

Respect Life Week: Resources for Youth Nights

Topic: Marriage

Opening Prayer: Adapted from the blog [Unveiled Wife](#).

Dear Lord, Thank You for the gift of marriage. We pray a blessing over husbands and wives today. May Your Holy Spirit anoint marriages and help couples to grow in love and understanding. We pray husbands and wives can serve each other, comfort each other and experience deep intimacy in their marriages. We pray for protection of marriages from the enemy and from temptation to sin. We ask for freedom, healing, reconciliation, and joy to overflow in these relationships in Jesus' name. Please guide people towards holy and loving marriages and bring Your hope and healing to all those who are struggling in marriage. Amen.

Introduction: The leader introduces the topic of marriage. This note from the Respect Life Week curriculum may be helpful for leaders to keep in mind:

- “Marriage numbers are decreasing around the world. And, there is much confusion about the nature of marriage and why people even ought to get married. Students will explore the benefits of marriage for individuals and society and learn how to have a successful marriage.

The topic of marriage has been highly politicized in our culture in recent years, resulting in a great deal of confusion. Add to that the reality that so many children live in homes with unmarried parents or divorce parents or only one parent, and we are often left believing that it is better to not teach about the reality of marriage rather than offend any student.

Actually, the opposite is true. By teaching the truth of marriage—a loving, permanent commitment between a man and a woman to each other and any children they may have—we allow students to realize that God did intend something special for us; that we are made for and capable of lasting, authentic love; and that even if they do not have this example at home, they can still aspire to it as adults. Rather than offending, this teaching is liberating.”

Opening Discussion Questions:

- Marriage is a sacrament in the Catholic Church - what does that mean to you? Do you think that we uphold the sacredness of marriage as individuals and as a society? If so, how? If not, how could we? What is the difference between seeing marriage a purely legal institution and as a sacrament?

Suggested Videos: There are a wide variety of excellent videos on this topic. Leaders should tailor their meeting to the needs of their youth.

- [Sophia Sketchpad: Marriage](#) for an introduction on the Catholic teaching on the sacrament of Marriage.
 - Discussion Questions: What did you think of the idea that marriage is a reflection of the Trinity? What does the statement “love is an act of free will” mean to you and what does it look like in real life? How can married couples help get each

other to Heaven? How can we set the tone for the marriage that we want when we are dating?

- For videos on the purpose, meaning, and rightful place of sex in our lives watch this [5-part series](#) from LifeTeen.
 - Discussion: After each video, ask youth to reflect on what stuck out to them the most and address any questions that may arise.

Activity: Pray for marriages in your own life.

- Write to religious community asking for prayers for the marriages of your family members and friends. There are so many religious communities that would love to receive your prayer requests; below are just a few.
- The Dominican Nuns of Summit, NJ
 - <https://www.summitdominicans.org/prayer-requests/>
- The Dominican Nuns of Bronx, NY
 - Corpus Christi Monastery 1230 Lafayette Avenue Bronx, NY 10474
- The Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration
 - <http://ssfpa.org/prayer/>

Closing Prayer: You may want to end with a song such as “[One Wild Life](#)” by Gungor or “[I Need You, I Love You, I Want You](#)” by Tenth Avenue North. Lead the group in a prayer that reflects the themes that you have explored in this session and asks for God’s guidance and grace as these students continue on their life journeys.