



Our Story

God's Plan

God, our Creator and Lord, calls us to the very depths of who we are. Each of us is intimately, uniquely designed in his image and likeness.

- We were conceived in love by God and by our parents – that is our *origin*.
- We are made for love and Heaven – that is our *goal*.

Seeing ourselves as God sees us unveils who we really are, showing us that our ultimate identity lies in our relationship with him. That should give us a sense of great assurance and trust. Yes, Jesus told us we will have crosses to carry in this life, but he intends for us to remain securely within the embrace of his loving providence.

Human Sin

The inclination toward sin, known as 'concupiscence,' is due to the Fall, the original sin of our first parents. Before the Fall, their desires were perfectly ordered toward the good; now, however, because we inherit the effects of original sin from our first parents, we often desire that which is *not* good for us. Adam and Eve fell because they doubted God's love. They began to see him as a tyrant who wanted to keep them under his thumb and deprive them of good things, rather than a loving Father who wanted to give them "every good gift" (see James 1:17).

As parents, you are the first and the primary representatives of God to your children, as well as their first example of his loving law. Keep that in mind, showing them your unconditional love even in the midst of necessary discipline. Neither overbearing nor lax, parents should give and enforce appropriate rules to guide and protect their children, always letting them know they are loved.

The biggest tyrant and con artist is the devil, Satan. He tricks us into thinking sin is good, and when we fall for it, we experience a rupture, a break, a division. We can see this division when we sin against another person, causing pain that damages and can even end the relationship. Likewise with God. Venial sin wounds our relationship with God, while mortal sin completely breaks it, causing spiritual death. It is only through repentance that that spiritual life of grace can be restored.

Jesus' Love

God's love can penetrate those places in our hearts where we have allowed sin to exist. Jesus wipes away our faults and sins and makes us new in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which we should desire to receive frequently. Jesus can forgive us and rebuild us, if we acknowledge our need and allow his healing touch to purify our hearts.

Engage with your son/daughter

Pray for them: "Lord, our child needs our help in becoming his/her true self. Give us the wisdom to know how to direct him/her according to your divine plan and for his/her good. Amen."

Ask questions:

- 1) How do you think Satan tempts people your age? What does he trick young people into believing?
- 2) How have you experienced the painful division caused by sin? What is it like? Who is affected?

Adapted from *Theology of the Body for Teens, Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life Middle School Edition: Parent's Guide*, Ascension Press, 2012.