

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Matrimony

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

The consent given and received between two spouses in marriage is sealed by God himself.

- ◆ The consent that expresses the binding nature of conjugal love finds fulfillment in two people becoming one flesh (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1627).
- ◆ Valid marriages between Catholics and baptized non-Catholics (“mixed marriages”) and marriages between Catholics and non-baptized persons (“interfaith marriages”) can be entered into with the proper permissions of the ecclesiastical authority (see CCC 1635).

Christ restores the original order of creation disturbed by sin, including the good of marriage.

- ◆ Only with the grace of Christ can two baptized persons live up to the high ideal of Christian marriage (see CCC 1642).
- ◆ Not everyone is called to marriage, since God calls some men and women to follow Christ in a life of virginity or celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God (see CCC 342).

Why Is This Important?

The Sacrament of Matrimony strengthens a couple so that they might become more loving, contribute to each other’s holiness, and help one another on the way to eternal life. Since openness to the gift of children is also understood as an essential element of the marriage bond, this Sacrament is also meant to strengthen a couple so that they might responsibly raise children and provide for their education.

*When (a married couple is)
in harmony, . . . their neighbors will
smell the sweet fragrance of harmony,
along with all their friends and relatives.*

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs, and provide a focal point with a Bible and the *Rite of Marriage* ritual book. Provide name tags, and have some refreshments available.

Welcome

Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins. Then use one of the nuptial blessings from the *Rite of Marriage* ritual book as the opening prayer.

Engage

Invite the group to reflect on the story presented in Insight. Then have participants share their response to the story, and explore the For Reflection questions together.

Teach

Summarize or invite the group to read Church Teaching. Then discuss the following:

- ◆ Marriage is a covenant between two people and God.
- ◆ The bride and groom are the celebrants of the Sacrament of Matrimony, which takes place before two witnesses and the ordained minister who receives the consent of the couple on behalf of the Church.
- ◆ Marriage is the way in which the husband and wife will live out their Baptism commitment to be followers of Christ and their call to holiness. They vow to help each other in all circumstances of their lives till death separates them.

Apply

Provide a copy of the marriage vows to the participants, and ask them to spend some time this week sharing what their understanding of vows is at this time in their lives.

Pray

Invite the participants to think of their spouses or, if not married, to think of a married couple they know well. Then proclaim 1 Corinthians 13 as the closing prayer.