# The Catholic Response to Transgenderism

### CONNECTIONS TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

CCC 369 CCC 2333-2335

### MATERIALS

- ► The New Thinking
- A Lady and her Knight/A Knight and his Lady
- Speaking the Truth in Love to Trans-Identified Family and Friends

### SUGGESTED TIME

50 minutes

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### **Teacher Background**

To be human is to be a personal union of a body and spirit. We are not just bodies with mental functions, and we are not just minds housed in a flesh-machine. We are one, integrated reality. From the moment each of us was conceived, when our spiritual soul was united with the very first cell of our body, we were male or female. Secondary characteristics can be altered by taking large doses of opposite-sex hormones, or by removing healthy body parts, but we can never cease being male or female.



### HOW DOES THIS LESSON HELP INOCULATE STUDENTS AGAINST GENDER IDEOLOGY?

Gender ideology asserts that there are no essential differences between men and women. In this lesson, students will encounter these and other basic claims of transgender ideology, and learn how they contradict reality. Students will be provided strategies for encountering and accompanying trans-identifying friends or family members, without compromising truth or love.

### Activity

- A. The day before, distribute <u>The Catholic Response to</u> <u>Transgenderism</u> for students to read at home, asking them to read it carefully and discuss responses to the questions with their parents.
- B. In class, discuss responses as large group. Throughout discussion, emphasize as needed that our feelings never define us, and that disagreement is not hatred.



- C. Then, distribute <u>A Lady and her Knight</u> <u>A</u> <u>Knight and his Lady</u>. Ask students to spend a few minutes studying the two paintings, and then discussing the questions. You may choose to have students work in small groups, or you could discuss as a large group. Use the answer key to guide discussion.
- D. Finally, distribute Speaking the Truth in Love to Trans-Identified Family and Friends and have students read and discuss it in groups for a few moments. Then reconvene the class and discuss each tip in turn as a large group.
- E. Encourage students to share all the materials from class today with their parents.



### **The New Thinking**

Directions: Read the essay and then discuss the questions that follow.

If you had reached adulthood before the 2000's, you would never have heard of being "trans." You would have known about cross-dressers, or transvestites (from the Latin prefix *trans*, for across, and *vestimentum*, or clothing). Transvestites are typically adult men who like to dress in women's clothes. You might have heard of Gender Identity Disorder (or Gender Dysphoria), where a person experiences a sense that they are the other sex, a rare psychological condition.

Your own life experience and knowledge of history would have informed you that not all stereotypes about boys and girls are fixed in stone: some little girls like sports better than dolls, and some boys are more drawn to dancing than to battle. While most men are physically larger and stronger than most women, some women are larger and stronger than some men. That is perfectly normal! And while most women are more nurturing than most men, some men are more naturally nurturing than some women. Again-perfectly normal!

But gender ideology insists that feelings and stereotypes about sex determine reality. Gender ideology says that if you're unhappy or unsatisfied with being the sex that you are, or with trying to be what culture says a boy or a girl should be, then it may be that you're not actually a boy or girl. And if anyone disagrees with that idea, that person is either ignorant, or a hateful bigot: a "transphobe." This claim is false, for many reasons we will explore.



The Marriage Feast at Cana, Juan de Flandes

#### The Unchangeable Reality of Sex

Being human is to be a personal union of a body and spirit. You're not just a body with mental functions, and you're not just a mind living inside a flesh-machine. You are one, integrated reality. You're also an individual person with unique qualities and quirks, and a unique history and environment, each of which contribute to who you are. Your personality can change and grow, but your nature is a body-spirit unity. From the moment of your conception, the moment when your spiritual soul was united with the

very first cell of your body, you were male or female. As your body grew with the multiplication and differentiation of its cells, your soul animated and filled it, and each cell in your body was, and always will be, either male or female. If you are male, each cell in your heart, skin, brain, fingers, and toes is male. If you're female, your cells are female all the way. Superficial characteristics can be altered by taking large doses of opposite-sex hormones, by taking drugs that stop puberty, or by cutting off body parts, but you can never cease being male or female. This unchangeable reality is what we call "sex".



Girl with a Pearl Earring, Johannes Vermeer.

### **Sex and Sex Roles**

Throughout history, men and women have tended to "specialize" in their social roles. Cultures vary widely, but in each place and time, men have been more likely to do some things, and women others. There is nothing necessarily wrong with deviating from these. For example, there is nothing disordered or contrary to nature in a woman driving a truck, or a man becoming a nurse. But there is something deeply disordered about a man thinking he's really a woman. A man who tries to be a woman is rejecting his identity and trying to divorce his spirit from his body. Rather than "embracing who he really is," or "living his authentic self" as gender ideology might say about trans-identification, he is rejecting who he really is, and living a fantasy instead.

#### The Gift of Our Identity

Our identity is neither a purely mental phenomenon, nor is it something we craft ourselves. On the level of nature, we are each composed of a soul (with an intellect and a will) and a body (with its various faculties), and made in the image and likeness of God. On the level of grace, our identity is a son or daughter of God by virtue of Christ's work. Notice the Church has never said our identity is that of "child of God," but specifically His son or His daughter. This distinction is because being a girl, or being a boy, is a unique and special thing, an integral part of our identity.

#### The Truth with Compassion

Those who experience body-or identity-related distress need love and understanding, never hatred or mockery. They are or may perceive themselves to be the target of vitriol and misunderstanding.

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People in this situation are very vulnerable. Tragically, many have been misled to believe that the only thing that will make them happy is embracing a belief that goes against objective reality. Since this reality is artificial, it needs to be constantly propped up or "affirmed" by everyone else. Being both truthful and loving toward people in this state of mind — especially if they've permanently altered their bodies with hormones and surgeries — is not a simple task, but it is a requirement for a Christian. Later in this lesson, we will consider some strategies for being truthful in a loving way.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Try to remember the first time you encountered a male portraying himself as female, or vice-versa. What is the difference between your natural reaction and feelings, and how our culture expects you to feel? (If you are afraid to even acknowledge your natural reaction, what might this suggest about our culture's current values?)
- After high school you will probably encounter aggressive forms of gender ideology. How will you face this challenge with the appropriate balance of kindness, justice, and discretion? How can you form friendships with LGBT-identifying friends, which respect the boundaries of truth, while permitting you to witness mercy?

#### **Discussion Questions Answer Key:**

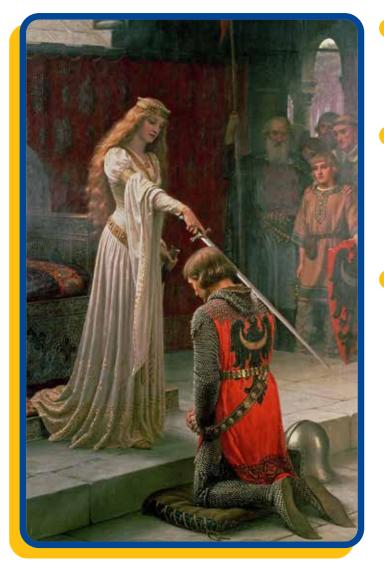
- 1. Accept reasoned answers. Our culture tries to say that any reaction other than affirmation is hateful; this false ideology is completely opposed to reality and in fact harms the people it claims to help. It is never good or helpful to lead someone away from the truth
- 2. Accept reasoned answers that do not separate compassion and truth. It is never compassionate or loving to lead someone away from the truth, but you do not want to share the truth without compassion, because that would be hurtful. Possible answers include: showing kindness and politeness, protecting the person from real harm, expecting friendship to be a "two-way-street" (meaning the LGBT-identifying person must also respect the student's boundaries), being willing to pursue common interests when present.

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### **STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY**

### A Lady and her Knight/ A Knight and his Lady

**Directions:** Study the two images carefully and provide thoughtful answers to the questions.



Who is in the position of authority in this picture?

The lady or queen is in the position of authority, since she is bestowing knighthood on a kneeling man.

Who is in the position of subjection or vulnerability in this picture?

The knight-to-be, as he is kneeling and receiving his office from the lady.

Does this image also symbolize something in human life, or remind you of anything from your experience?

In life, men receive their lives and much of their formation from their mothers. Boys are subject to their mother's (and father's) authority. In marriage, young men receive both encouragement and a new, focused sense of responsibility from their wives.

The Accolade, Edmond Leighton

THE CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDERISM

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Who is in the position of authority in this picture? The knight going off to war seems to be in a position of

authority, as he has a mission for which he has been appointed. His authority is directed toward protecting and preserving the community, of which she is a part.

5 Who is in the position of subjection or vulnerability in this picture?

> The lady is in a position of vulnerability because she supports and encourages the knight but is not in the battle herself. He is her protector.



Godspeed, Edmond Leighton

Does this image also symbolize something in human life, or remind you of anything from your experience?

Marriage in the order of grace is a sign of the union between Christ and His Church; fathers are called to love, protect, and provide for their wives and give their lives for them. In many families, fathers provide by going to work, while mothers (even when they do work) maintain the household and family more directly. Significantly, Catholic social teaching requires employers to consider employee's needs as well as their contributions, and defines just wages as those that can support a family (CCC 2434). Men often view their relationship to work as one of battling for the sake of their "kingdom" (household).

THE CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDERISM

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### **STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY**

### **Comparing both paintings:**



If you see differences in positions of authority and of subjection or vulnerability in these two paintings, what does that suggest to you about the relations of the sexes in real life?

It suggests that, at different times, men and women trade places of authority and subjection or vulnerability. One example is in marriage: the sign of the union between Christ and His Church. While the husband is the head of the family as Jesus is the Head of the Church, spouses are both called to be subject to one another for Christ (CCC1642).

Can the knight achieve his destiny without the lady? (Explain your answer.) No, because with no one to protect and defend, a knight has no purpose.

Can the lady achieve her destiny without the knight? (Explain your answer) No, she cannot realize all the dimensions of her womanhood without the love and protection of her knight.

To what extent is the contrast between the sexes and the roles they play part of what makes the paintings beautiful?

Allow discussion, but help students see that the paintings would be far less beautiful and iconic without the interplay of two distinct sexes.

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### Speaking the Truth in Love to Trans-Identified Family and Friends

As we have learned, being both truthful and loving toward people suffering from bodyand identity-related distress is not a simple task, but it is a requirement for a Christian. Here are some things we can do and steps we can take in our relationships with transidentified people.

### 🚺 Pray.

Pray for the person, that they may come to see themselves as God sees them. Pray for humility, kindness, and wisdom for yourself.

### Spend time together doing typical, favorite activities.

Find things to do that do not focus on the person's perceived trans identity. Spend time away from social media and outdoors in nature as much as possible.

### In conversations, ask questions to understand the person's experience.

Remember that your goal is not to win an argument or change the person's mind, but to understand what they are going through so you can offer support. With prudence, you may gently ask questions that may prompt deeper thinking. For example, "If all 'trans women' are women, are all women 'trans women?'" Or, "If the body does not determine sex, how does changing one's body affirm it?"

### 4 Be patient.

Don't allow yourself to be discouraged into thinking nothing good can come from prayerfully accompanying your confused friend or family member towards the truth.

#### 5 Be truthful and compassionate.

You can't separate compassion and truth. They are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, you must never speak the truth in anything but charity and love. And even more, it is never compassionate to lead someone away from the truth. Affirm the person, but not the perceived trans-identity. Everything we do and say should be both just and merciful.

For short videos with examples of how to respond to common questions about transgender identification, visit **SophiaOnline.org/Transgender** 

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# The Catholic Response to Transgenderism

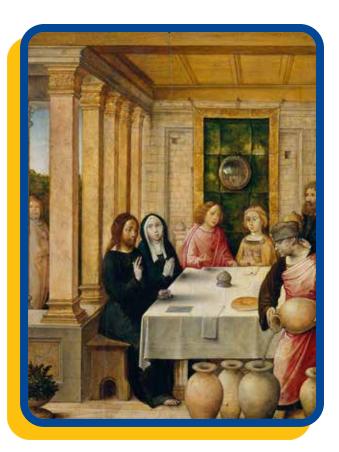
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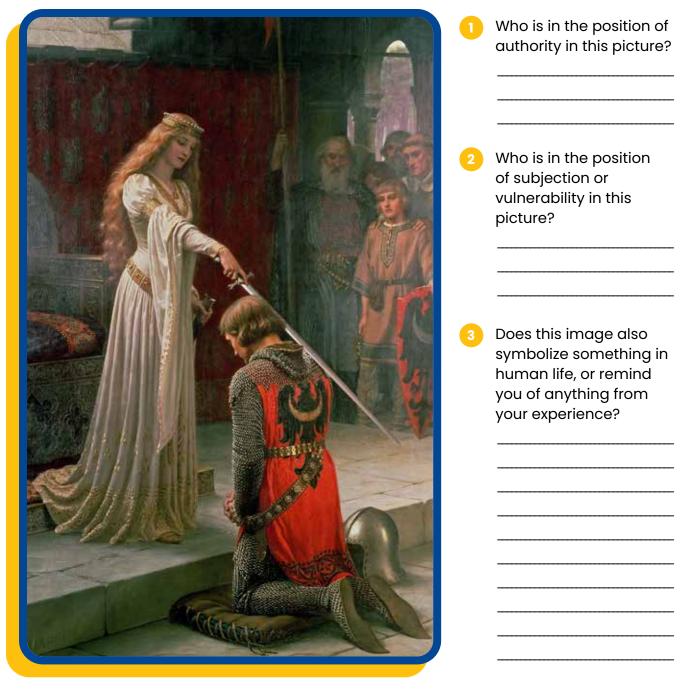
### **Discussion Questions**

Try to remember the first time you encountered a male portraying himself as female, or vice-versa. What is the difference between your natural reaction and feelings, and how our culture expects you to feel? (If you are afraid to even acknowledge your natural reaction, what might this suggest about our culture's current values?)

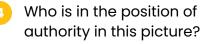
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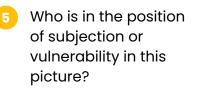
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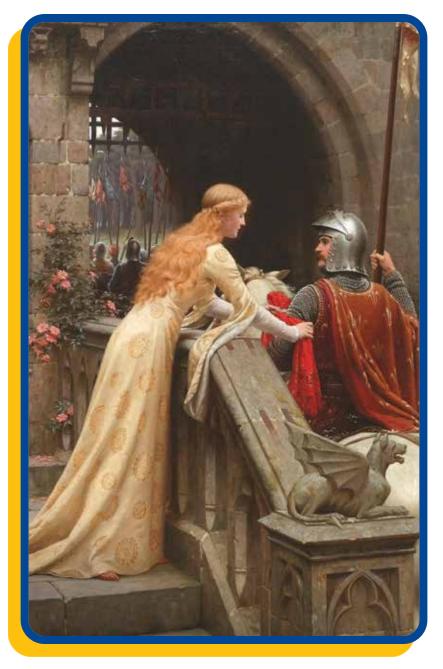
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The Accolade, Edmond Leighton







Godspeed, Edmond Leighton

Does this image also symbolize something in human life, or remind you of anything from your experience?

### **Comparing both paintings:**



6 If you see differences in positions of authority and of subjection or vulnerability in these two paintings, what does that suggest to you about the relations of the sexes in real life?

Can the knight achieve his destiny without the lady? (Explain your answer.)

Can the lady achieve her destiny without the knight? (Explain your answer)

To what extent is the contrast between the sexes and the roles they play part of what makes the paintings beautiful?

## Speaking the Truth in Love to Trans-Identified Family and Friends

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### Spend time together doing typical, favorite activities.

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# Who Am I?

**PRO TIP** Download other grades for alternate activities!

### CONNECTIONS TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

282-294 355-357 362-366 358-360 1716-1724

### MATERIALS

- Who Am I? Chart
- Teacher and Parent Resource: The Human Person in Brief
- Teacher and Parent Resource: The Culture Says/ The Truth Is

### **SUGGESTED TIME**

20 minutes

### **Teacher Background**

Each human being is created in God's image and likeness, and deeply loved by Him. We are each a unity of body and immortal soul. It may be easier in some ways to believe that we are purely material beings and that after we die, we simply cease to exist. But the truth is that what we do in this life matters for eternity. Our bodies will die one day, but our souls live forever, either in Heaven or in hell. Christ is our hope as we strive to grow in holiness and fulfill the true meaning of our lives.



### HOW DOES THIS LESSON HELP INOCULATE STUDENTS AGAINST GENDER IDEOLOGY?

This lesson begins a year-long process of confronting the errors of gender ideology. Students will learn that we are made to come to know God, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world so that we might fulfill our intended purpose to be happy with Him for all eternity in Heaven. This can only happen if we are aware of our natures, our intended purposes, and the call to self-giving love.

### Activity

- A. Explain to this class that over the course of this year we will be looking at the age-old question "Who Am I?" Since the dawn of humanity, people have sought the answers to questions like who we are, why we are here, and what the meaning of life is.
- B. Distribute **Who Am I? Chart** and read aloud the information.
- C. Note that for each question on this chart, there is a real answer that is good, true, and beautiful. That answer is taught by the Catholic Church. But there are other forces in the culture that seek to provide answers to these questions. Which answer we choose to accept and internalize will have massive consequences in our lives and the lives of those around us.



- D. Finally, explain that we will do a quick run-through of the real answers to the questions in the chart before we begin filling it out, and we will continue to complete it throughout the year.
- E. Use **Teacher and Parent Resource: The Human Person in Brief** to present a mini-lecture about the chart content. Encourage students to simply listen for now; they can listen for familiar ideas and jot down any questions they have, and you will answer each question fully as the year progresses.
- F. You may wish to send this resource home for parents, along with **Teacher and Parent Resource: The Culture Says/The Truth Is Chart.**

Note: If possible, make a large copy of the Who Am I? chart and post it somewhere in your classroom so that students can see and be reminded of it all year long. Fill it in together as you complete the following lessons in this series.

### Who Am I? Chart

**Directions:** Read the information, and then briefly skim over the chart that follows. The chart contains some questions we wll ask this year to discover true first principles. For now, fill in just the second column with any notes that you have as you read through the chart questions.

Have you ever heard or been part of an argument where it seemed impossible to find common ground, and you wondered why? Often, disagreements about particular topics are based on disagreement over unspoken principles.

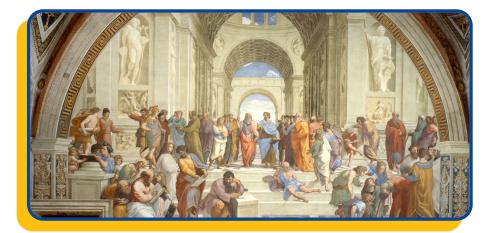
For example, is abortion good or bad for society? Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger argued that abortion and eugenics (killing or sterilizing those with less desirable traits) were good for human flourishing. The Church, of course, teaches that abortion and eugenics are morally wrong.

How can there be such disagreement? Because of unspoken assumptions about human nature and the meaning of life.

If you begin with the unspoken assumption that individuals exist to serve society, it makes sense that the less capable, less intelligent, or otherwise "unfit" people should be removed. In this distorted world view, removing those with less desirable traits will lead to human flourishing.

But when you begin with the truth that each person is created in God's image and deeply loved by Him, then it becomes clear that every human life is precious, unrepeatable, and of infinite value. Our dignity comes from God and not from what we produce or contribute to society. Therefore we can know that abortion is objectively wrong, and bad for society.

When seeking to understand the truth about transgender issues, or any other topic that might present a challenge, it's often helpful to examine first principles as a starting point, in order to see if it might be the root of the difficulty.



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WHO AM I?

### **STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY**

| Who<br>am I?  | My notes about<br>this question        | How does gender<br>ideology try to<br>answer this question?   | What is the true<br>answer to this<br>question?                          |
|---|--|---|--|
| What is my<br><b>identity</b> , and how<br>can I know it for<br>sure? | Student notes and questions will vary. | We will fill these columns<br>Identity is<br>self-determined. | out throughout the year<br>Son or daughter<br>of God.                    |
| Do I have <b>dignity</b> ?<br>Where does it<br>come from?             | Student notes and questions will vary. | Affirmation from others.                                      | From God; from being<br>made in His image<br>and deeply loved by<br>Him. |
| What is <b>human</b><br>nature?                                       | Student notes and questions will vary. | There is no such thing.                                       | A unity of body and<br>soul, created for<br>communion with<br>God.       |
| What is the<br>meaning of <b>my</b><br>body?                          | Student notes and questions will vary. | A tool, or canvas for self-expression.                        | The soul made<br>manifest.   |

Brief answers provided below; topics will be explored fully throughout the year.

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WHO AM I?

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### **STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY**

Brief answers provided below; topics will be explored fully throughout the year. Students not need to fill out these columns for this activity

| Who<br>am I?   | My notes about<br>this question        | How does gender<br>ideology try to<br>answer this question?                      | What is the true<br>answer to this<br>question?   |
|--|--|--|---|
| What is <b>marriage</b> ,<br>and <b>why</b> should<br>people get<br>married? | Student notes and questions will vary. | We will fill these columns<br>Temporary<br>arrangement for<br>benefit of adults. | out throughout the year.<br>Lifelong union of one<br>man and one woman<br>ordered primarily<br>toward procreation |
| What is the<br>purpose<br>of <b>human</b><br>sexuality?                      | Student notes and questions will vary. | Pleasure,<br>self-expression.  | Life-giving self-gift.  |
| Who is a <b>family</b><br>made up of?  | Student notes and questions will vary. | Whoever individuals choose.  | Husband, wife,<br>and children.   |
| Why is there<br><b>suffering</b> ?   | Student notes and questions will vary. | Suffering is caused<br>by oppression.  | Suffering can be<br>caused by sin, and<br>can be redemptive.  |

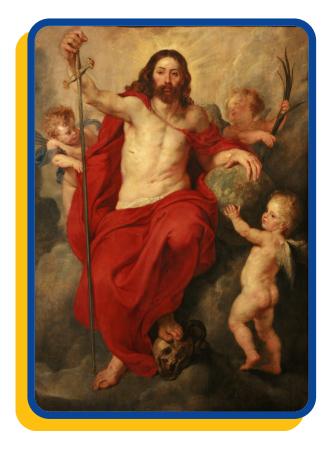
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WHO AM I?

### **TEACHER AND PARENT RESOURCE**

# The Human Person in Brief

Directions: Use the notes below to present a mini-lecture.



For centuries, the Catholic church has taught the truth of the human person. These basic truths are summed up here.

**First and most important – we are created, male or female, by a loving God.** Because He loves us and created us in His image and likeness for eternal life with Him, we have inherent dignity. We can't lose our human dignity no matter how much we stray from Him or how others treat us. Because we have dignity, every person must be treated with love and respect, and never used as an object for another's pleasure or gain.

We are a unity of body and soul. You are your body; it is not something other or less than your "real self."

**The body has meaning.** Our bodies reveal the truth that males and females are made for one another. We are equal in dignity, but different and complementary in design. The body allows us to make a total gift of self to another person in marriage.

And from this gift of self, we have the tremendous privilege to cooperate with God in creating a new human being – a child. Sex, by design, has two purposes – **it is life-giving and love-giving.** 

This sexual difference between male and female, the Church teaches, is the anthropological basis for the family. In the family –a husband, wife, and child – our love is called to mirror the Trinity.

We also know that all of us are broken, afflicted by sin, with our own weaknesses. Everyone has them. These sins don't make any one person better or worse than any other. But God doesn't leave us in our weakness and sin – He sent Jesus to die for us and to rise again, conquering sin. Jesus promises us His grace and mercy to help us bear the burdens of human life, to persevere in virtue, and to overcome sin.

This is who we are – the human person, in brief.

### **TEACHER AND PARENT RESOURCE**

## The Culture Says/The Truth Is

This resource presents mistaken ideas or statements popular in the current culture, alongside true statements that flow from Catholic teaching. The first section on definitions and first principles is important to understand before beginning any conversations on Section II.

### **Section I: Definitions and First Principles**

|              | What the culture says                                | What the Truth is  |  |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| HUMAN NATURE | The meaning of life is to maximize happiness.        | The meaning of life is to get to<br>Heaven.  |  |
|              | Our value comes from our talents or<br>achievements. | Our value is infinite as persons made in the image and likeness of God.                            |  |
|              | The individual exists to serve the economy.          | The economy exists to serve individuals.   |  |
|              | People are naturally good.                           | People are inclined to sin but capable<br>of virtue, and need God's grace to<br>live as we should. |  |

|                      | What the culture says  | What the Truth is   |  |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| THE ROLE OF FEELINGS | Our feelings should guide our<br>choices.  | Our intellect should guide our<br>choices; feelings are subordinate to<br>our intellect and will.   |  |
|                      | Love is a feeling.   | Love is an act of the will. It is the free<br>choice to will the good of another.   |  |
|                      | Good things are those which<br>feel pleasant, or bring feelings of<br>happiness. | Good things are those which help us<br>be what God created us to be.  |  |
|                      | If it feels good, it must be right.  | Our feelings can lead us in the wrong<br>direction, and to sin. It's important to<br>keep our feelings in check, under our<br>intellect and will. |  |

|                         | What the culture says  | What the Truth is   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| THE MEANING OF THE BODY | Our physical body isn't really who we<br>are. It's more like a "shell" for our true<br>self, which is who we are "inside." | Every human being is a unity of body<br>and soul. Our body, male or female, is<br>a fundamental part of who we are.   |
|                         | Our bodies are ours to do with<br>whatever we want.  | We should care for our bodies in light<br>of the reality that they are gifts from<br>God, and Temples of the Holy Spirit.<br>God's creation is to be cared for<br>lovingly, not dominated or controlled.        |
|                         | We should use whatever medical<br>technology is available to make our<br>body do what we want.                             | We should use medicine and medical<br>technology to restore the body to<br>how it was designed to function.   |
|                         | If something occurs in a lot of people,<br>it is natural and therefore good.   | The fact that something is common<br>does not make it natural or good.<br>Natural things are those which help<br>us achieve our purpose: bodies to<br>function as designed, and souls<br>growing closer to God. |

### Section 2: Transgenderism

| What the culture says   | What the Truth is   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Those who identify as the opposite sex should be affirmed in that decision.   | Manhood and womanhood are<br>realities. They are not feelings, no<br>matter how sincerely those feelings are<br>experienced.  |  |
| Trans people should be celebrated in a special way.   | Those who struggle with a confused<br>sense of sexual identity must be<br>lovingly accepted as persons created<br>in God's image with the same dignity<br>as any other person. Further, as<br>Christians, we must pray for peace<br>in their unique struggles and support<br>them with Christian charity, all the<br>while upholding the truth of God's plan<br>for life and love.  |  |
| Someone who believes they are the<br>opposite sex should be encouraged<br>to have surgery or take hormones to<br>change their body. | We should treat those experiencing<br>identity- and body-related distress<br>with compassion, and it is never<br>compassionate to lie to someone. Just<br>as we would not withhold food from<br>someone with a body image disorder,<br>we should not encourage someone<br>to take drugs or mutilate their body<br>to align with a mistaken belief about<br>gender. We should lovingly encourage<br>and help them to accept their body<br>including their identity as male or<br>female. |  |

| What the culture says  | What the Truth is   |
|--|---|
| Men who identify as women should be<br>able to compete in women's sports<br>(and vice-versa).  | The reason we have separate sports<br>for girls and boys is because of<br>the inherent differences between<br>males and females, and the physical<br>advantages most boys have over<br>most girls. It is true that some of the<br>strongest women are stronger than<br>the weakest men. But on average,<br>men are bigger, stronger, and faster<br>than women, making meaningful<br>competition between them unrealistic<br>in most sports. Girls deserve teams of<br>their own to fairly compete |
| But on average, men are bigger,<br>stronger, and faster than women,<br>making meaningful competition<br>between them unrealistic in most<br>sports. Girls deserve teams of their own<br>to fairly compete. | Every human being is a unity of body<br>and soul. Our body, male or female, is<br>a fundamental part of who we are.   |
| Boys who identify<br>as girls should<br>be able to use<br>girls' bathrooms<br>and showers (and<br>vice-versa).   | Girls need private spaces of<br>their own. Boys who identify as<br>transgender deserve to be treated<br>with compassion, and so do girls. They<br>deserve places of privacy where they<br>can be free of the gaze of boys/men<br>while they are showering or changing<br>clothes.   |
| We should use<br>peoples' preferred<br>pronouns, even<br>if it requires us to<br>call a biological<br>female a male and<br>vice-versa.   | To affirm someone in an identity<br>at odds with their sex or to affirm<br>a person's desired "transition" is to<br>mislead that person. Further, saying<br>a male is female or vice versa is a lie.<br>God calls us to tell the truth, but we<br>must always tell it with charity. We<br>must find charitable ways to express<br>ourselves that do not require us to<br>break the Eighth Commandment.  |

# Who Am I?

# Who Am I? Chart

**Directions:** Read the information, and then briefly skim over the chart that follows. The chart contains some questions we wll ask this year to discover true first principles. For now, fill in just the second column with any notes that you have as you read through the chart questions.

Have you ever heard or been part of an argument where it seemed impossible to find common ground, and you wondered why? Often, disagreements about particular topics are based on disagreement over unspoken principles.

For example, is abortion good or bad for society? Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger argued that abortion and eugenics (killing or sterilizing those with less desirable traits) were good for human flourishing. The Church, of course, teaches that abortion and eugenics are morally wrong.

How can there be such disagreement? Because of unspoken assumptions about human nature and the meaning of life.

If you begin with the unspoken assumption that individuals exist to serve society, it makes sense that the less capable, less intelligent, or otherwise "unfit" people should be removed. In this distorted world view, removing those with less desirable traits will lead to human flourishing.

But when you begin with the truth that each person is created in God's image and deeply loved by Him, then it becomes clear that every human life is precious, unrepeatable, and of infinite value. Our dignity comes from God and not from what we produce or contribute to society. Therefore we can know that abortion is objectively wrong, and bad for society.

When seeking to understand the truth about transgender issues, or any other topic that might present a challenge, it's often helpful to examine first principles as a starting point, in order to see if it might be the root of the difficulty.



| Who<br>am I?  | My notes about<br>this question | How does gender<br>ideology try to<br>answer this question? | What is the true<br>answer to this<br>question? |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| What is my<br><b>identity</b> , and how<br>can I know it for<br>sure? |                                 | We will fill these columns                                  | out throughout the year.                        |
| Do I have <b>dignity</b> ?<br>Where does it<br>come from?             |                                 |   |   |
| What is <b>human</b><br>nature?                                       |                                 |   |   |
| What is the<br>meaning of <b>my</b><br><b>body</b> ?                  |                                 |   |   |

| Who<br>am I?   | My notes about<br>this question | How does gender<br>ideology try to<br>answer this question? | What is the true<br>answer to this<br>question? |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| What is <b>marriage</b> ,<br>and <b>why</b> should<br>people get<br>married? |                                 | We will fill these columns                                  | out throughout the year.                        |
| What is the<br>purpose<br>of <b>human</b><br><b>sexuality</b> ?              |                                 |   |   |
| Who is a <b>family</b><br>made up of?  |                                 |   |   |
| Why is there suffering?  |                                 |   |   |