

Discussion Questions

Theology Lesson 1: Belong- God's Image and Likeness and Being in Relationship

Consider and discuss:

- Do you have a community of other couples who can support you on your marriage journey? If not, are there couples in your parish community that you admire or feel a natural connection with?

Plan and execute:

- If you are already in a community of supportive couples, make plans for a get together - a local trivia night, Happy Hour at a favorite pub, a planned hike, or a dinner date are all good ideas. Consider putting a monthly date on your calendar and be intentional about spending time with your community.
- If you do not yet have a community, make plans to explore friendships with couples you admire or feel a natural connection with. This could be a conversation after Mass leading to a coffee/dinner date, or if you are new to the area, you could ask your parish priest to start hosting events for couples to get together. Be intentional and persistent - friendships take time.

Theology Lesson 2: Believe- The Grace of the Sacrament

Consider and discuss:

- Have you realized or prioritized holiness as the goal of your marriage?

Plan and execute:

- Write 3 specific things you can do to help your spouse in their pilgrimage toward holiness.
- Write 3 specific things you need from your spouse to help you be holy.
- Schedule a time once a month to have a prayerful discussion on how God is working in your life and in your marriage.

Theology Lesson 3: Become- The Church's Moral Teaching

Consider and discuss:

- Is any of the information presented in this session new to you? Discuss with your beloved some of the topics that impacted you the most.
- Is there anything you need to change/adjust to live according to the Church's moral teachings?

Plan and execute:

- Schedule a time to discuss natural family planning and birth control in your marriage. Please visit witnessstolove.org/nfpresources for resources.
- Do either of you struggle with pornography? If so, have you shared this struggle with your beloved?

Theology Lesson 4: Beatitude- Living as a Catholic Family

Consider and discuss:

- Is there anything in my life that is preventing me from becoming a total gift to my (future) spouse? (Wounds, attitudes, vices, habits, etc.)
- Have we discussed how we intend to raise our children according to "the law of Christ and His Church?"
- Do our current friendships help or hinder our relationship?



Plan and execute:

- A Rule of Life is something that monastic communities live by, “an intentional, conscious plan to keep God at the center of everything we do.” Start to develop a Rule of Life for your family—some things can be simple and daily (“We will always eat dinner as a family and without distractions”), or express how you ought to be in times of conflict (“We will always fight to understand and resolve, not to be right, and never go to sleep without granting forgiveness”), but all things should be considered in view of how that action(s) bring you closer to God. How can you incorporate the promises you made on your wedding day into your Rule of Life?

Theology Lesson 5: Be Light- What is Domestic Church and How to Live it?

Consider and discuss:

- “Sacrament” is defined as a “visible sign of an invisible reality”. What does that mean for you and how does it affect how you intend to live your marriage?
- Discuss with your spouse what “love” means to you. How close is your understanding of what love is to what Christ defined as love with his sacrifice on the Cross?



Plan and execute:

- Plan a date to go to Adoration together.
- Praying together as a couple is a powerful way to become aware of the “invisible reality” of the Sacrament of Marriage. Many shy away from it because they are unsure of how to do it. There is no “right” way to pray, other than to speak to God our Father as two of his children. Resolve to pray together, either by reciting rote prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, for example), go to the bonus content of the Be More retreat to hear a testimony on couple prayer, or visit witnessstolove.org/product/grace-examen-prayer-card/ to see another beautiful way to pray together.

Theology Lesson 6: Be Healed- Perfect Love Drives out Fear: Marriage Advice for Adult Children of Divorce or Separation

Consider and discuss:

- Have you ever examined the ways in which your parents’ divorce or separation has affected you? Have you talked about them with your fiancé or spouse? Why or why not? If not, then we encourage you to journal about this wound in response to this talk and then share some of that reflection with your fiancé or spouse.
- How has your parents’ divorce impacted your identity? Do you struggle with self-worth, feeling beloved or lovable, feeling like you belong somewhere, or believing you are capable of loving? In what ways can you accept and trust more deeply your true identity in Christ? How can your fiancé or spouse help you here?
- What expectations do you have of marriage as a result of your parents’ divorce? Do you see any traces of cynicism or romanticism in how you view marriage? Or do you see any other negative expectations? In what ways can you embrace more of God’s vision of marriage?
- Are there ways in which you have been self-

protective to the detriment of self-giving to your beloved? How can you grow toward deeper self-giving? To help you on this question, think back to potential roles or behaviors you may have had to do in the aftermath of your parents' divorce and how those behaviors may have stuck with you into your relationships. (You may want to refer to our handout on this topic too.)

- Are there boundaries with parents or other family members that would be helpful to implement for the sake of your family and your relationships?
- How was forgiveness lacking in your parents' marriage and afterwards in the aftermath of the divorce or separation? How has forgiveness played a role in your relationships with your parents, and your relationship with your spouse? Are there ways you want to grow in deeper forgiveness with those who have hurt you? What do you think of Christ's unilateral forgiveness to us on the Cross? How does that transform the way you approach forgiveness?

Plan and execute:

- Schedule a time to do the Life Giving Wounds handout with exercise (download from lesson in app).

Life Skills Lesson 1: Self Knowledge

Consider and discuss:

- How are your personalities similar and different? Do you see any areas of concern? If so, discuss those.
- How are your families of origin similar or different? Do you come from a small family that was quiet and kept things to themselves or a larger family that talked about everything? Did your parents show love? If so, how? Who made the decisions in the family?
- How did your parents resolve conflict? What did they do well or not so well? What do you intend to change from the way it was in your family?
- Did you feel safe and secure growing up?
- Are there any vices that should be addressed

before you get married such as pornography, anger, etc.? Better to try and talk about or get help now if needed.

Plan and execute:

- Visit temperamentquiz.com, complete the temperament inventory and schedule a date where you exchange and discuss the results.
- Schedule a Virtue "Check Up": Below is a short list of virtues. Take your time considering each. Is there one you think you should work on? Is there one you think your beloved should? How can you receive what your partner tells you trusting in their love for you? How can you tell them which virtue(s) they ought to work on in a loving way? We suggest you begin this conversation with prayer and ask God to give you an open heart and gentle words to receive and communicate with love.

Courage	Humility	Charity
Perseverance	Honesty	Faith
Patience	Forgiveness	
Kindness	Self Control	

Life Skills Lesson 2: Communication in Marriage

Consider and discuss:

- What are your and your beloved's personal strengths and weaknesses related to communication? In what ways do you need to improve?
- How will you set apart time to communicate with your beloved? Discuss ideas on how you can ensure this is a priority in your marriage.

Plan and execute:

- As a couple, make your own "rules of engagement."
- What is your primary love language (take the quiz at 5lovelanguages.com). What about your beloved? Compare how you tend to give and receive love.
- Make a list of how you have been showing love to your partner and ask if they received it as love. Put what you learned into action by intentionally loving each other in the primary language the other recognizes as love.

Life Skills Lesson 3: Grace and Conflict

Consider and discuss:

- When you find yourself in a power struggle with your Beloved, make a prayer of surrender and ask God what he desires. Together, discuss what this will look like in your relationship.
- Reflect with your Beloved on potential existing emotional wounds and how they may impact your marriage.

Plan and execute:

- If it has been a while, schedule a time to make a good Confession.
- When an emotional wound is triggered within you, take time to do a self examination and and prayer. Reflect with your beloved on potential existing emotional wounds and how they may impact your marriage.

Life Skills Lesson 4: Finances

Consider and discuss:

- Talk about Jesus' image of the oxen and a yoke. How does the idea of being yoked together as a team of oxen sound to you? What emotions does it surface?
- Take a moment to write a note to your fiancé about some of the talents you see in them. What talents did your fiancé see in you?
- Tell your spouse what your deepest identity is. How do you feel about the idea of sacrificing your career for your family? Does that challenge your identity?
- How much debt do each of you have? What are the monthly payments? What is the principal and term? Cover any debt you have, including debts to family or friends.
- How do you spend money? Talk with one another about it.

Plan and execute:

- Take about 20 minutes (individually) to write down your goals for life. Take the very long view here, imagine you are 95 years old sitting on the deck in your backyard and reflecting on all you did in life. What things are on that list?
- Imagine you can only have one thing on the

list. Which comes first? Which comes next? How do you feel about accepting the possibility that not everything on that list will happen?

- Now write your list together and tear up those other lists. How does that feel?
- Set up a budget. Decide how you will stay on budget.
- Set a goal and a plan for celebrating that you have stayed on budget!

Life Skills Lesson 5: Marriage and Sexuality: What is the Church Doing in the Bedroom?

Consider and discuss:

- Do you struggle with the Church's authority on questions as intimate as contraception and sexuality? Why or why not?
- Do you see your fertility as a gift? Why or why not?
- Have you or anyone close to you struggled with infertility? If yes, what did people do that was most and least helpful for you/them to carry this cross?
- What does it mean to be a "total gift" of self?
- How does the modern world threaten fidelity? How can you safeguard your marriage from these threats?

Plan and execute:

- Schedule a time together to go over the Fertility Awareness resources provided below.
- Find a Fertility Awareness Method (FAM) instructor.
- Put a monthly date on your calendar to prayerfully discuss whether God is calling you to be open to or postpone having a child.

Life Skills Lesson 6: Parenting Expectations

Consider and discuss:

- What would you like your parenting style to be? Do you see eye-to-eye on your future parenting style?
- How do you honor your father and mother? Is that how you would like to be honored by your children? Why or why not?

- Did your parents effectively model faith to you? If yes, how, if not what would you change in order to do that for your children?
- Discuss how you see discipline and discipling your children. Did you have limits and rules as a child? How can you show love to your children by providing them with limits and rules?

Plan and execute:

- List 3 qualities that you love about your fiancé and that make your fiancé well suited for being a parent. Share.
- List qualities or habits you have that you would NOT like your children to imitate. Are you prepared to address them? How? (note: Be gentle with yourself and with your beloved during this self assessment. “We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures, we are the sum of the Father’s love for us and our real capacity to become the image of His Son Jesus.” - St. John Paul II)

Life Skills Lesson 7: The Temperaments

Consider and discuss:

- Do you know your God-given temperament? Which virtue(s) do you need to grow in to harness the “best” in the gift of your temperament?
- Are you reluctant to address issues/problems with your partner? Why or why not?
- Discuss what “radically intimate adventure” of marriage means to you.

Plan and execute:

- If you have not taken the Temperament quiz, schedule a time to do so.
- Based on your temperament results make a list of:
- 3 ways your temperament prevents you from resolving issues;
- 3 ways your temperament can help you resolve issues.
- Share your lists with each other. Discuss your differences and come up with a plan to best take advantage of your strengths in times of trouble.

Life Skills Lesson 8: Interfaith and Ecumenical Marriages

Consider and discuss:

- Why is your faith or spiritual tradition important to you and how has it helped you to grow as a person?
- What does your faith tradition teach about marriage?
- How will you continue to honor each other’s individual faith journeys?
- What will you do to enjoy a common prayer or spiritual life together?
- Is there anything about your beloved’s faith tradition that can complement or strengthen your own journey?
- What is really important to you when living out your faith as a family?

Plan and execute:

- Make a list of the Holy Days in your faith tradition. Share with your partner why certain celebrations are important to you and discuss if/how you can integrate them into your family life.
- If you haven’t done so before, schedule a time of prayer/worship at your partner’s place of worship.

