

TRUE BEAUTY
WOMANHOOD
SESSION 4



PART 2

SISTERHOOD



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SESSION OVERVIEW

In the last session we discussed how our own insecurities can lead to comparison, competition, envy, and even hurting others. The reality is that “hurt People,” hurt people. Jesus promises that we can discover our identity and security in Him. He is the Divine Physician that has come to heal us from our hurt. Jesus loves us in our brokenness and accepts us as we are, and He can transform our instincts to compare and compete into compassion toward others. Jesus gives us the grace to love as He loves—total self-donation. In fact, God’s love in us is the source of interior beauty and emotional virtue that others are drawn to. True sisters accept us as Jesus does—just the way we are! True sisters also remind each other who they can become in Christ. St. Catherine of Siena said, *“Be who God created you to be and you will set the world on fire.”*

SESSION SNAPSHOT

Review the entire lesson plan in advance so you are prepared to lead and discuss comfortably. Gather necessary supplies and review video clips prior to your gathering. Below is the outline for the session. Use the time allotments as a guideline, as the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

TIME	SECTION	SECTION OVERVIEW
15 minutes	 CONNECT	Connect with one another through the activities “Unveiling Competition” and “Deserted Island,” introduce the topic with quotes on friendship, and then read John 15:12-15 and the opening prayer.
30 minutes	 DISCUSS	Watch the video segments and discuss. <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Scene 3: How Compassion is Related to Sisterhood  Scene 4: The Power of Virtue in Our Lives  Scene 5: Be the Friend You Are Looking For
20 minutes	 COMMIT	Summarize and commit to living out the key lessons from the session, and close in prayer.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- » A device to play video segments
- » Bibles
- » Teen Sheets
- » Pens
- » Note Cards (one per teen)

PREPARE IN ADVANCE

- » Have snacks ready.
- » Create a welcoming environment.



LEADER TIPS

- » To help your girls grow in friendship, host a movie night and watch *A Walk to Remember*. After the movie, discuss where competition, comparison, and compassion were depicted in the film.
- » We often include possible responses after the discussion questions to help you facilitate the conversation. Let group members respond first; share the concepts in parentheses as needed.



CONNECT



ACTIVITY

UNVEILING COMPETITION

SAY: Let's play Rock, Paper, Scissors. Partner up with someone sitting next to you. Here are the rules: Rock breaks scissors, scissors cut paper, and paper covers rock. We are going to play three times.

Allow time.

SAY: Ask your friend: What were you thinking as you played the game?

After everyone shares their answers, play the game again but with a new objective.

SAY: Let's play one more time, but this time instead of trying to beat your partner, intentionally try to match each other.

Play three times.

SAY:

- » How did playing the game to match each other change the game?
- » How could removing competition with others change your life?
- » Share one competitive aspect you want to remove from your life.

Pray with your partner, asking God to help you become less competitive in that part of your life.

ACTIVITY

DESERTED ISLAND

SAY: Imagine you've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. You are told you may take three things you want, apart from the essentials. What would you take and why?

Give the teens a few minutes to respond and then continue.

INTRODUCTION

SAY: Today's topic is Sisterhood. It is the second half of the Session we started last time. The Session is again about true friendship with one another. Here are some more quotes on friendship. Pay attention to ones you like the best.

Give the teens a few minutes to respond and then continue.



"I don't need a friend who changes when I change and who nods when I nod; my shadow does that much better."

—Plutarch

"A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you."

—Elbert Hubbard

"My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me."

—Henry Ford

"I value the friend who for me finds time on his calendar, but I cherish the friend who for me does not consult his calendar."

—Robert Brault

"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."

—Oscar Wilde

- » What one did you like best?

Take a few minutes to discuss their reactions to each quote.



OPENING PRAYER

SAY: Let's open in prayer. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Invite a teen to read John 15:12-15.



"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."

—John 15:12-15

PRAY: Lord Jesus, thank You for the beautiful definition of true sisterhood that is expressed in the greatest commandment. Help us to love one another as You have loved us! Help us to lay our lives down for one another so that we might come to know You more deeply. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.



DISCUSS

SAY: In the last session we discussed how our own insecurities can lead to comparison, competition, envy, and even hurting others. The reality is that people who are hurting hurt people. Jesus promises that we can discover our identity and security in Him, He can heal us from our hurts, and He gives us the grace to grow in our love for ourselves and others. In fact, God's love in us is the source of interior beauty and emotional virtue that others are drawn to.

In this session we will discuss how true sisters accept us as Jesus does—just the way we are! In addition, true sisters remind each other who they can become in Christ.

Let's watch Scene 3 of the Sisterhood session we started last time.



Watch the Scene 3 video segment, which will last about four minutes. Then discuss the following.

SAY: Let's summarize what Sarah said:

The greatest weapon against comparison and competition is compassion. We are all wounded, and we internalize our wounds and insecurities differently. "Hurt people," hurt people. When a person hurts you, consider the pain in her life that is causing her to hurt others. Jesus loves us in our brokenness and accepts us as we are. True sisters accept us as Jesus does—just the way we are!

» Would you rather have no one show up to your wedding, or no one show up to your funeral?

(When people come to your wedding, they want to show their support for your marriage. When people come to your funeral, they want to pay respects and honor you for the life you lived. What would you value more? Mother Teresa, for example, had 15,000 people attend her funeral in Calcutta. Among those present were delegates from more than 50 nations—queens, presidents, and cardinals—who were there to honor her life of service for five decades to the poorest of the poor in Calcutta.)

» The Gospel message can be summarized with one sentence: “God loves you just as you are, but too much to leave you there.” What does this mean to you?

(We do not have to be perfect to come to God. Jesus drove this point home when he told the parable of the prodigal son. The prodigal son had a plan to earn his way back into relationship with his father. He would simply become one of his hired hands. But the father embraces the son and immediately restores him to his place in the family. We can't earn God's love. All He asks is that we turn our hearts back to Him and receive His embrace. He accepts us as we are. This is the reality of what takes place every time we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. However, God loves us so much that He wants us to experience the joy of growing in our ability to love as He loves.)

» What do you think prevents people from turning their hearts back to the Father?

(It is often people's difficulty in loving themselves.)

SAY: Let's continue with Scene 4 of the session.



Watch the Scene 4 video segment, which will last about five minutes. Then discuss.

» The movie character Shrek says: “After a while, you learn to ignore the names people call you and just trust who you are.” From a Catholic perspective, what does it mean to trust who you are?

The Christian life is about growing! The Catechism # 1832 states: “*The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: ‘charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self control, chastity.’*” The fruits of the Spirit demonstrate our growth in the power of the Holy Spirit. When you have authentic joy and peace what other people think and say about you means very little.

SAY: Let's summarize what Sarah said.

Emotional virtue is the bedrock of true sisterhood. Our bodies are the windows to our souls. Our inner beauty comes from knowing who we are in Christ. Each choice we make is a step closer or a step away from the person we want to be. St. Catherine of Siena said, “*Be who God created you to be and you will set the world on fire.*” God wants you to be the real you, not society's ideal you.

- » Would you rather be paralyzed from the neck down for five years and then recover, or be in a coma for five years and then recover?

(Another way to think about this is would you rather suffer but still be in relationships with family and friends or would you rather not suffer but allow five years to pass without relationships. If compassion means to “suffer with,” then suffering becomes meaningful when it is for the sake of others. In other words, being paralyzed would be very difficult but the consolation would be that you could still offer love, support, and encouragement to others and they to you.)

Sister Mary Margaretta is a Franciscan Sister of the Martyr St. George and teaches at a school outside St. Louis. She writes:



“In high school and college I was preoccupied with making myself look beautiful. My hair, my clothing, makeup, you know the drill. Here is the funny thing. Now as a sister wearing a full habit, I have received compliments of how beautiful I am. Think about that. I don’t worry about what I wear, or fixing my hair, or wearing makeup, but people find me beautiful. I think it shows that there is interior beauty that is attractive to others! And what is that interior beauty? The love of Jesus radiating through me to others!”

- » How does Sister Margaretta’s story emphasize Sarah’s point that a woman’s beauty shines from the inside out?

(A woman’s feminine qualities are beautiful. Grace, class, joy, receptivity, sensitivity, generosity, maternity, humility, etc. The love of Jesus helps women to grow in these qualities, and they become evident to the people she encounters. These qualities draw people to her.)



“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised”

—Proverbs 31:30

What do you think it means to “fear” the Lord?

(The Bible uses the word “fear” over 300 times in reference to God, and its meaning in the original languages is “respect” and “reverence.” To respect and have reverence for God is to put Him in the first place of our lives. We understand that He made us for a purpose and has a plan for our lives. We “fear” Him by surrendering our will to His. The irony is that when we do this, He casts out fear from our hearts. First John 4:18 says: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” So, in a sense, to fear God is to not fear anything else!)

SAY: Let’s watch the final video segment of this session.



Watch the Scene 5 video segment, which will last about five minutes. Then discuss.

SAY: Let's summarize what Sarah said:

We should find our sisters in Christ and share our lives with them. Embrace the real you, and let your interior beauty shine. Be accountable to each other. Remember that *"iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another"* (Proverbs 27:17). Be the friend you are looking for.

 Would you rather live on a beautiful tropical island all by yourself, or in a horrible polluted city with true friends?

(The reality is life is tough no matter where you live. True friends make life worth living.)

» Why is it important to find your bridesmaids before your groom?

(If your bridesmaids are true sisters, then they will help you grow in the virtues that prepare you for a joy-filled marriage.)

» Fr. Robert Barron says that *"to love is to break out of the black hole of the ego."* What does he mean by that?

(The ego is focused on your own understanding of yourself: your personality, talents, and abilities. It is often used to describe self-centeredness. St. John Paul II said we discover ourselves in the sincere gift of ourselves. In other words, the more we learn to love others, the more we understand who we are and love ourselves as God loves us. When we have difficulty loving ourselves as God loves us, we tend to stay focused on ourselves and not others.)



COMMIT



ACTIVITY

TAKE-AWAY

SAY: I am going to go around the circle, starting with the person on my right, and I'd like each of us to share something we remember that this person said tonight.

Take a minute and go around the group asking everyone to share briefly. Then continue.

Now, I want to go around the circle again, starting with the person on my left, and I'd like each of us to share one "take-away" from tonight. In other words, share something that resonates in your heart as a truth to live by.

Give everyone time to share. Then follow up on last week's commitments before discussing the new challenge.

SAY: Last time we talked about being more aware of how we compare ourselves to others and the need to overcome feelings of envy. How did this week go? How can we help you to become stronger?

Allow time for discussion. Hand out Teen Sheets and point out the Commit section.

In response to this session, are you willing to commit to being honest and accountable to this group in the following areas?

- » Place more emphasis on interior beauty than exterior beauty
- » Come to Jesus “as you are” and go to Confession in the next week or two
- » Pray for someone you know who is hurting others



CLOSING PRAYER

PRAYER SISTERS

SAY: True sisters pray for one another with compassion! As we close in prayer, I'd like each person to write her name and a specific prayer intention for the following week on a notecard. Make sure the prayer intention is something you are comfortable with the entire group hearing. After you write your name and your prayer intention on the card, I'm going to collect the cards and redistribute them to someone else in the room. Whoever's card you receive will become the person you are responsible for praying for starting tonight and throughout this upcoming week.

Allow time and collect the cards.

PRAY: In the name of the Father...

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this time today to be together and enjoy each other's company. We thank You for calling us to true sisterhood with the women You place in our lives. We ask that You give us the grace to grow in virtue and that You remove anything within our hearts that is not beautiful and glorifying to You. We want our entire life to be a response to the great love You have for us as Your precious daughters. We offer up to you these women and their intentions...

Go around the room and invite everyone to pray for the person on her notecard.

Mother Mary, you are the perfect model of true sisterhood. Bring us closer to your Son. Help us become like the woman you are!

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

St. Maria Goretti, pray for us!

St. Therese of Lisieux, pray for us!

St. Catherine of Siena, pray for us!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us!