

A Marriage Preparation Supplement designed  
to help couples understand and embrace...

GOD'S PLAN FOR  
A JOY-FILLED

*Marriage*



free, total, faithful, fruitful.

SEGMENTS GUIDE

GOD'S PLAN FOR  
A JOY-FILLED

*Marriage*

DVD SEGMENTS

Segment Descriptions  
& Planning Guide

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PART I:

Catholic *Faith*  
& Your Marriage

**DVD #1**  
*Introduction to God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage*

**Possible opening prayer for the day:**

*Heavenly Father, we praise you and thank you for the gift of this day. We praise and thank you for the great gift of the Sacrament of Marriage. We thank you, Lord, for the love that you have poured into our hearts that we are able to share with one another. This day we set our cares before you, Lord. We ask you to please open our hearts and our minds to something brand new, some deeper insight into the goodness, indeed, the greatness of your plan for married love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

#1

**Segment Details**

- DVD #1 - Introduction
- Segment #1 - Obstacles to a Joy-Filled Marriage
- Length: Approx. 2 min., 45 sec.
- Level of Theological Knowledge: Low

**Overview**

*In this segment of the God's Plan program, Christopher West begins by posing a question about what common obstacles to building a joy-filled marriage may include. After a brief exhortation about the value of not becoming a divorce statistic, Christopher engages the audience in a dialogue about what prevents us from creating the lifelong dream of a truly joy-filled marriage.*

**Specific topics covered in this Segment**

- How to Avoid Becoming a Divorce Statistic
- What are the Obstacles to a Joy-Filled Marriage?
- Answers to the Question: What are the Obstacles?

**Helpful Hint**

This session can easily be done by the facilitator, as it is the first session and you are trying to create a good impression with those attending the program.

**Notes**

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## #2

### Segment Details

- DVD #1 - Introduction
- **Segment #2** - Laying the Foundation for the Program
- **Length:** Approx. 4 min., 45 sec.
- **Level of Theological Knowledge:** Low

### Overview

*In this segment, Christopher begins to unpack the foundations of the God's Plan program. Beginning with the cultural shifts of the early 20th century, he traces the need to return to understanding God's authorship of marriage and explains the two-fold purpose of the day: To learn about God's plan and meditate upon it in order to change our lives.*

*Employing many practical analogies throughout the entire God's Plan program, Christopher likens our understanding of the natural law to discovering a car manufacturer's directions to put unleaded gas in an engine made for it. He argues that the creator of marriage made it with specific purposes which we cannot change; if we try to change them (akin to putting leaded gas in our "unleaded" vehicle), we will then suffer the consequences of this decision. He concludes with a brief overview of the unique contribution of Pope John Paul II to the theology of marriage and the family.*

### Specific topics covered in this Segment

- Modern Cultural Shifts Leading to the Breakdown of Marriage and Family Life
- Goal: To Meditate and Act on God's Plan for Marriage
- God is the Author of Marriage
- The "Unleaded Gas" Analogy of God's Authorship of Marriage
- The Contribution of Pope John Paul II for the Theology of Marriage and the Family

### Helpful Hint

Analogies help people grasp difficult material. While Christopher West has developed many of his own, we encourage you to think of analogies or examples that might help you explain a particular idea. Don't be afraid to try new analogies or discard those that don't work. Couples will thank you for trying to help them understand.

### Notes

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#3

**Segment Details**

- DVD #1 - Introduction
- **Segment #3** - Guiding Principles
- **Length:** Approx. 4 min.
- **Level of Theological Knowledge:** Low

**Overview**

*In this section, Christopher offers a warm welcome to people of all faiths present for this Catholic-directed program. The God's Plan program pastorally approaches couples with the concept of the Church's invitation to accept the proposal of her teachings. The Church never imposes its beliefs but always respects the free will of the faithful to follow Christ through these teachings. Christopher invites his listeners to explore the beauty and truth of the Church's teachings, which fulfill the deepest desires of our hearts for truth. Through the proposal of the Church—as with the proposal to marriage itself—we are asked to accept them with full reflection and consent of the will.*

**Specific topics covered in this Segment**

- Welcome to Non-Catholics
- Catholic Teaching Should Be Proposed, not Imposed
- Question: Why Should I Listen to What the Catholic Church Teaches?
- Encourages Couples to “Dream Big.” What Kind of Marriage is God Calling You to Have?

**Helpful Hint**

Hospitality is the key to a successful experience. It is important to be warm and welcoming to the engaged couples who attend the program. Your enthusiasm and witness will make the experience a positive one for people of all faiths.

**Notes**

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## # 4

### Segment Details

- DVD #1 - Introduction
- Segment #4 - Overview of the Program
- Length: Approx. 5 min., 15 sec.
- Level of Theological Knowledge: Low

### Overview

In this final section, Christopher presents a brief overview of the content of the God's Plan program: the Catholic Faith and Your Marriage and the sections on Sacramental Sexuality. He connects these major themes with the use of the workbook and the Good News textbook.

### Specific topics covered in this Segment

- Overview of the Two Major Components of the *God's Plan* Program:
  - Catholic Faith and Your Marriage
  - Sacramental Sexuality
- What is the First Question of Sexual Morality: How Far Can I Go?
- The True Nature of Human Sexuality
- Brief Overview of the *God's Plan* Workbook and *Good News About Sex and Marriage* Textbook
- The Modern Experience of Sexual Education

### Helpful Hint

Use the *God's Plan* Couples Guide and *Good News* book as props during your explanation of the material—holding them up while you talk about what they contain. The more you share the importance of utilizing the *Good News* book, the more couples will be familiar with how the materials are connected.

### Notes

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**DVD #1**  
**Talk #1: God's Plan for Marriage "In the Beginning"**

      
*#1*  
    

**Segment Details**

- **DVD #1** - God's Plan for Marriage "In the Beginning"
- **Segment #1** - God's Eternal Plan for Marriage
- **Length:** Approx. 6 min.
- **Level of Theological Knowledge:** High

**Overview**

*In this segment, we are introduced to the key biblical foundations of marriage. Beginning with the first book of the Bible, Genesis, and continuing to the final book, Revelation, this segment tells the story of God's desire to "marry us" as His people. We explore the image of Mary as the icon of God's love for each of us. In our bodies, as both male and female, we have been "stamped" with the image of God.*

**Specific topics covered in this Segment**

- Scriptures Tell a Story About Marriage
  - Old Testament Images of Marriage: Genesis, Song of Songs, the Prophets
  - New Testament Images of Marriage: The Words of Christ, the Book of Revelation
- God's Plan: God Wants to "Marry" Us
- Mary: The Icon of God's Love
- God Stamped an Image of Love Right In Our Bodies

**Helpful Hint**

Catholics are not typically known for having their Bibles in tow. This might be a good time to pull out your Bible and allude to the passages spoken of in the program. Again, this is another way to build rapport with your group, particularly those Christians used to having their Bibles with them in educational settings.

**Notes** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## #2

### Segment Details

- DVD #1 - God’s Plan for Marriage “In the Beginning”
- Segment #2 - The Body Proclaims a Great Mystery
- Length: Approx. 4 min., 45 sec.
- Level of Theological Knowledge: High

### Overview

*Here, Christopher begins to unpack the key notion of the human body proclaiming a great mystery of God—that we are made in God’s image and likeness, and that our bodies visibly reveal the mystery of the invisible God. Christopher introduces the unique contribution of John Paul II’s Theology of the Body as a revolutionary new paradigm for seeing the teachings on marriage and family but more importantly for all theological reflection.*

### Specific topics covered in this Segment

- Understanding Ephesians, Chapter 5, as a Revelation of God’s Mystery
- The Human Body Proclaims A Great Mystery
- The “Theology of the Body” Provides an Understanding of God’s Mystery Revealed in and through Our Bodies

### Helpful Hint

Check in with the participants. You can often read body language to see how people are absorbing information or deflecting it. You may consider a stretch break or even asking for questions based on what you have just heard or presented in the video.

### Notes

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## #3

### Segment Details

- DVD #1 - God’s Plan for Marriage “In the Beginning”
- Segment #3 - Jesus and Our Hardness of Heart
- Length: Approx. 3 min., 30 sec.
- Level of Theological Knowledge: Moderate

## Overview

In this segment, Christopher reveals that the key to understanding the Christian mystery is the very person of Jesus Christ, and he begins to probe the question regarding the “hardness of heart” common to the human condition. Using the analogy of flat tires on a car, he explores our experience of human sexuality and our need to keep before us the question of redeeming our hardness of heart as the key to unlocking the true freedom of human sexuality. Christopher then returns to the helpful “flat tire” analogy to explain our experience of sexuality after the Fall.

## Specific topics covered in this Segment

- Christ is the Key to Unlocking the Mystery of the Joy-Filled Marriage
- Jesus is Questioned by the Pharisees About Divorce
- The “Flat Tire” Analogy
- The Root of the Problem: Our Hardness of Heart

## Helpful Hint

Participants will identify with the hurt and disappointments they have felt in their relationships. For many, this might be the first time they begin to face their own “fallen-ness” and need for redemption. Be cognizant of the emotional (as well as the intellectual) impact of this message.

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#4

## Segment Details

- DVD #1 - God's Plan for Marriage “In the Beginning”
- Segment #4 - Imaging God Through Our Love
- **Length:** Approx. 7 min.
- **Level of Theological Knowledge:** Moderate

## Overview

In this segment, Christopher continues to explore the Creation narratives by examining the connection between the communion of persons in the Trinity and the relationship of male and female. Using songs from popular culture, Christopher tries to connect the longings of the human heart to that love which will eternally satisfy—the love of God Himself. The human search for love is really the search for God, in which we discover that God is the true lover in search of His beloved, us!

### Specific topics covered in this Segment

- Genesis: The Seven Days of Creation
- God as Trinity: The Communion of Persons
- Male and Female He Created Them as a Communion of Persons
- Christianity: God's Search for Us
- The Innermost Secret of God: An Eternal Exchange of Love
- Man Cannot Live Without Love
- Love One Another As I Have Loved You

### Helpful Hint

While you might not be an artist or a singer, it can be helpful in these sections to be able to draw and sing. You can draw images of the Trinity as a shamrock (or some other image) to demonstrate the Trinitarian "communion of persons." You may want to sing the songs Christopher uses or maybe a love song that will make the point. Try to have fun when you are presenting.

### Notes

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#5

### Segment Details

- DVD #1 - God's Plan for Marriage "In the Beginning"
- Segment #5 - Four Characteristics of Marital Love
- Length: Approx. 3 min., 30 sec.
- Level of Theological Knowledge: Moderate

### Overview

*Here we learn about the four characteristics of marital love as the image of God's love: free, total, faithful, and fruitful. This explanation will be echoed throughout the program. God's free, total, faithful, and fruitful love is manifested in the love between man and woman in marriage. In this section, Christopher also pastorally challenges couples to place God at the center of their relationship. It is only by centering on God's love that they can understand the attributes of married love.*

### Specific topics covered in this Segment

- The Four Characteristics of Marital Love: Free, Total, Faithful, Fruitful
- The Body Holds the Key for Revealing God's Love

- God is Love
- Love is the Center of Your Married Relationship

### Helpful Hint

This may be an appropriate time to share a story of your own as a married couple, particularly one which demonstrates the exercise of authentic love in a human relationship during a difficult or sacrificial time. It could be a period of unemployment, an illness, or a difficulty with a child. The story can be big or small, just an example of how God's love does permeate our human relationships.

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#6

### Segment Details

- DVD #1 - God's Plan for Marriage "In the Beginning"
- Segment # 6 - Naked Without Shame
- Length: Approx. 5 min.
- Level of Theological Knowledge: Moderate

### Overview

*At this point, Christopher unpacks one of the key contributions of the Theology of the Body as it applies to the relationship of man and woman in marriage. Here, Christopher juxtaposes the experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with our experience of nakedness and its expression in the world. Through this comparison of the "boundary experience," we come to see not only the extent of our fallen nature but also the goodness and beauty that remains. We are introduced to the concept of the nuptial meaning of the body.*

### Specific topics covered in this Segment

- Original Nakedness: The Key for Understanding the Original Plan of God for Marriage
- Nakedness Without Shame: The Nuptial (or Spousal) Meaning of the Body
- The "Billboard" Analogy
- You Cannot Give What You Do Not Have

**Helpful Hint**  
Share a story or experience where the insights of the Theology of the Body started to make sense and be employed in your life. It is important to be honest about the difficulties as well as the triumphs of conquering lust in the human heart.

**Notes** \_\_\_\_\_  
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#7

**Segment Details**

- DVD #1 - God’s Plan for Marriage “In the Beginning”
- Segment #7 - The Effect of Original Sin and the Gift of Free Will
- Length: Approx. 5 min.
- Level of Theological Knowledge: Moderate

**Overview**

*In this segment, couples contemplate the results of the original sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Through the first sin, death entered the human condition. We also experience for the first time the “disordered desire for the good” known as concupiscence. Christopher relates the first experiences of sexuality after the Fall as an inverted sexual desire which seeks the pleasure of sexual expression outside of its intended purpose and true meaning. The good news is that we retain the capacity to choose because our free will remains intact, even as we struggle to reintegrate our lives with the help of God.*

**Specific topics covered in this Segment**

- The First Result of Original Sin
- “Car Trouble”— Inverted Sexual Desire
- The Freedom To Choose

**Helpful Hint**  
Discuss the exercise of freedom in our lives. Our ability to choose good or evil is what makes us unique among all of God’s creation. What’s the difference between license and the true exercise of human freedom?

**Notes** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## #8

**Segment Details**

- DVD#1 - God's Plan for Marriage "In the Beginning"
- Segment # 8 - The Entrance of Shame and the Battle Between Love and Lust
- **Length:** Approx. 6 min, 30 sec.
- **Level of Theological Knowledge:** Moderate

**Overview**

*In this final segment of Talk #1, Christopher explores the phenomenon of the entrance of shame into the human experience of sexuality. He notes it is our hardness of heart and propensity to lust that demands the "self-defense" provided by shame. In essence, shame is not a rejection of the body but rather an experience of the body which says the body is too good to be used by another. The natural response, then, is to cover ourselves to protect the body from being seen as an object.*

*Christopher then relates the importance of developing a mature understanding of human relationships that takes into account the dynamic of shame as a way of redirecting our energies away from self-indulgence to the posture of self-donation. This requires a deep reflection on how we "see" others through the lens of our fallen yet redeemed nature.*

**Specific topics covered in this Segment**

- Shame Enters the Picture
- Root of the Problem: Hardness of Heart
- Shame: A Natural Self-Defense Against Lust
- Mature Reflection on the Value of Human Relationships
- The "Fuel of the Rocket" Analogy

**Helpful Hint**

Most participants will have never heard about the "positive" aspects of shame. This is a great opportunity to reiterate the goodness and beauty of the Church's teachings about human sexuality. You have given your audience a lot to consider in Talk #1, so take a moment to clarify any questions, particularly about the theological vision of the human person. It is important for you to share how you are striving to integrate this vision into your own life and relationships.

**Notes**

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