Learning to Love
Handbook

RME Year 1
(NOCN General Religious Education level 1)
LESSON 1 : TRUE LOVE

Introduction

In your first year at St. Dominic’s you will follow a course in Religious & Moral Education. This qualification is accredited by the National Open College Network and each student that successfully passes the course will receive an NOCN certificate. This is a nationally recognised qualification which demonstrates that you have successfully completed a course in Religious & Moral Education. To pass the course you need to attend regularly, participate in discussion and group work and complete the written elements of the Course Handbooks. There are three Handbooks covering the topics Justice & Peace, Celebrating Diversity and Learning to Love.

Lesson Objectives

- To get to know each other and complete the RME Individual Learning Plan.
- To explore the nature of love and understand that there are many different kinds of love.
- To realise that love is primarily spiritual.

Activity 1 : Icebreaker

Activity 2 : RME ILP

The learning outcomes in the Learning to Love Course are to:

- Understand the relationship between love, faith and lived experience.
- Develop skills and ways of ethical thinking which will lead to a positive response to the responsibilities and opportunities that life affords.
- Develop our own faith position by an increased personal awareness of the importance of placing love at the centre of our lives.

Complete part A of the RME Individual Learning Plan which your teacher will give you.

Activity 3 : True Love Questionnaire

Your teacher will pair you up with someone you don’t know. In this pair complete the questionnaire below with your views.

The Beatles said ‘All You Need Is Love.’ But what is love? Does it exist and how can you define it? In groups of 3 look at the events below (all of them are true) and decide if there is real love in these situations. Write down your views in the box
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>IS THIS LOVE? YOUR VIEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An old man has a painful medical problem which doctors say is incurable. He wants to die but can’t do it on his own – his wife of 50 years helps him.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. A St. Dominic’s female student meets a boy, they go out, they both agree they love each other. She doesn’t believe in sex before marriage. He says ‘if you really loved me, you’d sleep with me’</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. A father picks up his new born baby for the first time and is overwhelmed with strong feelings as he looks into the child’s eyes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. A married couple of 50 years have run out of things to say to one another and just sit together quietly.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. A young woman gives up wealth, and the possibility of marriage and a family in order to enter a religious order and care for the poor and the dying.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. A Catholic priest in Auschwitz swaps places with a man condemned to death who has a wife and family. He is locked in a cell and starves to death.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Newly weds on their honeymoon!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Man in his forties says ‘I love my work.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Two people live together happily, raise a family, stay together, but never see the need to get married.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. A husband, who is not a wealthy man, gives his wife his life savings so that she can have plastic surgery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. A man says ‘you can’t love anybody else unless you love yourself.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. A mother regularly goes to visit her son (who is in prison for committing a serious crime). She says she’ll always love him no matter what.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. A young man falls off a ferry at night into the sea. His best friend who is not a good swimmer jumps in to try and save him. Both are drowned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. A religious teacher tells his class that they must ‘love God with all their heart.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concluding thought:

Love is hard to pin down and there are many different levels of love. Love is often equated in contemporary Western culture purely with sex, yet it is so much more than this. Love is essentially spiritual. It involves an element of self sacrifice, of letting others be themselves and loving them ‘warts and all’ – unconditional love. Is this possible? Only with our closest friends and family? Can you love everyone? What does God want from us?

Prayer:

Almighty God, teach us how to love. Help us to let others be themselves … may we be slow to criticise and judge, and quick to praise … give us the good grace to accept others as they are and help us to see that spiritually, we are all brothers and sisters … children of the one true God.
LESSON 2 : MY IDEAL PARTNER

Lesson Objectives

- To explore what makes ‘an ideal partner’
- To understand that certain qualities are more important that others in choosing an ideal life partner
- To analyse what makes a happy relationship

Activity 1: Diamond 9

Complete the Diamond 9 exercise which your teacher will give you (in groups of 3) – what qualities will you look for in an ideal life partner, i.e. someone they might want to settle down with.

Activity 2: Whole Class Diamond 9

Try to get a Diamond 9 for the whole class. Areas to discuss:

- How important are things like same faith and race? How about similar personality? Is it a case of ‘birds of a feather flock together’ or do ‘opposites attract’? Most evidence supports the idea that those with similar personalities tend to get along better, and for longer.
- Are there any qualities you would have put down which aren’t on the cards?

Activity 3: Follow-up Exercise

Which of these cards are essential for true love to blossom and last? Pull out the essential Diamond 9 cards. You might record on the board any potential problems which might occur if your partner doesn’t have the qualities on the cards.

Activity 4: Reflective Log

How do we sum up an ideal partner in just one sentence? Complete the sentence in the box below:

My ideal partner is someone who ...

Activity 5: View the YouTube clip ‘Love’
LESSON 3: SEX MATTERS

Lessons Objectives

- To analyse the question ‘when is the right time for sex?’
- To consider what might be required for a healthy loving sexual relationship.

Starter: Marie Stopes is a sexual health clinic which advises on matters of contraception and STI’s but also offers help to women who want to terminate a pregnancy. What do you think about the screening of this advert?

Activity 1: Advise Your Child

You are a parent. You have a child who is the same gender as you. You’ve watched them grow up and now they are sixteen. He or she has a boyfriend/girlfriend and they have been going out together for a while. One day he/she says to you ‘do you think it’s OK if I have sex with him/her?’

In the space below write your reply:

Discuss with your neighbour and then in the whole group.

Activity 2: No Sex Please We’re teenagers’

Read the following extract from the Romance Academy website, watch the YouTube clip and then answer the questions below.

In September 2005 you may have seen ‘No sex please we’re teenagers’ on BBC2. It followed the lives and loves of the very first Romance Academy made up of 12 North London teenagers. They were asked to give up sex for 5 months...an impossible task?
During their time in the Romance Academy, the young people committed themselves to supporting and challenging each other (who they have never met before) to exploring the benefits and frustrations of a sex-free lifestyle. It proved to be an eventful journey...

‘When I walked into the first session and looked at everyone, I expected us not to get along. But we are best friends now and they helped me to respect myself and know who I want to be ‘cos I wasn’t very sure at the beginning.’ Nicky

‘I’d heard all about STI’s before at school and it was boring! But when we talked about the emotional side and how you can feel used afterwards, that was real to me.’ Byron

Questions:
1. Is there more or less pressure on teenagers today to have sex?
2. Where does the pressure come from?
4. What do you think of groups such as the Romance Academy. Do you think they are appealing to young people today?

5. Is saving sex for marriage just something for religious people?

6. Do most films portray a positive or negative view of sex? Can you think of any examples?

7. Do you think there is a difference between ‘having sex’ and ‘making love’?

8. Teenagers may find themselves in situations where they feel under pressure to have sex. This is an example of a bad reason to have sex. In pairs try to come up with some more bad reasons to have sex.

Take a look at the powerpoint ‘Are you doing this because you want to?’ to see some more bad reasons for having sex.

Final Thoughts

Read the extract below:

God created all things, including sex, but he always wants us to be the best and reach for the stars rather than settle for second best. Some people argue that religious rules about sex are there to stop people having fun, but bad sex isn’t fun, it’s just unfulfilling. As in all things we should aim to be the best, to have high standards, to be the best person we possibly can. Don’t eat junk food, don’t do junk sex. You deserve something better.

Final Prayer

Almighty God, help me always to do the right thing. May I always strive for grandeur, to be the best person I can be in any situation. Give me the strength and the courage to be the wonderful person you created me to be.
LESSON 4 : TEENAGE PREGNANCY & SEXUAL HEALTH

Lesson Objectives

- Discuss why there is a high rate of teenage pregnancy in Harrow
- Discuss how teenage pregnancy can be reduced
- Explore what the major religious faiths tell us about sexual relationships

Starter Activity

Watch the clips from YouTube. What is your immediate gut response to the video clips? Discuss in groups then in whole class.

Activity 1 :

In groups of three, discuss the possible reasons for the high level of teenage pregnancy in the UK.

Activity 2 :

In what ways do you think teenage pregnancy could be reduced? Discuss in pairs then brainstorm answers on board.

Activity 3 : Sexual Health

In June 2003 the House of Commons Select Committee on Heath, made up of MPs from all parties produced a report on sexual health. Here are extracts from The Times and the Daily Mail the day after the report was published. Read the extracts then in groups of 3 answer the questions which follow.

The Times - Sexual diseases soar for young women

A huge increase in sexually transmitted disease is going unchecked MPs said today. About one in ten sexually active young women have chlamydia, syphilis rates have increased fivefold in six years and gonorrhoea infections have doubled creating what the MPs describe as an appalling public health crisis.

The Commons Health Select Committee criticises the Health Department for lacking the direction to provide adequate services and schools for raising a generation of teenagers unaware of the risk.

Sandra Gidley, a Liberal Democrat member of the committee said “People are dying through ignorance and the Government must take a large part of the blame”.

Since 1993, the proportion of 14 year old boys who say they are concerned or very concerned about HIV/Aids has declined from 27% to 12%, while in girls of the same age it has halved from 34% to 16%.

Witnesses told the committee that since the late 1980s knowledge about the risks of sexually transmitted diseases has declined as the effect of a national campaign about the dangers of Aids has worn off. “We have lost our focus in understanding that we have to continue these education messages”. Processor Anne Johnson of the Royal Free Hospital told MPs.

A pilot screening programme for Chlamydia had found that between 10 - 11% of women under 25 may be infected with Chlamydia, a disease that has no symptoms but can lead to infertility. The committee recommends that sex and relationship education should become part of the national curriculum.

Daily Mail June 11 2003- Youngsters bring Britain to verge of sexual health crisis

Britain is on the brink of a public health crisis brought about by the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases.
With the fertility of an entire generation under threat, desperate measures are needed to deter children from having sex without any idea of the consequences, MPs warn today. In a significant shift from the liberal notion that youngsters should be supported or even encouraged to experiment sexually, they recommend that the value of committed relationships and the need to resist peer pressure should take precedence in future.

Last year controversial schemes were approved to hand out emergency contraception in school clinics in an effort to cut the teen pregnancy rate, which is among the worst in Europe. The MPs' report will reveal how an increasing number of teenagers feel under pressure to have sex earlier and earlier. And the rise in children having sex has helped spark the epidemic of sexually-transmitted diseases.

The report recommends schools consider unprecedented screening for sexual diseases in children as young as 11 to help counter the rise of infections spreading through promiscuity. Many young people who have not had sex believe they are in the minority, while others who have sex go on to regret it, the report says.

This suggests teenagers need help to resist peer pressure and “that they would benefit from more support in deciding when is the right time for them”, the MPs believe. Children are also victims of Britain’s “Benny Hill” attitude to sex – where people find it hard to talk openly about sex. Committee chairman David Hinchliffe said: “Despite the fact we live in an increasingly sexualised society, we find it difficult to talk openly, resorting to a nudge and a wink, what another of our witnesses described as “Benny Hill culture”.

“And what is most worrying is that this is the culture we are passing on to our children although they need good information and advice about these issues more than ever before”.

At the heart of the threat to children and their fertility is a “patchy and inconsistent” health education system which has left them in the dark about the dangers of sexually transmitted infections. Children have been given the facts of life and easy access to the pill and contraceptives with little or no information about the risks of disease, the MPs found. Mr Hinchcliffe said: “I do not use the word lightly, but during the course of this inquiry, it has become plain that with sexual health we are looking at a public health crisis. The statistics speak for themselves. It is vital that we commit ourselves to prioritising sexual health and to improving the way we educate young people about relationships and sex if we are to prevent an even worse situation being passed on to the next generation of young people”.

Robert Whelan of the Family Education Trust, who gave evidence to the committee said: “The spread of sexual infections is appalling, but the fact is that still no one is prepared to simply tell children to abstain from having sex”.

In the US, where abstinence education became widespread during the 1990s, the teenage pregnancy rate dropped by 20%. Mr Whelan added: “It is a step forward that MPs are now suggesting that children should be told to wait and consider sex in the context of a loving and committed relationship”.

Discuss

1. The Times says the Health Department is to blame for “raising a generation of teenagers unaware of the risk”. Do you agree? Make a list of anyone else who might be to blame.

2. Sandra Gidley says people are “dying through ignorance”. Is this true?

3. Do the statistics in the article surprise you? Explain your answer.

4. The survey shows that since 1993 teenagers are actually less concerned about sexually transmitted diseases. Why do you think this is?

5. Before today, had you heard of chlamydia (and the fact that it has no symptoms and can lead to infertility)?
6. Do you agree with MPs that young people “feel under pressure to have sex earlier and earlier?” What factors have brought this about?

7. What do you think the MP means by the “Benny Hill” attitude to sex. Do you think it is true?

8. The Catholic Church teaches that sex outside marriage is wrong. In the US there has been a great deal of emphasis by various religious groups on “abstinence education”. What do you think of this approach?

9. What does your particular faith group have to say about sex and teenage pregnancy?

**Activity 4: Reflective Log**

If you become a parent in the future, what will you tell your children about sex and relationships? Complete the box below:
LESSON 5: WHY MARRIAGE?

Lesson Objectives

- To explore beliefs about marriage and cohabitation.
- To explore the differences between marriage and cohabitation.

Activity 1: Starter

In small groups discuss three good reasons to get married (and write below):

✓
✓
✓

Now discuss (and write below) three bad reasons for marriage:

✗
✗
✗

Now think of one more way to finish the sentence ‘Marriage is …’ that best reflect your beliefs about marriage:

Marriage is …

Feedback the results to the group

Activity 2: True of False?

Tick the box you think is correct:

1. The current divorce rate is at its lowest since 1979
2. Living with someone is a good ‘trial run’ for marriage.
3. Over 80% of young people between the ages of 16 and 17 expect to get married when they are older.
4. Marriage is as popular today as it has always been.
5. Average age for marriage is 29 for men and 31 for women
6. People who are married spend less time in hospital than people who are single, divorced, or who live together.
7. Cohabitations are just as likely to break down as marriages.
8. You can only get married in a church or a registry office.

9. Most people think marriage is out of date.

10. Over 40% of new marriages end in divorce.

Definitions:

**Marriage** according to the law of this country is the union of one man with one woman, voluntarily entered into for life, to the exclusion of all others.

**Cohabitation** is a co-resident man and woman, living together within a sexual union, without that union having been formalised by a legal marriage.

**Activity 3 : Show of Hands**

**Activity 4 : What's the Difference?**

Is marriage 'just a piece of paper'? What is the difference between marriage and cohabitation? It may help to think about how the different relationships effect:

- The couple themselves?
- Their families?
- Their friends?
- The relationship with each other?

What are some of the reasons why a couple might choose to live together, or cohabit, instead of or before getting married?

What are some of the reasons why a couple might choose to get married instead of living together without a marriage ceremony?

In pairs think about the type of relationship that you would like when you are older. Will you get married, or live with someone, or maybe both? What would be your ideal and why?

Some quotes about marriage:

*It is terribly sad today that people think having the same husband for your whole life is dull. It's much more intriguing than having affairs.*  
*Nanette Newman, Somerfield Magazine*
Chains do not hold a marriage together. It is threads, hundreds of tiny threads which sew people together through the years. That is what makes a marriage last – more than passion or even sex. Simone Signoret, French Actress

Marriage is nothing but a civil contract. John Seldon, Historian Writing in 1689

There is still no real substitute for the loving, nurturing and profoundly secure environment of a successful family. Marriage … works to give children the best chance of making a success of their lives … to enhance the long-term prospects of our nation. We could do much more to prepare young people for marriage – perhaps we need to teach young people how to build a relationship; how to anticipate and to accommodate the needs of a partner; how to negotiate, communicate and compromise. Michael Portillo, The Times 14 March 2000

The marriage relationship is designed by God to be an adventure of love that lasts a lifetime. Nicky & Sila Less writing in ‘The Marriage Book’, HTB Publications
LESSON 6 : COMMUNICATION & RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Lesson Objectives

- To identify good communication skills
- To identify specific attributes that block communication.
- To produce guidelines for resolving conflict in relationships.

Activity 1 : How do you communicate?

Think back over the last 24 hours, about all the people with whom you have communicated. How successful has that communication been? Fill in this sheet, ticking yes, no or sometimes in response to the questions. If the last 24 hours have not been typical for you, think about how you usually communicate.

1. Did you say anything that you didn’t really mean? - for example, ‘I hate you’
2. Did you have problems taking to people? - for example when faced with a group of strangers?
3. Did you have problems getting other people to talk to you? - for example, did they seem to wait for you to start the conversation?
4. Did you end up arguing with people even though you didn’t want to?
5. Do you wish you have said something when instead you kept quiet? - for example not saying sorry?
6. Did you get talked into doing things you didn’t want to do?
7. Do you wish you could take back something that you said? - for example, telling someone they are boring
8. Were there occasions when you didn’t understand people?
9. Were there times when you felt people didn’t understand you?
10. Did you have trouble understanding yourself?

How good do you feel you are at communication? Put a cross on this line to indicate where you would place yourself:

Not very good          Excellent at communicating

Activity 2 : Communication Styles

Communication between people can get stressful. We can feel that we are being blamed for something, or can get into arguments, sometimes over simple things. When we are upset with other people, we can tend to react or overreact in one of four negative ways.

The Peace-Keeper This person always takes the blame and says ‘It’s my fault’ to try and keep the peace.
The Blamer This person always criticises and finds fault. They never admit that they might have been at fault.
The Computer This person seems rigid and unfeeling and wants to stay in control all the time.
The Distracter This person tries to change the subject to avoid any conflict.
We need four volunteers to role play a situation. Peace-Keeper, Blamer, Computer and Distracter are written on pieces of paper and each volunteer chooses one without letting anyone else see. The four act out the following situation, playing the role they picked. The rest of the group should see if they can identify who is playing the different roles.

**Situation - A group of friends go out to the cinema one weekend, but they forget to invite a fifth friend who is now very upset and no longer speaking to them.**

Is it possible to reach an agreement, or solve the problem playing these roles? What communication style do you need in order to solve problems?

If time, another four can role play the following:

A family (**mother, father, child, child**) is discussing who spilt a glass of coke on the living room carpet and went off without clearing it up. (choose which family member you will play without divulging your communication style)

**Activity 2 : This is My Family**

Fill in the names of a couple of your family members at the top of the columns. Think about how these family members react in different situations. Try and sum up their behaviour in two or three words and write it in the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You walk mud through the house and don’t clear it up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are late home and the dinner is spoilt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You borrow your brother/sister’s clothes without asking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are money worries at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone leaves the bathroom in a mess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don’t do so well at College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about how your communication style has been affected by your family. Do you react in similar ways to other people in your family? Or do you deliberately act in ways that are different to other family members?
Activity 4: Listening Skills

Listening in pairs

1. Speaker – topic talks 2 minutes
   Listener – avoids eye contact, looks everywhere else.
   Feedback

2. Swap roles:
   Speaker – 2 minutes
   Listener – interrupts, puts own view, relates own experiences
   Feedback

Activity 5: Brainstorm

In pairs brainstorm three rules for dealing with conflict resolution. Powerpoint – 10 Powerful Commitment Rules.

Final Prayer

Lord, teach me to listen more,
Show me the other person’s view,
Give me the strength to compromise.
Show me when to be big enough to walk away,
Give me the confidence to turn the other cheek,
Let me be a peacemaker.

Help me to say sorry when I need to,
And forgive those who do me wrong.
Teach me how to listen
And hear the words you speak to me.
LESSON 7 : PARENTING ‘MADE EASY’

Lesson Objectives

- To understand the qualities required for good parenting.
- To discuss different styles of parenting.
- To reflect on what our faith tells us about good parenting.

Activity 1 : Ten Commandments for Parents

In the space below, write three things you might put in a 10 Commandments for Parents list. What are the Do’s and Don’ts of parenting?

1.
2.
3.

In groups of three, work out a list of 10 Commandments. Share with the whole class.

Follow-up Questions

1. Is there a perfect style of parenting? Is it true that it is one of the ‘hardest jobs in the world’?
2. What is the best way to motivate children? What should happen if they disobey instructions/do something wrong?
3. Is it acceptable to slap or hit a child? Give reasons.
4. How do you deal with teenagers effectively?
5. Study the extract below:

Children Learn What They Live

- If a child lives with criticism, He learns to condemn.
- If a child lives with hostility, He learns to fight.
- If a child lives with ridicule, He learns to be shy.
- If a child lives with jealousy, He learns to feel guilty.
- If a child lives with tolerance, He learns to be patient.
- If a child lives with encouragement, He learns to appreciate.
- If a child lives with praise, He learns to appreciate.
- If a child lives with fairness, He learns justice.
- If a child lives with security, He learns to have faith.
- If a child lives with approval, He learns to like himself.
- If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, He learns to find life in the world.

Dorothy Law Nolie

In the light of this how might you summarise the best way to bring up a child?

Activity 2 : The Parent Trap

Some parents are very strict, others are easy going/anything goes types. Take the test below and find out what type you might be. Imagine you are the parent of a 16 year old. Tick whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:
1. There is no set bedtime. They go to bed whenever they want.  

2. If they disobey my instructions, I ground them or send them to their room.  

3. There are certain programmes on TV that I don’t want them to watch, so they can’t watch them.  

4. They don’t have to ask permission from me to stay out late at night.  

5. They are not allowed to be alone with a friend of the opposite sex in their bedroom.  

6. They can have TVs, videos, computer games etc in their bedroom – no problem.  

7. If they wish to use bad language in the house, they can, they are old enough to decide now.  

8. Once they are 16 I insist that they try and get a part-time job and they should make some contribution to their upkeep. If they want to go out/have driving lessons etc. they should earn money to help pay for it.  

9. There are times when a slap is necessary to keep a child in line.  

10. If they complain my response is ‘if you don’t like it, move out – whilst you are here you obey my rules’.  

11. If they were getting poor grades at College I’d say ‘so what, it’s your life’.  

Your teacher will tell you the scores for each question so you can work out your particular style.

Group Discussion

1. Discuss the pros and cons of ‘strict parenting’, then ‘easy going parenting’. Is one model better than the other?  
2. When teenagers misbehave, politicians, newspapers, TV often blame the parents. Is this fair? Should we hold parents responsible for what their children do?  
3. Do you think teenage behaviour is getting worse? If so, who is to blame? If not parents what other factors might be responsible?  
4. Does religion/faith have anything to teach us about how to be good parents? How about how to be a good child? One of the 10 Commandments is ‘Honour Your Mother and Father’. What does this mean in 21st century Britain?

Concluding Thought - Read the following reflections of a parent.

I give you life, but cannot live if for you.  
I can give you directions, but I cannot be there to lead you.  
I can teach you right from wrong, but I cannot decide for you.  
I can buy you beautiful clothes, but I cannot make you beautiful inside.  
I can offer you advice, but I cannot accept it for you.  
I can give you love, but I cannot force it upon you.  
I can teach you to share, but I cannot make you unselfish.  
I can teach you respect, but I cannot force you to show honour.  
I can advise you about friends, but I cannot choose them for you.  

I can tell you about alcohol and drugs, but I can’t say ‘no’ for you.  
I can tell you about lofty goals, but I can’t achieve them for you.  
I can teach you about kindness, but I can’t force you to be gracious.  
I can pray for you, but I cannot make you walk with God.  
I can tell you how to live, but I cannot give you eternal life.  
I can love you with unconditional love all my life.  
And I will.

Final Prayer

Father in heaven, you are our heavenly parent and we are your children. Thank you for loving us unconditionally. Teach us to be patient, forgiving and generous with our parents. Teach us to love one another and if one day it is your will that we become a parent ourselves, give us a wise head, a patient personality and a heart to love.
LESSON 8 : HOMOSEXUALITY

Lesson Objectives

- To develop knowledge and understanding of issues surrounding homosexuality.
- To understand and discuss the teaching of the church on homosexuality.
- To understand why discrimination based on sexual orientation is wrong and how this can be overcome.

Starter Activity : True of False

In groups of three discuss your views on homosexuality. Use the True/False quiz below to get discussion started. Circle your opinion about the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True/False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gay people are born that way – it’s not a lifestyle choice.</td>
<td>True/False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Homosexual sex is against God’s wishes.</td>
<td>True/False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If you are gay you should remain celibate (i.e., not have sex).</td>
<td>True/False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gay marriage should be given the same status in society as heterosexual marriage (otherwise it is discrimination).</td>
<td>True/False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To discriminate against a person because they are gay is exactly the same as discriminating against someone because of their colour.</td>
<td>True/False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gay students in high school should be encouraged to come out.</td>
<td>True/False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gay people should not be allowed into certain professions, e.g., armed forces, priesthood.</td>
<td>True/False</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whole class feedback on answers

Activity 2 :

Look at powerpoint and watch the clip from Brokeback Mountain.

Activity 3 :

The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfil God’s will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

If you would like to read more of Jack Dominion’s views you can read his book “A Guide to Loving”.

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AMH/PH/RME/Learning to Love Handbook
Reflective Log:

Record below your initial thoughts on the Church’s view:

Class discussion:

1. Should the Church change its teaching?
2. How do other Christian denominations/other faiths such as Islam and Hinduism view homosexuality?
3. Should ‘gay marriage’ be blessed in church (currently not permitted in Catholic and most Anglican churches)?

Activity 4:

Watch the interviews of young men coming out to their parents.

Activity 5:

The Catholic Church teaches us that discrimination against gay people is wrong. How can all of us ensure that such discrimination ends. What can we do as individuals/schools/society at large to end unjust discrimination? List things that should be done.

Final Prayer

Almighty God, we pray for an end to all unjust discrimination whether it is based on faith, colour, gender or sexual orientation. Give us hearts that are big enough to treat our neighbour as we ourselves would wish to be treated. Amen.
LESSON 9 : FINDING YOUR TRUE SELF

Lesson Objectives

- To assess personal strengths and weaknesses, and to give and receive feedback about each other.
- To analyse how personal character has developed and is developing.
- To enable us to think about our needs in relationships.

Starter : Describe Yourself with an Acrostic

Try to describe yourself (personality, physical attributes or skills) using only words that begin with each letter of your name (this is called an acrostic), e.g.,

G  good sense of humour
E  eccentric
O  obstinate
F  friendly
F  football mad

Write your acrostic below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1 : This is Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you bring to a relationship? Yourself! Being aware of your strengths and weaknesses can help you in your friendships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My good points!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Are you kind, funny, generous …?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Interests &amp; Passion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Things you are proud of – these don’t have to be major awards)</td>
<td>(film, music, world poverty, the environment …?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The not-so-good bits</th>
<th>My hopes and plans for the future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Perhaps a bad temper, tend to sulk …?)</td>
<td>(What might a friend discover if they stick with you?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2: I need ...

Human beings have various needs that must be met in order for us to survive. The most obvious ones are food, water and air. We have lots of other needs too. Here is a list that some people have identified. Circle what you think the five most important needs that you agree with. Add one other need that you think of in the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need for security</th>
<th>Need for acceptance</th>
<th>Need for love</th>
<th>Need for money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for understanding</td>
<td>Need to belong</td>
<td>Need to give</td>
<td>Need to have fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for an opportunity to make a difference</td>
<td>Need to be valued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions to discuss:

1. Which of these are essential for life?
2. Which do you feel are essential for the kind of life you want to lead?
3. Are any of these selfish wants instead of needs?
4. Think about how these needs are met in your life. Some people, who feel their needs are not being met, may dream about meeting an ideal partner who will meet all their needs. Is this realistic?
5. What are the dangers in expecting one person to meet all your needs?

*It has been said that a bride’s attitude towards her betrothed can be summed up in three words: Aisle, Alter, Hymn. Frank Muir, broadcaster.*

What does Frank Muir mean by this? Psychologists have indicated that this phenomenon accounts for much marital break-up. Why is this?

**Final Thought: The following information might save you a great deal of pain!**

'It has been claimed that when two people get together powerful feelings of love, emotion and togetherness work to bring them closer to each other. This is the idyllic, dreamy 'I'm in love' phase of a relationship when life is rosy and everything that your partner does is simply wonderful (your partner’s faults almost magically disappear before your eyes or are seen as 'quirky' or 'fun'). Powerful hormones are at work – people have talked about being 'blinded by love'. It is argued that this romantic infatuation period lasts for between 18-24 months.'

Question:

What conclusions might you draw from this research about relationships, and your possible decisions about marriage?
LESSON 10: LEARNING TO LIVE TO LOVE

Lesson Objectives:

- To understand that in life we learn to live to love
- To ask in prayer for a greater love of God and our neighbour

Your teacher will remind you of the nine lessons you have had in this module.

Activity 1: Starter Discussion – Reflective Log

Write below one important thing that you have learnt on this course:

Discuss in the group.

Activity 2:

Read the following extract from the Bible (Paul’s 1st letter to the Corinthians 13, 1-13):

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge – for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known.

In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

Activity 3: Paraliturgy

Activity 4: ILP

Your teacher will re-issue you with the RME ILP sheet. You will be given a list of the ten lessons on the course. Please complete and return to your teacher.

Final Prayer:

Only by love can men see me, and know me, and come into me. Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita 11.54

Almighty God we thank you for your presence here today. Sometimes we find it difficult to love. Show us how to love. Help us to love the weak and lonely, the powerless and unloved. Give us peace and harmony in our families, with our friends and in the wider community. Drive all hatred and anger from our hearts. May your love be with us always, now and until the end of time.