

# BEING RESPONSIBLE for our own lives

## CLASS 2

### Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

#### Introduction

In this lesson we will reflect upon your life as an adventure, gifted with freedom. Yet the free will God has given only to humans also comes with intelligence and responsibility. Our lives will be shaped well or poorly by the moral decisions we make. Through our free will we decide whether or not to choose good and to avoid evil. We are capable of choosing to guard our sexuality by the constant use of free will as taught by Jesus and His Church.



#### These are the things we will talk about in this second lesson:

- Life includes the ability to **choose** whether we want to make a good life for ourselves or not.
- You are **responsible** for the free decisions which you make in life.
- You are called to guard your sexuality with **chaste** hearts and lives.
- **Deliberately** doing immoral things is sinful.

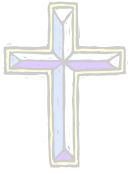
#### Life and FREEDOM

Life is an adventure! It is full of freedom.

*Each one of us must decide* whether we want to make a good life for ourself or not.

God promises that each of us can have a life of which we can be proud. But we must be willing to pay the price of a great life (see Matthew 13:44). God promises to help you shape a wonderful life if you choose. But God created you with **free will**. Only you can decide what you will do. If you ask Him, God will give you the grace to make the right decisions.

We have little say over things that just happen. Will you win the lottery? Will you be hit by a truck? Good things and bad things happen to people. Because of our freedom, evil and suffering have entered our world.



But our life is not what just happens to us. Our life is something we do, something we live, and something we choose.

And Christ **promises** everyone: You can lead a good life if you choose. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

"Before a man are life and death, and whichever he chooses will be given to him" (Sirach 15:17). What do you think that this sentence means?

## Discussion: When BAD things happen



- ? Do bad things sometimes happen to you, things you cannot help?
- ? Do good things sometimes happen to you, things that you did not really deserve?
- ? Which is more "my life": What happens to me, or what I actually do?

*Some think:* My life would be great if I won the lottery. My life would be great if only I were thinner, or had beautiful hair. My life would be complete if I could slam dunk the basketball. Do you think all this is very true?

*Others think:* My life is ruined because we had to move and leave good friends behind. My life is bitter because my health is not good, and I cannot do things I want to do. It is possible to live well, and even happily, when things go wrong?

## You are RESPONSIBLE for your own life

Very small children have not yet really grown up into being able to be responsible for their own lives. They are not yet able to understand what is really **good**, and what is bad. So their parents, and others who love them, have to try to protect them as much as possible.

But as we get more mature, we become more and more the rulers of our own lives.

God wants us to be free! He wants us to live life well, not because we have to, but because we choose to do it. Whether we will live great and good lives or not is our responsibility.

"It was he [God] who created man in the beginning, and he left him in the power of his own inclination" (Sirach 15:14).



Things will happen to you, fortunes good and bad. But your life will not just happen. You shape your own life by the decisions you make: The **decisions** to do what is really good; decisions to care about more than just yourself; decisions to listen to God, and to seek to do what is really right; decisions to live as well as you can in the circumstances in which God puts you.

## Discussion: Talking about RESPONSIBILITY

### Important ideas

- People are not to be blamed if they cannot manage something very difficult. It is silly to blame a person who tries hard, and comes in second. But would we blame someone who lost a tournament for our school because he did not really practice and did not really try, and blew it for us? What is the difference between the two cases?
- Many people have to work hard to make things work for them. They build lives that people admire. "This fellow, this girl, really gives things his or her best." Is it worthwhile being like that?

### Special cases

What would you say about people who say things like this:

"I couldn't help it. I didn't start it. The other girls were taking things from the store, so I had to go along with them. Do you expect me to be different from everyone else?"

"Ok, so I had a beer at the party. Everyone else was drinking too. Big deal!"

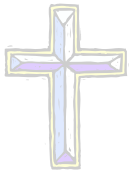
"It didn't amount to anything. Just some puffs on a joint. It sort of felt good and nobody got hurt."

What do you think Christ would say about excuses like that? Do you think Christ would agree with them?

### Sexuality AND our lives

Some people say: "People who live in times like these are bound to be sexually active from the time they are very young."

"They will do that even if being sexually active causes a lot of harm, like AIDS, and other diseases, or abortion. People will do that even if the lack of self control makes them fail in their marriages and unable to have the generosity needed for real love."



Many will deliberately play with obscene thoughts, even though Jesus taught us that it is wrong (read Matthew 5:28). They will have premarital sex (sexual activity without the promises of committed marital love) and other activities that show a refusal to treat sexuality with the respect it deserves.

**But is talk like that true?** The fact is that millions of young people guard chaste hearts and lives. God promises to help everyone to be chaste. God cares so much about the goodness of love, the importance of the home, the **dignity** of little children and of life.

In the days of Christ, a pagan empire ruled most of the world. Pagan homes and lives were unhappy, partly because of their sexual sins. Adultery, premarital sex, and obscene forms of living caused great pain. These things took away the will to guard really precious things like honest love, children, and strong, faith-filled homes.

But the early Christians refused to live as the pagans. They believed Christ, who told them how wrong and hurtful all these things were. And as a result, their lives, and their homes, were so much **happier** than the pagans'. This is one of the reasons the pagan world decided to become Christian, because people saw that those who followed God's commandments were truly happy.

Advertisers, and people who make money on movies and TV, often feel that they can "hook" people by teasing them with sexual games. Even when we understand the importance of the gift of sexuality, we can still be severely tempted to misbehave sexually. We can decide that we do not care whether or not we hurt the people we love.

If we feel driven to enjoy sexual pleasure now, we cause pain in **important** areas of life.

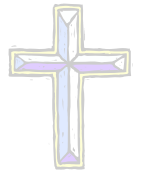
We do not have to give in to temptation. We do not have to treat sex shabbily and foolishly. We can be intelligent about the important things of life, no matter what other people do. Some people in the world will tell you that you have no control over your thoughts and feelings. But they are *wrong*. You are not an animal. You can control your bodies and make the right **decisions**.

Lots of people overeat and under-exercise. Lots of people become couch potatoes, and are unhappy with their lives. But people can decide if they wish to have self-control. When we make bad decisions with our lives, we are not just unlucky. We are freely doing things badly on purpose. *We* are the ones who are hurting our own lives.

Faith teaches us about original sin, which makes us inclined to error and sin. We are, indeed often tempted to behave badly. We often feel like doing things that are irresponsible and sinful. But, we have the **freedom** to choose what is right and good if we wish to!

## The SERIOUSNESS of sin

Catholic faith teaches us that deliberately doing immoral things is sinful. It is not just unfortunate; it is much worse than that.



It is unfortunate if you catch pneumonia; that is a natural evil. It is much worse if you torture a small child to get money. That is a deliberate moral choice, a deliberate evil, which we call sin.

Sexual activity, if not guarded by the generous promises of marriage, is sinful. It is not just acting “against the rules.” The reason for **rules** is that doing such things hurts people, hurts lives, makes life much poorer and much more full of trails. We hurt others when we commit sexual sins and we hurt ourselves.

We also offend God seriously by sexual activity that is wrong, such as premarital sex, or deliberately filling our minds with obscene desires and feelings. We separate ourselves from the Lord when we sin, when we break the commandments or ignore the teachings of the Church. We lose interest in living God’s way.

Some people say that sexual activity outside of marriage is OK. (It is interesting that some people also say that eating too much will not make people gain weight.)

**But they are very wrong.** What the Lord teaches us about the sinfulness of irresponsible sexual activity is true. And its bitter truth becomes evident only too soon in the lives of those who refuse to believe the Lord, or to seek to live in the **good ways** he teaches.

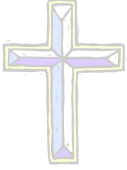
Sinful sexual activity is activity that abuses sex, abuses ourselves and other people. People who have not learned from Christ may be deceived. Perhaps they do not realize how much harm is caused by sexual sins.

We can protect our lives, and make them happier, because we know the truth Christ teaches, and we can have the power to live in really good ways.

Your life is worth more than you can imagine. Sexuality blesses life if we respect it and treat it with the **reverence** Christ taught. Christ, the best of all teachers, urges us to be wise in our life choices.

**Chaste  
lives work  
and make  
people  
really  
happy.**

## TYING things together



**Remember what we studied in this lesson:**

- 1.** We each have the ability to exercise our free will to create goodness in life or not.
- 2.** You are responsible for choosing to do good or evil.
- 3.** Chaste hearts and lives guard our sexuality.
- 4.** To sin is to deliberately choose immoral thoughts and actions.