

## PRAY

We live in the mystery of God's creative love above and around us, within and between us. Help us, loving God, learn to love ourselves and love one another as you love us. Amen.

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# SPIRIT

# LOVE<sup>is</sup>

Read the definitions of love from high school students.

When your hormones do the thinking.

Sharing oneself totally with another stronger person.

Like alcohol or drugs, Love can seem to start out fine, but once you get into it, you can't stop wanting it.

When you have seen someone's bad side but like them anyway.

When two people each put the other before themselves and think about the other's feelings.

Fulfillment of what we need—security, trust, kindness, honesty, compassion, understanding, selfless sacrifices.

When two people make a commitment to each other and keep faithful to that commitment, and they don't feel right unless they're together.

An attraction to someone for no other reason than the way you feel about him or her.

Caring about someone for his or her inside and not just the outside appearance.

Which definitions are typical of girls? Of boys? Which cause trouble in relationships?

## "You become what you do."

An old saying, but it carries a lot of truth. You become a dancer by dancing. You become a guitarist by playing the guitar. You become a bully by choosing to take out your unhappiness on somebody weaker or less aggressive than you. You become a kind person by choosing to be kind to someone today, even if you don't have the time or you don't feel good.

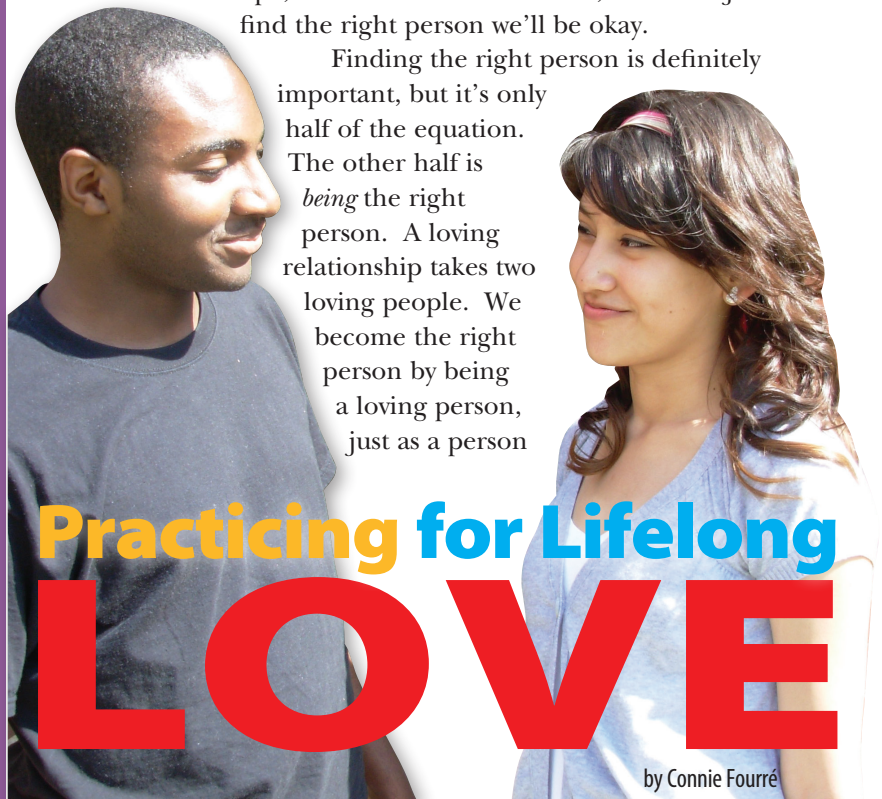
So how do you become a happily married adult? Even though marriage is probably the last thing on your mind today, most teens hope to find someone to share their lives with—some day. And most would agree that sharing life in a loving, fun, basically peaceful way will have a big impact on longterm happiness. Most of us assume we'll somehow get there, even though we know the divorce rate is over—what?—50%.

50%. Think about it. 50% means, statistically speaking, half of the people sitting in the room with you at this moment will end up divorced. Look around and let that sink in for a minute. Nobody likes to think about that statistic. When we do think about it, we hope we'll luck out and it won't happen to us.

We hope, without a lot of reflection, that if we just find the right person we'll be okay.

Finding the right person is definitely important, but it's only half of the equation.

The other half is *being* the right person. A loving relationship takes two loving people. We become the right person by being a loving person, just as a person



## Practicing for Lifelong

# LOVE

by Connie Fourré

becomes a basketball player by playing basketball. We become a loving person by developing loving attitudes, skills, and habits. One can't become a loving person just by thinking about it any more than one can become a long distance runner by thinking about it.

Which brings us to the subject of sex. Sex is part of a loving marriage relationship, a part most people wouldn't be willing to live without. Sex is also an issue teenagers deal with, some better than others.

**W**hat's the connection between dealing with sex in high school and sex in marriage? Loving attitudes, skills, and habits carry over. A bully on the playground stands a good chance of being a bully in a marriage. A casual attitude toward sex as a teenager or young adult increases the likelihood of infidelity in marriage—research backs up that statement. *We become what we do.*

What do people want out of marriage, and what do they hope to give? Most of us want someone who really knows us and likes us anyway. We want to feel free to be ourselves—not that we don't need to change and grow, but that someone accepts and loves us just as we are. Another name for that is intimacy.

What comes to mind when someone says the word intimacy? Honestly?

For many people, intimacy is a polite term for sex. On TV, if a courtroom attorney asks the person on the stand, "Were you intimate with the defendant?" the attorney is really asking, "Have you had sex with the defendant?"

If asked to name another kind of intimacy besides sexual intimacy, some might come up with emotional intimacy—feeling close to another person. When people are looking for a romantic relationship, they often seek out some combination of sexual and emotional intimacy.

If we look at intimacy more broadly, as being known and accepted, as being truly connected to another person, different kinds of intimacy surface. Trying to keep a lifelong relationship going on just two kinds of intimacy is like trying to run an eight cylinder car on two cylinders. Possible, but rough. The more cylinders—or types of intimacy—we have going, the sturdier and happier our relationships will be.

**Humor** People connect through humor when they laugh at the same things. Have you ever been in a class and something strikes you and your best friend as funny but you know you're not supposed to laugh? Or been in a room where everyone else thought something was funny and you didn't? You've experienced the power of humor to connect and to exclude. Humor adds joy to life and helps make hard times bearable. Imagine being married to someone with no sense of humor.



**Spiritual** Have you ever been in a room with other people and just known God was there? Are there people you pray with? Being truly present to someone spiritually, which isn't necessarily the same as agreeing with them, is a powerful form of intimacy.



**Work** Think of a team where, win or lose, you knew everybody cared and were in it together. Farm families connect when they're working hard to gather hay before a rain or get a field planted on time. Raising a family can be a type of work that connects—and it can be a big source of conflict in modern marriages.



**Intellectual** Do you enjoy a good debate or discussion? Are you curious? Some people highly value a lively intellectual conversation with a friend or spouse.





# SUNDAY GOSPEL

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Jesus forms a new community.

**NARRATOR:** On the third day there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. While they were there, Jesus' mother noticed that the wine had run out.

**MARY:** Jesus, they have no wine.

**JESUS:** Mother, what is this to you and me? My hour has not yet come.

**MARY:** (To the servants) Do whatever he tells you.

**NARRATOR:** Nearby stood six large stone water jars, holding water for the washings prescribed by Jewish law. Each jar held between fifteen to twenty-five gallons.

**JESUS:** Fill the jars with water.

**NARRATOR:** The servants filled them to the brim.

**JESUS:** Now draw from the jars, and take it to the steward in charge of the feast.

**NARRATOR:** The servants did what Jesus asked. The chief steward tasted the water which had become wine without knowing where it had come from. Only the servants knew, because they had drawn the water. The steward called the bridegroom.

**STEWARD:** People usually serve their choice wine first, and then when guests have been drinking for a while, a lesser vintage. But you have kept the choice wine until now.

**NARRATOR:** Jesus performed this first of his signs at Cana in Galilee. He revealed his glory and his disciples began to believe in him.

John 2.1-11



**Appreciation** Ever seen a beautiful sunset and really wish you had someone to share it? Or a movie, or anything else you consider amazing to behold? What would it be like to live with someone who played music you hated really, really loud? Appreciating some of the same things connects people, sometimes without words.



**Fun** What do you like to do for fun? Whether you like rollerblading, dancing, watching professional sports, or hanging out in coffee shops, relaxing and enjoying an activity together balances a relationship.

**A** healthy, loving marriage requires several types of intimacy to thrive. High school relationships begin to form habits and attitudes that shape more serious relationships in the future. You spend many hours each week at school, which prepares you for an eventual job. Many teenagers spend many hours practicing to excel at a sport or other activity they care about. What practices today will help build the relationship you want in your future?

**QUESTIONS** **1** How many types of intimacy do you think the average teen relationship possesses? **2** What percentage of the sexual activity among your classmates would you guess is intimate as defined in the article? **3** How many types of intimacy do you think are needed to keep a good marriage going? **4** What is Jesus' relationship with his mother? **5** To what families and communities does Jesus belong? **6** In what sense is Jesus the life of the wedding party?

# Spirituality, sexuality, and mutual love

**S**exuality is a wholistic way of describing human persons who are male or female, skin, bones, fat, muscle, spiritual selves. Our laughing, talking, thinking, choosing, feeling, touching are all part of our total sexuality. Our sexuality includes our capacity for human intercourse, not just sexual intercourse.

The teen years are the time in life to learn how to be intimate without sexual intercourse. Friendships help us practice. We try trusting and confiding in people outside our families. We get a sense of who we are from their reactions. We try telling how we feel. We get hurt and withdraw. In friendships we discover some of our friends have feelings like ours, some don't. We get attached to friends, share their problems, and react to their moods.

Spirituality expresses the human spirit, our drive and desire for meaning, love, and purpose. Spirituality is our moving in the Holy Spirit, our reflecting, praying, opening to relationships with others and with God.

Friendship helps our spirituality and sexuality to grow together, so we can become whole persons.

**W**e humans experience feelings of sexual attraction in our bodies (physiologically) and in our conscious, spiritual selves (psychologically). Our sexual feelings do not program us to act by instinct like animals. We act sexually by choice, by thinking, acting out of what we value.

St. Augustine, who associated sexuality with the animal/body side of human nature, influenced Christian moral thinking about sexuality very negatively in the AD 400s. People today share his view when they talk about falling in love. They lose their heads. They think they have no choice but to follow their natural feelings. Augustine taught passion is unruly, grasping, difficult to control as a result of original sin.

People today workout and make over their bodies but experience little of the capacity of their spirits for faithfulness and intimacy. In this way of thinking, the act of intercourse—

physical intimacy—is able to do the work that in reality only sharing all the types of intimacy can do: creating closeness by talking, sharing, and listening.

Love is more than an emotion and more than a name for romantic, sexual attraction. Love is also a one-word summary of all that Christian and Jewish teaching asks of us.

**F**rom the beginning Jesus challenges Christians to live in mutual love, despite differences between Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, men and women. Serving one another in mutual love and treating one another as equals aren't easy.

Jesus challenges his followers to build a community that reverses the usual pecking order in Roman families, in which the father was head and then in rank, the wife, children, male slaves, female slaves. The members of Jesus' community call no one father. "Only one is your father, the One in heaven." The community has only one teacher—the messiah.

Early Christians formed communities of equals and challenged one another to love as Jesus loved them, not as a household in which some submitted to the authority of others. Instead they called one another brothers and sisters, terms of equal rank. In serving one another they lived out Jesus' challenge to mutual love.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul describes the Christian community as being one in Christ. "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (3.28).

Most Christians live out Jesus' challenge to love in the sacrament of marriage. The Catechism of the Catholic Church understands marriage as a sacrament of service. A husband and wife love each other mutually. Each partner seeks his or her well-being in the other. The health of their children rests on the well-being of their relationship, so ultimately does the well-being of society.



The very **WORD** made flesh willed to **SHARE IN HUMAN FELLOWSHIP**. He was present at the wedding of Cana... and **SANCTIFIED** those **HUMAN TIES**, especially **FAMILY TIES**, from which **social RELATIONSHIPS** arise.

Gaudium et Spes #32

## FAITH in ACTION

- 1 If you were getting married tomorrow and could only pick four types of intimacy (physical, emotional, humor, work, spiritual, intellectual, appreciation, fun) which would you choose? Why? Or rank the kinds of intimacy in order of importance to you.
- 2 What are the greatest examples of love you have experienced?
- 3 How should friends treat friends in mutual love?
- 4 How should boy- and girlfriends treat each other in dating relationships?

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