

Formation in Christian Chastity Grade 4

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 Fourth Graders?

THEME = THE MYSTERY OF GOD AND OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO HIM. Begin with how we see God and grow to love Him in our lives, then discuss how our lives can be offered in service to Him. An outline of teaching points follows, and concludes with some ideas of how you might present these concepts.

My place in God's family.

- The one God is a family – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- The three persons of the Blessed Trinity love each other perfectly and completely.
- We are to imitate their love.
- Love is giving yourself fully to another person without expecting anything in return.
- To truly love another, you have to give.
- Love is not a 50/50 relationship. To truly love, as we ought, we must give ourselves totally – 100/100.
- God loves us so much that He gave us His only begotten Son. He gave His life so that we can experience the fullness of life and be happy with Him forever.
- Jesus showed us His self-giving love in all of His actions and especially by giving His life on the cross to open heaven for us.
- Jesus' death on the cross shows us that true love involves sacrifice.
- Jesus said, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." – John 15:13
- Because we are made in God's image, we are called to love others as He loves us.
- For most people this will not involve physically dying for another, but it will involve many self-giving, selfless actions.
- God calls everyone to be a holy person.
- God calls different people to love Him in different ways. The word we use for God's individual call to each person is "vocation."
- The different vocations in this sense are married, single, religious, and priestly life.
- A married man and woman promise to love God and each other by faithfully loving each other for life and by welcoming and loving the children God may wish to give them.
- Married people are given grace by God to help each other to be holy and to teach their children the ways of God and to help them to be holy.
- A single person is someone who is not a married person, or a priest, or a member of a religious community, but who strives to be holy by remaining close to God in prayer and service to others, striving to live a holy life in the everyday circumstances of the world.
- A consecrated brother or sister is someone who follows God and seeks to be holy by making certain promises (poverty, chastity, and obedience) to live in a certain way, and to live in community with other people who promise to live the same way.
- Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the Lord gives bishops and priests the power to forgive sins in the Sacrament of Penance and to consecrate bread and wine, changing them into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist.
- The priest has a special role in teaching God's people, in helping them to become holy, and in using his special authority to serve His people.

Teaching Examples

1. Speak to your child about your own marriage and the love you have for your spouse. Share your wedding photos and stories from that day. Tell your child how you met and decided to get married; this is the story of your own vocation.
2. Introduce the word vocation, explaining that it comes from the Latin word “vocare” meaning “to call”. It represents our understanding that God has a special plan for each person that is revealed to us in prayer and by listening to the guidance of others who love us and can help us to see our calling more clearly.
3. Talk about the difference between vocation as a calling from God and vocation as simply a job or career that we do in life. List the vocations of some members of your larger family, and then perhaps of people in your parish (i.e. what God has called them to do). Talk to your child about religious vocations and how important they are to the life of the Church.

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.

- There is one God.
- There are three persons in one God.
- Each of these persons is fully God (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit).
- The one God is a communion of persons, Father, Son, and 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. Consider placing a cap on time spent online.
- 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.