

YEAR 4 - LESSON 8 - CATECHIST GUIDE WK. 1



FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION

GOD'S SAVING LOVE FOR US: LITURGY AND THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

TOPIC: THE SACRAMENTS AT THE SERVICE OF COMMUNION AND MISSION: MATRIMONY

SACRED SCRIPTURE

GEN 2:21-24;

MT 19:4-6;

EPH 5:21-33

REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
no. 1601 & 1617

CREED

nos.

219,
369-79,
772,
796

LITURGY

nos.

1601-
66

LIFE

nos.

2331-
2400

PRAYER

nos.

2559-
65,
2618,
2742-
45

Goals: Families will...

- Learn about the second Sacrament at the Service of Communion and Mission: Matrimony (Marriage).
- Learn about the vocation of marriage.
- Review covenants and sacraments.
- Begin/continue their plan for celebrating the Easter Season.

MATERIALS

- Sacrament of Matrimony and Wedding of Cana [coloring pages](#) to be used any time during this session or Week 3
 - Crayons or colored pencils
- Stations of Light (Closing Prayer)
 - Candle

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
We entrust our family to You and ask for Your blessing and protection. We love You Lord Jesus with all our hearts and we ask that You help our family become more like the Holy Family. Help us to be kind, loving, and patient with one another. Give us all the grace we need to become saints and Your faithful disciples.

Amen.



ICE BREAKER

SHOE EXCHANGE

Set-Up: Instruct everybody to leave one of their shoes by the door.

How to Play: Bring everyone into a circle and redistribute the shoes, so everyone has one that doesn't belong to them. Then, set a 5-minute timer and tell everybody to find the shoe owner, and have a 2-minute discussion explaining who their favorite saint is and why.

Adapted from

<https://scienceofpeople.com>



BACKGROUND RESOURCES FOR CATECHISTS

[The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Within Mass](#)

[Christian Wedding Symbols:](#) The Meaning Behind the Traditions by Mary Fairchild – *note that while not all the article's explanations are complete or still apply to the Catholic rite of marriage, the connection with the ancient understanding of covenant, fulfilled in the New Covenant, can still be helpful and will be referenced in the content below.*

[Who Makes the Sacrament of Marriage:](#) Christ definitively instituted the Sacrament of Marriage when He poured out His life for us - the Church His Bride - on the Cross and conquered the powers of sin, death, Hell, and the devil in His Paschal Mystery. In so doing, Jesus raised the natural bond of marriage to the grace-filled and grace-giving reality of a sacrament between a baptized man and a baptized woman. To be a sacrament, a baptized man and a baptized woman are necessary. Through their incorporation into Christ through Baptism, their consent to each other is plunged into the life-giving bond and covenant between Christ and the Church, making their marriage a sacrament of the union of Christ and the Church. In the Latin tradition, the ministers of the sacrament are the bride and bridegroom themselves, and the priest or deacon receives their consent on behalf of the Church. In the Eastern Churches, priests serve as witnesses as well, but their blessing is also necessary for the validity of the sacrament (see CCC, no. 1623).

[The Church Recognizes Valid Natural Bonds of Marriage:](#) Not all valid marriages are sacraments. The sacrament is between a baptized man and a baptized woman. However, the Church also recognizes valid marriages between a baptized person and non-baptized person, or between two non-baptized persons (man and woman), presuming proper conditions are met. This is one reason why the Church cares about all marriages, and why she sees it as essential to uphold, promote, strengthen, and defend the unique meaning of marriage as the permanent, faithful, and fruitful union of one man and one woman across society. Marriage is not just a Christian reality but is grounded in the order of creation and is a bedrock institution across cultures.

[The Bond and Grace of the Sacrament:](#) In the Sacrament of Marriage, the consent of husband and wife is sealed by God Himself, by the Holy Spirit. This marriage bond, when concluded and consummated, cannot be broken and is indissoluble (see CCC, no. 1640). (When the Church offers a declaration of nullity, she has found that at least one of the elements required for a proper consent was lacking, and therefore a valid marriage bond was not present.) Jesus Christ is the source of the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage, and He dwells with the spouses in and through their marriage bond sealed by the Holy Spirit (see CCC, nos. 1641-42).

[What's Needed for Marriage:](#) Marriage is ordered to the good of husband and wife and to the procreation and education of their children. Only one man and one woman, by their free consent, can enter the one-flesh union of marriage, which requires a total or full union that is permanent and indissoluble, faithful till death, and open to the gift of new human life. Many couples struggle with infertility or miscarriage. These couples' openness to life, even in the midst of great difficulties and suffering, is a fruitful witness to God's love for us. There are many other ways that married couples struggle and need help, and there are various supports and aids offered by the Church. Learn more at [Pastoral Care | Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta](#) | Atlanta, GA (archatl.com) and at [ForYourMarriage.org](#).



CONTENT

Hook: Quick Review

Review and Ask: Last month we said there are two Sacraments at the Service of Communion and Mission. In the Scriptures, we learned that Jesus called the Twelve to be His Apostles. These men were set aside to carry on Jesus' ministry with His authority to serve in a unique way. Because Jesus wants to be closer to us, to heal us and to keep His promise to always be with us, God has continued to call some baptized men to the ministerial priesthood. These men, through priestly ordination, receive what sacrament?

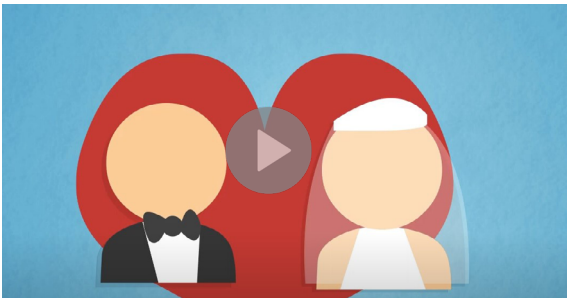
Answer: The Sacrament of Holy Orders

Explain: The other Sacrament that is at the Service of Communion and Mission is the Sacrament of Marriage. Marriage is also a vocation, or a calling from God.

TEACH

1. Watch

Catholic Kids Media [What is Marriage?](#) (1:50 min)



2. Introduce Topic

Today, we are going to learn about Holy Matrimony.



Ask: When did God create Marriage?

Answer: When He created human beings, male and female, in His image.

Read [Gen. 1:27-31](#)

Invite families to follow along in their bibles as you read [Gen. 1: 27, 28 & 31](#)

Explain: “God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.” This means that since God is love and human beings are made in His image, He created man and woman to love each other and to love God. St. John Paul II teaches that at the very moment of the creation of the human person as male and female, God willed marriage into existence as well.

“God blessed them,” The blessing from God is the Holy Covenant of Marriage, among the one man and the one woman and God Himself. This blessing makes their covenant holy and is how God remains with the couple, as the source of the grace they need to love one another as God loves!

“... saying: ‘Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.’ This means that God calls the husband and wife to bring new life into the world, to cooperate with God so He may create new life in, with and through them.

“God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good.” This means that marriage and family are awesomely beautiful to God!

Watch: *What makes Catholic marriage a sacrament?* (6 min)



Ask: Does anyone remember what a covenant is?

Answer: A covenant is a special agreement or promise.

Explain: There are many traditions that come from the Old Testament Covenant. In fact, many of today’s Christian wedding traditions can be traced back to the first century BC or beyond. For example, back in ancient times, like when Abraham lived, most people couldn’t read or write, so when they were making a special contract or agreement, they made a covenant by cutting an animal in two and standing in the middle where the blood had been poured out, for this was considered to be holy ground. There, they stated their promises aloud. It was understood that if either party broke the promise, what had happened to the animal would happen to them. Therefore, a covenant was a very serious agreement.

Ask: Similarly, who stands in the center of the aisle of the church and makes a very serious, lifelong promise in the Sacrament of Marriage?

Answer: Bride and Groom

Ask: Did you ever wonder why at weddings the groom’s family sits on one side of the church and the bride’s sit on the other? Why do you think that is?

Explain: In an ancient covenant ceremony, the families and friends of each individual making the covenant stood on separate sides (of the aisle) as they still do at weddings today.

Ask: What do you think everyone did after the ceremony?

Answer: Both groups were now united and went to eat a great feast to celebrate. The same is done today!

Explain: Our Sacrament of Marriage traditions are rooted in those ancient covenant practices and have been handed down to us in a transformed way through the New Covenant established by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to remember that whenever a covenant is made, our relationship with God deepens. We become more and more a part of His heart, and He becomes more and more a part of our hearts. God still “covenants” with us through His sacraments. When our Lord Jesus came to earth and suffered, died, rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, He transformed the covenants and promises making up the Old Covenant into the New Covenant, and He gave us the Seven Sacraments, through the Catholic Church, as special signs and instruments of His grace and new life with Him. Every time we receive a sacrament, we deepen our familial relationship, our covenant, with God our Heavenly Father.

Watch: *Marriage | Catholic Central* (6 min)



***(Please be sure to show this video, or to address the main points of the video, as many of the families may have experienced the painful effects of divorce in one way or another.)**

FAMILY CONVERSATION

Name a couple or couples you have known who are positive models of the Sacrament of Marriage for you and for others. List the important qualities that make them wonderful examples.

(If time allows, share with large group as well!)

MISSION

1

First, Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

2

Second, Explain Activity

- i. Watch the videos about the Sacrament of Marriage.
- ii. Find a sacramental, favorite keepsake or photo from your wedding or of a couple who are a witness to the holiness of marriage and bring them to the Week 3 gathering.
- iii. Review the resources on celebrating the Easter Season and watch the video on Easter together.
- iv. Make a plan for how your family will (continue to) celebrate the Easter Season.
- v. Be prepared to share about your *Celebrating the Easter Season Plan* the next gathering.
- vi. Gather around your home altar and pray together a decade of the Rosary, meditating on the First Glorious Mystery, the Resurrection of Our Lord, or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, praising God for the gift of His Son's Resurrection!
- vii. Families complete the [Families Forming Disciples Family Survey!](#)

3

Last, Model for the families by

- i. Showing and sharing your own Sacrament of Marriage sacramental, keepsake, or photo, and then share about your own *Celebrating the Easter Season Plan* too.

REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER

PRAY THE STATIONS OF LIGHT

- I. Light candle
- II. Pray the Sign of the Cross
- III. Watch: [4 min. video](#)
- IV. Close with a Glory Be...

SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

***Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1617:**

The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath, which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist. Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign, the sacrament of the covenant of Christ and the Church. Since it signifies and communicates grace, marriage between baptized persons is a true sacrament of the New Covenant.

Pope St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), no. 3:

Willed by God in the very act of creation, marriage and the family are interiorly ordained to fulfillment in Christ and have need of His graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin and restored to their “beginning,” that is, to full understanding and the full realization of God’s plan.

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), no. 72:

The sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses, since “their mutual belonging is a real representation, through the sacramental sign, of the same relationship between Christ and the Church. The married couple are therefore a permanent reminder for the Church of what took place on the cross; they are for one another and for their children witnesses of the salvation in which they share through the sacrament.” Marriage is a vocation, inasmuch as it is a response to a specific call to experience conjugal love as an imperfect sign of the love between Christ and the Church. Consequently, the decision to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment.

