

## CHAPTER ONE

### Who Am I?: Discovering My True Identity

#### Objectives

- Establish an environment of trust and confidence where your middle schoolers 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 nature of growing up, maturing, making decisions, and finding happiness
- Explain what true freedom is and its purpose
- Discuss how the Incarnation of Jesus reveals truth about their own bodies
- Show how the Theology of the Body is God's map given to help us find our way to true fulfillment as human persons

#### Key Concept

This chapter focuses on creating an environment that supports effective teaching and discussion. Along with many reflective questions about the students' own experiences, this chapter provides several activities to establish a place where real connection can happen.

#### In Your Faith

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells 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 just loves and wants to share His life with us. That's really good news!

#### Definitions

**Theology Of The Body:** A study of God and the purpose of our existence, as discovered and revealed through our bodies. The body reveals that human persons are created in the image of God, as male and female, with freedom for loving relationships. The TOB asks and answers two really big questions: *Who am I? How should I live?*

## CHAPTER TWO

### Our Story: God's Plan, Human Sin, Jesus' Love

#### Objectives

- Reflect on the experience of sin
- Reflect on sin as a cheap substitute for authentic good
- Explore how God's original plan for us was a pure and perfect relationship
- Understand original sin as a lost inheritance
- Anticipate the hope that Jesus brings to heal the brokenness and divisions middle schoolers experience

#### Key Concept

This chapter challenges middle schoolers to consider how their experiences of brokenness and sin contrast with humanity's origins when, as Jesus says, "It was not so." Connecting your students with their personal experiences of desire, sin, hope, and even confusion shows how these experiences echo our first parents' original state as well as their sin.

#### In Your Faith

"God created man in His image; in the divine image He created him; male and female He created them."  
~ Genesis 1:27

#### Definitions

**In His Image And Likeness:** Human persons are made to be a model of the Holy Trinity. The Trinity is three Persons united in one God who give themselves to each other in perfect love. We are meant to do the same, so when we are in loving relationships, we understand more about God.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Me, Myself, and I: Body And Soul

#### Objectives

- Explain the meaning of the language of the body—to make invisible things visible
- Discuss and reflect on the human person as a body-soul composite
- Confront and discuss spiritual and emotional issues related to the body
- Reflect upon the meaning of Jesus being fully God and fully human
- Interpret the powerful message “spoken” by the language of Christ’s own body
- Recognize Christ as the key to understanding our humanity (*Gaudium et Spes*, 24)

#### Key Concept

Here, the groundwork for understanding the Theology of the Body will really be laid. In understanding the importance of the embodied person and the importance of God coming to us in a fully human embodied way, middle schoolers will be able to really discover the truth about their call to chastity and healthy integrated development.

#### In Your Faith

Since we are body-souls and because the language of the body is so important, Jesus left us many visible signs to bring His love and grace into our lives. We call these sacraments. Sacraments are sensory, meaning that we can see, touch, smell, hear, and even taste God’s goodness through our bodies.

#### Definitions

**The Language Of The Body:** The major teaching that the visible human body can reveal truths about the invisible human soul, God, our relationships, and how we should act.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### How Should I Act?

#### Objectives

- Understand the relationship between actions and the formation of character
- Understand virtuous behavior is synonymous with truly human behavior
- Discuss the necessity of habit-forming practice for true personal growth
- Differentiate between the nature of virtue and of vice and their respective effects
- Appreciate the necessity of grace in the practice of virtue
- Teach the middle schoolers to examine their own good and bad habits (particularly in regard to their use of major cultural forces like computers, texting, video games, etc.)
- Understand the need for consistency in the practice of virtue, as opposed to having multiple “selves” for different groups and situations
- Explore the importance of participating in the sacraments as sources of grace
- Grow in active participation as members of the Church

#### Key Concept

This chapter is designed to help middle schoolers see that practicing moral virtue is the means to fulfilling their human identity, and as such, is also the means to real freedom and happiness. So often morality is presented as a set of rules and mandates, but nobody really likes to be told what to do—certainly not teens and pre-teens! God has given us rules and laws, but He has done so for a reason: so that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). A virtuous life is an abundant life; growing in virtue begets happiness.

#### In Your Faith

There are two kinds of virtue we recognize in our faith: *cardinal virtues* and *theological virtues*. The cardinal (the word literally meaning “hinge”) virtues—temperance, wisdom, justice, and fortitude—are like hinges that open a door. When we work to practice the cardinal virtues, we open the door to other natural virtues as well.

The theological virtues are faith, hope, and love. They are called theological because they direct us toward God.

#### Definitions

**Grace:** God’s free gift of divine life given to us through Jesus Christ, especially through the sacraments. Grace both inspires us and gives a powerful spiritual impact to our good efforts toward virtuous living.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Sex, Love, and Chastity

### Objectives

- Consider why God created different genders
- Understand the equality and complementarity of men and women
- Consider how gender identity as a man or woman affects the comprehensive question “Who am I?” (Chapter 1)
- Consider the meaning of sexual identity in light of Adam and Eve’s original experience (Chapter 2)
- Consider how the principle of selfishness versus self-gift applies to sexuality (Chapter 2)
- Apply the truths about the language of the body and Jesus’ standard for truly human behavior to sexuality (Chapter 3)
- Distinguish that chastity is a positive virtue of sexual purity, not merely the practice of abstinence, and that lust is a vice (Chapter 4)
- Understand how chastity gives us freedom in our relationships truly to love and to fulfill our intended purpose
- Determine how practicing chastity affects daily choices (pornography, “sexting,” Internet posting, modesty, etc.)

### Key Concept

The past four chapters of the program have laid a necessary foundation for understanding God’s plan for sexuality in a counter cultural way. By examining personal identity and the overall human condition; by exploring the significance of Jesus’ bodily Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection; and by thoughtfully studying virtue, your students can now approach the topic of sexuality in a healthy way. This chapter begins answering their ideas, misconceptions, questions, and experiences about mature topics.

### In Your Faith

In Mark 10:6, Jesus says, “But from the beginning, God made them male and female.” It’s a simple statement, but profound to think about. From the very beginning, God’s plan included men and women together. In fact, the very first time God says something in His creation isn’t good is when He sees Adam alone and without Eve (see Genesis 2:18). What would the world be like if there were only men or only women? Scary thought!

### Definitions

**Chastity:** The virtue that helps us use our bodies to express love in purity and truthfulness. Chastity requires learning to love as God loves us. Chastity also makes our actions express the true reality of our relationships. Chastity means telling the truth of love with the language of the body. Chastity helps us remember who we are.

## CHAPTER SIX

# To Use Or Not To Use?: That Is The Question: The Opposite of Love

### Objectives

- To be able to differentiate between love and lust
- Recognize that use is the opposite of love, and thus never an acceptable response to a human person
- Evaluate contemporary culture and specific behaviors with the standards of chastity (e.g. music, TV, Internet use, pornography, “sexting”, premarital sex, etc.)
- Apply the mandate of never using another person to dating behavior
- Apply the mandate of never using another person to sexual relationships
- Determine how other immoral behaviors constitute use of another person
- Develop concrete actions to love people and only use things

### Key Concept

Chapter 5 helped your middle schoolers understand the foundational principles of sexual identity, physical intimacy, and the virtues necessary for healthy sexual identity and relationships. Chapter 6 explores how these principles apply to concrete circumstances, especially the critical standard of loving, not using, others.

### In Your Faith

In this famous definition of love, God gives us a sort of checklist to compare how real love behaves with how we actually act. As you read it, ask yourself if you have room to grow in some of these actions of real love. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-6).

### Vocabulary

**Agape:** The totally selfless part of love that wants what is truly best for your loved one and works to achieve it. Agape seeks nothing in return; it is pure charity and selflessness.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# VOCATION: God's Call, My Response

### Objectives

- Explain the universal vocation to holiness and the particular vocations to marriage, consecrated life, and ordained life
- Identify flaws in the secular understanding of dating
- Understand the universal call to holiness
- Consider how to live the universal vocation to holiness in their own daily lives
- Prepare for their future vocations by learning the significance of discernment

### Key Concept

The early stages of adolescence are critical in vocational discernment. Although few middle schoolers know their specific, lifelong calling, the impressions they form now remain deeply rooted. Therefore, the present moment is pivotal for encouraging openness to God's plan, which will be marriage for most, but includes the possibility of priesthood or consecrated life.

### In Your Faith

"Every vocation, every path to which Christ calls us, ultimately leads to fulfillment and happiness, because it leads to God, to sharing in God's own life." ~Blessed Pope John Paul II

### Definitions

**Vocation:** First, the universal call to holiness that each of us received at our baptism. Next, this is the particular, specific way that God calls a person to live out their call to holiness in marriage, consecrated life, or ordained life.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# HOPE AND FUTURE: Daily Living Out the Language of the Body

### Objectives

- To trust in God’s plan for their futures
- Embrace their baptismal promises in a living relationship with Jesus Christ
- Use their bodies to “speak” the truth
- Apply core concepts of Theology of the Body to the following:
  - Friends: bullying, gossip, peer pressure, social justice
  - Family: broken or dysfunctional, lack of intimacy with parents, siblings
  - World: works of mercy, social justice
  - To overcome fear and make a deeper commitment to embrace and live their Catholic faith

### Key Concept

In this final chapter, we will explore applications of the Theology of the Body in everyday living and encourage the students to make a deep commitment to using the language of their bodies to “speak” only the truth of God’s love.

### In Your Faith

Sometimes you may wonder if you really have what it takes to figure out your future on your own. But as you begin training for your specific vocation, remember your life is an adventure you share with your friends and family. As Blessed Pope John Paul II reminds us, “You must never think that you are alone in deciding your future! And second: when deciding your future, you must not decide for yourself alone!” In other words, our vocational decision affects the Body of Christ; it is not only for my happiness but the happiness of many.

### Definitions

**Discernment:** The process of listening to God in order to understand gradually His particular calling for you, then choosing to respond, “Yes.”