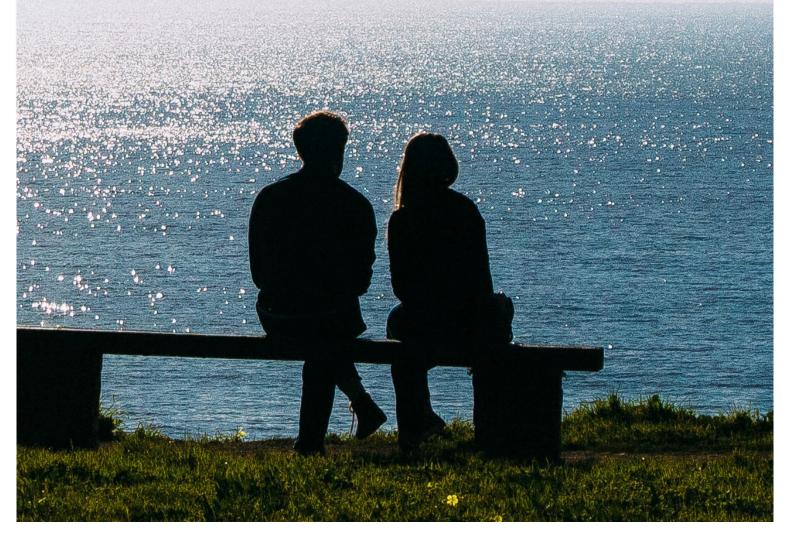


Participant Guide







PRAYER & WELCOME (10 min)

Introduce selves (name, how long married, why joined, what you'd like to get out of the group, quarantine struggle, quarantine blessing)

St. Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians from prison and it reflects his great love for the Philippian community. It is a joyful letter filled with hope. Paul is not despairing because he is in prison, he is thankful for their prayers and he pledges prayer for them. Paul writes about the transforming power of Jesus' death and resurrection for the faithful and the joy we can find in suffering.

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:8 (15 min)

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

- What speaks to you in this passage?
- How did you feel when you read this?

READ CCC 1803 (15 min)

A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

- What does the first sentence suggest?
- Are we able to do good and be holy on our own?
- How can you pursue the good through concrete actions with your spouse?

VIRTUES DISCUSSION (15 min)

| Theological | Charity: love of God & others |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| (from God) | Faith: belief in God |
| | Hope: desiring heaven |

 Cardinal
 Fortitude: strength in times of trial

 (our effort)
 Prudence: common sense & good decisions

 Temperance: moderation of pleasure
 Justice: treating others equitably

- Which of these virtues do you feel good about in your life?
- Which of these virtues do you wish to grow in?

THE TAKEAWAY & PRACTICE (10 min)

Below, write down one thing you learned in this session or one thing that is speaking to your heart. Write a short prayer (2 or 3 sentences) asking Jesus to keep this on your heart until we meet again. Pick a time to say this prayer each day.

DAILY CHECK IN (5 min)

Take turns checking in daily with your spouse. This can be a short (5 minutes is okay) check in to hold each other accountable and connect or a longer conversation. Together pray the prayers you wrote above.



INTRODUCTION & 90 SECOND CHECK IN (5 min)

The theological virtues are given to us by God. They are the "action of the Holy Spirit" (CCC 1813). They are so important we pray for an increase in them every time we pray a Rosary. Charity is one of the theological virtues (along with faith and hope which will be discussed in the next two sessions). Charity is love.

Charity is the "virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God." (CCC 1822) Charity is the first and most important virtue.

"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (I Cor 13:13)

READ JOHN 15: 9, 11 (15 min)

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

- Reflect on the love you feel for your spouse. God's love for you as his son/daughter is infinitely greater. What feelings does that reality invoke in you?
- Do you ever doubt God's unconditional, extravagant love for you?

READ 1 COR 13: 1-4 (15 min)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

- What is the message you hear in this passage?
- Finish the sentence for a 21st century wife/husband: If I do/have _____ but not love, I am nothing.
- When is loving a challenge and how can we begin to overcome that challenge?

READ CCC 1829 (15 min)

The fruits of charity are joy, peace, and mercy; charity demand beneficence and fraternal correction; it is benevolence; it fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous; it is friendship and communion; Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run; we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.

- What are the traits of charity?
- How do these traits manifest themselves in marriage?

THE TAKEAWAY & PRACTICE (10 min)

Below, write down one thing you learned in this session or one thing that is speaking to your heart. Write a short prayer (2 or 3 sentences) asking Jesus to keep this on your heart until we meet again. Pick a time to say this prayer each day.

DAILY CHECK IN (5 min)

Take turns checking in daily with your spouse. This can be a short (5 minutes is okay) check in to hold each other accountable and connect or a longer conversation. Together pray the prayers you wrote above.



INTRODUCTION & 90 SECOND CHECK IN (5 min)

"Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that the Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith 'Man freely commits his entire self to God.' For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will." (CCC 1814)

READ MT 14: 22-33 JESUS WALKS ON WATER (15 min)

- What did Peter do first? Second? Third?
- What was Jesus' response?
- How can we apply this parable to our marriage?

READ MT 17: 18-20 (15 min)

And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

- What does Jesus promise if we have faith?
- Can Jesus do the impossible? Do you believe this?

READ CCC 1816 (15 min)

The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: 'All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks.'

- How can we grow in faith with our spouse?
- How can we as a couple witness the faith to others?

THE TAKEAWAY & PRACTICE (10 min)

Below, write down one thing you learned in this session or one thing that is speaking to your heart.

Pray the Apostles Creed daily & reflect on what you are confessing belief in. Consider praying it with your children

DAILY CHECK IN (5 min)

Take turns checking in daily with your spouse. This can be a short (5 minutes is okay) check in to hold each other accountable and connect or a longer conversation. Together pray the prayers you wrote above.



INTRODUCTION & 90 SECOND CHECK IN (5 min)

"Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1817)

READ ROMANS 5:2-5 (15 min)

Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

- What does it mean to "rejoice in our sufferings?"
- How are you suffering as a human/husband/wife right now?
- How can you rejoice in your suffering?

READ ROMANS 12: 11-12 (15 min)

Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

- What does St. Paul suggest we do?
- Share one concrete, specific way you can follow St. Paul's suggestion

READ CCC 1818 (15 min)

The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity.

- What are some effects of hope?
- Which of these effects would you like most right now?
- Which of these effects would you like for your spouse right now?

THE TAKEAWAY & PRACTICE (10 min)

Below, write down one thing you learned in this session or one thing that is speaking to your heart.

"Hope is expressed and nourished in prayer, especially the Our Father, the summary of everything that hope leads us to desire." (CCC 1820). Pray the Our Father slowly each day, reflecting on each line.

DAILY CHECK IN (5 min)

Take turns checking in daily with your spouse. This can be a short (5 minutes is okay) check in to hold each other accountable and connect or a longer conversation. Together pray the prayers you wrote above.

Session 5: FORTITUDE & PRUDENCE

PRAYER (5 min)

INTRODUCTION & 90 SECOND CHECK IN (5 min)

"Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life." (CCC 1808)

"Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it." (CCC 1806)

READ JOHN 16:33 (15 min)

I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

- What speaks to your heart in this passage?
- How does this passage relate to the virtue of fortitude?

READ PSALM 118:14 (15 min)

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.

- How does this passage help us in increasing our fortitude?
- Where in your life as a husband/wife do you need more fortitude?

READ CCC 1806 (15 min)

Prudence is "right reason in action," write St. Thomas Aquinas...it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure. It is prudence that immediately guides the judgment of conscience....with the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid.

- What are some real world examples of times when you've had to exercise prudence?
- Where can you use more prudence in your marriage?

THE TAKEAWAY & PRACTICE (10 min)

Below, write down one thing you learned in this session or one thing that is speaking to your heart. Write a short prayer (2 or 3 sentences) asking Jesus to keep this on your heart until we meet again. Pick a time to say this prayer each day.

DAILY CHECK IN (5 min)

Take turns checking in daily with your partner via email, text, phone call (!) or face time. This can be a short (5 minutes is okay) check in to hold each other accountable and connect or a longer conversation.



INTRODUCTION & 90 SECOND CHECK IN (5 min)

"Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable. The temperate person directs the sensitive appetites toward what is good and maintains a healthy discretion." (CCC 1809)

"Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor." (CCC 1807)

READ SIRACH 18: 30, 32 (15 min)

Do not follow your base desires, but restrain your appetites. Do not revel in great luxury, lest you become impoverished by its expense.

What is the cost of reveling in great luxury?

READ TITUS 2: 11-12 (15 min)

For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world.

- Is it harder in this time of uncertainty and social isolation to live temperately and why?
- How can we fight the temptation to binge watch Netflix or spend too much time on our phones or social media? Why should we fight it?
- What kind of assumptions do people make about sober, upright, godly living?

READ CCC 1807 (15 min)

Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. The just man... is distinguished by habitual right thinking and the uprightness of conduct toward his neighbor.

• Are shelter in place/stay at home directives just? Why or why not?

THE TAKEAWAY & PRACTICE (10 min)

Below, write down one thing you learned in this session or one thing that is speaking to your heart. Write a short prayer (2 or 3 sentences) asking Jesus to keep this on your heart. Pick a time to say this prayer each day.

CONCLUSION

To live well is nothing other than to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul and with all one's efforts; from this it comes about that love is kept whole and uncorrupted (through temperance). No misfortune can disturb it (and this is fortitude). It obeys only [God] (and this is justice), and is careful in discerning things, so as not to be surprised by deceit or trickery (and this is prudence). (CCC 1809 quoting St Augustine)