

Formation in Christian Chastity Grade 3

Dear Parents,

The Church states with confidence that parents are the primary educators of their children and this is most true when we speak of the religious education of your children. This responsibility to teach flows from the natural bond that exists between parent and child, and from the most basic teachings of our faith.

You know your child best. While many parents seek the assistance of others to impart some of the systematic elements of education in faith, in Catholic schools or in parish religious education programs, you retain the primary duty to form your children in the faith. Through you, your children will be introduced to prayer and the experience of worship. An essential part of this calling is to learn from you how to live responsibly in this world.

This series is intended to assist parents in the formation of their children in the virtue of chastity.

Why Chastity?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) introduces the discussion of chastity by calling it a “vocation” (CCC 2337 ff). Chastity is the virtue whereby we regulate our use of sexual activity in accord with our state in life. We want to emphasize the good elements of the Christian life that are ours as followers of Jesus Christ. Every disciple observes chastity, though the manner of how it is observed varies according to our state in life.

The married person, the priest or religious, and the young person all observe chastity, though in different ways. For example, a young person practices chastity by remaining pure in all of their relationships. A married couple observes a holy life in their exclusive commitment to each other. Priests and religious dedicate themselves exclusively to God. We want our children to grow up with a proper, healthy and holy understanding of themselves and their gift of human sexuality.

How will this program work?

This program is based on the premise that *parents know their children*. As a parent, you have a good sense of your child’s personal development and can best judge when he/she is ready for specific lessons or information. It is very important to protect the natural innocence of young children; therefore, parents will be the teachers during the first four grades.

To support you in this effort, each year we will provide a series of ideas and basic concepts of the chaste life. We also provide some technology tips to help you begin to brainstorm ways to encourage healthy use of modern technology without compromising the virtue of chastity and the innocence of your child. Our hope is that you will review these points with your children as you see fit and lay the foundation for a holy family life for your child’s future. In later grades (5 to 8), we will assist parents with some classroom activity to support what is being taught at home.

What can parents teach to Third Graders?

THEME = MYSTERY OF THE TRIUNE GOD. Begin with the basic teachings of God as the Trinity of Persons, then discuss the mystery of the human family. An outline of teaching points follows, and concludes with some ideas of how you might present these concepts.

God is a community of persons – similar to a family.

- There is one God.
- There are three persons in the one God.
- Each of these persons is fully God.
- We call this mystery of three persons in one God, The Most Holy Trinity.
- The three persons in the Holy Trinity are: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are a communion of Persons (sort of like the first family), and have loved each other perfectly from all eternity.
- God makes us in His image and likeness; therefore, we are created to be part of a family.
- God gave us mothers and fathers (either biological or adoptive) to love us and take care of us, body and soul, and to help us become the loving persons that God wants us to be.
- When a man and a woman marry they become husband and wife and can begin a new family.
- Children are the greatest gifts that God can give to a family.
- As children, we show our love through obedience to God and our parents.
- Our grandparents and other relatives also love us and help us to be who God wants us to be.
- As God's children, we are called to be part of a larger family, the Church.
- This loving family of God includes the Blessed Mother, the holy angels, all human beings in heaven (the saints), and the holy souls in Purgatory.
- We should pray to God our loving Father, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, our Guardian Angel, and the saints in heaven, to give us the grace to live good and holy lives in our families.

Teaching Examples

1. Share the story of St. Patrick with your child, and how he used a 3-leaf clover to help explain the mystery of the Trinity to the King of Ireland. As a young man, Patrick was captured as a slave and taken from his home to Ireland. Later he escaped and returned home, eventually to study for the Priesthood. His desire was to return to the Irish and bring them the Catholic faith. Years later he did return. When meeting with the King, he told him how God was one divine nature and three persons. The shamrock or clover helped to show this as it had three distinct petals, but formed a single whole shamrock.
2. Speak about family life. Together look at your child's family photo album with pictures of them as a baby and at their baptism. You could help the child to create a family tree with the names of your extended family.
3. Pray the Hail Mary, with reference to the Holy Family, and the prayer: Angel of God. Use this prayer invoking your child's guardian angel to explain how God watches over them, and how others in their life also serve to protect them (e.g. parents, teachers, police, firemen, school crossing guards, etc.).

Theology of God

Since we find our true identity and purpose in God, it is important that we know certain essential information about God. This information is intended to help in this regard. Some of this is a repeat of what is found above.

- There is one God.
- The one God is a communion of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Each persons of the Trinity is fully God (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit).
- God the Father loves the Son from all eternity.
- God the Son returns the love of the Father from all eternity.
- The love between the Father and the Son are so powerful that from all eternity a Third Person, the Holy Spirit has proceeded from the Father and the Son.
- God is all-loving, all-knowing, all-powerful, and ever-present.
- God is perfect. Nobody made God. God always was, is now, and always will be.
- God cannot be limited by time and space. God came before time and space and He made time and space.
- When nothing else was, God was.
- God made all things and He made them good.
- God made man and woman and He made them very good.
- Men and women (and boys and girls) are the greatest of all of God's creatures on earth. We are made in His image. This means that we are to love God and each other because God is love and He loves us.
- Because we are made in God's image, He gives human beings the ability to reason and we are given free will so that we can freely choose based on our reason.
- God shows us and tells us in different ways what is good and what is evil. He gives us His grace because He wants us to choose good and be happy with Him forever.

Prayers

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Angel of God, my Guardian dear, to whom His love entrusts me here; ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

TECHNOLOGY TIPS

- Closely monitor computer use by your children.
- Computers used by children should be in a common area of the house.
- Purchase a good web filter to keep out unwanted and harmful materials (i.e. SafeEyes, BeSecure, Barracuda, etc.).
- Children should not be using "chat" rooms.
- Use of social networking and media sites for viewing, and especially for creating a user profile, should not be allowed (i.e. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).
- Children should protect their privacy and modesty on the computer just as in other public settings like restrooms.