and thus we are to love him above all things and love our neighbor as ourselves. Who is our neighbor? Every person is, because we are all made in God’s image and because the good that we do helps not just those close to us, but everyone. By the same token, the evil that we do harms not just ourselves, but everyone.

The highest way that we show our love for our neighbor is to help him to get to heaven. Jesus’ death on the Cross demonstrates the pattern of service and meaning of self-giving and it shows us that love involves sacrifice. His death was the ultimate sacrifice, and it was done out of love and obedience for God the Father and out of love of us.

Life the Holy Trinity we had made us to live in community of persons. This desire is imprinted into our nature and reflects that we are made in His image and likeness. It is part of who we are. Because we are made to live with others, the Father wants us to form friendships, which are gifts precious to each one of us. Like God, a true friend wants what is best for both our body and our soul. True friends do not use another person for pleasure, to look good to others, or for selfish reasons.

**CATECHIST PREPARATION**

**SCRIPTURE TEXT**

1 Samuel 3:10  
Jeremiah 31:3b  
John 15:13  
Romans 12:16-18  
1 Timothy 4:12
**Key Concepts to Communicate**

- Love is to will the good of someone.
- There are various levels of love which includes friendship. True friends are not self-centered.
- Gossiping, bullying, and teasing violate love of neighbor and friendship.
- Virtue is a spiritual power which involves the purity of mind and body, frees love from selfishness, and helps us to realize our own dignity as a child of God, as well as the dignity of others as children of God.
- Modesty is necessary to be seen by the other and illustrates our dignity as a person and child of God.
- A proper family dynamic fosters chastity which builds an atmosphere of love, virtue, and gratitude for the Father’s gifts, and helps each person discover what is his/her own vocation.

**Key Terms to Understand**

**Chastity:** The virtue that moderates the desire for sexual pleasure according to the principles of faith and right reason. In *married people*, chastity moderates the desire in conformity with their state of life; in *unmarried people* who wish to marry, the desire is moderated by abstention until (or unless) they get married; in *those who resolve not to marry*, the desire is sacrificed entirely. (Etym. Latin *castus*, morally pure, unstained.)

**Community:** A group of persons who share the same beliefs, live together under authority, and co-operate in pursuing common interests for the benefit of others besides their own members. The degree of common belief, living, and activity determines the intensity of the community and its distinctive identity as a human society.

**Friendship:** Reciprocal love. In philosophical terms a friend is a person whom one knows and loves well and by whom one is known and loved for virtuous reasons. The biblical notion of friendship, in the New Testament, adds the feature of total selflessness after the example of Jesus Christ, whose love was generous, forgiving, and sought only the welfare of those whom he loved. The sharing of confidences is also part of the biblical understanding of friendship (John 15:15).
forgiving, and sought only the welfare of those whom he loved. The sharing of confidences is also part of the biblical understanding of friendship (John 15:15).

**Good**: In general, whatever is suitable or befitting someone or something. Practically, however, it is that which all things tend toward or desire. The good is the desirable, and therefore the object of the natural (or supernatural) needs or tendencies of a being.

**Marital Act**: It is the act by which a natural husband and natural wife give themselves totally to one another body and soul. This act is in cooperation with God the Father and sometimes God chooses to create a new human being through it.¹

**Modesty**: The virtue that moderates all the internal and external movements and appearance of a person according to his or her endowments, possessions, and station in life. Four virtues are commonly included under modesty: humility, studiousness, and two kinds of external modesty, namely in dress and general behavior.

**Lectio Divina**: This Latin phrase literally means divine reading. An ancient practice for reading Scripture, the early Church Fathers also called it spiritual reading and was, and still is, a staple for daily prayer. In a 2005 speech, Pope Benedict encouraged the practice of Lectio Divina stating,

"I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of *Lectio divina*: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church - I am convinced of it - a new spiritual springtime."

There are many private/group techniques but at the core it is comprised of the following four steps: Lectio, reading of a passage or section of the Word of God; Meditatio, invoking the Holy Spirit and considering the giving passage; and Oratio, responding to the word through a movement of the heart; and contemplation, opening our heart and resting in God’s presence to allow what He has spoken to take root. In a Bible study, this is most often practiced by reading the passage, providing a catechesis or framework for understanding

¹ The biological explanation is reserved to parents, in accordance with # 133.4 of The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality.
the selection, reading the passage again and discussing/wrestling with what it is saying, and ending with a prayer of thanks. There is a tendency to want a commitment for immediate application. Life-changing commitments happen after a sufficient time of reflection. Participants should be encouraged think, pray and come back the next week with an application.

**Truth/True:** Conformity of mind and reality. Three kinds of conformity give rise to three kinds of truth. In *logical* truth, the mind is conformed or in agreement with things outside the mind, either in assenting to what is or in denying what is not. Its opposite is error. In *metaphysical or ontological* truth, things conform with the mind. This is primary conformity, when something corresponds to the idea of its maker, and it is secondary conformity when something is intelligible and therefore true to anyone who knows it. In *moral* truth, what is said conforms with what is on one's mind. This is truthfulness and its opposite is falsehood.
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LESSON PLAN

1. Begin with a prayer invoking the Holy Family and their example of virtue (Suggestion follows):

   Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we love you very much. Yours was the perfect family, overflowing with goodness, peace, truth, and love. Please give us, and our families, the grace we need to be good and pure in thought, word, and deed. Help us to become holy by loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and help us to love our neighbor as ourselves for love of God. Finally, when our days on this earth have ended, please lead us safely to eternal happiness in heaven with God and all His holy angels and saints. Amen.

2. Provide an overview – what is the starting point and where are we going?

3. Set the stage for the study
   a. **Question 1:** What is friendship?
      i. All answers (within reason) are correct as long as they relate to individuals respecting them for who they are and assisting them to strive for virtue and holiness
   b. **Answer 1:** A friend is an individual who desires the best for you. They want you to grow in virtue and are willing to assist you along the way!
   c. **Question 2:** What does it mean that God loves us?
      i. The answers typically revolve around wanting us to succeed, be rich, love other people and get to heaven.
   d. **Answer 2:** To say that God loves us is to say that he intentionally made us and desires the best for us which is a virtuous life – we were made for the good, true and beautiful and, consequently, eternity with Him in heaven.

4. Lectio Divina: Scripture
   a. Have three teens read the following
      i. 1 Samuel 3:10
      ii. Jeremiah 31:3b
      iii. John 15:13
      iv. Romans 12:16-18
      v. 1 Timothy 4:12
   b. Highlight that readings proclaim that:
      i. The Lord desires to speak to us even if we are young
      ii. The Lord gives us what we do not deserve, His mercy and love
      iii. Friendship as demonstrated by the Lord means to be willing to lay down one’s life for another
iv. Friendship serves and respects the individual and loves them for who they are but sees them as they are called to be
v. Just because you are young does not mean that you cannot become a saint and lead others to Jesus through His church

5. **Study of Who we Are**
   a. How would you answer these two questions:
      i. **Question 1**: What are you worth as a person? And to clarify, not in the sense of what are the chemicals in my body worth or in the sense of human trafficking but what are YOU worth?
      ii. **Question 2**: Are you happy and excited about who you are?
      iii. **Question 3**: What is self-image?
         1. Pictures in their wallet or iPhone
      iv. **Answer 3**: In psychology, the mental image that we carry around with us is called the self-image.
      v. How do we define it?
         1. We usually define it as, “What we think and feel ourselves to be.”
         2. But that would be a very vain and self-centered picture, it definitely links us to Adam and Eve.
            a. The Catholic understanding, the Biblical definition is, “Seeing ourselves as God the Father sees you - no more, no less.”
               i. That means with all our successes, failures, sins and good works
         3. It is the realistic portrayal as given to by the Father through His Word and Church.
   b. What shapes our self-image?
      i. There are a number of really important groups that shape us
         1. Family
            a. A family that teaches chastity assists us in making friends. It teaches us that people can accept us for who we are not what we can do for them or be used by them
            b. A family that teaches sacrifice allows us to die to ourselves for the betterment of another i.e., not be selfish, be polite, share, etc.
         2. Authority figures i.e., coaches, teachers, youth workers
            a. They teach us how to live and interact in community with those who are not related to us
         3. Friends
            a. Our choices of friends direct how we want to live
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i. Bad friendships influence us to make poor choices

ii. In friendship we typically base them on what we get out of them. In other words,
   1. How do I perform?
   2. How do I look?
   3. How influential or important am I with them?

iii. Why are we this way?
   1. Society tell us that the “really important or worthy people are the:
      a. Attractive, beautiful or ones that stand out above the rest
   2. Commercials appeal to our vanity:
      a. Smarter, prettier, attractive (Axe)
   3. Worst of all, we don’t dare be satisfied with the way we are.
      a. Children’s fairy tales are not helpful:
         i. Ugly duckling, Sleeping beauty, Rudolph and Dumbo
            1. All are only accepted after they do something
            2. All show that life is impossible if you are set apart

iv. God the Father did not intend this...IT WAS NOT SO IN THE BEGINNING!

6. Forming a positive self-image
   a. A positive self-image is to know personally the person of Jesus the Christ who created us
   b. Living a life of modesty that allows individuals to see us as the mystery that we are:
      i. Persons are meant to be revealed never exposed
      ii. In order to be seen we must dress, act and communicate in a way that hides those areas of our body and lives that people would exploit
   c. A true friend
      i. Does not gossip, bully or use us
      ii. They are willing to assist us become holy and live a life of virtue
   d. Our Lord called us friends and not slaves (John 15:15)
      i. To be a friend of the King in ancient times meant you always had access to the King. Not even a King’s wife had that type
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of access. To be a friend of the King was an official position which meant:
1. You did not have to you have to wait to be summoned to see him
   a. To approach a King without asking permission and being summoned was to be thrown in jail. In Persia, you were executed.
   b. Even a wife had to asked permission first and make an appointment
2. You did not have to ask permission to speak to the King
   a. To speak without being spoken to would cause your immediate execution

7. God the Father loves us as we are and sees us as we will be. You are important to the God. He said so!
   a. We are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27)
      i. Tselem – image, ancients made tselamim
   b. We are truly children of God (1 John 3:1)
   c. God the Father has a person, individual, loving interest in each one of us
      i. He has made Himself accessible to us through Jesus
      ii. He has made it possible to change by the power of the Holy Spirit
      iii. He loves us! (John 3:16)
      iv. He desires to be in relationship with us
      v. He wants to give us a better life. (John 10:10b)

8. We need to see ourselves as God sees us
   a. Ephesians 1:36
      i. The Father has bestowed or entrusted us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavens”
      ii. The Father chose us in Him before the world began
      iii. The Father predestined us through Jesus to be His adopted sons/daughters
   b. There has never been another You, nor will there be. You are precious in the eyes of the Lord (1 Pt. 3:4)
   c. God loves you as you are but loves you too much to leave you the way you are.
   d. You are destined for greatness. He told us that we will reign with Him and by grace are even greater than the angels. (Hebrews 2:7)

9. The One who Knows you the best, loves you the Most
   a. He loves Us Unconditionally! (1 Jn. 4:10)
   b. We like to argue:
      i. I need to fix myself first.
ii. I need to straighten out the Deacon first
iii. Rubbish! You’re just making excuses. He does not want to change your personality or who You are, He wants to maximize all your gifts and talents

c. We need to accept ourselves
   i. If God the Father loves us just the way we are, it should motivate us to accept ourselves and treat our friends in a similar manner

10. The Father’s love and power is real
   a. If we remain open to Him and let Him transform us then we will be able to say that the love He has is sweeter than wine. (Song of Songs 2:2)
      i. To experience this, we need to be able to hear Him say that to us
         1. Impediments to our hearing is called sin
            a. Jesus freely forgives us through confession
               i. Without judgment
               ii. Without condemnation
            b. We are meant to experience His friendship through the sacraments

   b. Invite the teens to use the sacrament and to begin listen to the Jesus and ask Saint Joseph to keep us close to Him in prayer:

   St. Joseph, please obtain God’s grace and protection for my family and for all families. Help us to love by giving of ourselves to others, avoiding selfishness, and living in peace with others. Help us to model our lives after yours by being humble, working at our tasks faithfully, by acting justly, and by loving mercy. Finally, help us by your prayers to live chaste lives, to be truly devoted to Jesus and Mary, to love and grow in our Catholic faith, and finally to be with our Lord in heaven. Amen.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- Why don’t we expect more of our friendships?
- What do you need to do to be a better friend?
- How does friendship assist us in holiness?
- Why are families important?
- Why does Jesus desire to be our friend?
- Name four practical ways to assist your friends to become holy.
Lives of the Saints

St. Maximilian Kolbe:

Raymond Kolbe, born January 7, 1894, was the son of devout Catholic parents. When Raymond was still a child, our Blessed Mother came to him holding two crowns, a red one symbolizing martyrdom and a white one symbolizing persevering purity. She asked if he was willing to accept either crown. He accepted both.

As a young man, Raymond, along with his elder brother, entered a junior Franciscan seminary. He excelled in mathematics and physics and also had a passionate interest in the military. Later he decided that rather than be a military strategist, he wished to fight in another way. He wished to fight moral and spiritual evil by overcoming it with the weapons of truth, love, and mercy. In October 1917 he and six friends founded the Crusade of Mary Immaculate with the goal of converting sinners, freemasons, and those who left or denied the Catholic faith. He took the religious name Maximilian and was ordained a priest on April 28, 1918.

Despite constant suffering from tuberculosis, Maximilian lived a life of intense prayer, work, and charity. Upon returning to Poland, he formed one of the largest Franciscan friaries in the world, with over 700 inhabitants. In honor of the Ever-Virgin Mother of God, he named the friary “Niepokalanow” which means “City of the Immaculate.” He believed that it was important to use the technology that was available to further the kingdom of God. He did this by establishing a printing press which printed a monthly magazine, a daily newspaper, and a radio station - all to advance and spread the message of love of the Lord Jesus and His Holy Mother. By the mid-1930’s, Father Maximilian’s magazine was reaching 750,000 people a month. His daily newspaper was reaching over 100,000 readers per day. Priests throughout Poland credited his magazine and newspaper with fostering greater faith all over the country.

Fr. Maximilian was a great missionary, setting up friaries with printing presses in Japan and India to spread the love of God and devotion to Our Lady, all the while respecting the local customs and traditions of the people in those lands.

In 1939, while back in Poland, was taken prisoner by the Nazis who had invaded Poland. He was released on December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate
Conception. After his release he spent much of his time organizing shelters for refugees.

In February 1941, Fr. Maximilian was arrested again and sent to prison in Warsaw where he was brutally treated. In May of the same year he was sent to Auschwitz. In July of 1941, several prisoners escaped from two separate cellblocks. In reprisal, 10 men from each cellblock were randomly chosen by the Nazi commandant to die in their place. One of those chosen was a man named Franciszek Gajowniczek. Upon being chosen to die, Francis cried out, “Oh, my poor wife, my poor children. I shall never see them again.” At this point, Fr. Maximilian stepped forward and offered his own life in place of Franciszek’s. His offer was accepted, and he was taken to the starvation chamber with the other men who had been chosen for death. There he led them in daily prayers, hymns, and the Rosary. Slowly, all the men died of thirst and starvation – all that is except Fr. Maximilian. Finally, after growing impatient waiting for Fr. Maximilian to die and wanting to use his cell to kill more people, Fr. Maximilian, with a prayer on his lips, was given a lethal injection.

This heroic martyr of charity was canonized a saint by Pope John Paul II on October 10, 1982. His feast day is August 14th, one day before the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Until his death, Franciszek Gajowniczek spoke often and in different parts of the world about St. Maximilian Kolbe’s self-sacrificial love and how that love had saved his life.

**Potential Questions**

1. **Why did God make us?** Answer: God made us to know Him, love Him, and serve Him so as to be happy with Him forever in heaven. This may also be summarized by the Nigerian Catechism that answers the same question by stating, “He thought that we would like it!”

2. **Does God love everyone?** Answer: Yes, God loves everyone, because God is love.

3. **Who is our neighbor?** Answer: In a certain sense, everyone is our neighbor, because every human being is made in God’s image and likeness. Not only that, but every baptized person is an adopted son or daughter of God the Father and is our brother or sister in Christ.

4. **Ultimately, how do we show love for our neighbor?** Answer: We show love for our neighbor by doing good toward him and helping him/her get to heaven.

5. **What are some characteristics of true friends?** Answer: Answers here will vary, but may include such things as respect, loyalty, mercy, and kindness.
6. **What are certain actions, which we must always avoid with respect to others?** Answer: Answers will again vary, but may include, gossiping, bullying, ridiculing. Also, to ignore or be mean to another person because we think we will fall out of favor with the “cool” crowd if we are kind to him/her would be a sin.

7. **From what does the virtue of chastity free us?** Answer: Chastity frees us from selfishness.

8. **Name some ways in which chastity helps us?** Answers may include: Gives inner peace; enables one to think and act purely with the mind of Christ; helps us respect ourselves and others; builds up respect and love in families; helps us to be holy; helps us to know what God is calling us to in our lives.

9. **Which are the cardinal virtues?** Answer: The cardinal virtues are the four main categories of virtue around which the other virtues may be grouped. The cardinal virtues help us to govern our actions, to order the passions, and guide our conduct, according to reason and faith. The four cardinal virtues are prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. (CCC #1804 and following).

10. **Which cardinal virtue do chastity and modesty fit under?** Answer: Chastity and modesty are part of the cardinal virtue of temperance.

11. **What is temperance?** Answer: Temperance is the cardinal virtue by which we control the desires of the senses according to the will of God.

12. **Why does the Church hate those who are gay?** Answer: The Church does not hate those who suffer from same-sex attraction (SSA). It does call for repentance for those who participate in sex sin. Additionally, it offers assistance for those who suffer from SSA since it is a disorder that deserves our compassion, healing and proper education.

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES FROM CHURCH TEACHING**

**CCC 396:** God created man in his image and established him in his friendship. A spiritual creature, man can live this friendship only in free submission to God.

**CCC 1604:** God who created man out of love also calls him to love – the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love.\(^{90}\)

**CCC 1822:** Charity (love) is the theological (God-given) virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

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\(^{90}\) Cf. Gen 1:27; 1 Jn 4:8, 16.
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CCC 2522: ...Modesty is decency. It inspires one’s choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet.

REFERENCE BOOKS

- A Father Who Keeps His Promises: Scott Hahn
- An Appointment with God: Fr. Michael Scanlan
- Friendship: The Key to Spiritual Growth: Fr. John W. Crossin
- Theology for Beginners: Frank Sheed
- The Truth About Trouble: Fr. Michael Scanlan

MEDIA CLIPS

- Chosen: Lesson 4, Seg. 3: Our Response to God?: YouTube or Chosen Video series
- Get Back Up (Karate Kid): Wingclips.com
- Promise for Wilbur (Charlotte’s Web): Wingclips.com
- Standing Up To Bullies (The Cure): Wingclips.com
- Prisoner 24601 (Le Misérables): Wingclips.com
Selected Bibliography
