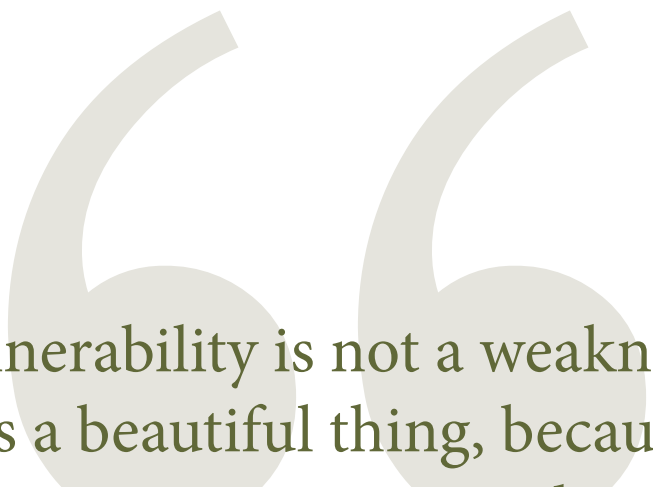




VIDEO 4

VULNERABILITY: AN IDENTITY CRISIS



Vulnerability is not a weakness.
It's a beautiful thing, because
it means opening ourselves to
relationship with others, even
depending on others in our need.
But this is also risky, because
in relationship, there's always a
chance of being wounded or hurt.

SUMMARY

In this fourth video, “Vulnerability: An Identity Crisis,” participants are introduced to the profound vulnerability experienced by a woman who is unexpectedly pregnant. This experience of vulnerability can lead to a deep identity crisis, which can cause a woman to enter into a mode of self-preservation. This desire to preserve her self-understanding drastically affects her perception of the three options available to her—motherhood, adoption, or abortion. Without the accompaniment of someone who will receive her in her vulnerability and believe in her, she might see abortion as her only option.

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 something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are the groundwork for building 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

Share a time when an experience of vulnerability led to a victory/great communion in your life?

When you look around in your community and the world, who is most vulnerable? Who is easy to forget or ignore?

Facilitator may choose which question to use. Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #4

VULNERABILITY: AN IDENTITY CRISIS



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 4: "Vulnerability: An Identity Crisis"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this fourth video, we are invited to a deeper understanding of the profound vulnerability experienced by a woman who is unexpectedly pregnant. Her pregnancy and vulnerability can lead to a deep identity crisis. She may feel as though she has lost herself or is going to lose herself because of her pregnancy. In response to this deeply felt loss of self, a pregnant woman may find herself in a mode of self-preservation. In coming to understand her heart and her experience, we can better accompany her to help a woman believe in herself.

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

**2 CORINTHIANS
12:9-10**

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”

GALATIANS 6:2

“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

ISAIAH 41:10

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me?
That was new to me?
2. How do I view vulnerability? In myself? In others?
3. Have there been times when I felt I lost control of my life? What was my response?
What were my fears? What gave me hope?
4. According to Paul Swope, women in crisis pregnancies generally view adoption as the worst form of death of self. Take a moment to pause and reflect on this. How can I empathize with a woman in crisis? When have I had to make a hard decision that was ultimately for my good, but which felt like a death of self at the time?
5. The Sisters speak about how those who choose life make an act of faith in themselves and incorporate motherhood into their self identity. Has there been a time(s) that I have experienced questions or doubts about my identity, for example, as a spouse, a parent, a student, a leader? How did I respond to these doubts? Was I called to make an act of faith in myself?
6. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

“

Women considering abortion who chose life do not necessarily have a greater love for children, but rather a stronger sense of self. They don't feel threatened by their pregnancy, rather, they believe in themselves and their capacity for motherhood.

”

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. In the modern world vulnerability is viewed negatively, but in the Christian life it's essential for communion with others. How do you tend to view vulnerability? When have you had an experience of vulnerability that was transformed from something negative into an opportunity of encounter?
3. In the video we heard that, for many women, abortion is a response to the interior question: "How can I preserve my own life?" How do you react to this? How does this perception of abortion as self-preservation impact your understanding of women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant? How can you build empathy for a woman who has this experience?
4. Sister Maria Cristina, SV says, "If we begin to wrap our minds around this perception of abortion as self-preservation, we can start to understand the extent of the pressures and temptations a pregnant woman in crisis faces. This allows us to prepare our hearts to receive her, ...to give her the space to reflect honestly and ponder the questions tugging at her heart. If she feels understood, she will begin to trust, and once that happens we can respond, ... with a real friendship and practical support—housing, clothing, options for continued education—the list goes on." How does this approach to walking with a woman in crisis strike you? Does it resonate or not? Explain.

“

At the heart of what it means to be pro-life is to see the goodness, the beauty, the capacity in each of the women who come to us; to reflect back to her the truth of her identity, so that she can make an act of faith in herself—and incorporate motherhood into her self-identity.

”

CLOSING

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

What's coming up next? Video 5: "Hope and Fear: Understanding the Heart of a Pregnant Woman"

In the fifth video, "Hope and Fear: Understanding the Heart of a Pregnant Woman," participants will be invited to more deeply understand the five main fears in the heart of a pregnant woman: (1) I am all alone, (2) I am not enough, (3) It's all up to me, (4) There is no room for this baby in the heart of the father, (5) There is no room for this baby in the hearts of my family members.

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. May women who find themselves pregnant and vulnerable feel the presence of your love and your providence, and know themselves to be your beloved daughters.

*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.

Copyright © 2022 McGrath Institute for Church Life,
University of Notre Dame and Sisters of Life

Intolifeseries.com