

Session Theme: Sexting Safe Environment Lesson

Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- Appreciate being created in God's image and likeness.
- Understand the Trinity as the perfect example of a love relationship.
- Understand what sexting is and the consequences of sexting.

Opening Activity/Icebreaker

Begin with an icebreaker from the Circles of Care suggested opening activities, if desired.

Opening Prayer

(10 - 15 minutes)

Gather in the sacred space of the church, chapel or prepared prayer environment. Lead the group into silence and allow the silence to deepen – at least two full minutes of quiet.

Prayer:

Leader: Let us begin our prayer together
In the Name of the Father...

Leader: God of all Life and Love, you
created us in your image and likeness.

All: We praise you!

Leader: You fill us with your love and life and choose to dwell within us.

All: We thank you!

Leader: Gifted with your Holy Spirit, deepen your image, your love and your life in us.

All: We ask you.

Leader: Bless us with your mercy as we strive to learn and express what true love is.

All: For we are your daughters and sons.

Scripture Reading:

1 Corinthians 6: 17-20

What You Will Need for this Session

Copies of Opening Prayer

Area of the church or other prayer space
prepared with:

- Table covered with cloth of liturgical color of the season
- Candle - battery powered
- Bible

Leader of Prayer

Reader

Copies of Closing Prayer, either "The Prayer of Thomas Merton," or other appropriate prayer, for each participant.



Brief Pause for silent reflection (at least 3 full minutes)

Intentions

*Prepare intentions about events in the Church and the world, for the sick and those who have died.
Invite the teens to offer intentions for people and needs in their lives.*

Response: *God of Love and Life, hear our prayer. OR Lord, hear our prayer.*

Close the intentions by praying together the *Our Father*.

Exchange a Sign of Peace and/or pray together the following:

The Prayer of Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you and I hope that

I have that desire in all that I am doing.

And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road although

I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death, I will not fear, for you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Catechetical Session

(40 – 50 minutes)

Re-gather the group in the space for the session; e.g., parish hall, meeting room, etc.

Introduction

(5 – 10 minutes)

Set the framework for a presentation and discussion on the dignity of the human person by drawing on the experience of the Opening Activity/Icebreaker or choose one of the options listed below:

1. Using one of the following Scripture Passages (dignity of the human person; God's love for each/every person) ask the teens to share what the passage means to them.
 - Genesis 1: 26-27
 - John 15: 12
 - 1 Corinthians 6: 17 – 20 (from the Opening Prayer)

2. Relate the Opening Activity/Icebreaker experience to one of the following sayings to emphasize that we are whole persons and not just what others see on the outside:

- “A picture is worth a thousand words.”
- “The clothes make the man (person).”
- Another current saying the adolescents would know, be familiar with and/or use that conveys how bodies “speak.”

Presentation

(20 – 30 minutes)

Please refer to the Catechist Guide for details about the purpose and content of this session.

PART I: God’s love; the Trinity; relationships

At the heart of our Catholic Faith is God’s love for each of us. This love is rooted in and overflows from God’s very self, the Trinity. The loving relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are extended and embrace each person, drawing us into their Life and Love. The loving relationship of the Trinity is the model for all relationships.

Invite the teens to think of the relationships in their life. Invite them to think about and select a friend or family member with whom they have a special relationship. Ask them to share what is special about the relationship and why/how they have become important to one another over time. After a few minutes of sharing, ask the group if there are any unspoken rules or expectations involved in their special relationships.

Try to illicit from teens these characteristics and others they may suggest. Special relationships are characterized by mutual trust, communication (talking and listening), acceptance, respecting boundaries of time and personal space, confidentiality (not including secrets that put someone at risk), concern for health and safety.

PART II: Moral character; sexting

Scripture and Catholic Tradition see the heart as the seat of morality. The sixth Beatitude speaks of the “pure of heart” and St. Paul reminds us that our body is a “temple of the Holy Spirit.” (Opening Prayer for this session) Honoring our bodies and our relationship with God and each other is very challenging. It is even more challenging with all of the pressure that our culture puts on us to be, look and act in certain ways and, in some cases, at all costs.

Ask the teens what types of technology and social media they frequently utilize (Skype, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook) and what types of photos they post (i.e., events, activities, friends, selfies, etc.), particularly if sexting has not come up yet.

Consider introducing an opportunity for the group to share experiences of sexting they have read or know about. Elicit from them some of the possible reasons for sexting and why people do it.

Use the information on the NetSmartz handout, Child Lures poster, catechist guide, and *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, p. 270 (Appendix B) as a basis for a discussion about:

- Sexting statistics and definition
- Possible consequences of sexting
- Practical and faith-based ways to resist sexting and for training moral character

Pose the following question to the teens:

Why live a moral life if you can sin now and ask for forgiveness later?

Ask the teens to...

Consider this analogy: Think of judgment akin to running a marathon. A marathon is 26.2 miles. If a person doesn't regularly train for a marathon, what are the chances he or she will actually finish? Further, what if they spent their whole “training” time sitting on the couch, watching TV and eating nothing but lots of junk food? While we must allow for the technicality, if a person doesn't train their moral character the logical conclusion is that they won't be capable of taking responsibility for their sins and seeking forgiveness.

(*The Way*, Teacher Guide, Our Sunday Visitor, 2014, Chapter 1, p. 9)

Closing Prayer

(5 – 10 Minutes)

Call to Prayer

As we close our time together, let us recall that Christ is always in our midst as Light and that in baptism we have been given a share in that Light and are called to share it with each other and our world.

(Allow a brief period of silence to help the group become more aware of God's presence.)

Pray the following or similar prayer with the teens:

Dear Jesus, help me to live a life pleasing to you.

Help me to do what is right and to be strong enough
to say "No" to those things that are against your will.

Let me be an example of your love and kindness
to my family, friends, and all I meet.

Help me to respect myself
by avoiding places and people that would do injury to me.

Help me to respect others
by not pressuring them to deny their God-given dignity.

Especially give me the courage and strength
to live chastely, honoring the gift of my sexuality and that of others.

Strengthen me, too, so that I may avoid and encourage others to avoid
sexual intercourse and other intimate sexual activity outside of marriage.

Jesus, you were always a friend to those in pain or trouble.

If I should make a mistake and fail in these efforts,
please forgive and help me.

I know that you will always be with me
to lift me up and show me the right way to go.
Amen.

(Based on the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry *True Love Waits* program)



Session Theme: Sexting Catechist Guide

Overview

There are two parts to this session on sexting:

PART I: God's love; the Trinity; relationships

PART II: Moral character; sexting

Plan and set aside sufficient time to read and reflect on the resources related to the lesson, particularly those topics you may be less familiar with or uncomfortable talking about with a group of teens. It is essential that you be prepared to present and discuss the topics related to relationships, sexuality, and sexting with a solid understanding of and appreciation for the dimensions of our Catholic faith that inform our approach to these topics.

The session is not intended to be an in-depth presentation on morality. Rather, it is a supplemental lesson implementing the U.S. Bishops' *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*.

The session is intended to be an interactive presentation of key points found in §2331 – 2350 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (see Catechist Resources) and includes some very basic principles of morality, particularly “relationship.” Keep in mind throughout the entire session that the starting point of Christian morality is who we are, sons and daughters of God.

Be sure to include in the session as many ways as possible that help you, the catechist, know the adolescents are coming to a fundamental understanding of and a maturing level of clarity about “Love,” “Made in God's image and likeness,” “Sexual Identity,” and “Vocation to Chastity.”

Catechetical Session

Vocabulary

Chastity: Connected to purity of heart, this is a virtue that moves us to love others with generous regards for them. It excludes lust and any wish to exploit them sexually. It helps us see and put into practice God's plan for the body, person, and sexuality. All people are called to pursue and live the virtue of chastity according to one's state in life. (United States Catechism for Adults, p. 506)

Cyberbullying: Using technology to bully others.

Vocabulary terms are provided to assist the catechist in preparing for this lesson. There is no need to read these aloud to the teens unless they request clarification.

Instagram: An online, mobile social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos to send to friends or share them on a social networking site, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.

Modesty: A modest person dresses, speaks, and acts in a manner that supports and encourages purity and chastity and not in a manner that would tempt or encourage sinful sexual behavior. (USCCA, p. 520)

Morality: In one sense, this is the goodness or evil of particular actions. For a Catholic, it also refers to the manner of life and action formed according to the teaching laid down by Christ Jesus and authoritatively interpreted by the Church. (USCCA, p. 520)

Selfie: A photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website

Sexting: Sending nude or semi-nude pictures or videos of oneself via cell phone text messaging or forwarding this type of message to others.

Sexual identity: The physical, moral and spiritual differences of being male and female. (CCC, §2333)

Sexual Integrity: Being honest with yourself and others about how committed you are to a relationship. Rationalizing or leading people on for the purpose of sexual pleasure is deceptive. The Church's term for sexual integrity is chastity. (Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, pp 265 – 275)

Sexuality: Affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. (CCC §2332)

Skype: Having a conversation over the internet using an application (“app”) or webcam that allows users to see each other.

Snapchat: A photo messaging app that allows users to take photos, record videos, add text and drawings, and send them to a controlled list of recipients (“friends”). The sent messages ‘self-destruct’ in a set amount of time (1-10 seconds) after the recipient views them. Because of this, some Snapchat users may believe that it is safe to send risqué or inappropriate photos. However, the photos can be saved if the recipient takes a screen shot of them.

Social Networking Site: An online community that brings people together to blog, share photos and videos, and make new friends. The sites usually require members to set up a profile, which may include information such as name, location, email address, phone number, age, and gender. Some popular social networking sites are Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter.

Virtue: A habitual and firm disposition to do good. (USCCA, p. 531)



Introduction

Choose what you will use and how you will segway into the presentation.

Presentation

Read and reflect on paragraphs § 2331 – 2350 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

(*Appendix A*)

Read through the whole session (Parts I, II) to become comfortable with the content. Be alert to news and stories related to sexting in the media and on social networks.

Be familiar with statistics and consequences of sexting (*see Resources*).

Closing Prayer

Prepare copies of the suggested Closing Prayer, or other appropriate prayer, for each participant.

Catechist Resources

Books

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, particularly § 2331 – 2350

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, St. Mary's Press,

Chapter 27, "Respecting Sexuality," pp. 265 – 275.

The Catholic Youth Bible, Revised, St. Mary Press

Theology of the Body for Teens, Discovering God's Plan for Live and Life, Leaders Guide, Ascension Press, Chapter 6, "Language of the Body," pp. 81 – 96.

The Way, Living out God's Plan for Your Life as a Disciple of Jesus Christ, Teacher Edition, Our Sunday Visitor, Chapter 1, "A Life in Christ," pp. 2 – 11.

Total Catechesis: Catechetical Sessions on Christian Morality, St. Mary's Press, Chapters 7, "Respecting Sexuality: The Gift of Sexuality," pp. 104 – 116.

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., 2005.

Handout

Tips to Prevent Sexting For Teens (from NetSmartz Workshop)

Poster

Pics Don't Stay Private (from Child Lures)

Web Resources

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

"Life and Dignity of the Human Person"

www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person.cfm

"Morality"

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/morality>

Faith Formation Learning Exchange

"Talking about Sex with Teens and Parents" by Jolene Roehlkepartain

<http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/blog/talking-about-sex-with-teens-and-parents-jolene-roehlkepartain>

Great Schools

Sexting Statistics

www.greatschools.org/parenting/behavior-discipline/2079-sexting.gs

Netsmartz

Sexting Information

www.netsmartz.org/Sexting

Some Facts and Statistics about Sexting

Studies from the 2000's report that between 4% and 25% of teens admit that they have electronically sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos of themselves. Younger teens were in the 4% range whereas older teens were in the 25% range.

28% of teens say that they have received this type of message on their cell phone.

61% of all sexters who have sent nude images admit that they were pressured to do it.

Sexting can become a form of bullying (cyberbullying) when people forward the images to others. Students have been embarrassed, harassed, humiliated, and have become depressed and even suicidal after sending pictures to someone they thought would keep them private, but didn't.

Sending these types of images of minors (those under age 18) can be considered child pornography. Those who send or forward these messages could be subject to legal action, arrest, prosecution, and may even be required to register as sex offenders.

Pictures are out of the sender's control once they are sent. Teens often do not think about the fact that the pictures could be forwarded to others.



Pics Don't Stay Private!



Right now,
you may not care, but:

- Colleges will.
- Employers will.
- Friends will.
- Parents will.

Texting & Posting Can't Be Retrieved or Erased

TeenLures™ PREVENTION.com

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National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453. All calls are anonymous and confidential.

tips to prevent **SEXTING** FOR **TEENS**

NetSmartz.org/TipSheets

NetSmartz Workshop
A PROGRAM OF THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN®



THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES

of taking, sending, or forwarding a sexual picture of someone else, even if it's of you. You could get kicked off of sports teams, face humiliation, lose educational opportunities, and even face a police investigation.



NEVER TAKE

images of yourself that you wouldn't want everyone—your classmates, your teachers, your family, or your employer—to see.



BEFORE HITTING SEND

remember that you can't control where this image may travel. What you send to a boyfriend or girlfriend could easily end up with their friends, and their friends' friends, and so on...



IF YOU FORWARD

a sexual picture of someone without their consent, you are violating their trust and exposing them to potential ridicule. It's not up to you to decide who should see their body, so don't forward the image to anyone.



IF ANYONE PRESSURES

you to send a sexual picture, don't give in and talk to an adult you trust. Remember that anyone who tries to get you to do something you are uncomfortable with is probably not trustworthy.

ARTICLE 6
THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not commit adultery.¹¹²

You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.¹¹³

369-373 I. "MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM . . ."

2331 "God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image . . . God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the *vocation*, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion."¹¹⁴
1604

"God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them";¹¹⁵ He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply"¹¹⁶ "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created."¹¹⁷

2332 *Sexuality* affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.
362

2333 Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity*. Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.
1603

2334 "In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity."¹¹⁸ "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God."¹¹⁹
357

2335 Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."¹²⁰ All human generations proceed from this union.¹²¹
2205

2336 Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins. In the Sermon on the Mount, he interprets God's plan strictly: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."¹²² What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.¹²³
1614

The tradition of the Church has understood the sixth commandment as encompassing the whole of human sexuality.

112 Ex20:14; Deut 5:18.	117 Gen 5:1-2.	122 Mt 5:27-28.
113 Mt 5:27-28.	118 FC 22; cf. GS 49 § 2.	123 Cf. Mt 19:6.
114 FC 11.	119 MD 6.	
115 Gen 1:27.	120 Gen 2'24.	
116 Gen 1:28.	121 Cf. Gen 4:1-2, 25-26; 5:1	

II. THE VOCATION TO CHASTITY

2520 **2337** Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.

The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift.

The integrity of the person

2338 The chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech.¹²⁴

1767 **2339** Chastity includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery* which is a training in human freedom. The alternative is clear: either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy.¹²⁵ "Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by blind impulses in himself or by mere external constraint. Man gains such dignity when, ridding himself of all slavery to the passions, he presses forward to his goal by freely choosing what is good and, by his diligence and skill, effectively secures for himself the means suited to this end."¹²⁶

2015 **2340** Whoever wants to remain faithful to his baptismal promises and resist temptations will want to adopt the *means* for doing so: self-knowledge, practice of an asceticism adapted to the situations that confront him, obedience to God's commandments, exercise of the moral virtues, and fidelity to prayer. "Indeed it is through chastity that we are gathered together and led back to the unity from which we were fragmented into multiplicity."¹²⁷

1809 **2341** The virtue of chastity comes under the cardinal virtue of *temperance*, which seeks to permeate the passions and appetites of the senses with reason.

409 **2342** Self-mastery is a *long and exacting work*. One can never consider it acquired once and for all. It presupposes renewed effort at all stages of life.¹²⁸ The effort required can be more intense in certain periods, such as when the personality is being formed during childhood and adolescence.

2223 **2343** Chastity has *laws of growth* which progress through stages marked by imperfection and too often by sin. "Man ... day by day builds himself up through his many free decisions; and so he knows, loves, and accomplishes moral good by stages of growth."¹²⁹

2525 **2344** Chastity represents an eminently personal task; it also involves a *cultural effort*, for there is "an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society."¹³⁰ Chastity presupposes respect for the rights of the person, in particular the right to receive information and an education that respect the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.

2345 Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a *grace*, a fruit of spiritual effort.¹³¹ The Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ.¹³²

124 Cf. *Mt* 5:37.

125 Cf. *Sir* 1:22.

126 *GS* 17.

127 St. Augustine, *Conf.* 10, 29, 40: PL 32, 796.

128 Cf. *Titus* 2:1-6.

129 *FC* 34.

130 *GS* 25 §1.

131 Cf. *Gal* 5:22.

132 Cf. *1 Jn* 3:3.

The various forms of chastity

2348 All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has "put on Christ,"¹³⁴ the model for all chastity. All Christ's faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life. At the moment of his Baptism, the Christian is pledged to lead his affective life in chastity.

- 1620 **2349** "People should cultivate [chastity] in the way that is suited to their state of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others live in the way prescribed for all by the moral law, whether they are married or single."¹³⁵ Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practice chastity in continence:

There are three forms of the virtue of chastity: the first is that of spouses, the second that of widows, and the third that of virgins. We do not praise any one of them to the exclusion of the others. . . This is what makes for the richness of the discipline of the Church.¹³⁶

- 1632 **2350** Those who are *engaged to* marry are called to live chastity in continence. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the hope of receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love. They will help each other grow in chastity.

133 Cf. Jn 15:15.

134 *Gal* 3:27.

135 CDF, *Persona humana* 11.

136 St. Ambrose, *De viduis* 4, 23: PL 16, 255A.

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LIVE IT!

Ten Ways to Practice Chastity

- 1) Pray. Thank God for the gift of sexuality, and ask for the strength to live a life of chastity.
 - 2) Seek out a parent or another adult that you can talk to when you have questions about sexuality.
 - 3) Focus on making friends—not romance—with people of the opposite sex.
 - 4) Learn to turn a critical eye toward media messages that use sex to sell products.
 - 5) Remind yourself that your value is not dependent on whether and how much you date.
 - 6) Stay away from drugs and alcohol. Impaired judgment on a date can lead to trouble.
 - 7) If you are on a date and things get out of hand, call a friend or a parent for a ride home.
 - 8) If you have a boyfriend or a girlfriend, communicate openly and set boundaries about touching.
 - 9) Remember that more teenagers are not having sex than are having sex.
 - 10) Make a pledge to avoid intimate sexual activity until you get married (visit the Web [site-www.truelovewaits.com](http://www.truelovewaits.com)).
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THIS WAS TAKEN FROM THE
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By Brian Singer-Towns with Janet Claussen, Clare vanBrandwijk and other contributors

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