



Marriage and Family

FaithBuilder 4 | Lesson 24 | Conjugal Love

Lesson Overview

1. Word Map

Create a word map about parenting.

2. Read

Having children is the highest purpose of marriage. Working through the challenges of raising children together can strengthen a marriage. p. 1-2

3. Discuss

Reflect on the challenges and joys having a family brings. p. 2

4. Interview a parent

Optional activity

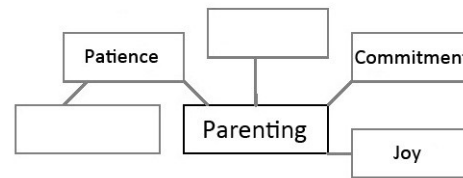
Invite a parent to class. Students ask him or her about their parenting experiences.

New Church Concept In His Image

The Lord is Divine love. He is infinite and the Being of all life. People were created into the image of God after the likeness of God. And as every person is formed by the Lord in the womb into that image after that likeness, it follows that the Lord is the heavenly Father of all people, and that people are His spiritual children. See *Divine Providence* 330

Create a Parenting Word Map

As a group, brainstorm words and ideas connected with the word “Parenting.” Work with students to arrange the words into clusters in a “word map” as a way of organizing thoughts about parenting. Your chart will look something like this:



Read

Working to sustain a faithful loving marriage partnership can build strengths, such as the ability to lovingly support another person through a hard time. Strengths like this grow and build over a lifetime and transfer to others outside a marriage too. They are the “fruits” of the work of a marriage relationship.

The highest purpose or “use” of marriage is the nurturing of new human beings. This is because human beings are the Lord’s highest purpose in creation.

The ultimate purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race. Heaven is made up solely of individuals who have been born as people on earth; and since these are the only inhabitants of heaven, it follows that the ultimate purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race. See *Divine Providence* 323

The growth that comes from this work is a blessing from the Lord.

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb is His reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
so are the children of one’s youth.
Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;
they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.
Psalm 127:3-5

Babies are born knowing nothing. They are completely dependent on the adults who care for them. The responsibilities of raising and educating children provide

New Church Concept Offspring

Every delight and pleasure is involved in the love of producing offspring, because from creation all that is delightful, pleasurable, blessed and happy, in the whole heaven and in the whole world, has been brought together in the effort, and so in the act, of producing uses. And these joys increase in an ascending degree to eternity, according to the goodness and excellence of the uses. This explains why the pleasure of producing children, which surpasses every other pleasure, is so great. It surpasses every other because its use, which is the procreation of the human race and thus of heaven, surpasses all other loves. *Apocalypse Explained* 991.2, 3

Protection

The sphere of a love for little children is a sphere of protecting and maintaining those who cannot protect and maintain themselves.... For it exists from creation that things created must be preserved, safeguarded, protected, and maintained—otherwise the universe would fall to ruin. But because this cannot be done by the Lord directly in the case of living beings to whom He has bequeathed free judgment, He does it indirectly through His love implanted in fathers, mothers and nurses. *Conjugal Love* 391

opportunities for partners to work together, and through this to grow closer as a couple.

The primary duties which bring the souls and lives of two married partners together into one are those which involve their joint concern in bringing up children. These duties bind the dispositions of a couple into one. *Conjugal Love* 176

Children can also help a couple see the beauty of eternal values in this world. Babies bring a sphere of heavenly innocence into a home that can be a powerful source for learning what is truly important. The prophet Isaiah said, “And a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6). And the Lord himself said, “Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

In raising children a couple’s love for each other can become stronger and more pure on account of the many opportunities the experience gives couples to work together.

Discuss

1. Overcoming great endurance challenges such as climbing Mount Everest can lead to tremendous feelings of accomplishment. What kinds of endurance challenges do parents sometimes have to face? In what ways might these challenges put stress on a marriage? In what ways might they bring a couple closer together and be a source of joy?
2. What life lessons have you learned from observing your parents or others working together to raise their children?
3. Today most couples can choose whether or not they will have a family. What *spiritual* factors are important to consider when making the choice between whether or not to have a family ?
4. How can working with someone improve your relationship with him or her?

Interview a Parent

Invite a parent with children of any age to visit your class. If you invite a parent with a young baby, invite him or her to bring the baby too. Give students the opportunity to ask questions that can help them see the world through a new parent’s eyes, e.g. What’s the best thing about being a parent? What’s the hardest thing you’ve ever had to deal with as a parent?