



## Recommendations for Parish Ministries and Families

### For Parish Pastoral Leaders

Parish leaders should become familiar with the resources offered on the [www.radiatelove.info](http://www.radiatelove.info) website. The major themes that flow from the readings this weekend include:

- The complementary communion of male and female persons in a covenant relationship tells us something about the divine life of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—because we were created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1:26-28; St. John Paul II, *By the Communion of Persons Man Becomes the Image of God*, November 14, 1979)
- The command God gives to the first man and woman to be fruitful and multiply (Gn 1:28) also informs the covenant relationship of marriage: the man and woman are *for* each other, and no other must come between them, as it is uniquely through their union that human life comes into the world, is protected, and the human family grows in the most optimal setting for the children (Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 292); for this reason, society has a duty to protect and support the institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 217 & 225)
- This ideal is strengthened in prayer; the responsorial Psalm today encourages people of all ages to contemplate the gift of children and grandchildren, and to see in them a blessing from God (Ps 128:4-6)
- The faithfulness, exclusiveness, and indissolubility of marriage are gifts from God that reflect God's unrelenting love for His people, the Church. In turn, the mercy and grace of Christ received in faith make it possible for sinful human beings to live these gifts (Mk 10:7-9) as a witness to the world about the nature of God's love





- The nature of marriage can only be properly understood within a framework of vocation... As social beings, we are not created for ourselves, but for others, and it is only in the total and irrevocable gift of ourselves that the fullness of life and the meaning of love come into view; this happens in marriage, consecrated life, and ordained ministry. As Pope Francis says, it is not so important for young people to ponder “who am I?” as it is to contemplate “for whom am I?” (*Christus Vivit*, 286)

Sample ideas for parish programs and activities this month:

- Invite a guest speaker to make a presentation on the faithfulness, exclusiveness, indissolubility, and fruitfulness of Christian marriage, helping parishioners to understand what is distinctive about our Sacrament in contrast to the practice of civil marriage
- Highlight services and opportunities in the parish for the pastoral care and accompaniment of couples whose marriage is facing a crisis or significant challenge, as well as for individuals who have experienced separation or divorce
- Address CA Proposition 3 that will be on the ballot in November... While it does not change in any way our religious practice of the Sacrament of Marriage, it does undermine societal supports and structures that human cultures have always and everywhere established to protect children for the common good, by helping parents to surround their biological offspring with love, care, stability, and holistic formation





### **For Parish Catechetical Leaders (PCLs) and K-8 Catechists**

Catechists and parents should be encouraged to deepen their understanding of God's plan for human flourishing for those who are called to marriage, and Christ's role in making it possible:

- PCLs: when you communicate with the parents and families you serve this month, share with them the parish or diocese's social media that reminds them of the enduring value of a lifelong commitment in marriage
- Catechists: take some time to:
  - Appreciate the enduring value of a Christian marriage that is faithful, exclusive, indissoluble, and naturally open to children (see Pope Francis [here](#) and [here](#))
  - Discover how as Catholics we may more effectively confront the redefinition of marriage by the secular state (see [Bishop Robert Barron](#))
  - If you are married, share these reflections with your spouse and explore together how Christ can strengthen your relationship so that you may Radiate Love into the world, starting with your family and the faith learners in your ministry
- Incorporate a 5 to 10-minute reflection, discussion, or activity into the catechetical sessions this week, drawing from the materials and resources in this Radiate Love packet. Some options might include:
  - Select a few verses from the first reading (whether male or female, we are all made in love and for love, in God's image and likeness) or the Gospel (marriage is for life, Mk 10:6-9) and do a *lectio divina* with the children. Pflaum's [Gospel Weeklies](#) provides age-appropriate content you may find useful
  - Use the [Saint of the Month](#) (Mary, Untier of Knots) as a group conversation starter
  - Offer marriage-themed coloring pages (i.e. [here](#)) for the younger kids

### **For Parish Youth and Young Adult Ministry Leaders**

The recommendations for PCLs and catechists also apply to parish youth ministry leaders. This month would be a great time to conduct a session on one or more of these topics:

- The enduring value of a lifelong covenant of marriage amid the ups and downs of life (see [this month's bulletin insert](#)), and what it means to prepare for the vocation to love



- The difference between unjust discrimination against people who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and the Church's unchanging definition of sacramental marriage as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman (see [Bishop Robert Barron](#) and [Fr. Mike Schmitz](#))
- How the complementarity of man and woman in marriage reveals something about the inner life of God as Trinity, and its implications for how we become fulfilled as human beings (see the references regarding this week's scripture readings at the beginning of this document)

### **For Catholic Couples and Parents**

Families and couples are always encouraged to visit the [Families](#) and [Married Couples](#) sections of the Radiate Love website. In addition, take some time this month to learn together as a couple and pray as a family:

- USCCB – Visit [For Your Marriage](#) and [Por Tu Matrimonio](#)
  - [Love Means More: Teachings and resources](#) on the meaning of love
  - [In Sickness and in Health](#)
  - [The Body Reveals What We Are Made For](#)
  - Explore articles on [Overcoming Adversity](#) in the adventure of marital commitment
- If you are a child of divorce, explore the resources of [Life-Giving Wounds](#) to find healing

