



PURPOSE

To highlight love as a response to the value and human dignity of another person.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Become aware of how love takes many forms (parental, fraternal, romantic, etc..).
2. Recognize that love affirms the value of the other person and expresses itself through self-gift (helping, supporting, enjoying with each other, affirming) in order to choose the good for the other.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *Love Venn Diagram* worksheet (see Materials)
- *Hero Preparation* worksheet (see Materials)

VOCABULARY

- **love:** To affirm the value of another person because of their intrinsic worth
- **self-gift:** Sharing what is best in ourselves with another and helping another to choose what is good

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Review the previous lessons. Explain: In the past lessons, we have learned about how human beings are social beings. Then we learned how our social nature leads us to build friendships centered around the pursuit of human excellence. These individual relationships between people can expand to form a group unity, solidarity, which is the result of a community pursuing excellence together. Today, we are going to learn about love and its relationship to human dignity.

Step 2: Introduce love.

Tell the students you are going to play a "word association" game. You are going to say a word and the students should respond with whatever comes to mind. Try to write whatever words they say on the board. Begin with one or two words they are already familiar with by now like "dignity" or "solidarity." Then, throw out the word "love."

The exercise is meant to get the students thinking explicitly about something they are already implicitly familiar with, that is, loving and being loved.

Explain: We all know what it looks like to spend time and feel happy in the company of the people we love. It is something we encounter every day in books, films, and our daily lives. Love is something we see so often that we sometimes forget how valuable it is. We feel happy to feel loved by our family and friends and we show them love because it is a way to affirm our human dignity as well as theirs!

Write on the board:

- **love:** To affirm the value of another person because of their intrinsic worth

Explain: When we look at this definition of love, we can see that love not only involves the recognition of another's dignity but also the choice to give of ourselves to another to the best of our ability. What makes the act of loving hard is that we might have to give up our own desires for the sake of affirming or respecting the other. We call this **self-gift**.

Write on the board:

- **self-gift:** Sharing what is best in ourselves with another and helping another to choose what is good

Step 3: Further the understanding of love.

Activity: Have the students play a game called "Love charades." Give each student a slip of paper and have them write down a way that they will show love. It could be helping your parents by taking out the garbage, sharing your toys with your siblings, telling someone "I love you!", etc. After the students have finished writing a way that they show love, collect the slips of paper and mix them up in a container. Pick a volunteer randomly to take a slip of paper and then ask them to act out the way of showing love written on the slip of paper without speaking. The other students will try to guess. After they guess correctly, select another volunteer and repeat the process.

Explain: The purpose of the activity is to become familiar with the little ways that we show love. Simple actions that put others before ourselves can be profound moments of showing and demonstrating love. We have to always be on the lookout for these ways to "gift" ourselves to others simply but meaningfully. In real life, just as in the game, it is important to recognize when these moments of self-gift occur and to be grateful when we are the receiver of them. But remember! Even though you are called to give yourself to others, you have human dignity too! You have to make sure you are taking care of yourself so you can be in a position to love others, and to love well.

Step 4: The different kinds of love

Ask:

When we use the word “love,” do we use it in different ways? Do we love our parents?

How do we show love to our parents?

Do we love our siblings? How do we show love to our siblings?

Do we love our friends? How do we show love to our friends?

How are these kinds of love similar and different?

Do parents love each other?

Are these all the same kinds of love?

Explain: “Love” is a term that gets used in several different but related ways. However, the way parents love each other, is different from how siblings love each other, which is different from how friends love each other. Parental love is romantic, but is also ordered to the common good of the family that they have formed. Sibling love is a matter of what family we happened to be born into. We do not choose our siblings, but we love them anyway, even if it is difficult. We should get along with our siblings, but even if we do not they are still our siblings no matter what. Friendship love is more something that we choose. In friendship we enjoy, but also recognize and affirm those things in the other person that make them excellent. We love what is good about them, and, in special friendships, we help them to become even more excellent in new and undiscovered ways.

Still all these kinds of love have something in common. In all kinds of love there is an experience of self-gift. Parents give of themselves to their children. Brothers give of themselves to their sisters. And friends give of themselves to their friends. In all these different relationships, to love means to respect the goodness of the other person, and to affirm and help that person to pursue good and excellent things in their lives.

Have students complete the *Love Venn Diagram* to compare and contrast the different kinds of love.

Step 5: Love and Friendship

Explain: Friendship is about pursuing excellence together. Friends help each other make excellent decisions and work on good and excellent projects together. However, love brings friendships to an even deeper level. Two friends have the common project of becoming excellent and they work to help each other become excellent. However, love means that each friend really places the excellence of the other person above their own. This often means a friend will need to sacrifice, to help each other choose the good. This is what self-gift means.

Ask:

- When have you put the needs and concerns of a friend above yours?
- Did you have to sacrifice something? What was it?
- Is it easy to put others first?

Step 5: Summarize: Today we learned about love and how it requires self-gift to give ourselves to another. We do all these things in order to show love for someone. However, we must always remember that this must be done in ways that will affirm our own dignity as well.

FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Students should complete the *Hero Preparation* worksheet in preparation for the last class. Students can ask parents for help and input as they please.

SUPPLEMENTS

None



Human
Dignity
Curriculum

Name: _____

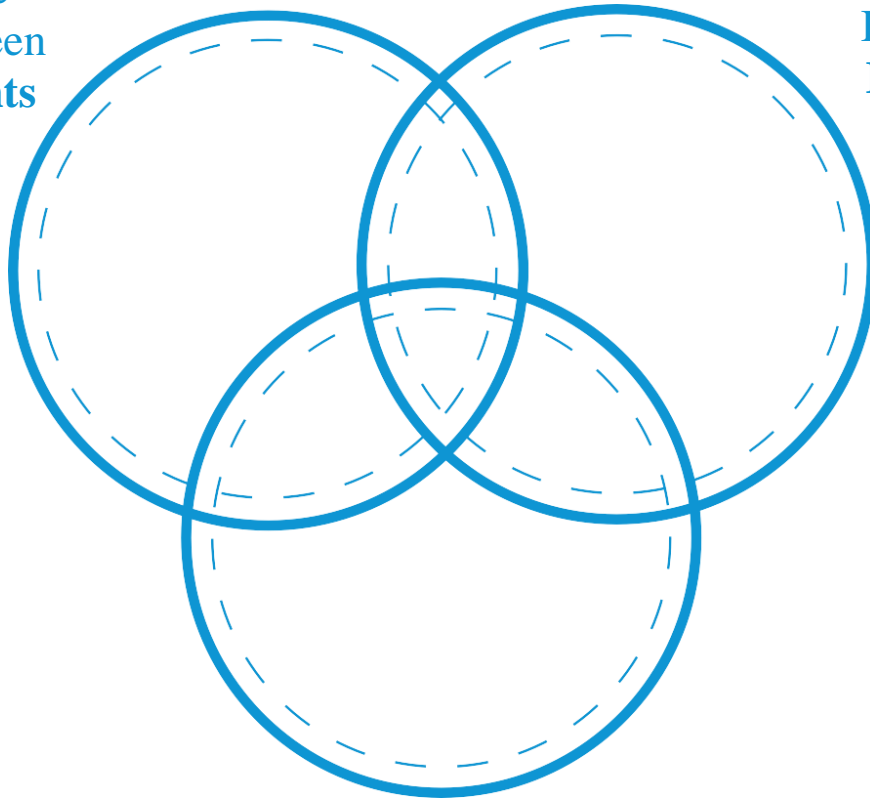
Date: _____

Love Venn Diagram

- 1 How are the three kinds of love different?
- 2 How are they the same?

Love
Between
Parents

Love
Between
Friends



Love Between
Siblings



Hero Preparation

Name: _____
Date: _____

Directions: Fill in the blank spaces below.

Part One: Who I Am

My name: _____ Where I was born: _____

A list of my gifts and talents: _____

One way that I have used a gift or talent in an excellent way: _____

One thing I struggle doing well: _____

One dream I have for my life: _____

Some excellent things that I do with my friends: _____

Moments in which I struggle respecting others' human dignity: _____

Moments in which I struggle with non-excellent habits: _____

Part Two: Who I Want to Become

If I was to star as the hero of a novel or a movie, the novel or movie would be about:

I would demonstrate courage by: _____

I would demonstrate patience by: _____

I can demonstrate courage and patience in my life today these ways: _____

I will make an effort to be more kind to, generous to, and patient with: _____

To be excellent with regards to **my body**, I will develop this good habit and avoid this bad habit:

1. _____.

2. _____.

To be excellent with regards to **my whole person**, I will develop this good habit and avoid this bad habit:

1. _____.

2. _____.

To be excellent with regards to **those around me**, I will develop this good habit and avoid this bad habit:

1. _____.

2. _____.

Two ways that I will contribute to excellence in my community and society:

1. _____.

2. _____.