

LIFE is worth living

CLASS 3

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

In this class we will talk about “doing things right.” First we remember how much we like being able to do ordinary things right, like playing ball well. We think about how great it would be to be able to shape our whole lives well. Then we will talk about how Jesus can and does help us to do right with the most important things of life. Finally we will talk about understanding sexuality and facing it intelligently, and how Christ helps us to do that.



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

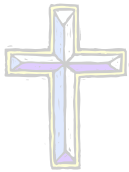
- **Christ** teaches us that it is a joy to live our lives well.
- Jesus is the best of all **teachers** of life.
- Sexuality is a **good**, as God wills it.

Doing things WELL

Should we be happy about life? God made life to be happy. But some people are not very happy with it. Often they are people who have enough money and get their way a lot. Many good things seem to happen to them. But of course some bad things happen too, and they do not like the taste of life. On their expensive cars they will put bumper stickers saying things like “Life is a bummer.”

Often these people really do not *think* very much about what life is about and for. They mostly aim at having fun, and doing what they feel like. They seem to have no intention to look for any **wisdom** about life. They live like people who have found no instructions or helps to living life well, and the things they do, do not really work.

Other people say “YES” to life. As they live it, they find it works, and they are glad about their lives. They are people who have found some way of understanding what life means and what it is for. They busy themselves with things they know are worth doing.



Christ is the great **Teacher** of life for all people. He teaches us:

- ♥ It is a joy to put heart into things, to do things well.
- ♥ It is a joy to live our lives well.
- ♥ We can live well, because He fills us with His grace!

**Jesus lived
a great life
on earth.**

We all like to be good at doing things. It is much more fun to play football or tennis or cards if we know how, and can do well. Playing a guitar is much more satisfying when we do it so well that everyone enjoys what we do. As we know, doing things well takes a great deal of practice and **hard work**. We have to work at these things over and over.

It would be fun to be a superstar. But we do not have to do spectacular things to do things well. Even doing little things like growing flowers well or raising a pet well or setting the VCR well can make us feel good.

Living our lives WELL

Clearly our lives are more important than games and skills at doing things. Some people get a good grip on the whole shape of their lives. We like it if people think we play basketball well. We like it more if they think we are living our lives well. We like it if they recognize that the big things in our life are in great shape; if they see we have learned to be generous, courageous, fair, and to lay hold of life with happiness and greatness of heart.

Jesus is the **teacher** specializing in showing people how to have the kind of life they most deeply want to have. When He was on this earth He lived a great life. He was generous and courageous. He was wise and strong and clearly happy. People who saw Him wished they could have lives as full and happy as His. So they asked Him: "Teach us how to live!"

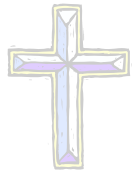
Jesus tells us that the reason why He came into this world was to make it possible for us to have better and happier lives. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Discussion: Doing it RIGHT

List on the blackboard some of the kinds of things that you think you can do very well: drawing, playing basketball, using a computer, playing a guitar, cooking — or things like these.

- ✎ Is it fun to do things like this well? Why?
- ✎ How do people learn to do things like these very well?
- ✎ Did you do these things well when you first tried them?
- ✎ Once we have learned them well, are we glad we took time to learn?

Try to think of some people you know, or have heard of, who lived really great lives. What would you want your life to be like?



How Christ helps us to LIVE life as we like it

Many people do live great lives. And it is not just because they are rich or powerful. Many rich people have shabby lives, and many poor people have happy and great lives. People have great lives when they come to **understand** what life is all about, and work at living it well.

The saints led heroic and exemplary lives. That does not mean they lived “pious” lives. It means they lived lives in which they accomplished a lot and did things they knew were worthwhile. They put their hands on difficult things and found they could do much more than they imagined. They had the great joy of loving other people, and of being loved by them. They also had the joy of seeing how many great things there are to do, and of doing them.

Many people today lead great lives. That means more than being great at basketball or great with a computer. It means being **great** at being a person, great at caring and doing important things about the most important matters in the world.

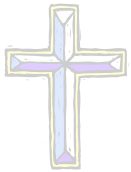
Discussion

Who do you think would fit into the class of great people like that?

Coaches and teachers are important. No one becomes great either at special things, like football, or at giant things, like living life well, without a good coach. If we want to live a life we will be proud of, and happy about, we need a good teacher of life. Jesus is the best of all teachers of life.

Learning life means learning to love. Most people know and admit that learning about life is mostly about learning to love. It is about learning how to love the **good things** God has made accessible to us — life, friendship, truth, and doing things well, and loving our brothers and sisters on this earth gladly and wisely.

We all see that many people get mixed up about love. Sometimes they love the wrong things. Sometimes they forget how love cannot live without generosity, courage, and self-control. Instead of the great kinds of love Christ teaches, they live in selfish and false kinds of love, love that is mostly “looking out for myself” and “doing whatever I feel like.” But this is selfishness rather than honest **love**, and it never makes people happy.



Learning love AND sexuality well

Jesus is the great Teacher about what love is. His disciple, St. Paul, spoke of the greatness of the real love that Christ teaches and makes possible for us to have. (Read Corinthians 13.)

What would a person who had love like this be like? Can you think of any people you know whose lives seem deeply touched with this kind of love, the kind Christ teaches?

God made sexuality, and he made it to accompany **honest love**. It is God who made us male and female, and he knew that it was good for us to have sexuality. We are sexual persons.



Sometimes, of course, sexuality is badly used, as all the good things God made are sometimes used. Life is a beautiful gift of God. But people abuse it by killing, for example by abortion or by euthanasia. Truth is a great gift of God. But people abuse it by lying and false advertising and the violation of secrets.

Sexuality is good, and God made it to serve very great goods. He made it to go with mature love, love that is not selfish, but that wants and is able to give itself to one other person for a whole lifelong in marriage. He made sexuality for the love that can last a whole lifetime, that helps a man and woman to make their love, and their home, **stand firm** and last. God made sexuality to make personal love stronger and more generous, and to enable spouses who love each other to bring children into this world with great love and to care for them with generosity.

Sexuality is good, a very serious good. It is not a toy, not something to be played with. In a way, of course, it gives joy to all our lives. It is a good and happy thing to be loved in the way a mother loves us, and in the different way a father loves us. It is a joy to have both boys and girls in this world. Each is a different way of imaging God. There are wonderful traits both in boy-ness and girl-ness. Each boy or girl reveals only some of the wonderful goodness of being male or female. Life is made **interesting** and rich because God put the complexity of feelings and joys that go with human beings being male and female.

But some acts of sexuality, because they guard such important things as personal love and little children, are by no means things to be treated as toys. Some kinds of kisses and hugs are gracious signs of friendship. Some, however, are passionate, and stir up strong feelings, which can go rightly only with mature



kinds of love. These acts can be right and morally good only when they are surrounded with the promises and generosity of marriage. When people treat sexuality as the Lord teaches us to, they find it **rich** and always the source of blessings. When they use it badly, they find it disappoints them, and brings all kinds of trouble and pain into life.

Christ invites us while we are young to learn what He teaches us about love. And He wants us to let our minds and hearts learn to feel and think as He calls us, which will make our lives better.

Certainly it is important that while we are young we should not fill our imaginations and memories with images and words that make fun of what God made sexuality to be. Much on television, much in the movies, much in magazines today presents sexuality in ways that hurt young lives deeply. Can you think of some kinds of television shows young people should not watch? Can you **think** of the kinds of movies to avoid if you wish to learn the great sort of love that Christ teaches us?

This would not mean you cannot have fun. It does not mean you cannot enjoy life with one another. One should be glad that God made me a boy, or made me a girl. One ought to be glad that He made the wonderful reality of love, and the mysterious reality of sexuality. But we also should learn how to understand these gifts from the best teachers, from those who love me, and know Christ. These are the ones who teach us about life as it is meant to be lived.

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

- 1.** The message of Jesus includes the joy of living well and of doing things well.
- 2.** Jesus helps us to learn how to live life well.
- 3.** Sexuality is good and God made it to serve great goods.

