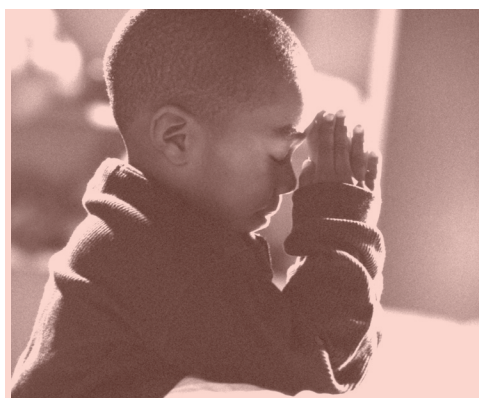


LOVE IS
OUR
MISSION



*the family
fully alive*

 WORLD
MEETING OF
FAMILIES
2015 Philadelphia

World Meeting of Families Preparatory Catechism

Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive

Study Guide for 6-Session Study

Suggested format for each session

Pre-reading

Invite members of the group to read in advance the chapters of the WMOF catechism that will be covered in the upcoming session.

Part I **Opening Prayer & Lectio** (15 minutes)

Consider leading the group in a period of *Lectio Divina* on the suggested Scripture passage. The passage is selected to complement the content of the session. A period of prayerful encounter with God's Word can generate an openness to the content being discussed and also afford the Holy Spirit the opportunity to work in each heart. A guide for *Lectio Divina* can be found on the next page.

Part II **Review & discuss Study Points** (45-60 minutes)

Read each Study Point aloud as a group along with each Recommended Paragraph from the WMOF catechism. By reading these selected paragraphs, the group will come into contact with the main points of each chapter. It is recommended that the group pause after reading each Recommended Paragraph to discuss the significance of the passage before moving on to the next point. It is recommended that the group spend 5-10 minutes on each study point.

Optional: Use the discussion questions at the end of each chapter of the WMOF catechism to guide your discussion of each chapter's content.

Part III (optional) **WMOF updates** (15 minutes)

In this section of the meeting, the group leader can share any new news or information about the World Meeting of Families event with the group. News and updates can be accessed from the WMOF website (WorldMeeting2015.org), WMOF social media, or WMOF email news blasts. The group can discuss ways to spread the word about WMOF in the parish/school or how they plan to invite friends and relatives to the event. Here are some suggested discussion questions for this section:

What is the purpose of WMOF?

What do you hope it will accomplish in our local church? In the Universal Church?

Do you believe it could have an impact in our culture and on our society? If so, in what ways?

What will be your family's level of participation in WMOF?

How do you plan to give of your time, talent, and treasure to WMOF?

What part of WMOF do you think will be most beneficial to you? To your family?

Part IV **Closing prayer:** Prayer for the World Meeting of Families or sing the WMOF hymn "Sound the Bell of Holy Freedom" (see page 3)

To purchase copies of the *Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* preparatory catechism, visit:

<http://www.worldmeeting2015.org/about-the-event/catechesis/>

What is Lectio Divina?

“Lectio Divina means ‘Divine Reading’ and refers specifically to an approach to prayer and scripture reading practiced by monastics since the early Church. The idea of praying with sacred scripture comes to the Church through ancient Jewish tradition. Christians in the early Church continued this tradition and further developed the practice of prayer and meditation using mostly the psalms as a rich source of heartfelt engagement with God...In the 11th century, a Carthusian prior named Guigo formalized Lectio Divina, describing the practice in a letter written to a fellow religious. This letter has become known as *The Ladder of Monks* and describes a four-runged ladder to Heaven, each rung being one of the four steps in his method of prayerful scripture reading. These steps are provided below along with a short definition of each and brief quotes from Guigo’s letter:

Lectio (reading): An attentive, slow, repetitious recitation of a short passage of scripture.
‘looking on Holy Scripture with all one’s will and wit’

Meditatio (meditation): An effort to understand the passage and apply it to my own life.
‘a studious searching with the mind to know what was before concealed’

Oratio (prayer): Engaging or talking with God about the passage.
‘a devout desiring of the heart to get what is good and avoid what is evil’

Contemplatio (contemplation): Allowing oneself to be absorbed in the words of God as the Holy Spirit draws us into His presence through scripture.
‘the lifting up of the heart to God tasting somewhat of the heavenly sweetness’¹

Using *Lectio Divina* at the beginning of your study session

Before reading, invite everyone to listen prayerfully as you read the passage aloud slowly. Invite them to pay attention to the word or phrase from the passage that stands out to them. This is usually experienced as a stirring of the heart in response to a particular word or phrase in the passage.

Lectio: Read the passage slowly and then pause after reading for about one minute for silent reflection.

Meditatio: Just before reading the passage a second time, invite everyone, as they listen to the passage a second time, to silently ask the Lord, “What are you saying to me through this word/phrase?” Read the passage a second time and pause 2-3 minutes for silent reflection.

Oratio: Invite everyone to take two minutes to make a response to the Lord silently (2 minutes silence).

Contemplatio: Spend another minute or two in silence resting in the Lord.

If time allows, invite everyone who feels inclined to share the word/phrase that spoke to them with the group.

¹ Burke, Dan. “What is ‘Lectio Divina’ and Will It Help My Prayer Life? A Guide to Lectio Divina.” SpiritualDirection.com. 21 Apr 2012. Web. 23 Dec 2014

**Prayer for the World Meeting of Families
Philadelphia 2015**

God and Father of us all,
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,
you have made us
your sons and daughters
in the family of the Church.
May your grace and love
help our families
in every part of the world
be united to one another
in fidelity to the Gospel.
May the example of the Holy Family,
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,
guide all families, especially those most troubled,
to be homes of communion and prayer
and to always seek your truth and live in your love.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us!

**World Meeting of Families Hymn
Sound the Bell of Holy Freedom**

Sound the bell of holy freedom; call all nations of the earth.
Sons and daughters of one Father, sent to spread God's saving Word.
Come, and gather, as one fam'ly at the table of the Lord.

David branch from root of Jesse, Mary that vine's flow'ring rose.
She brought forth for us the Savior as the angel did propose;
Overshadowed by the Spirit, by her "yes" new life arose.

Blessed Joseph, spouse of Mary, teacher of your God and Lord,
You did shelter and provide for wondrous child by kings adored.
Open to God's Word in dreaming saved your child from Herod's sword.

Jesus, youth in low'ly Naz'reth, faithful son, and loving child,
Guest and host at Cana's wedding, finest wine you did provide.
You, our rock and you our shelter, keep us ever by your side.

At the cross a grieving mother, on the cross, her only son,
With all mothers and their children, Blessed Mary, you are one.
In our joys, and in our sorrows may we do as you have done.

Sound the bell of holy freedom; call all fam'lies of the world
To be fed by love incarnate; to proclaim God's holy Word;
Through the love of Christ our brother, in the Spirit make us one.

Text: Andrew D. Ciferni, O., Praem, b. 1942 · Tune: PHILADELPHIA, 8 7 8 7 8 7:Normand Guoin, b. 1970

Session I: Chapters 1 & 2

Pre-reading: Chapters 1 & 2 of Love is Our Mission Preparatory Catechesis

Lectio Divina: John 2:1-11, The Wedding at Cana

Study Points:

Chapter 1: Created for Joy

- *Study point 1: All of the Church's teachings on marriage and the family come from the person of Jesus Christ. They are not arbitrary rules and laws, but instead they express the very meaning of love that Jesus Christ reveals. Recommended paragraph: 1*
- *Study Point 2: The human person is created in the image and likeness of God. He is not just an accident of nature. Recommended paragraph: 12*
- *Study Point 3: God's plan for us is to bring us joy. All that Christ teaches us about marriage and family is for the sake of bringing us joy. Recommended paragraph: 19*

Chapter 2: The Mission of Love

- *Study Point 4: All throughout the Bible, God uses marriage imagery to describe his love for us. In doing so, he also reveals what married love is. Recommended paragraph: 26*
- *Study Point 5: All of the Bible's images of marriage are summed up in Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, especially in his suffering and death on the cross out of love for us. In Christ, we learn what real love is and how it is that we must love one another, especially in marriage and in our families. Recommended paragraph: 33*

Session II: Chapter 3

Pre-reading: Chapter 3 of Love is Our Mission Preparatory Catechesis

Lectio Divina: Genesis 2:18-25, Creation of Adam and Eve

Study Points:

Chapter 3: The Meaning of Human Sexuality

- *Study Point 6: The material world has sacramental meaning, that is, it is capable of communicating spiritual realities. Recommended paragraph: 37*
- *Study Point 7: The human person is a unity of body and soul. Our bodies make visible the invisible mystery of our souls. Recommended paragraph: 39*
- *Study Point 8: The fact that we exist as either male or female is fundamental to our very identity. Human sexuality is the sign that we were created to give ourselves away in love. Recommended paragraphs: 42-43*
- *Study Point 9: The virtue of chastity is the ordering of our sexuality in accordance with the love of God, so that we love one another as he has loved us. Recommended paragraph: 49*
- *Study Point 10: Everyone is called to the virtue of chastity. It takes different forms depending on whether one is married, single, or celibate. Recommended paragraph 50*

Session III: Chapters 4 & 5

Pre-reading: Chapter 4 & 5 of Love is Our Mission Preparatory Catechesis

Lectio Divina: Ephesians 3:14-21, "...the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth gets its name..."

Study Points:

Chapter 4: Two Become One

- *Study Point 11: In the Sacrament of Marriage the love of the husband and wife is incorporated into Christ's love for His Church. In this way, the man and the woman share in and become signs of the faithful, enduring and self-giving love of Christ the Bridegroom and the Church, the Bride. Recommended paragraph 64*
- *Study Point 12: The Church, through her sacraments, teachings, and life of prayer, offers married couples a home in which to live out their married life. In particular, the Sacrament of the Eucharist feeds their love and the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation heals them and makes them capable of greater love and mutual forgiveness. Recommended paragraph 66*

Chapter 5: Creating the Future

- *Study Point 13: All authentic love gives life. Married love is unique because its identity rests on the difference of the sexes and their union, which is apt for bringing about new life. It is the special vocation of a husband and wife that they are called by God to become a father and a mother. Recommended paragraph 76*
- *Study Point 14: The family is the domestic Church. This means that the family has the same mission as the Church, namely, to be a place where man encounters God. Recommended paragraphs 77, 85*
- *Study Point 15: The parish is a "family of families." Recommended paragraphs 86, 88*

Session IV: Chapter 6 & 7

Pre-reading: Chapter 6 & 7 of *Love is Our Mission* Preparatory Catechesis

Lectio Divina: Matthew 19:3-12, Jesus teaches on marriage and celibacy

Study Points:

Chapter 6: All Love Bears Fruit

- *Study Point 16:* The vocation of marriage reveals the human person's call to give himself away in love. This call can also be answered through the vocation of celibacy, in which a person makes a total gift of self for the "sake of the kingdom of Heaven." Recommended paragraphs: 91-92
- *Study Point 17:* The person who lives a celibate vocation as a gift of self to God bears great spiritual fruit. They become a spiritual mother or father. Recommended paragraph: 112

Chapter 7: Light in a Dark World

- *Study Point 18:* One of the effects of original sin is the inclination to sin and selfishness in the human heart. This causes a constant threat of breakdown in the relationship of man and woman. Recommended paragraph: 114
- *Study Point 19:* The breakdown in the relationship of man and woman generates many threats against marriage and family life. These include pornography, masturbation, and contraception. It also includes the propensity to try to make marriage "whatever we want it to be," rather than to respect marriage for what it is and submit ourselves to its demands. Recommended paragraphs: 122, 133, 134
- *Study Point 20:* The Church's opposition to these and other threats to the good of marriage are part of Her great "Yes" to the good of the human person. Our efforts to wrestle with and conform ourselves to Christ's teachings on these issues will bring about a great flourishing, both personally and as a society. Recommended paragraph: 144

Session V: Chapter 8 & 9

Pre-reading: Chapter 8 & 9 of *Love is Our Mission* Preparatory Catechesis

Lectio Divina: Luke 10:25-37, The Good Samaritan

Chapter 8: A Home for the Wounded Heart

- *Study Point 21:* The family shares in the Church's mission to bring Christ's healing presence to others. This begins with our own need to encounter Christ personally and allow him to heal us, our marriages, and our family life through the life of the Church. Recommended paragraphs: 154, 159
- *Study Point 22:* The parish family has the particular task to be a place of welcome, warmth, and community for others, so that the demands of the Gospel can be faithfully lived out. Recommended paragraph: 167
- *Study Point 23:* The practice of hospitality can bear tremendous fruit in helping all members of the parish community along the path of healing and conversion. Special pastoral care should be shown to those who have experienced divorce, separation, and those members of the community who experience same-sex attraction. Recommended paragraphs: 165, 169-170

Chapter 9: Mother, Teacher, Family

- *Study Point 24:* The Church is our Mother. She draws us close to Jesus Christ and makes it possible for us to respond to His call to follow Him. Recommended paragraph: 188

Session VI: Chapter 10 and Closing Discussion

Pre-reading: Chapter 10 of *Love is Our Mission* Preparatory Catechesis

Lectio Divina: Ephesians 6:10-20, the armor of God

Chapter 10: Choosing Life

- *Study Point 25:* We live in a culture that is often hostile to the Gospel. But Catholics have a vocation to bring the truth about love to the world, and we do this by living love in our own families and communities. Recommended paragraph: 197
- *Study Point 26:* The Church stays close to the family, cherishes the family, and must support the family. Recommended paragraphs: 200, 203

Final discussion: where do we go from here?

- Group leader: In advance, select some key questions from the reflection questions at the end of each chapter of the WMOF catechesis to generate a closing conversation. Use these questions to help the members of your group to come up with realistic, practical action steps to respond to what has been learned over the 6-week study on three levels: personal, in my family, in our parish.



Compiled by Meghan Cokeley, Office for the New Evangelization, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in collaboration with parish adult faith formation leaders Theresa Haggerty, St. Anastasia, Newtown Square, Angela McClellan, Corpus Christi, Lansdale and St. Maria Goretti, Hatfield, and Maria Stumpf, Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, North Wales