

MADE TO BE IN COMMUNITY PART ONE

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pieces of paper with pre-written character descriptions (for the ice breaker)
- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: GOING MY WAY?

For this drama game, compile a list of interesting characters and quirks ahead of time (suggestions below), and write them on separate pieces of paper. To begin, one teen takes “the stage” and pretends to be a driving a car. One of the other teens selects a character (or “quirk”) and doesn’t show anyone. He or she must act out the role of a hitchhiker hailing and then getting into the car – in character. They drive along until the driver discovers who the character is. The driver must then take on that character/quirk as well. When the driver has successfully guessed and taken on the character, he or she exits the scene and the hitchhiker shifts places to become the new driver. The next teen up selects a new character/quirk, gets into the car, and so on. *(Some character ideas: Someone afraid of being followed; Can't stop texting; Keeps seeing stray animals and wanting to rescue them; Compulsive nose picker; Someone who believes they are famous; Speaks in a high-pitched voice; Terrified of germs; Waves at everyone the car passes; Whistles after every sentence; Keeps talking about how everything was harder when s/he was a child; Forgot to change out of pyjamas; Chewing gum loudly; Keeps dropping things and apologizing).*

FOR SMALL GROUPS, EACH PERSON WILL HAVE MULTIPLE TURNS. FOR GROUPS OF MORE THAN TEN, YOU MAY WISH TO SPLIT INTO TWO OR MORE TEAMS TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE “ON STAGE”.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: HEADED IN THE SAME DIRECTION, TOGETHER

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Share this quote with your teens: **“Friendship is a deep oneness that develops when two people, speaking the truth in love to one another, journey together to the same horizon.”** – *Timothy Keller*
- How do you think this statement relates to marriage?
- Do you ever think about the sort of person you’d like to marry? What qualities matter most to you?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *A little earlier in Keller’s book (“The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God”), we find this clue: “What is the purpose of marriage? The Bible’s answer to this question starts*

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with the principle that marriage is a friendship”. Keller is describing a special kind of friendship that should be at the foundation of a Christian marriage. He’s pointing out that there’s a process involved – the unity he’s describing must “develop” by “speaking the truth in love”, a process which is not always easy. He also points out that they must be headed in the same direction.

- *Chances are that your teens have thought about marriage. If not, they have certainly thought about dating, which is a first step towards finding a life partner, and a good time to begin to think seriously about what sort of person they’d like to marry. Challenge your teens to think about whether the person they are describing is an unrealistic ideal (someone with no flaws), a reflection of superficial values on their part (must have nice hands), or a believing friend who is headed in the same direction (2 Corinthians 6:14).*

THE LESSON: GENESIS 1+2

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND “DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 3: SPECIAL OCCASIONS” BY SUE CARELESS.)

Community matters. Though each one of us needs times of solitude, we also need one another. This is true for all people, but for believers it is actually a vital part of our faith. We believe that we were *designed* for community. Together, believers form the Church, the bride of Christ, and the scriptures remind us to meet together often and to love one another deeply.

When it comes to Christian marriage, men and women enter into community in a unique way. The marriage liturgy points out that matrimony was “instituted of God in the time of man’s innocency”. It goes on to warn that it is not to be entered into “lightly”, and that those who marry should consider what marriage is actually *for*: “Matrimony was ordained for the hallowing of the union betwixt man and woman; for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, in both prosperity and adversity” (BCP, p. 564).

Although marriage involves deep companionship, it does not replace a couple’s need for the larger Christian community. Even in marrying one another, their vows are made in the presence of that community. In the years that follow, they will continue to need the support of their family of faith, and there will continue to be ways for them to serve that larger family too.

Refer to Genesis 1: 26-28, 31, 2:7, 18-25.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: GENESIS 1:26-2:25.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- Why do you think it was not good for the man to be alone?
- What do you think the passage means when it talks about a “helper”?
- What do you notice about Adam’s speech when he first meets Eve?
- What does this passage tell us about God’s intention for marriage?
- What do you think this passage has to teach those of us who are not married now and who may not marry in the future?

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A few notes and reflections for reference:

- In Genesis 1:31, God surveyed all that he had made and declared it to be “very good”. But before the creation of Eve, it was “not good” (2:18). God had made a beautiful world filled with plants and animals. And Adam was in perfect fellowship with God. But in spite of all this, the creation was incomplete. The man needed a companion, someone who was uniquely suited to help him.
- It’s worth noting that the word that is translated here as “helper” is the Hebrew word “ezer”, and is the same word used to refer to God in the psalms. (“Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield” Psalm 33:20). So when we talk about a “fit helper” the word isn’t meant to suggest hierarchy, but rather the value, necessity and suitability of what this person is uniquely able to offer.
- Adam’s speech verges on poetry. He says “at last”, as if with a sense of relief in recognizing someone who belongs with him in a way that none of the animals did.
- Marriage is a gift, given to us by God, with the intention that it be a lifelong blessing (Matthew 19:8). This covenant relationship was begun while creation was fresh and sin had not entered the world, and in the beginning nakedness did not result in shame (2:25). The service of matrimony provides a succinct summary of the purposes for which God designed marriage: “Matrimony was ordained for the hallowing of the union betwixt man and woman; for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, in both prosperity and adversity” (BCP p. 564).
- Whether or not we marry, we need to remember that isolation is not God’s intention for us. We were made to live in community and we need other people in our lives: friends, family, and the Church. We may also ask ourselves whether we have a right view of marriage, whether we speak about marriage in a way that honours God’s design, and whether we seek to support those who are married in keeping their vows. Though the teens in your group may not currently have married friends, there will come a day when they do. In the meantime, they might think of organizing a free babysitting night for some of the couples in your parish. Perhaps they have other ideas for how they can support the people they know who are married.

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time praying for the home where you live. You may also want to pray for your future home. (Consider whether this is a prayer you’d be comfortable praying together with a boyfriend or girlfriend, someone who might one day become a husband or a wife.)

Merciful Saviour, who didst love Martha and Mary and Lazarus, hallowing their home with thy sacred presence: Bless, we beseech thee, our home(s), that thy love may rest upon us, and that thy presence may be with us. May we all grow in grace and in the knowledge of thee, our Lord and Saviour. Teach us to love one another as thou hast given commandment. Help us to bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil thy law, O blessed Jesus, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest, one God, for evermore. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR THE FAMILY, FROM THE “FAMILY PRAYERS” SECTION OF THE BCP, P. 732)

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CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

Before closing, ask the teens to pray the words of the At-Home Challenge prayer with you, for their homes and the homes of others in your parish.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

GENESIS 1+2: A HELPER TO HOLD FAST TO

1 ²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸And God blessed them... ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good...

2 ⁷The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature... ¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

¹⁹Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.