

Chapter One - Overview

Created for Love

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To explain God's love for us and his desire to have an intimate, personal relationship with us
- To define "Theology of the Body" and show how our bodies teach us profound truths about ourselves and our purpose in life
- To explain that our bodies are very good and have been designed by God for communion with him and with each other
- To explore opportunities for a deeper relationship with God and others

Key Concepts to Convey:

- By reflecting on the human body, on its origin and its purpose, we can learn God's purpose for our lives and ultimately find true love and happiness
- Love cannot be in isolation, but only in a "communion of persons"
- God created us freely out of love, male and female. He made us for loving communion with each other and destined us to share in His own eternal bliss
- Just as a sacrament makes a spiritual reality visible, the body makes our call to love visible. This is what John Paul II calls the "sacramentality of the body"

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

- "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 be a sign of it" (TOB, Feb. 20, 1980).

Definitions

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

Chapter Two - Overview

Love Defined: Giving versus Using

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To contrast real love (“self-donating”) with lust (“self-seeking”)
- To explain the difference between abstinence and chastity
- To recognize and explain why love is the only proper attitude (or response) toward another person
- To measure the quality of a relationship based on “giving” versus “using”

Key Concepts to Convey:

- In order for a person to love another properly, he or she must first desire what is good for the other person
- Lust is sexual desire apart from God’s love. It is a selfish desire to please oneself, and it treats people as objects to achieve that pleasure
- Chastity is the virtue that orients all our sexual desires, emotions, and attractions toward the true good of the other person and, thus, the real meaning of love. Chastity frees us to love.

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

“Thus only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love. For chastity frees their association, including marital intercourse, from that tendency to use a person which is objectively incompatible with ‘loving kindness’, and by so freeing it introduces into their life together and their sexual relationship a special disposition to ‘loving kindness’” (Love and Responsibility, 171)

Definitions

Love: A decision to “will the good of another” person (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.

Chapter Three - Overview

Naked Without Shame

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To use the Creation accounts of Genesis to help people understand the modern world
- To recognize the meaning of our existence as revealed through the one-flesh union of our bodies in the marital relationship
- To explain the original experiences of man (nakedness, solitude, innocence, unity, happiness) and how original sin altered these realities
- To identify Satan as the enemy whose purpose is to twist and destroy God's good creation
- To show that God allows us to choose him in total freedom, and that we will experience great joy in our relationship with him
- To define and explain the meaning of the "nuptial (or spousal) meaning of the body"

Key Concepts to Convey:

- God made man and woman in his own image and likeness and that we are all created "good"
- Adam and Eve, "naked without shame" prior to original sin, saw each other without any confusion between love and lust. In their nakedness, they rejoiced with a pure attraction to the beauty of their bodies as the manifestation of the invisible goodness of the other
- The essence of original sin was believing the lie that God was not a good Father. Adam and Eve doubted the gift of God and disobeyed his command not to eat of the tree of knowledge—a law which was given to protect them from death
- Original sin, as a consequence of disobeying God's plan of purity, love, and grace, plunged all creation into a darkened state of suffering and death

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

"Only the nakedness that makes woman an object for a man, or vice versa, is a source of shame. The fact that they were not ashamed means that the woman was not an 'object' for the man nor he for her" (TOB, Feb. 20, 1980).

Definitions

Nuptial Meaning of the Body: The marital meaning of the body. "...the body's capacity of expressing love, that love precisely in which the person becomes a gift and...fulfils the very meaning of his being and existence" (TOB, Jan. 16, 1980).

Chapter Four - Overview

Hope and Redemption in Christ

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To explain our destiny (eschatological man) as the experience of full redemption and eternal union – perfect “marriage” – with God in heaven
- To demonstrate that Jesus offers us hope and healing from our pain and regret, past and present
- To freely encounter God’s mercy and forgiveness for our hurts and sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession)
- To explain that God has revealed to us the meaning of our existence through the “nuptial (or spousal) meaning of the body”

Key Concepts to Convey:

- Eschatological man experiences no pain or concupiscence; he is in full union with Christ in heaven
- Our hope every day is that the Lord offers us new help and grace that allows us to start anew and progress further toward heaven and the fullness of redemption
- God has revealed to us the meaning of our existence through the “nuptial (or spousal) meaning of the body”
- The resurrection of our bodies will be an event in which we are re-created in a wholeness of body, mind, and spirit, and we will be rid of any sin and live in God’s perfect love

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

“However, the redemption of the body is expressed not only in the resurrection as victory over death. It is present also in Christ’s words addressed to historical man, when they confirm the principle of the indissolubility of marriage as a principle coming from the Creator himself, and also when, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ called man to overcome concupiscence, even in the uniquely interior movements of the human heart” (TOB, July 21, 1982).

Definitions

Hope of every day: The daily hope of victory over sin which is available to us through Christ, who helps us overcome “evil with good” (Rom 12:21).

Chapter Five - Overview

Truth and Freedom

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To define true freedom
- To compare and contrast authentic freedom with the cultural view of freedom
- To explore why freedom must be connected to truth

Key Concepts to Convey:

- Man is created for freedom: the ability to desire and choose the good
- Free will is the capacity to choose one's own deeds, making the individual the author of his own acts
- "Freedom from the law" is the result of bringing our hearts into such pure conformity with God's law that we no longer desire to break it

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

"Human freedom belongs to us as creatures; it is a freedom which is given as a gift, one to be received like a seed and to be cultivated responsibly...Freedom then is rooted in the truth about man, and it is ultimately directed toward communion" (Veritatis Splendor, 86.1).

Definitions

Free Will: The gift given to us by God that allows us to choose between good and evil. This God-given ability allows us to be the authors of our own choices, thus allowing us to determine our own destiny.

Chapter Six - Overview

Language of the Body

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To demonstrate how the body can speak either truths or lies
- To judge the truthfulness or untruthfulness (lies) of sexual behavior(s)
- To analyze the “language of the body” as “the language of love” spoken within marriage
- To explain how pre-marital sex, adultery, pornography, and contraception all constitute lies of the body

Key Concepts to Convey:

- Teens can begin to train themselves for faithfulness in their future marriages by speaking the truth with their bodies now, through purity and self-control
- Pornography casts every participant in the selfish role of taking, using the body merely as a means to addictive pleasure rather than as an expression of true love
- God designed us for authentic, honest love, wherein a person gives himself to the other completely. The act of intercourse says, “I give you all that I have and all that I am”
- Contraception disorders the sexual act by saying, “I give you some of me, but not my fertility”
- Contraception is a contradiction of the very essence and meaning of human sexuality and, thus, turns the sexual act into a lie

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

“Man is precisely a person because he is master of himself and has self-control. Indeed, insofar as he is master of himself he can give himself to the other. This dimension – the dimension of the liberty of the gift – becomes essential and decisive for that language of the body, in which man and woman reciprocally express themselves in the conjugal union” (TOB, Aug. 22, 1984).

Definitions

Contraception: Every action before, during, or after sexual intercourse that deliberately attempts to impede its procreative potential. These acts are intrinsically evil and always unacceptable (CCC 2370).

Chapter Seven - Overview

Free, Total, Faithful, Fruitful (FTFF)

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To analyze these four marks of God's love in the life of Christ, in his love for the Church, in the wedding vows, and in the love of spouses in marriage
- To differentiate love that is self-giving from sex that is self-seeking
- To demonstrate that reception of God's love, like Mary, is the prerequisite for truly loving self and others
- To recognize that marriage is a pre-requisite for sex to be a sign of the four marks of God's love - yet not a guarantee - since even married couples can sin with such acts as masturbation, adultery, and contraception which cannot image God's love

Key Concepts to Convey:

- The four marks of self-donating love (agape) are free, total, faithful, fruitful
- While "What would Jesus do?" is a good start for making moral decisions, "How would Jesus love?" is a good start to building a loving, lasting, communion with others
- Mary is the perfect model for how we are to receive God's love
- Husbands and wives continually renew their wedding vows through lives of true mutual service, but especially through their one-flesh union: the marital act of sexual relations
- Contraception is a contradiction ("speaking against") of the language of love
- In the Sacrament of Marriage, a couple receives special graces, but moreover, they become a symbol of the union of Christ with the Church, which speaks of deep change in their very being, not simply as passive recipients of God's grace

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

"In the reflections on the sacramental sign, it has already been said several times that it is based on the language of the body reread in truth. It concerns a truth once affirmed at the beginning of the marriage, when the newlyweds, promising each other 'to be always faithful...and to love and honor each other all the days of their life,' become ministers of marriage as a sacrament of the Church. ...In fact, the man and the woman, living in the marriage 'until death,' re-propose uninterruptedly, in a certain sense, that sign that they made on their wedding day, through the liturgy of the sacrament" (TOB, July 11, 1984).

Definitions

Fruitful Love: Love that is life-giving, because it is free, total, and faithful. It is open to procreation in the physical realm and is life-giving in the spiritual and emotional realm.

Chapter Eight - Overview

Marriage

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To analyze the roles of husband and wife as distinct and complementary, forming a union that expresses the love of God “in the flesh”
- To recognize God as the one who established marriage and the source of its holiness
- To understand sacramental marriage as the earthly foreshadowing of the heavenly marriage of Christ and the Church
- To defend Christ as the center of Christian marriage, the building block upon which society and culture are built
- To recognize marriage as the primordial (original) sacrament in which grace comes through Christ

Key Concepts to Convey:

- God created marriage to be a beautiful sacrament in which a man and woman give themselves completely to each other and the two become one flesh
- While contraception is always a hindrance to authentic marital love, Natural Family Planning (NFP), when practiced properly, actually enhances all four marks of marital love
- In Christ’s sacrificial, spousal love for the Church, we see not only God’s love for us but also a model of love for married couples
- In the New Testament, the fifth chapter of Ephesians explains mutual submission of spouses as imitation of Christ and the Church. The husband symbolizes Christ in his initiating self-gift, while the wife symbolizes the Church in her active receptivity and return of his gift

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

“Indeed the very words, ‘I take you as my wife – my husband’ refer not only to a determinate reality, but they can be fulfilled only by means of conjugal intercourse. This reality (conjugal intercourse) has moreover been determined from the very beginning by the institution of the Creator: ‘Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh’” (TOB, Jan. 5, 1983).

Definitions

Natural Family Planning: The term referring to various modern, effective, and moral methods of achieving or postponing pregnancy based on the daily recording of the observable signs of fertility and infertility occurring in every healthy woman.

Chapter Nine - Overview

Celibacy and Religious Life

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To understand that celibacy for the kingdom, like marriage, is a vocation – a personal call from God, not merely a “choice” by an individual
- To explain how celibacy for the kingdom fulfills the “nuptial (or spousal) meaning of the body” by embracing a life signifying the heavenly marriage between Christ and his Church
- To describe the essence of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood, and the reasons why only men can be ordained to the ministerial priesthood

Key Concepts to Convey:

- Celibacy for the kingdom is a call to serve God and the Church more fully – foregoing earthly marriage to devote oneself entirely to the heavenly marriage – and foreshadows the ultimate purpose of our life: union with God in heaven
- The “nuptial (or spousal) meaning of the body” is the call to union that God has stamped into our bodies as male and female: to love as he loves through a sincere and total gift of self
- Everyone is called in one way or another to communion because the marriage of Christ and the Church is the ultimate fulfillment of every longing for love
- The Church cannot change the reality that only a man can be called to the priesthood (spiritual fatherhood) just as the Church cannot change the reality that only a woman can only be a mother and bare new life in her womb. This reality is due to the very nature of sexual difference

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

“These two dimensions of the human vocation [Marriage and Celibacy] are not opposed to each other, but are complimentary. Both furnish a full answer to one of man’s fundamental questions, the questions about the significance of ‘being a body,’ that is, about the significance of masculinity and femininity, of being ‘in the body’ a man or a woman” (TOB, July 14, 1982).

Definitions

Contenance: Maintaining control of one’s desires, appetites, and passions rather than being controlled by them. Furthermore, continence lived as a virtue involves directing one’s passions toward the true, good, and beautiful.

Chapter Ten - Overview

Finding Your Vocation

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To show that God has a unique life plan for every person and that our purpose in life is to know, love, and serve God in a particular vocation: marriage or celibacy for the kingdom
- To show that living a sacramental life is the key to hearing, knowing, and following God's will
- To help recognize the gifts God has given us and be able to offer them back to Our Lord as we live out our vocation
- To demonstrate five principles for vocational discernment

Key Concepts to Convey:

- Everyone has a vocation to love and to holiness
- Man will only find his life when he learns to give it away in love
- Practicing various styles of silent and vocal prayer is the way to hear God's voice and overcome the common impediments of noise, busyness, fear, sin, laziness, and apathy
- Moral discernment is judging an action as to whether it is right or wrong. Discerning God's Plan involves listening for the voice of God through prayer and the counsel of others to discover His desire for our lives
- The Theology of the Body is a lens through which anyone can gain help in discerning which vocation God is calling them: marriage or celibacy for the kingdom

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

"Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being" (Familiaris Consortio, 11)

Definitions

Vocation: From the Latin, vocare ("to call"); the call that God gives to each of us, asking us to live for Him and love him in a particular way in a particular state of life (e.g., a man who is called to marry, become a doctor, and to write in medical journals about the truth and sacredness of life at conception.)

Chapter Eleven - Overview

Dating with Purpose and Purity

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To define the purpose of dating, the difference between healthy and unhealthy dating, and the difference between dating and courting
- To explain the value of building dating relationships on authentic friendship and seeing others as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- To demonstrate that the gift of sex is valuable and worth protecting
- To describe practical ways of staying pure, without being prudish, while living a radical life for Christ and discerning a vocation to marriage or celibacy

Key Concepts to Convey:

- The ultimate purpose of dating is to find a spouse
- The modern dating “norm” hurts rather than helps one’s chances of entering a happy and faithful marriage
- “How far is too far” is the wrong question because it asks how far away from purity – toward sin – we can go, instead of asking how much toward purity and holiness we can go
- To practice self-discipline and find happiness through chastity: pray for purity every morning, avoid impure relationships, and know your boundaries

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

“Purity is the requirement of love. It is the dimension of its interior truth in man’s heart” (TOB, Dec. 3, 1980)

Definitions

Courtship: A time of relating with another, getting to know the person – and his or her friends and family – through friendship before moving into a dating relationship. This low-risk, balanced approach to pursuing relationships creates a firm foundation upon which love can be built.

Chapter Twelve - Overview

Living the Good (and Free!) Life

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To integrate the Theology of the Body into a life of authentic love, radical holiness, active life of service, and evangelization
- To explain the purpose of the body and sexuality as good gifts given by God
- To explore how the original experiences of Adam and Eve are foundational to the meaning of understanding our own life experiences

Key Concepts to Convey:

- The Theology of the Body gives us a new lens through which we can view ourselves, our world, and eternity
- Purity is possible, but we must struggle to love with truth and integrity
- The path to happiness and holiness in life is to learn to speak the language of the body as God intended: freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully

In His Own Words (John Paul II)

“Remember: Christ is calling you; the Church needs you; the Pope believes in you and he expects great things of you!” (John Paul II, Jan. 26, 1999, St. Louis)

Definitions

New Evangelization: A term referring to the special need to share the Gospel with new enthusiasm, new methods, and new expressions. The new evangelization is not a new Gospel, but it recognizes that as the world changes, the methods for sharing the Good News need to change if they are to be effective.