

6. Could this definition of love be the basis of a life time commitment? Why? Why not?
7. Do you know any couple whose marriage you would look to as a role model? Why?
8. Do you know any couple whose marriage you would not look to as a role model? Why?

## **Part II - MARRIAGE, THE SACRAMENT**

**OBJECTIVE:** to help the students understand and prepare themselves for the Sacrament of Marriage.

### **BACKGROUND:**

1. Married Christians, in virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church, they help each other to attain to holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children; and they have their own special gift among the people of god.
2. Marriage arises in the covenant of marriage, or irrevocable consent, which each partner freely bestows on and accepts from the other. This intimate union and the good of the children impose total fidelity on each of them and argue for an unbreakable oneness between them. Christ the lord raised this union to the dignity of a sacrament so that it might more clearly recall and more easily reflect his own unbreakable union with his Church.
3. Christian couples, therefore, nourish and develop their marriage by undivided affection, which wells up from the fountain of divine love, while, in a merging of human and divine love, they remain faithful in body and in mind, in good times as in bad.
4. By their very nature, the institution of matrimony and wedded love are ordained for the procreation and education of children and find in them their ultimate crown. Therefore, married Christians, while not considering the other purposes of marriage of less account, should be steadfast and ready to cooperate with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will constantly enrich and enlarge his own family.

*from the Rite of Marriage*

**MATERIALS:** enough copies of **THE RITE OF MARRIAGE** for each student.

**ACTIVITY:** Go around the class and ask the students who plans to be married in the church.

1. Why do you want to be married in the Church? Why not?
2. What is a Sacrament?

*Sacraments are effective signs, instituted by Christ, that make God's grace present to us to love, heal and transform our lives.*

3. How is the Catholic Sacrament of Marriage different than being married by a judge or a justice of the peace?

*The Sacrament of Marriage celebrates God's call of a woman and a man to love one another, their children, their faith community, and the world. Marriage is a sign of the love that Christ has for the Church*

4. Who marries a couple? *They marry themselves, the priest only acts as a witness of the community.*

Distribute a copy of **THE RITE OF MARRIAGE** to each student.

5. What are you promising in a Catholic Marriage?

6. What do we mean by honoring someone?

7. What does to have and to hold mean?

Read the following (or have a student read the following) to the students.

*Ephesians: 5:22-33*

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, since, as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church is subject to Christ, so should wives be to their husbands, in everything. Husbands should love their wives, just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy by washing her in cleansing water with a form of words, so that when he took the Church to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because we are parts of his Body. *This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh.* This mystery has great significance, but I am applying it to Christ and the Church To sum up: you also, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

8. Do you think these are realistic expectations in this modern day world? Why? Why not?

9. What are the expectations and responsibilities of husbands in this reading? Wives?

10. Do we have these expectations today? Why? Why not? Should we?

11. What are some of the sins against Marriage?

*The Church considers sins against marriage to be: artificial birth control, sterilization,*

*abortion, unlawful separation, adultery and divorce.*

12. How does the Sacrament of Marriage help us to heal and transform our lives?

**TEACHER OPTION:** Have a follow-up class where you invite a panel of married people (couples married 20+ years, couples married 5+ years, newly weds, couples with children, couples without children, etc.) to speak to the class about the joys and problems of a Christian marriage.

## **TOPIC: ADULT COMMITMENT I: MARRIAGE - Part I**

**OBJECTIVE:** to help the students understand the commitment of marriage.

**MATERIALS:** paper and pencils for each student

**ACTIVITY:** Begin by telling the students that most of them will be married at some time in their lives. Currently half of all marriages in America end in divorce. The other side to that statistic is that half of all marriages in America are successful. Have the students work in pairs (if you have a coed class and enough students, make the pairs coed) to come up with their own definition of Marriage (about 5 - 10 minutes). Have each group share their ideas, while you write the important points on the board. Then, working alone, have the students write down the qualities that they are looking for in a lifemate (about 5 minutes). Ask for volunteers to read their qualities aloud. Have the students discuss what they think goes into a successful marriage

### **SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. (Referring to the qualities that the students came up with) How do you find out if someone has the qualities that you are looking for?
2. Do you think people should have *trial* marriages (Live together) to make sure that they are compatible? Why? Why not?
3. Why do you think that statistics show that couples who live together before marriage have a higher divorce rate than those who do not?
4. Do you think arranged marriages (where your parents pick someone who has the same cultural, religious and economic background as you) would work? Why? Why not?
5. Do you think romantic love is a good basis for a lifetime commitment? Why? Why not?

Read the following or have a student read the following aloud:

#### **1 Corinthians 13:4-13**

*Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offense or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. Love never comes to an end...*

*When I was a child, I used to talk like a child and see things as a child does, and think like a child; but now that I have become an adult, I have finished with all childish ways.*

5. How is this definition of love like romantic love? Different?