

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

for Teens

DISCOVERING GOD'S
PLAN FOR LOVE AND LIFE



LEADER'S GUIDE

Chapter One

Created for Love

Have you ever wondered why the subject of sex is part of nearly every TV show, advertisement, song, and movie? And the sex shown or sung about is usually glorious—with no pain inflicted on those involved.

Rarely do we see the pain that comes, for example, from selfishness. Did you ever think about what society would be like without selfishness in relationships? If everyone simply loved the other as he or she wished to be loved, we would have virtually no pain, no problems in relationships. Imagine, for example, if marriages never ended in divorce. Think about the pain that both parents and kids would be spared.

Confusion reigns, and it is leading to some seriously broken hearts. People today seem more confused about the meaning of love and the purpose of sex than perhaps ever before. Many people are searching for the meaning of life and love but don't realize that the answer is actually right in front of us; the key to finding that love we're all looking for (even if we don't know it) is hidden in God's original design of our bodies and souls. Yes, you read that correctly. This Catholic curriculum is stating that God has actually hidden in our design as "male and female" a key to the secret of love.

ICEBREAKER (optional): “Hacky Sack” Name Game

Have the teens form a circle. The person with the Hacky Sack should state his or her name and toss the Hacky Sack to the next person in the circle. The receiver should state the name of the previous person plus his or her own name. Continue until each person in the circle has been included and all names have been learned. After each person has gone once, he or she can make longer throws across the circle to others if they can remember that person’s name. They should say it aloud as they throw to the receiver. If you don’t have a Hacky Sack, use some other item, as long as it is safe to throw (a Koosh Ball, a stuffed animal, an eraser for the blackboard, etc.).

To add a wrinkle to this introductory game, have each person also make some physical sign that can be identified with his or her own name. Have participants recall aloud those names that have been introduced already before saying their own.

For example: Billy likes basketball so he says his name while simulating a basketball jump-shot; then the next teen, Jason, has to say Billy’s name while simulating his jump shot, then adding his own symbol. Jason is in Junior ROTC, so he says his name and salutes as his symbol/gesture. Jill then says Billy’s name while simulating a jump shot, says Jason’s name while saluting, and then says her own name while giving the “peace sign” to signify her peaceful nature, etc.

Teens must pay attention to names, but they also learn a small gesture with which to identify each other. With groups of more than fifteen, the game gets harder and takes more time. However, remember to be patient. Investing time at the beginning is worth it if it can help the teens become familiar with each other and the safe environment you are trying to establish. At the very least, they can learn the name of the person sitting near them and already know one thing about them.

As the leader of the group, give them a few examples before you start. You should also go first to help break the ice. If you can, try to go first and last to show them that you are paying attention to them and want to connect with them. Do your best to recall all of their names and symbolic actions. (Hint: Study your roster or sign-up sheet of names a few times to familiarize yourself with each teen’s name.)



OPENING PRAYER

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

(Option #1)

Leader or Reader #1: Read Genesis 1:1-2, 25-28a, 30b, 31a

“In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was. Then God said: ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.’ God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: ‘Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it, and so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.’”

Leader or Reader #2: Lord, as You created us in Your image and likeness, we know that You created us out of love and for love. You created us for a union of love with each other just as You created us to be together forever with You. Lord, help us to be open today to learn, to live, and to love like You. We ask all this as we pray together: 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. Saint (patron saint of your church or school), pray for us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

(Option #2)

Leader or Reader #1: Read John 10:10, 15:11

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly... These things I have spoken to you that my joy might be in you and your joy may be full.”

Leader or Reader #2: Jesus, You have created us for love. You made us for Yourself, and our hearts will not be at rest until they rest in You. So, open our minds and our hearts, so that this hour of study may be an hour of prayer. Help us to let go of those things that keep us from receiving the joy You wish to give us today and always. **Amen.**

notes



STORY STARTER: Words and Wounds of the Heart

- “I gave in to him because I thought it would make him like me more. But the next day, he acted like he hardly knew me.”
- “My parents got divorced when I was four, so I never really had a dad. Now my mom is with this other guy, but he gets drunk all the time and they fight a lot.”

Notes & Nuggets: For Beginning Teachers

You can approach the following material in a few different ways as you move through the curriculum. The first option is to use the following Bridging the Gap and To the Core sections as “notes” from which you can present the information in your own way.

Another option is to pick teen volunteers to read the following paragraphs in small groups and answer the related comprehension and discussion questions. You probably already know that it’s not a good idea to force kids to read. You don’t want your desire to have them read make them uncomfortable, and thus, somehow cause them to be less open to you and the healing truth found within this beautiful teaching of John Paul II. Be patient with those students who do not seem to want to participate out loud through reading or discussion (for whatever reason). Give them some space, but don’t write them off. It is easy to fall into the extreme of either pushing hard on those teens or ignoring them altogether in favor of those extroverts who really help the classroom experience. Continue to make eye contact with them and gently encourage them to step out of their comfort zones.

Remember that you are a witness of God’s love as much as you are a catechist of Catholic teaching. This material is intimately tied to relationships, and that does not exclude your relationship with your students. If you have a good relationship with them, they will be more open to receive the truth in the teaching that you are presenting. In time, they may do just that.



BRIDGING THE GAP

So why is there so much pain and suffering in the world today? It all started with one simple choice: when Adam and Eve chose to go with their own plan instead of God’s plan. Their **original sin**, which you will learn more about in the coming chapters, affects us all. Instead of wanting to do what’s right, we often desire to do the wrong thing. This tendency to sin is called **concupiscence**.

Concupiscence is not something that affects only a select group of people; it affects every single one of us as members of a society that is damaged and hurting from the effects of sin. Just look at all the broken families, broken hearts, sexual abuse, addictions, infidelity, and shame and regret in people’s lives. This is what **despair** looks like in a society that thought it found **sexual liberation** and freedom by using sexuality in whatever way it wanted. Consider how all this has brought us to where we are today.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the mass media grew stronger and stronger in their influence on society. You could say they became a primary teacher of young and old alike. Television and movies degenerated quickly from mere sexual suggestion to more sexually-explicit material. As some observers have noted, we are experiencing the “frog in the pot” scenario. You may be familiar with this example. If you take a frog and put it into a pot of boiling water, it will immediately jump out. However, if you place the frog in room-temperature water and then slowly heat the water, the frog will continue to adjust to the rising temperature and not know that it is in danger. It will stay in the ever-increasingly hot water until it finally dies. This describes very well the moral swamp displayed in our modern media. We have gradually become desensitized to the increase of explicit sexual content in our media. The result of all this is that our country is plagued by a seriously warped understanding of marriage and the role that sex should play in relationships.

Lust is “disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure” (CCC 2351). It is sexual desire apart from God’s love that selfishly seeks one’s own pleasure at the expense of another. Lust often dominates our culture. This domination can easily lead to apathy, or lack of concern, on the part of many. Apathy then leads to a lack of motivation to change. We begin to settle for less than true, good, and beautiful relationships. These are heavy words, we know. They almost sound dismal. A natural question one would ask is, “Is there any hope?” Are we all doomed to suffer broken hearts and marry people who will commit to us only as long as it is convenient? Where is God in all this mess?

God is with us, and there is hope! The good news is that life and sexuality were not always the way we find it now. Jesus tells us, “In the beginning, it was not so” (Mt 19:8). In fact, in the beginning, love had its way and lust *didn’t even exist*. To learn more about how to solve the problem of lust and sexual confusion, we must go back to the beginning to see how God created sexuality. In doing



Did you know?

One in three girls is sexually abused by the time she’s eighteen years old.ⁱⁱ



Did you know?

About 40 percent of all children in the United States will live with their single mother (never-married or divorced) and her boyfriend at some point before their 16th birthday.ⁱⁱⁱ



Did you know?

Every day, 8,000 teenagers in the United States become infected with a sexually transmitted disease.^{iv}

Notes & Nuggets: The “Wednesday audiences” are the Pope’s weekly addresses to visitors gathered in St. Peter’s Square. John Paul II used these opportunities to give reflections on Scripture, to greet visitors from around the world, and to teach the faith.

Notes & Nuggets: It’s no secret that many high school students are suspicious of the stories found in the book of Genesis. Whether through secular or catechetical misinformation and disorientation, many teens believe that Adam and Eve weren’t real people. Some of them lump the story of original sin into the same mental compartment that holds other catechetical missteps, such as the Exodus story being a gross exaggeration based upon the probability that a few Israelites escaped Egypt with the help of some coincidental natural phenomenon. To put all this into context and to give yourself the greatest handle on how to approach the book of Genesis and the truth found within it, we recommend you review the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 355-421.

For your students, it may be helpful to offer the following analogy: Consider the difference between the approach that an optometrist takes when he looks into a woman’s eyes, and the way that same woman’s husband looks into her eyes. Both men look into the same eyes and have vastly different approaches and appreciations for the depth and beauty of the woman’s eyes. One is looking with the eyes of a scientist; the other is looking with the eyes of a lover. This is analogous to how we can and should look at the book of Genesis.

The Church looks at Genesis differently than secular historians. While historians search for precise information detailing a chronological account of the events in Genesis, the Church looks to Genesis for the truth that it imparts about all of humanity, which is rooted in the story of Adam and Eve. In short, the Church is looking for the “truth behind the words.” That said, it is also important to remember that Jesus referenced the reality of the story of Adam and Eve, even if He didn’t refer to them by name (Mt 19:4-5).

so, we will discover the true purpose of our sexual gifts. We will see what went wrong and find the hope that will lead us back to true love and happiness.



TO THE CORE

Pope John Paul II (1920–2005) dedicated 129 of his “Wednesday audiences” during the first six years of his papacy (1979 to 1984) to a series of talks about the human body and sexuality. These addresses were later compiled into book form, creating the first major teaching of John Paul II. This teaching is called the **Theology of the Body**, and an international surge of interest has followed its proclamation.

The Theology of the Body explores the meaning of our bodies and of sexual desire as it relates to the purpose of our existence. Philosophers have asked questions about the meaning of life for thousands of years. If you’ve ever wondered, “Who am I? What is my purpose in life? What is love all about?”, you are asking very good questions. Answering these questions was a major goal of John Paul II through his teaching of the Theology of the Body. After all, he was not just a great pope but also a great philosopher.

So, what is **theology**? Theology may be understood as the study of God. St. Anselm, an eleventh-century philosopher, theologian, and archbishop, called it “faith seeking understanding.” The word theology can be broken down like this: In Greek *theos* means “God” and *logos* means “word.” Logos was also defined by the ancient Greeks in other ways that relate to “science” and “study.” (Notice that our modern words which have “-ology” at the end of them refer to some type of study: biology, archaeology, radiology, psychology, etc.) So, the Theology of the Body is the study of God as revealed through our bodies.¹

By looking at the creation of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis, we begin to find the answers to our questions about the purpose of life.

Love Equals Communion

In Genesis 1:26-31 we learn that when God made man and woman it was “very good.” They were made in his “image and likeness.” We may hear that phrase often but let’s consider what it means: The Bible says “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). Now, when love is present, it is never in isolation. This is why a person can’t marry himself. Rather, whenever you have love, you must have a lover, a beloved, and the love between them. There must be a communion of persons, united in love. A communion of persons is created when two or more persons give themselves to one another in love. So, in the case of God, you have the Father, the Son, and the fire of love between them, which is the Holy Spirit.²

As a “communion of persons,” God created humans to participate in heaven and on earth in God’s love. This means that God created us male and female



*“Then God said:
‘Let us make man in our image,
after our likeness.
Let them have
dominion over
the fish of the sea,
the birds of the air, and the
cattle, and over all the wild
animals and all the creatures
that crawl on the ground.’*



*God created man
in his image;
in the divine image
he created him; male and
female he created them.”
– Gn 1:26-27*

Notes & Nuggets: To help your students further understand how our bodies act as visible signs of the invisible, help them through this quote from John Paul II. Write it on the board, and then create a list on the other side of the board of things that we know are real but that are invisible to the naked eye. Challenge them to offer examples, and include the following in your list:

“INVISIBLE” THINGS:

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Gravity
- Wind
- Heat/Cold
- Trust/Faith
- God (keep for last)

After compiling the list, pick out a few and point out that these are all things we cannot see. They are “invisible,” but there are signs that help us to know they are all real; though we cannot see them, we can see their effects. Draw arrows from the list on the left to a new list of corresponding signs of the invisible realities.

For example, we cannot see gravity, but we all know it exists, because whenever we throw a ball, it lands on the ground again. We can't see the wind, but we can see trees bending from it and houses destroyed by it in hurricanes. Feelings of fear, courage, pain, sadness, and joy are all very real, but they are invisible in themselves; instead, we see visible signs of them: smiles, frowns, crying, laughing, etc. Now make the connection to God. He is invisible, but our visible bodies tell us something about the invisible mystery of God.

You may want to finish with this example: since God is invisible, He has given us bodies to help one another learn about Him. The fact is that the authors of this program can type these words, and God has enabled you to read with your eyes, transmit the information to your brain, and therefore understand more about God and all that happens through the use of our bodies.

precisely so that we could image His love by becoming a sincere gift to each other.³ Giving this sincere gift to one another creates a communion of persons, through which we share God's love with each other.



COMPREHENSION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is *theology*?
2. What was the goal of John Paul II in his teaching of the Theology of the Body?
3. What do you think our society believes and teaches us about the meaning of our bodies?
4. Where in Scripture does it say that our bodies are very good?
5. Why do you think some people believe our bodies are bad?
6. How is a *communion of persons* formed?



The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that "God himself is an eternal exchange of love...and He has destined us to share in that exchange" (CCC 221).

Not Meant to Be Alone

When God said that Adam and Eve were made in His image and likeness, one thing this meant was that they were designed for love. But when Adam was created, he was without Eve. But even before Eve was created, Adam knew something was missing. As a result, God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gn 1:18).

Since we're made in God's image and likeness, the Church teaches that, "Man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere gift of self."⁴ In order to give to someone else, one must not be alone. *Someone else* is there for communion. This total gift of self can be seen in the married life or in the **celibate life**, which is *choosing* to forego earthly marriage so as to devote oneself entirely to the marriage of Christ and the Church. In both cases, marriage and **celibacy**, we are called to make ourselves living sacrifices. In the words of Blessed Mother Teresa, "Life is not worth living unless it is lived for others."

John Paul II's vision of the body is a key to understanding the meaning of our lives. This short quote summarizes his view of the body as a visible sign that points to things that are invisible:

→ The body, in fact, and it alone is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery [of God]... and thus to be a sign of it.⁵

Although we cannot see God, our bodies reveal many amazing truths about Him, because we are made in His "image and likeness." For example, just as a

APPLICATION: GOD LOVES PLAY-DOH

Provide the teens with Play-Doh or another type of modeling clay. Ask them to sculpt their concept of God and their relationship with Him. Remind them that God is a “communion of persons” and that He created us to share in His eternal exchange of love. Encourage them to be honest and to create something that represents their present (and possibly future) relationship with God. Take the time to create your own model prior to class that day. Share your model with your students, describing its meaning before they begin modeling their own. Then, as they begin modeling, move around to help give ideas to those teens who seem “stumped.” If time allows, have them all share what they created and why.

The goal is to have teens create scenes that may bring comments and explanations wherein they honestly let you know where they see themselves in their walk with the Lord. It is important to remember that there are no “wrong answers” here. If the teens are honest, then whatever they depict—assuming it is not improper or vulgar—is acceptable. You may find students coming up with symbols or comments like these:

- “My relationship with God is on and off, so I made a light switch”
- “My relationship with God is supposed to be one of communion, but I don’t think I’m there yet, so this is me still walking up the aisle.”
- “Here’s me and there’s God over there—the maze between us shows that I want to get closer to Him, but I can’t figure out how yet.”
- “This broken-down car represents me without God. I’m on empty; but I’m heading to the gas station, which is Mass, where I know God is going to fill me up with His grace.”
- “This is me in a chapel praying, and there is God outside the Church. You’ll notice He has no ears, because God never answers my prayers.”

- “This is me helping at a soup kitchen, and this is little Sally who comes every Saturday to get food. When I serve her, I feel like I can see God in her eyes. I feel closest to God when I help others.”
- “This is a ball of clay that represents the world. There’s nothing else in my picture because I’m an atheist and don’t believe God exists.”
- “This is my grandmother saying her rosary in her rocking chair. This is me doing a puzzle, trying to figure out if the stuff my parents and grandma teach me is real.”
- “This is me with a big smile because I just came out of reconciliation. I feel closest to God after that.”
- “This is my brother lying dead from cancer. This is me walking away from the Church because I don’t believe in a loving God anymore.”

As a teacher, pay very close attention to what your students do with this activity. It may give you helpful hints about their world, their beliefs, their struggles, and their sources of either joy or pain. Remember to watch for these particulars, which may give you hints about how to best minister to them throughout the program:

- Did the picture focus more on themselves or on God?
- Did they make God out to be someone far away and unapproachable?
- On what characteristics of God did they focus? Did Jesus enter the picture at all?
- Was their picture generally hopeful or filled with despair or confusion?

It is Jesus who first calls to us, saying “know thyself.” He challenges us to learn the truth of our existence and to direct our lives toward the purpose of the loving communion for which we have been created. He knows that our fulfillment cannot be found in lies but in truth. God, who is a perfect communion in the blessed Trinity, created us to be in communion with Him. This relationship with God “is defined by that unique fact that the more deeply I abandon myself to Him, the more completely I let Him penetrate my being, the more powerfully He, the Creator, gains authority in me, the more *I become myself*.”¹¹

So, the great command to be given is to *become who you are*. In the movie trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, this call is given directly to Aragorn in the *The Return of the King*. Aragorn is the heir to the throne of his kingdom, but he has not accepted responsibility for it yet. When in the midst of the greatest challenge facing Middle Earth, Lord Elrond has re-forged the sword of the king, he presents it to Aragorn with the words, “Put aside the ‘ranger.’ *Become who you were born to be!*” Just like Aragorn, if we set aside the lies that we have believed about ourselves and embrace the reality of our life in Christ, we can claim and proclaim with boldness the truth of who we really are.

Read these inspiring words of John Paul II and see if they speak to you, even as a faint echo in your heart:

It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle.

It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.

– Pope John Paul II, *World Youth Day, Rome 2000*

You Decide

In whose vision of life do you think true happiness is found?

Weezer, from the song “Tired of Sex”

“I’m tired, so tired. I’m tired of having sex. So tired. I’m spread so thin. I don’t know who I am. Monday night I’m makin’ Jen. Tuesday night I’m makin’ Lyn. Wednesday night I’m makin’ Catherine. Oh, why can’t I be makin’ Love come true?”

vs.

Pope John Paul II

“The person who does not decide to love forever will find it very difficult to really love for even one day.”



Understanding the propulsion system on a space shuttle...

Having a working knowledge of the new tax laws governing foreign trade...

Knowing how to properly care for a beached whale...

These are not situations that the average person really needs to know much about. To be ignorant of any one of these facts—or millions of others like them—does not render one stupid or lazy. That being said...

Knowing how to shut off the water to an overflowing toilet...

Knowing how to perform the Heimlich maneuver on a person who is choking...

Knowing how to ask for the nearest clean restroom in a foreign country...

These are all situations in which a little bit of knowledge can go a long way. To be ignorant in one of these moments could be disastrous—or at least messy.

Sure, if you *wanted* to learn about the physics of a shuttle launch, or the ramifications of changes in tax laws, or how to take care of a whale, you're usually just one book, one click, or one seminar away. Again, these issues might be interesting, but they really are not necessary to the average person's everyday happiness. You can choose to remain ignorant when it comes to several areas of life and your world will just keep on spinning.

But remaining ignorant on "the purpose of your life" is an entirely different matter. Knowing your purpose in life and living it out will determine your future on earth as well as your eternity after death. That's an amazing concept worthy of your attention.

As you study this curriculum, you will have a choice each day of whether to be open-minded as you read. You'll also have the choice of whether to be open to change in your life. If you have an open heart, you will grow in wisdom and knowledge before God and man. The truth you find in these pages will bring challenges, but also great satisfaction. And remember that God will never offer you a challenge without also offering you every grace needed to overcome it.

In short, if you take what you learn in this workbook and apply it, in a practical way, your life is going to change ... for the better. This is a crash course in love, in truth,

and in authentic freedom. In these "live it out" sections, you will be offered encouragement and practical ideas of things you can do with your body that will have an everlasting impact on your soul. That will help the "head knowledge" you gain on these pages become "heart knowledge" you retain for life.

So, what is the goal of your life? What is it supposed to be? The answer is actually quite simple—it's living it that is the challenge. The answer is "to love." God calls us to this. This is what Christ lived. This is what the Holy Spirit makes possible. This is what the saints achieved.

But only after you have accepted the love of God can you share that love with others, freely and purely. So, here's your chance—your "Love 101" course starts today. Learn how to receive the love of God, and to allow that love to transform your life into something beautiful. (And guys, this is absolutely for you, too. Love is an extremely masculine thing. If you're looking for the ultimate challenge, try laying down your life—in big and small ways—for another. And then try doing it day in and day out. You'll find if you get married, for example, that the test of a real man involves "dying to yourself" every day. We'll say more about this later.)

If you ask, "Why am I here?", know that God created you to love and to be loved. As Christ said, "Love one another, even as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34). Want to know God's expectations for you? Consider Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

God loves you more than you love yourself. Doubt it? Read John 15:13: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The verses listed above are to be prayed through...that's how you will start to *live it out* in a real, practical way.

Here's one final idea before we move forward: next time you see a crucifix, consider the fact that you have a God who loves you so much that He would rather die than spend eternity without you.

Notes & Nuggets: If you have the opportunity to take your teens to a church or adoration chapel, this prayer and journal activity would be an excellent, prayerful way to begin a time of quiet reflection or adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This is also a great time for you to dedicate your teaching of the Theology of the Body to God through prayer before the Body of Christ in the Eucharist.

Notes & Nuggets: Explain up front to the students whether you intend to read their journals or not. Most states have laws that bind you as a teacher (if you collect the journals) to read them in their entirety. If you are not sure of the laws in your state, check with a counselor at your school or the pastor at your parish. In addition, if there is anything within the journal that incriminates the student or someone else in a crime, suggests suicidal tendencies, or hints of abuse of any sort, you are bound by law to report it to the proper authorities. You may choose to check the journals during class (without collecting and reading them), to see that they have been done. There are benefits to reading the journals, but with that reading comes much responsibility.

MOVIE CLIP/SONG SUGGESTIONS

MOVIE CLIPS:

- 1. *The Return of the King*:** Show the segment between 1:15:48 and 1:17:35. (Note: The time code we are providing here is from the second disc of the extended version.) Frodo and his best friend, Sam, are on a mission together. Frodo has had to carry the burden of the ring and just can't go on. Sam tells him that he can't carry the ring for him, but he can carry Frodo. It could be said that their friendship resembles the relationship between God and His creation. God created us with a purpose, and while He will not accomplish our mission for us, He is always there offering us grace. He is a faithful friend ready to help us at every turn.
- 2. *Signs*:** Show the segment between 1:25:56 and 1:39:28. (Note: This scene is a little scary.) This clip can be used to convey the section about finding one's purpose in life. Mel Gibson's character finds out the truth about his purpose in life.

- 3. *The Day after Tomorrow*:** Show the segment between 1:44:03 and 1:50:23. This scene demonstrates the power of family love. Dennis Quaid's character vows against all odds that he will find his son. His son never doubted that his father would come to rescue him.

SONGS:

- 1. *Not Home Yet*** – Steven Curtis Chapman
(*Greatest Hits*)

This song stresses the need to remember we are not home until we are in heaven. Contemporary.

- 2. *Meant to Live*** – Switchfoot (*The Beautiful Letdown*)

The singer wonders what life is about as he explains that we are meant to live for heaven. Hard/Alternative Rock.

- 3. *Wait for Me*** – Rebecca St. James (*Transform*)

A call to one's future spouse to "wait" for the right time for love: marriage. Note: This song is extremely popular with girls. Pop/Contemporary.



PRAYER & JOURNAL ACTIVITY

→ **Read:** Quietly and slowly read the following meditation.

Everyone longs to give himself or herself completely to someone, to have a deep and committed soul relationship with another. We want to be loved thoroughly and unconditionally. But God says:

Wait until you are satisfied, fulfilled, and content with being loved by Me alone, with giving yourself totally, unreservedly to Me alone.

I love you, my child. But until you discover that only in Me is your satisfaction to be found, you will not be capable of the perfect human relationship that I have planned for you. You will never be united with another as you desire to be until you are united with Me, exclusive of anyone or anything else, exclusive of any other desires and belongings.

I want you to stop planning and stop wishing, and allow Me to give you the most thrilling plan that exists—one that you can't imagine. I want you to have the very best. Please allow Me to bring it to you.

*Just keep your eyes on Me, expecting the greatest things.
Keep experiencing that satisfaction knowing that I AM.
Keep learning and listening to the things I tell you.
You must be patient.*

*Don't be anxious.
Don't worry.
Don't look around at the things others have.
Don't look at the things you think you want.
Just keep looking to Me, or you will miss what I want to give you.*

*And then, when you are ready, I will surprise you with a love far more wonderful than you could ever dream. You see, until you are ready, and until the one I have for you is ready ... until you are both satisfied exclusively with Me and the life I have prepared for you, you won't be able to experience the love that exemplifies your relationship with Me ... and this is perfect love.
(Anonymous Prayer)*

Pray: Take a few minutes to reflect silently on what God is saying to you in your heart.

Respond: Use your journal to respond to this amazing love that God has for you. If it helps you, read through the meditation again (written from God's point of view) and respond to each of the sections.



"Chastity is a difficult, long-term matter; one must wait patiently for it to bear fruit, for the happiness of loving kindness which it must bring. But at the same time, chastity is the sure way to happiness."

– Pope John Paul II

4. Voice of Truth – Casting Crowns (Self-titled release)

This one is about believing Jesus, the “voice of truth” above all other doubts and lies. Contemporary/Rock.

5. Dangerous Wonder – Curtis Stephan (Sacred Revolution)

This song helps us to rejoice in the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God. Pop/Rock.

6. Big Enough – Chris Rice (Past The Edges)

This is about facing doubt, having lots of questions and asking God about them. Folk/Easy Listening.

7. I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For – U2 (Joshua Tree)

Journey of searching near and far, knowing what Jesus did and still not being convinced it is what we need. Suggestions in the song are made that connect sexuality with eternity. His “burning desire” is more than just a physical thing. He knows he is meant for more, but he is confused. Pop/Rock.

7. God of Grace – Adam Watts (Noise Inside)

Our God is a God of grace and love and He is there whenever we need Him. Pop/Rock.

8. God is Love – John Reuben (Are We There Yet?)

God is love and love is God. If we focus on Him we will be love. Hip-Hop Ballad.

Notes & Nuggets: This project is only a possibility if you can break teens into groups and have access to video cameras. It will be worth the effort as the teens will really enjoy this exercise. Get permission from your parish or school to have video cameras on campus.

Notes & Nuggets: We chose to ask the Blessed Mother for her intercession because she beautifully exhibits for us the teaching of John Paul II on the Theology of the Body. She made a perfect gift of herself through her body, and she was perfectly pure. She is a model for holiness for us all.



WORK IT OUT

Assignment #1: Draw a picture, write a poem, or write a song that creatively helps others realize why men and women do not make sense without the other—the two were made for union with each other. What would the world be like if there were no women? What if there were no men? Creatively include the text of Genesis 2:24 at some point in your creation. By the simple realization of our need for each other, we can also recognize that we were made for communion with each other.

Assignment #2: Use the terms from the glossary at the end of the chapter and go online to create your own crossword puzzle or word search that other students could use to help them better learn the many definitions in this chapter.

Assignment #3: Dig into the primary text of Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body from November 14, 1979, which focuses on man imaging God through the communion of persons. Write a summary essay of the address.



→ **Project #1:** Create your own “man on the street” video. Go to your cafeteria or a school sporting event to ask the following question: What is the meaning of life? After taping ten responses from people in different age groups, get on camera yourself and give a verbal summary of what you heard. Then give your own one minute answer to the same question.



CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Leader or Reader #1: **O Blessed Virgin and Mother Mary**, please pray with me that I, like you, can live a life of perfect love. Help me to live a life worthy of returning to the One Who created me in love and for love. Please pray that I, like you, will live as a sinless and perfect vessel of the Holy Spirit.

Leader or Reader #2: Let us pray together: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen. Saint (patron saint of your church or school), pray for us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**



IN HIS OWN WORDS

- **On the Body in “Theology”:** “Through the fact that the Word of God became flesh, the body entered theology through the main door. The Incarnation and the redemption that springs from it became also the definitive source of the sacramentality of marriage ... ” (April 2, 1980).
- **On imaging God in the Communion of Persons:** “Formed in the image of God, also inasmuch as they form a true communion of persons, the first man and the first woman must constitute the beginning and the model of that communion for all men and women, who, in any period, are united so intimately as to be one flesh” (November 21, 1979).
- “Man becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion. Right ‘from the beginning,’ He is not only an image in which the solitude of a person who rules the world is reflected, but also, and essentially, an image of an inscrutable divine communion of persons” (November 14, 1979).
- **On Intimacy & Nakedness:** [Gen 2:25] “According to this passage, the man and the woman saw themselves, as it were, through the mystery of creation. They saw themselves in this way, before knowing that they were naked. ... They see and know each other with all the peace of the interior gaze, which creates precisely the fullness of the intimacy of the persons” (January 2, 1980).
- **On Original Happiness:** “Happiness is being rooted in love. Original happiness speaks to us of the beginning of man, who emerged from love and initiated love. That happened in an irrevocable way, despite the subsequent sin and death ... This beginning can also be defined as the original and beatifying immunity from shame as the result of love” (January 30, 1980).
- “The revelation and discovery of the nuptial meaning of the body explain man’s original happiness” (January 16, 1980).
- **On the Sacramentality of the Body:** “The sacrament, as a visible sign, is constituted with man, as a body, by means of his visible masculinity and femininity. The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God, and thus be a sign of it” (February 20, 1980).
- **On Communion and Marriage:** “Against this vast background we understand fully the words that constitute the sacrament of marriage, present in Genesis 2:24: ‘A man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh’” (February 20, 1980).
- “Therefore, in his original situation man is alone and at the same time he becomes male and female—unity of the two. In his solitude he is revealed to himself as a person, in order to reveal, at the same time, the communion of persons in the unity of the two ... In the unity of the couple he becomes male and female, discovering the nuptial meaning of his body as a personal subject” (January 13, 1982).

Glossary of Key Terms

Celibacy (celibate life): Freely choosing to forego earthly marriage “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19:12), that is, for the sake of the heavenly marriage of Christ and the Church. Celibate people “consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to ‘the affairs of the Lord’” (CCC 1579, 1 Cor 7:32).

Communion of persons: The “common union” between two or more persons who give themselves to one another in love; they see in each other the image and likeness of God and want the best for the other. John Paul II refers to the unity of Adam and Eve as the “prototype” for the communion of persons, through which man and woman become more fully the image of God.

Concupiscence: The “inclination to sin” that is present in all humans, inherited through the sin of Adam and Eve, and against which we must struggle to resist “by the grace of Jesus Christ” (CCC 1264). While it inclines us to sin and comes from sin, concupiscence itself is not a sin.

Despair: The opposite of hope, despair is the resolve to give up pursuing whatever was initially pursued. In the case of relationships in our culture, many people despair, thinking that the possibility of finding loving, faithful relationships is impossible. But with God there is always hope, and in Him we find the keys to building loving, life-giving relationships that last.

Dignity: The inherent and unchanging value of all persons as a direct result of their being created by God in His image and likeness.

Love: A decision to “will the good of another” person (St. Thomas Aquinas, as quoted in CCC 1766). John Paul II echoes this same definition in much of his writing on love, and adds that love involves a sincere gift of oneself to others.

Lust: It is “disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure” (CCC 2351). It is sexual desire apart from God’s love—a selfish desire that seeks one’s own pleasure at the expense of another.

Original sin: The first sin of mankind against God, when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God’s command and do what they wanted instead. This choice affected all of humanity, giving us all a tendency to sin, a disordered desire to break God’s law, and a world prone to suffering and struggles of all kinds—including death.

Sacrament: A sacrament makes a spiritual reality visible to us. It is an outward sign “instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church by which divine life [grace] is dispensed to us” (CCC 1131).

Sacramentality of the body: The inherent ability of the body to act as a visible sign of God’s invisible love.

Sexual liberation: The common term for escaping sexual “rules” so as to do whatever one wants with his or her sexuality. In reality, this liberation is not sexual freedom but an excuse to use sexuality as a form of recreation, often leading to the slavery of sexual addiction and a life of emptiness and broken relationships.

Theology: The study of God, or “faith seeking understanding” (St. Anselm). The word comes from the Greek words *Theos* (God) and *logos* (word). Theology is its own science of faithful study, seeking to understand God and His word.

Theology of the Body: A study of God and the purpose of our existence, as discovered and revealed through our bodies.