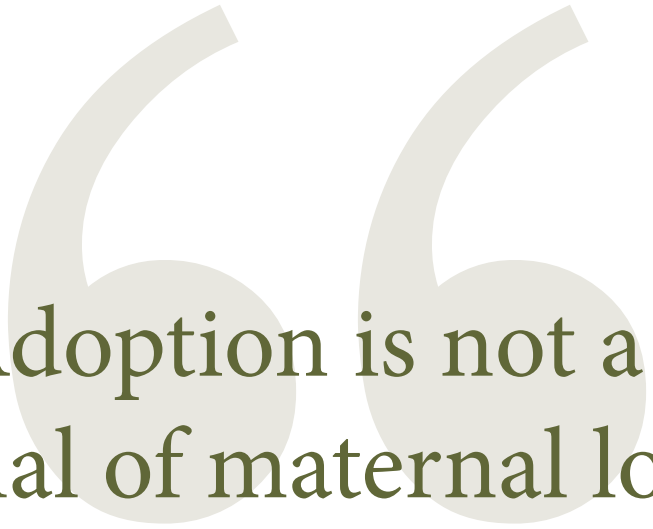




VIDEO 9

MATERNITY IS FOREVER:
ADOPTION



Adoption is not a
denial of maternal love
but an act born of love.

SUMMARY

In this ninth video, “Maternity is Forever: Adoption,” participants are invited to look at the reality of adoption. A woman needs to know her own goodness and worth so that she can discern before God whether to parent or place her child for adoption. Only she can answer the question, ‘What is the most loving thing I can do for my child?’ She needs accompaniment and support in freely being about to make the best decision for the life of her child and for her own heart.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share an experience that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the "Introductory Question."

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

When was a time when you felt welcomed into someone's life/home/heart?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #9

MATERNITY IS FOREVER: ADOPTION



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 9: "Maternity is Forever: Adoption"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video, we are invited to explore the complex reality of adoption, as a decision that may emerge as a woman contemplates what she wants for her child. While adoption is often seen as an obvious answer in pro-life circles, the reality of adoption is much more complicated and requires tremendous discernment, strength, and love. During the course of the video, we'll consider when and how to bring up the idea of adoption, have an opportunity to better understand the obstacles to adoption, and contemplate what it means to accompany a woman considering adoption.

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INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

ROMANS 8:15-17

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’, it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

ROMANS 8:22-25

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

2 CORINTHIANS 6:18

“I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

GALATIANS 4:4-5

“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

JEREMIAH 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Sister Marie Veritas, SV says that “many people think that the obvious answer to the problem of abortion is adoption ... However, the choice for adoption is actually a very infrequent choice for young women facing unexpected pregnancies today.” How have I viewed adoption? Has this video changed or altered my understanding of adoption in any way? If so, how?
3. St. Paul writes, “We have received the spirit of sonship” (Romans 8:15). As baptized Christians, we are adopted sons and daughters of God. Have I pondered the profundity of this reality? Take time now to ponder the awesome truth that you are a beloved child of God, ransomed from death by the blood of Jesus. How does this understanding change the way I approach my life?
4. Sister Maris Stella, SV says that “women who are in crisis pregnancies often perceive adoption as the worst of their options, because they see adoption as being a ‘bad mother,’ one who ‘gave their child away.’ A woman often equates adoption with failure.” When were the times in my life when I felt that I failed? Was I tempted to let myself be defined by that perceived failure? How can my experience of failure help me to better understand many women’s struggle to consider adoption?
5. Sister Marie Veritas says, “Adoption is not a denial of feeling but an act of love” and that “it’s okay if a woman cries; it’s okay if she’s emotional throughout the process.” Why is it so important to make space for another’s emotions? How does attending to my own emotional state help me to more fully and authentically accompany others?
6. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

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Once she is able to see herself as a gift, her child as a gift, and to accept herself as a mother, then she is able to engage the questions of her heart.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Sister Marie Veritas, SV, speaks about how “placing for adoption does not mean renouncing motherhood. Maternity is forever. Therefore, it is important to be sensitive to this reality when speaking about adoption. We never use the language of ‘giving up’ or ‘giving away’ a child, but rather ‘making a plan for the child’s life’ or ‘placing or entrusting the child with a family.’” Why is it so important to be sensitive in our language regarding adoption? How can the way we speak about adoption change the understanding of adoption?
3. Sister Marie Veritas, SV, says that while many believe the best time to bring up adoption is when a woman is considering an abortion or is abortion-bound, the Sisters of Life have found otherwise. Suggesting adoption in a moment of crisis might underscore feelings of inadequacy, confusion, or failure for the mother, but through accompaniment, she can come to see both herself and her child as a gift. Once she can accept herself as a mother then she is able to engage the questions of her heart around choices of parenting and adoption. Does this advice come as a surprise to you? Why is it so important to allow a woman to see herself as a gift and a mother before initiating any discussion about adoption?

4. How does Sister Maris Stella, SV, suggest you respond if a woman asks what you think she should do when deciding between adoption and parenting? How and why is this different than if a woman brings up considering an abortion?
5. Sister Maris Stella, SV says, “Our role is to allow ourselves to deeply experience the goodness of this woman, to reflect that goodness back to her, to be a place of encouragement, and most importantly, to hold out hope that God’s plans for her and her child are good and beautiful.” How does our availability and openness create the space for a woman to discern freely and truly?

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CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 10: "Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present"

During the next video, "Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present," participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the power of listening and presence in the work of accompanying another person into life. They will also explore concrete skills for more effective listening.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. We pray in a special way for all those who are discerning
adoption at this time; may they know your powerful presence, and trust
deeply in your love for them and their children.*

*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.

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