

Maryvale Institute



A Catechesis on Marriage and Family

General Introduction

This new course – *A Catechesis on Marriage and Family* - looks at God's saving plan of love which is lived in a special way in the vocation to marriage and family life. The course brings together the reality of who we are, the richness of our life's experience, and our Catholic Faith. It is in the light of Faith that we can truly know who we are, the meaning of our lives and the full truth about the call to love and life in marriage and the family. With this understanding, we are able to participate fruitfully in the Church's mission in the 'New Evangelization'."

Structure

This is a six-month course. There are two modules: Module 1 on Marriage and Module 2 on Family. Each module involves 10 weeks of study with a further 2 weeks to complete an assignment. Upon completion, students will be awarded a Maryvale Certificate (A Catechesis on Marriage and Family).

Content

Module 1: Marriage

Chapter 1 The course begins by looking at *Marriage and Family Today*. This includes an examination of the challenges facing marriage and family and the response to those challenges both within the Church and wider society.

Chapter 2 *Marriage and Family as a Witness to Love*. Here the focus is on the relationship between our understanding of the Faith and the lived witness to the Faith in the New Evangelization. This lived witness is the fruit of a personal encounter with God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. This encounter is very important for understanding marriage and family as a living image of Divine Love.

Chapter 3 This chapter looks at the foundation of marriage in *God's Plan for Human Love – 'Marriage in the Beginning'*. This plan is revealed in the creation of man – male and female – in the 'image and likeness of God'. The truth about who we are as men and women (anthropological truth) is intrinsically bound to the truth about who God is (theological truth).

Chapter 4 *Human Love is Redeemed - Sacrament of Marriage*. Human love is rendered fragile by Original Sin and personal sin. It is in need of redemption. Our ability to love is healed by God's own Love given to us through His Son. We need God's grace in order to love. Here we study the relationship between Baptism, the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Marriage.

Chapter 5 *Marriage – a lifelong journey together in love.* In this chapter, we look at the concrete experience of love in marriage: from falling in love, to marriage preparation, to the different stages on the journey – the joys and challenges. It is in and through the journey that we ‘learn how to love’ and in doing so live out the truth of our humanity, created in the ‘image and likeness’ of a God who ‘is Love’.

Module 2: Family

In this Module we learn why God’s design for the family is the source of blessing for the world, and the heart of the New Evangelization. Five chapters explore the Christian vision of the family as a community of faith, hope and love that is revealed in Creation, redeemed in Christ and central to the ‘transformation and renewal of the world’.

Chapter One presents an overview of the *Gospel – or ‘good news’- of the Family.* It also examines some of the challenges currently facing the family, and the Church’s response in the New Evangelization.

Chapter Two on *The Family and God’s Covenant of Love* looks at the identity of the family in Scripture as the bearer of God’s blessing through the generations. Three principles from Genesis offer the foundation for understanding the family’s mission of love and life: 1) blessing or gift; 2) unity; and 3) fruitfulness.

Chapter Three looks at the family redeemed in the New Covenant so that it becomes the *Church of the Home.* We learn how the family plays its part in extending to the whole world the blessings of belonging to God’s ‘New Covenant Family’: divine adoption, holy communion and eternal life in the Kingdom.

Chapter Four on *The Mission of the Family* examines the way the family shares in the Church’s saving mission, as a ‘school of humanity’ and a ‘school of love’. Christian parents have the sacred task of communicating the Gospel to their children and mediating God’s unconditional love. This chapter explores the missionary vocation of the family as a witness to life, a witness to love, and a witness to faith.

Chapter Five on *The Family: A Journey of Love* presents various aspects of the spirituality of the family as it travels with Christ on a path of love and communion. We look at family discipleship and see why spiritual growth comes through a lifestyle of ‘covenant love and fidelity’, a life-giving love that reaches out beyond itself in welcome and solidarity.

Assignment

At the end of each module, there is an assignment(s) which will allow each student to demonstrate the fruits of his/her study and personal reflection.