

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY *for Teens*

DISCOVERING GOD'S
PLAN FOR LOVE AND LIFE

MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION

Leader's Guide

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and Colin & Aimee MacIver

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Note: Page numbers in this Leader's Guide match those of the Student Workbook. Blank pages, however, have been omitted. As such, leaders will notice a break in page sequence at certain points in the Leader's Guide.

*It is Jesus in fact 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
provokes 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.*

*– St. John Paul II
August 19, 2000
World Youth Day (Rome)*

LEADER'S INTRODUCTION

A Note to Leaders

We are excited and grateful that you have decided to lead your middle schoolers through this program! We live in a world of unprecedented opportunity and unprecedented challenge, especially for the generation of young people whom you serve. They are the first generation whose socialization has been largely digital. They communicate primarily through media detached from personal contact, such as texting or online social networks. They find practices such as silent reflection or extended lectures nearly unbearable, and they expect instant information and constant (and varied) stimulation.

They are a generation whose ability to reach into the world has far exceeded their ability to reflect and mature. Thus, they experience much confusion about love, identity, sexuality, and other fundamental aspects of human nature. While confusion about these issues is not new, a world of moral ambiguity is presented to them with unprecedented saturation.

Yet, in this darkness shines the Good News: Each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made, and God's truth about love, identity, and sexuality does not confuse but satisfies. The truth—wonderful and magnetic—has the power to free us from chaos. Young people, even middle schoolers, are hungry for this truth. In a perfect counterpoint to contemporary lies, we believe that St. John Paul II presented this resonating truth in his Theology of the Body (TOB).

The Theology of the Body contains St. John Paul II's teaching on the significance of humanity created male and female in the image and likeness of God. This teaching was originally delivered in 129 Wednesday audiences during his early papacy and represents his decades of reflection on the rich wisdom that Scripture, Tradition, and human experience provide on this topic. The TOB provides profound insight into the meaning of manhood and womanhood, thus shedding light

on a host of moral issues. The Theology of the Body is available as a book, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, translated by Michael Waldstein. This work contains all 129 Wednesday audiences, plus six undelivered audiences on the Song of Songs.

How does the TOB connect to middle schoolers? When looking out at a group of them, you see a thousand volts of energy and potential along with a vast range of experience, curiosity, and, in many cases, pain and disillusionment. This program ministers to their varied desires by answering life's two core questions, those which the Theology of the Body directly confronts: "Who am I?" and "How should I live?"

We have been amazed to see how the answers to these questions address nearly every difficulty faced by middle schoolers: body image, techno-socializing, dating, sin and reconciliation, healthy sharing of emotions, cyber bullying, weekend culture, and, of course, questions about sex and love. We will probe these throughout the program.

We know addressing these issues can be an intimidating task for parents, teachers, and youth ministers alike, so we have crafted this program keeping in mind the authentic teaching of John Paul II and the particular audience. In order for you to be well prepared and comfortable as a leader, we recommend that you review all eight chapters before you begin teaching. As you read, you will find that we have worked hard to respect the role of parents as primary educators and the varied levels of maturity that exist among this age group. For certain topics we have equipped you, the leader, with text and video to use at your discretion. We have also made extensive notes to help you to navigate sensitive issues.

To effectively form young people in chastity, we follow the lead of John Paul II and begin with our first parents' original experience, humanity's dilemma after sin,

and the good news of our redemption in Christ. The *Theology of the Body for Teens: Middle School Edition* is much more than an abstinence education program; it also surpasses a traditional chastity program. It seeks to be an *identity* and *evangelization* program. The key to healthy sexuality is a relationship with Jesus Christ, because He is the key to knowing oneself. As the Second Vatican Council puts it, Christ came to reveal man to himself (see *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22). By inviting middle schoolers into a deeper relationship with Him, we invite them into a healthy sense of self—and thus to a truly integrated sexuality.

Educators and youth leaders should be encouraged by these words of John Paul II:

Sometimes when we look at the young, with the problems and weaknesses that characterize them in contemporary society, we tend to be pessimistic. The Jubilee of Young People, however, changed that, telling us that young people, whatever their possible ambiguities, have a profound longing for those genuine values which find their fullness in Christ. Is not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as He really is, they experience Him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept His message,

even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross. For this reason, in response to their enthusiasm, I did not hesitate to ask them to make a radical choice of faith and life and present them with a stupendous task: to become ‘morning watchmen’ (cf. Is 21:11-12) at the dawn of the new millennium. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 9)

We pray that this program will serve you in helping your middle schoolers to make the same radical choice of faith and life that will surely change their lives.

Due to the ever-shifting, peer-pressure packed social landscape in which middle schoolers live daily, there is a pressing need for stability in order to live out their true identity and strength to pursue authentic love at all costs. May John Paul II intercede for you, that you would receive the graces of courage and steadfastness to help provide that stability. May we all learn to imitate John Paul II in both prayer and evangelization, that we may become holy and convincingly bring the message of life and love to the young “morning watchmen” of the new millennium.

John Paul II, pray for us!

– Colin & Aimee MacIver, Jason Evert, and Brian Butler
Divine Mercy Sunday
May 1, 2011



PROGRAM FEATURES

Objectives: Lays out the learning goals to keep in mind as you proceed through each chapter.

Notes and Nuggets: These comments are designed to help leaders best implement the program content and activities. They include further reading for leaders, considerations for difficult or sensitive topics, suggestions for lesson presentation, and instructions for program activities.

Tune In: Each chapter comes with several relevant song suggestions. Some work well with the opening prayer service, while others might just be fun songs to have playing during gathering or break times. All are great suggestions for youth to download and enjoy on their own.

Opening Prayer: This “call and response” styled prayer is repeated at the start of each chapter. It calls middle schoolers to remember throughout the program the greatness of God and His love for us, specifically as expressed through creating us male and female in His image and likeness. It concludes with an Our Father.

Icebreakers: These are fun, attention-grabbing options to creatively lead your group, through visual aids and physical activities, into the topic of the chapter.

Video: The companion DVD contains four content-specific features tailored for each chapter: 1. a dynamic introduction to set up the session; 2. questions and answers with authors and other experts to get the students thinking about the objectives; 3. man-on-the-street style candid interviews for fun reinforcement and discussion; 4. trivia questions for lively, interactive group review. We recommend using the first two features together near the beginning of the chapter and the other two together near the conclusion. You may, however, use them whenever they work best for your group and can even split them up further by going to “Scene Selection” on the DVD menu. Consider reading out loud to the group all of the on-screen graphics as they appear, including: session titles, questions and trivia.

Story Starter: A dramatic story that helps capture the attention of middle schoolers to draw them into the topic of the chapter.

Bridging the Gap: These few paragraphs link the preceding story to the lesson and prepare middle schoolers for the material they are about to cover.

To the Core: The main body of the teaching of the chapter.

In Your Faith: Interspersed throughout the body of the text, these breakout boxes isolate short catechetical themes relevant to the program. These items range from simple Scripture quotations or Catechism excerpts to a more detailed exploration of a particular doctrine.

If You Ask Me: These workbook exercises are intended to help middle schoolers engage and reflect upon and/or share an opinion or personal experience related to the chapter.

Mind Glue: Introduces memory devices to help middle schoolers remember key principles presented in the chapter.

Application: Provides activities that apply the chapter lesson to individual experiences. Some application activities can serve as formative assessments to help leaders check for comprehension and personal integration of the chapter topic, while other activities instruct middle schoolers how to construct tangible products that help them internalize and recall the lesson.

Work It Out: These assignments assess each student’s learning. Assignments may be adapted to vary in difficulty and degree of involvement depending upon the needs of the group.

Closing Prayer with Scripture: Using a relevant Psalm as the connecting link, and concluding with a Glory Be, these simple prayers help close each chapter in a spirit of surrender to God.

Got It?: These workbook exercises are intended to be used as reviews and therefore are found near the end of each chapter. The purpose is to help the middle schoolers engage the text and improve reading comprehension.

Vocabulary: Each chapter concludes with a section of succinct definitions of the new terms introduced during the chapter. These words are bolded when they initially appear in a chapter, highlighting that this is a “key term” to understand.

Objectives:

At the end of this chapter, middle schoolers should be able to:

- Participate in an environment of trust and confidence in which they feel safe talking about important issues.
- Ask some basic, but critically important, questions about their own identities.
- Ask some basic, but critically important, questions about what it means to be a human person.
- Explore the basic nature of growing up, maturing, making decisions, and finding happiness.
- Learn what true freedom is and its purpose.
- Understand how Jesus' Incarnation reveals truth about their own lives.
- Discover the Theology of the Body as God's map given to help us find our way to true fulfillment as human persons.

Notes and Nuggets:

The “If You Ask Me” feature is a great way to help middle schoolers to begin to open up and discuss their personal experiences and opinions. The questions progress from simple and relational in the early chapters to more substantive and reflective in the later chapters. In the experience of the authors, middle schoolers are generally quick to share and engage with these types of questions. This is great because it helps the leader to build relationships with them in the early chapters before moving into more difficult matters later in the program. However, not bringing this discussion to a close quickly enough, or allowing it to dominate the time allotted for the chapter, is a critical mistake. To avoid this pitfall, be clear with your group (especially if it is large) that everyone will get a chance to offer their opinions, but not everyone will answer every question. This will enable you to choose just a few people to answer the number of questions you have time for, and then to move on. To be fair, it is a good principle to keep track of who is sharing each time, so that you ensure the equal participation of those who want to be part of the discussion throughout the program.



Tune In:

Just Like You
— Matt Maher,
Overflow

This Is Your Life — Switchfoot,
Beautiful Letdown

Here Am I? — Mercy Me,
Almost There

Everything Glorious — David
Crowder, *Everything Glorious*

Original — Kelly Pease, self-
titled

*Note: These songs are
available online. Consider
encouraging your students to
find and download them.*

Notes and Nuggets:

Effective conversations about deep issues require an environment in which your middle schoolers feel secure and affirmed. The program's personal nature calls for breaking the self-consciousness that keeps young people guarded and resistant. Chapter 1 focuses on creating an environment that supports effective teaching and discussion. Along with many reflective questions about middle schoolers' own experiences, this chapter provides several activities to establish a place where real connection can happen. At this point, you might want to space out icebreakers during the session. For a group that has already been together for a while, though, you might skip the name game and immediately go to one of the other activities. For a group that is just getting to know each other, the “Name Game” might be a good starter, while “Find Me Bingo” might serve as a better closing activity. Use your judgment to help your group bond from the very beginning.

Chapter One

Who Am I? Discovering My True Identity



Notes and Nuggets:

This prayer should begin each lesson. A recurring prayer is a great tool for memory and connecting with God, and it also establishes tradition and stability.

Icebreakers

Name Game 2.0

Students sit in a circle and go around three times saying their names. (Tell them to pay close attention because there will be a quiz!) Each middle schooler then writes his/her name on three scraps of paper. Those papers are mixed into a hat. Each student picks three sheets of paper at random from the hat. Without talking, students must match the correct names to the correct people.

Find Me Bingo

Use Appendix #1 at the end of this Leader's Guide. This is a list of several random and interesting personality traits, likes and dislikes, etc. After distributing copies of the list, have your middle schoolers gather as many signatures as they can from others who match the described traits. Tell them that after seven minutes you will give prizes to the top three with the most signatures. (Be sure to have some simple prizes ready, such as candy or something funny/interesting.) This game establishes connections and common interests within the group. In order to complete the activity, middle schoolers must mingle with others they might not know well. Discussing the traits list after the game is a great opportunity to engage students in discussion about relevant interests and can help the leader discern which issues most concern the group.

Name and Detail Ball

On a volleyball or beach ball, use a permanent marker to write the following statements in different spots on the ball (do this before the activity to allow the ink to dry):

My favorite show is _____.

My favorite sports team is _____.

I brush my teeth with _____ toothpaste.

My middle name is _____.

If I could eat anywhere, I would eat at _____.

There is no such thing as _____.

On my next vacation I want to _____.

I never want to go back to _____.

I'm hoping to attend high school at _____.

The best thing about my parents is _____.

The hardest thing about being my age is _____.

Have your middle schoolers toss the ball around the room while sitting in a circle. Whoever catches the ball must say his/her name and answer the statement on which his/her right index finger lands. Clarify that everyone should have a turn before there are any repeat throws to the same person.



VIDEO

Play "Introduction" and "Big Questions" before Story Starter. Refer to Program Features on page ix for additional information and suggestions.



Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (*all make the Sign of the Cross*).

All respond: *In the divine image, Lord, you created him; male and female you created them.*

Reader 1: God, you made us good, both body and soul.

Response: *In the divine image, Lord, you created him; male and female you created them.*

Reader 2: God, you saw that it was not good for us to be alone, so you gave us one another for loving relationships.

Response: *In the divine image, Lord, you created him; male and female you created them.*

Reader 3: God, you are love, and you made us for love.

Response: *In the divine image, Lord, you created him; male and female you created them.*

Reader 4: God, you made us without anything to hide from you.

Response: *In the divine image, Lord, you created him; male and female you created them.*

Reader 5: God, you made us to be happy with you forever.

Response: *In the divine image, Lord, you created him; male and female you created them.*

Leader: Jesus, you taught us to address your Father as you did, and so, in the Holy Spirit, we pray ...

All: *Our Father ...*

notes

STORY STARTER

You Can't Take It with You

At age eight, I decided to run away from home so I could drink orange juice whenever I wanted.

In my family, orange juice was a special treat reserved for birthdays and holidays. I had four younger siblings, and between us we could gulp down three gallons of juice a day, which got to be pretty expensive. So my mom had stopped buying orange juice as an everyday beverage. Our choices became limited to milk or water.

If I ran away, I would be able to buy my own juice and drink it all day long if that's what I felt like doing. And maybe I would buy some Cocoa Puffs and

Notes and Nuggets:

Leaders, you are just getting warmed up. How you use the text in your particular setting is up to you. We have designed this program to be flexible and adaptable. You might want to read the story starter and use the text as notes which you present according to your own method. Alternatively, you might have your students take turns reading. Leaders with more time may want to divide each chapter's powerful concepts into several "bite-sized" lessons. With any approach, it is essential to keep the experience as interactive as possible. The student workbook offers a variety of quick-check questions, discussion starters, and other interactive components to keep your middle schoolers engaged.

Fruit Loops to replace Mom's standard menu of Cheerios and bananas. I couldn't wait to be on my own!

My friend Paul agreed to join me. Neither of us had any serious problems at home; we just wanted to be free. So we met up one morning after my mom had left the house to run errands. With plastic grocery bags in hand, we went through the house to gather up what we thought we would need for our journey and new life. Clothes, of course, but no church clothes, that was for sure. And medicine, but just the yummy grape chewable pills, not that nasty red syrup.

As we got ready to leave, Paul suggested bringing a few "survival" books to help us figure out which plants we could eat. We settled on the set of encyclopedias my grandfather had recently given my siblings and me. There were almost thirty volumes, but Paul and I put about two-thirds of the set into plastic bags and headed out the door.

At first, we were too excited to notice how heavy our bags were. We talked about where we would set up camp and how to start a fire with two sticks like they did on TV. Soon, the summer sun reached its full intensity. We started sweating bullets as we dragged the bags along the road. Man, they were heavy! Had they been this heavy when we left the house?

Neither of us wanted to admit it, but we realized that we had made a mistake. Did we really need all these books? Maybe we should go put some of them back. In fact, maybe running away wasn't worth the trouble. Things were pretty good at home. Our great plot ended with Paul going back home and me climbing into my bunk bed that night.

We experienced the desire to be free and make our own choices, but we obviously had no idea what to do with our freedom. We knew we needed something to guide us, but we packed all the wrong things and didn't even make it out of the neighborhood. We thought we had it all figured out, but we were really clueless about how to take care of ourselves in the wild. An entire set of encyclopedias was what we needed? Encyclopedias! Every pioneer who ever lived would have laughed to the point of tears.

It would still be years before either of us could set out on our own. First, we needed to know what a human person actually needs to survive and thrive.

– Aimee MacIver

IF YOU ASK ME ...

1. If I had to leave home tonight and could take only one thing with me, I would take _____.
2. When I was eight years old, my idea of freedom was _____.



In Your Faith

"What are humans that you are mindful of them, mere mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them little less than a god, crowned them with glory and honor."

– Psalm 8:5-6

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that we as human persons are the only creatures that God made just to love and be loved. Everything else God made—animals, plants, and even angels—was made to do a job or accomplish some task for him or for humanity. This is why the Catechism reminds us that from our beginning, we are made for eternal happiness with God (see CCC 1703).

Notes and Nuggets:

At this point, present your students with a clear catechesis on the true nature of the human person. Remind them that we are the pinnacle of God's creation because we are made of the "stuff" of heaven (spirit) as well as the "stuff" of earth (body). This makes us earthly creatures with a heavenly homeland. God has given us, unlike the animals, free will to choose and guide us through life all the way back to be with Him in heaven. (For more on the uniqueness and greatness of the human person, see CCC 1730-1731 and 355-357.)

3. I think a human person needs _____ to survive.

4. I think a human person needs _____ to thrive.

BRIDGING THE GAP

You know those “Hello, my name is ...” nametags?

If you walked into a room full of strangers and had to identify yourself without writing your name, what would your nametag say?

Would you describe your relationships? “I am Henry’s granddaughter.” “I am Sarah’s brother.” Would you give some details of your personality? “I am shy.” “I am outgoing.” You could explain what you do: “I am a soccer player.” “I am a dancer.” You could share your likes: “I like pizza.” “I like riding horses.” Or maybe you would just state the obvious: “I am a boy.” “I am a girl.”

All of these things would certainly describe parts of your identity. Even if your likes or hobbies changed, you would still exist, so really, deep down, the question remains: Who are you as a human person?

You actually began trying to define your identity when you were a toddler. You learned how many years “old” you were and proudly counted out three fingers to anyone who would listen. You learned how to spell your name and then wrote it on everything. You and your friends spent hours pretending to be different characters: firefighters, ballerinas, football stars, chefs, veterinarians. Remember as a little kid playing house or “army” inside a homemade fort?



But why did you, like most kids, play games about being someone older? You don’t see first graders running around the playground at recess saying, “Let’s pretend to be first graders at recess.” Even at an early age, we are motivated to develop into more than what we are now.

IF YOU ASK ME ...

1. Three relationships that helped make me who I am today:

2. What I think makes humans different from animals is:



In Your Faith

When it comes to the big question of what it means to be human, our Catholic faith gives us some profound answers. The first section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that human beings are the only creatures that God made for their own sakes. This means that God made us just because he loves us. He wasn’t lonely or bored. He doesn’t need us. He just loves and wants to share his life with us. That’s really good news! (see CCC 1 and 355).

Notes and Nuggets:

The following paragraphs begin to examine some specific examples of the transition experienced by middle schoolers. Remind your group that it is normal to experience confusion at their age. For example, girls may find themselves crying “for no reason,” while boys may find themselves feeling angry without knowing why. Middle schoolers are experiencing major biological changes and may start to compare themselves to each other. They may also feel more tension in their relationships with their parents. During these changes, it is encouraging to remember that God created everyone good. As we grow each day, He wants us to accept ourselves as He does. We are unique, unrepeatable, irreplaceable gifts to the world—male and female created in His image and likeness. Nothing can change that truth.

The next three chapters will expand upon who we are as human persons, but now is also a good time to survey what preconceived ideas your students bring into the program, as well as to affirm what they already know.

You could pose the question “What makes us human?” or “What are some things that all human beings have in common?” If you have time for tangential discussion, you could conduct a thought experiment: “If you had to explain human beings to an alien who had never met one, how would you do it?” Let your middle schoolers brainstorm and have volunteers write their ideas on the board, or break them into small groups and have them make lists on poster-board. This is a good strategy to begin steering their personal experiences toward what John Paul II calls an “adequate anthropology.”

If the following points do not surface, you may want to make them as a sort of final word: Distinctly human capacities are intellect, free will, and the ability to love.

TO THE CORE

From the moment we are born, **human persons** have a deep desire to grow up, be independent, and find happiness. In many ways, this is a good thing, because otherwise we would never make any progress. Can you imagine what the world would be like if everyone refused to be potty trained?

At this point in your life, you are probably starting to feel the urge to have more freedom, to make more of your own choices, to experience life more like an adult. Sometimes you might feel restless or annoyed when parents or teachers tell you what to do, simply because you want to do your own thing, not theirs. This desire is natural and necessary to help you discover who you are and who you want to become.

Having independence and finding happiness become more complicated as we grow up. You want to make your own choices, but sometimes you don't know what to choose. You want to find happiness, but sometimes you are not sure where to look for it. As a kid, choices were pretty simple: Should you choose chocolate or vanilla ice cream? Now your decisions matter more: If you speak up in class, will you look stupid? Should you hang out with your friends and risk failing tomorrow's test, or should you study diligently but miss the fun?

Happiness was also easier to pinpoint in childhood. Some candy and new toys pretty much did it. You spent all day playing, and your biggest responsibility was washing your hands before dinner. Now you spend all day at school, and you are expected to make good grades, practice hard, complete your chores, and maybe even watch your younger siblings.

So it's a sort of trade-off. The more freedom you have, the more your happiness depends on your own choices.

Even your friendships change as you grow up. In kindergarten, your friends didn't care about your clothes or if you had a boyfriend or girlfriend. If you wanted to impress them, you jumped on your bed or blew bubbles in your milk. Boys hung out with other boys and thought girls were good for nothing but chasing around the playground. Girls cared for their dolls and played dress-up. The two groups were more often separated than together.

Now, it's different. Your group of friends is changing. You may find out you don't share much in common anymore with old friends from elementary school. You may want to spend more time with the opposite gender. You may feel more concerned with your looks and more confused about how to be accepted. The changes can be pretty overwhelming. What should you wear? What should you say? Will people like you?

This is exactly when knowing who you really are as a human person matters most.

notes



Notes and Nuggets:

This chapter's application is in an expanded "If You Ask Me..." in the student workbook. Students should silently fill in the "If You Ask Me..." and then discuss how their desires changed as they got older. Be sure to tell them that God wants to fulfill their truest desires and that their purest longings were actually placed in their hearts by God Himself. Ultimately, we all seek love. If this reality does not naturally surface in their answers, you can pose the following question to start a group discussion: "Do you think it is fair to say that what we are all really after is love?"

IF YOU ASK ME ...

1. When I was five, all I wanted was _____.
2. When I was six, I wanted to be a _____ when I grew up.
3. When I was seven, I would have watched _____ all day if my mom let me.
4. When I was eight, my favorite subject in school was _____.
5. When I was nine, I was afraid of _____, but not now.
6. Right now, I want _____ more than anything.
7. When I'm sixteen, I hope I can _____.
8. When I get to college, I'm going to _____.
9. When I'm old, I hope I'll be able to say that I _____.
10. My biggest goal is to be a _____ person.
11. In the end, I think all anyone really wants is _____.

You can't make such decisions until you know who you are. It is like trying to find a place you have never been to before without having a map or a GPS. Imagine you want to visit the beach. To get there, you hop in the car, back out of your driveway, and start turning down random roads, hoping one will take you to the ocean. If you tried to travel this way, most of your turns would be dead ends; they would lead you anywhere but where you wanted to go. You would be no closer to your goal, and maybe even farther away than when you started. And you would have lost precious time that you could have been spending in the sand.

IF YOU ASK ME ...

Even though _____ is invisible, I know it is real because _____. (Give an example of something that you are sure is real even though it is invisible. Then explain how you can be sure of this.) _____

Looking for the Beach

Unfortunately, just when you really need examples of what it means to be a free, happy person, it is harder than ever to find them. What do you see teenagers doing on TV and in movies? They are drinking alcohol at parties. They are getting into really intense dating relationships. They are often doing pretty much what they want without rules. And they usually seem cool and



Notes and Nuggets:

“Cookie Quest”

The following activity is an optional closing to the chapter. It may not be appropriate for every setting, but it can help drive home the image of a map and also provide another bonding opportunity. Bonding, fun, trust, and an overall positive rapport are important for laying the groundwork of this program.

Before your group meets, hide cookies throughout the room and/or building. There should be at least one cookie for each student. Cookies should be grouped and labeled according to groups of three. Organize your middle schoolers into groups of three and give each group a map to their cookies. The map should require some decoding. See the example directions below. You, of course, will make directions that correspond to your particular situation. If possible, it might be more fun to hide cookies outside of your room. Instruct each group to find the cookies and then return. You will need adult chaperones to monitor the groups.

This activity is meant to be lighthearted. Once your middle schoolers have returned and are eating their cookies, you can explain that the Theology of the Body is like the map to the cookies. We need to follow God’s map in order to get to the “really good stuff” that He has prepared for us.

Group 1:

Start on the X.

Go over to the blue chair in the back of the classroom and take four steps to the right.

Back up two steps.

Look down.

Enjoy!

Group 2:

Start on the X.

Go out the front door into the hallway and take a right.

Walk exactly halfway down the hallway and take a right.

Look down.

Enjoy!

sophisticated. According to these images, freedom means doing whatever you want; happiness is having fun and avoiding complications.

In real life, some adults may not give very good examples either. Many adults seem to live by the idea that one's identity comes from one's career. Happiness means you have a nice house and a new car every three years. Yet you may have noticed that this way of life doesn't really guarantee anything at all. How many adults have you seen who do nothing but work, complain, and remain frustrated? You may even have seen supposedly "successful" adults who treat each other unkindly, or who seem incapable of good relationships.

No wonder young people today seem so confused about who they are, what will give them true happiness, and what maturity means. Some guys might think they are supposed to go out with as many girls as they can to prove they are men. Some girls might think they have to show off their bodies or flirt all the time to attract a boyfriend.

The world is not all bad, but it certainly is confused about what makes a person matter—and it is even more confused about what makes a person happy. It is sometimes easy to get the idea that you are worth nothing more than how good you look, how well you perform, and how much you own.

But God loved us too much to leave us confused! At the **Incarnation**, God the Son actually became one of us and opened a way for us to end up even better off than Adam and Eve started. And God did not stop helping humanity after the time of Jesus. He gives us exactly what we need for the time we live in.

One of God's main ways of helping humanity is to inspire holy men and women with wisdom that they can share with others. We know these people as the saints. God inspired St. John Paul II with answers to those questions you have about identity and happiness. John Paul II was a man who truly loved youth. He understood how difficult it can be to find the truth when TV, movies, music, magazines, and society surround you with mistaken ideas. So John Paul II spoke about the true meaning of who you are in a collection of talks called the **Theology of the Body**. The Theology of the Body asks and answers two big questions: *Who am I? How should I live?* This teaching is like a map that reveals how our visible bodies can express the truth about our invisible souls. It reveals many things about our relationships with God and others, such as:

- You have the freedom to choose how you will live your life.
- You have been created for loving relationships with God and others.
- These truths about our own relationships help us understand the relationship of the Holy Trinity: the One God is three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—who love each other eternally.



In Your Faith

Jesus not only gave us a map; he is also the guide! Check out what he says in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." – John 1:14

"The Word became flesh" refers to the Incarnation, when God the Son assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it (see CCC 461). God became one of us to save us!

**VIDEO**

Play “Man on the Street” and “Trivia” before Work it Out.

Notes and Nuggets:

The “Work It Out” section provides options for processing and assessment. In this first chapter the activities are geared toward helping students share their thoughts and interests. One suggestion is to allow time during the next several sessions for one or two young people to share their self-portrait.

Notes and Nuggets:

If you assign “Work It Out – Getting to Know Me” and decide to have your middle schoolers present their projects, explain that the projects will not be presented without you previewing them first. This will prevent potential awkwardness during sharing, and it will ensure that the experience uplifts the whole group’s dynamic.

If you assign “Media Mash Up,” be prepared to play the CDs or DVDs to the class or individual group.

This workbook will help you to learn more about what God inspired this great pope to share with us.

So there is hope—a lot of hope! You can start high school confident and happy about who you are and what kind of person you will become. You can have good relationships with your friends and with those of the opposite gender. God offers you a destination better than anything like popularity, money, or power could offer. And, more importantly, God offers you a map; even more importantly than that, he gave us Jesus to be our guide along the way.

Are you ready to go?

IF YOU ASK ME ...

I think _____ is a good role model.



A. Getting to Know Me

Create a symbolic collage or self-portrait (drawn by you or from an image search) to represent your uniqueness. Put the images together in a Power Point presentation, a collage, or some other artistic piece. Include some of the following elements:

- a personality trait that makes people laugh
- a personality trait your friends value most about you
- a secret talent or weird ability
- something good you have done for someone else
- a favorite “something” (but be original—no people, songs, movies, foods, animals, or colors!)
- three blessings God has given you
- quotations from three different family members, friends, and teachers describing something they love, appreciate, or admire about you (don’t quote the same person twice!).

B. Media Mash Up

Create a collection of songs or video clips that you believe show the challenging process of growing up. Explain your choices in a brief written paragraph or present your collection to the group or class.



Closing Prayer

***Let us thank God for the
Good News we have heard in
this chapter as we pray:***

The LORD is my shepherd; I
shall not want.

He guides me in right paths
for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk in the
dark valley I fear no evil.

You are at my side with your
rod and your staff that give
me courage.

Glory be to the Father, and
to the Son, and to the Holy
Spirit. As it was in the begin-
ning, is now, and ever shall
be, world without end. Amen.

– from Psalm 23

Got It?

1. saints
2. Theology of the Body
3. happiness

Notes and Nuggets:

Each chapter concludes with a vocabulary section which contains definitions to key terms set off in bold text throughout each chapter. In a school setting, a leader might encourage students to make flashcards and/or conduct a quiz or vocabulary quiz game. This sort of check up, whether formal or informal, can help to ensure comprehension and retention of the new words used in each chapter.

GOT IT?

1. Holy men and women inspired by God to share their wisdom with others are called _____.
2. St. John Paul II spoke about the true meaning of who you are in a collection of talks called the _____.
3. The more freedom you have, the more your _____ depends on your own choices.

VŌ·CAB'·U·LAR'·Ȳ

HUMAN PERSON:

God created us with both a body and a soul. We are the only creatures God made in his image and likeness, made to love and be loved. All other earthly creatures were made for our benefit. Every human person is unique and unrepeatable. This fact flows from being created in God's image and likeness, which is uniquely true about humans.

INCARNATION:

The Incarnation refers to the reality that Jesus, who is fully God, became man. God the Son became man so he could die and rise, saving humanity from the destruction caused by sin so that we can really become sons and daughters of God, possessing divine life.

SAINT:

A saint is someone who has lived a holy life, practiced virtue to a heroic degree, and chosen to love God above all things. Saints come from around the world and from different backgrounds. Some are priests and nuns, others are married, and some are even children. The Catholic Church canonizes, or gives the title of saint, to those holy men and women to give us examples of how we should live, too. We are all called to become saints.

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY:

On Wednesdays from 1979 to 1984, St. John Paul II gave talks about how the body reveals that human persons are created in the image of God, as male and female, with freedom for loving relationships. The Theology of the Body asks and answers two big questions: *Who am I? How should I live?*