

For the Classroom - Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 7

Grade 7 - Lesson Plan 1

Theme: God made us to be happy in Him

Objectives:

1. Students will learn how to attain true and lasting happiness.
2. Students will understand what true happiness is and that making proper use of our freedom leads to happiness.

Begin by noting that every year the Church sets aside the month of October as “Respect Life” month. Tell the children that you are going to talk about the best way for them to show respect for themselves, others and God: by living a life of chastity.

(Have the following prayer, Scripture and Catechism quotations, and “Key Concepts” Reading ready on a handout for the children. Recite the prayer together, then let the children take turns reading the rest of the handout out loud.)

Opening Prayer to the Holy Family: 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 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.

Quotations from Sacred Scripture:

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6: 4-5)

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)

Quotations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

God put us in the world to know, to love, and to serve him, and so to come to paradise. (1721)

The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to “the slavery of sin.” (1733)

“Key Concepts” Reading:

How we achieve holiness and our ultimate happiness.

God made us because He loves us and wants us to be happy. Our ultimate and perfect happiness is living with Him forever in heaven. God gives us the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the teachings of the Church, to show us the way to peace and joy in this life and unlimited happiness in the next. The Holy Eucharist and prayer give us the grace we need to live good lives.

God gives us freedom, which is His gift to choose what is right and good. We call this free will. Because of free will, we are responsible for the decisions we make. Disobedience to God’s commandments and teachings will make us unhappy. The Ten Commandments are like “guardrails” that keep us on the road to life and true happiness, and from “going over the cliff” of unhappiness and spiritual death.

Our parents are responsible for helping us to keep on the straight and narrow road to happiness by guiding us to choose what is good and reject what is evil. We are to follow the fourth commandment and honor our father and mother. God promises blessings to those who do. God is so good and loving that if we choose evil and commit sin, He gives us the sacrament of Penance as a remedy. This sacrament is like medicine for our souls, because through it we receive the healing and life-giving grace of Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

Question: 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.

Question: What is true freedom?

Answer: True freedom is the freedom to choose what is right and good.

Question: Why does God give us freedom?

Answer: Because He made us in His own image and this dignity includes freedom; because He wants us to freely choose to love Him. True love is not forced, it must be chosen.

Question: What does Jesus say our reaction should be if we are persecuted or “made fun of” for doing the right thing for His sake? (Read the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:1-11.)

Answer: We should rejoice and be glad, for our reward will be great in heaven.

Activities:

- 1) Each student will copy the Ten Commandments onto a piece of paper, leaving several spaces under each commandment. They will then list one or two positive ways to follow each commandment, e.g. for the third commandment: “I will go to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation.” They will follow this by writing one or two actions they will avoid, which would break that commandment. The teacher will call on students to share their answers orally or to write them on the board.
- 2) Students will look in the gospels and write down two instances where Jesus speaks of consequences for doing good and two instances where He speaks of consequences for doing evil. They should write down the chapters and verses where these may be

found. This may be done individually or in pairs. After students have finished, the teacher may choose students to read the scripture passages they have found.

Summary:

So far, we have discussed that our true and lasting happiness is to be found in loving God and neighbor. If we love God, we will keep His commandments. We are responsible for our acts because of the freedom that God has given us. We need God's grace to live morally upright lives and we receive grace primarily through Mass, prayer, and the sacrament of Penance.

Closing Prayer: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, help and protect us.

(Closing prayer may be omitted if both lessons are taught on the same night.)

For the Classroom - Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 7

Grade 7 – Lesson Plan 2

Theme: God made us to be happy in Him

Objectives:

1. Students will learn what “vocation” means, and that God is lovingly calling each of us to follow Him in a particular way.
2. Students will understand the importance of choosing friends who want the best for us, in both body and soul.
3. Students will know that chastity is a spiritual power that helps us to follow God’s call.
4. Students will see that living a prayerful, sacramental life is essential to forming solid friendships and chaste lives, thereby ascertaining the way of life to which God is calling them.

Tell the story of St. Dominic Savio, given below.

St. Dominic Savio:

Dominic Savio was born in Italy in 1842. Dominic, who loved to pray, became an altar boy when he was just five years old. When he was twelve he met a holy priest who later was named a saint, St. John Bosco. Don Bosco ran a school for boys called the Oratory. Dominic joined the school. In those days, children were twelve when they received their First Holy Communion. On the day of his First Communion, St. Dominic wrote four simple rules for himself in his journal. The four rules were:

1. I will go to Confession and to Communion often.
2. I will keep holy the feast days.
3. Jesus and Mary will be my best friends.
4. I will rather die than commit a mortal sin.

He was very well liked by his schoolmates because of his kind and cheerful disposition. However, because of poor health, he had to leave the oratory and return home.

When he was just fifteen years old, as he lay dying from sickness, he was heard to speak of the beautiful things that he was seeing. God was showing Dominic a glimpse of the marvelous reward awaiting him in heaven. After his death, Don Bosco wrote the story of Dominic’s life. St. Dominic Savio is Patron Saint of Children.

Opening Prayer: Dear Saint Dominic Savio, please help us to be holy. Pray that we might have the grace for us to live chastely and purely. We ask that you intercede for us to have good friends who truly want the best for us. We ask that these friends will help us to faithfully pursue God’s call to each of us. Help us by your prayers to help those around us to be holy so that we may make this world a better reflection of God’s

kingdom, and that we may, one day, share fully in His unlimited love in heaven – the love that never ends. Amen.

(This prayer may be omitted if both lessons are taught on the same night.)

Review:

So far, we've discussed that our true and lasting happiness is to be found in loving God and neighbor. We learned that to love God, we must keep His commandments. We also learned that God gave us the gift of free will and we can use it either to choose good or to choose evil. God wants us to choose good and He gives us the grace to do so, especially through holy Mass, the sacrament of Penance, and prayer.

Now you will learn that God calls each one of us to holiness in a particular way and that to successfully navigate our way through life, we must live chastely and choose our friends wisely, receive the sacraments regularly, and pray persistently just as St. Dominic Savio did.

(Give the children a second hand out with the following quotes and "Key Concepts" Reading. Have them take turns reading out loud.)

Quotations from Sacred Scripture:

The Lord called me from birth, from my mother's womb he gave me my name.
(Isaiah 49:1)

But the Lord answered me, "Say not, 'I am too young.' To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak." (Jeremiah 1:7)

Some friends bring ruin on us, but a true friend is more loyal than a brother.
(Proverbs 18:24)

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

Quotations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state – though each in his own way – are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father himself is perfect. (825)

The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as friends, who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality. Chastity is expressed notably in friendship with one's neighbor. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion. (2347)

“Key Concepts” Reading:

Following God’s call to holiness, happiness, and true friendship.

As you have already learned, God desires our true and lasting happiness. To achieve this we must use the gift of freedom that he gave us to act obediently toward Him and his commandments. God calls each and every one of us to be holy, to be a saint. He calls us each to be a saint, but each in a different way, in a way particular to us. There are certain things that everyone is called to do, such as keeping the commandments, but no one’s path in life will be exactly the same. Yet God desires that everyone’s path end in eternal glory and happiness with Him in heaven.

The call to us from God is called “vocation.” This word actually comes from a Latin word “vocare,” which means “to call.” There are four general types of vocations, or callings: ordained priesthood, consecrated life, married life, and single life. Regardless of what one’s general vocation is, the path that an individual takes to attain holiness will differ. However, all are called to holiness.

To clearly hear the voice of God calling to us in our heart, it is very important that we live purely. “Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a *grace*, a fruit of spiritual effort.” (CCC 2345) Chastity is a spiritual power, and helps us live out our vocation by imitating the purity of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Chastity is not just for priests and sisters. Everyone, whether married, single, priest, or religious is called to live chastely, though one who is married would live out this virtue in a different way than one who is not married.

To live chaste and holy lives, it is very important that we choose our friends wisely. We must never be unkind to anyone, but we must be careful to choose friends who want what is best for both our body and our soul. It is important that our friends accept us for who we are, children of God and “soldiers of Christ.” It is good to have friends who are of the opposite sex, as well as friends of the same sex. While it is good to have friends who are of the opposite sex, this is the time to happily enjoy these friendships without the pressures of dating.

Finally, we need God’s grace to be the holy people that he wants us to become. Prayer, going to Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation, and regular reception of the sacrament of Penance gives us the grace that we need so that we can become the people we are called to become, and know more clearly what path God is calling us to follow.

Discussion Questions:

Question: To what does God call everyone?

Answer: God calls everyone to be holy. God calls everyone to live chastely. God calls everyone to give Him glory. God calls everyone to keep His commandments. God calls everyone to be happy forever in heaven.

Question: What are the four general types of vocations?

Answer: Ordained priesthood, consecrated religious life, married life, and single life.

Question: What is chastity and who is called to it?

Answers: Chastity is a spiritual power (virtue) that helps us to live out our vocation in a

holy way by imitating the purity of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Everyone is called to chastity.

Activities:

Students will make a list of ten characteristics of a good friend. Teacher will give 5-10 minutes for this and then discuss with the students what characteristics they chose, highlighting those that are virtues.

Read a brief biographical sketch of a saint who is known for his or her purity and discuss with the students how that saint practiced the virtue of chastity to a heroic degree, explaining why this was so admirable. Examples may include: St. Joseph, St. Dominic Savio, St. Maria Goretti, or St. Thomas Aquinas.

Summary:

Today we have discussed that a vocation is the particular call that God gives to each person to live out his or her life in a holy way. We must practice the virtue of chastity, as well as the other virtues, if we are to live out this call to holiness. Part of being holy is choosing our friends wisely, choosing only those who will help us to follow God. If we choose our friends wisely, practice the virtues, and receive the sacraments regularly throughout our lives, we will be the holy people that God made us to be. One day we will reign with Him forever in heaven, where we will have total and unending happiness.

Closing Prayer: Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!
Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us!
St. Joseph, pray for us!
St. Dominic Savio, pray for us!