

# Conversations about **L.I.F.E.** Love. Infatuation. Friendship. Exploitation.

## Tutorial

This tutorial is designed to train catechists, teachers, parents, or others who intend to facilitate the various sessions of the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** program. It is taken from the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** website [GetFamiliesTalking.org](http://GetFamiliesTalking.org).

The **L.I.F.E.** sessions are designed to be presented by a trained facilitator or team. The sessions cannot be “taught” in the traditional sense of presenting information from teacher to student. Facilitation differs from teaching in that it depends for its effectiveness on the interaction of the participants with one another and with the facilitator. The role of a facilitator is to set up the **PROCESS** by which such meaningful intercommunication can take place.

### Step 1 Core Concepts

Understand the core concepts on which the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** program is based. These concepts are summarized in the two diagrams below:

The program is based on an understanding of the four kinds of relationships represented by the letters of the acronym LIFE.

**LOVE:** The **L.I.F.E.** program reserves the word “love” to stand for the kind of self-giving unconditional love that is found in marriage, in families, and in other committed relationships.

**INFATUATION:** The program uses the word “infatuation” to stand for any relationship that involves sexual attraction or sexual feelings. It covers all stages of a sexual relationship, from the initial attraction to sexual intimacy.

**FRIENDSHIP:** The program uses the word “friendship” to stand for the basic relationship of respect, trust, and acceptance between any two or more people.

**EXPLOITATION:** The program uses the word “exploitation” to refer to a relationship in which one person uses another for his or her own selfish purposes. Some degree of exploitation can often be found in each of the three positive relationships.

(Although most people will agree that there is a distinction between the four kinds of relationships covered by the acronym, people differ in the words used to name them. For instance young people often equate the words “love” and “romance.” And society commonly uses the word “infatuation” to stand for one degree of the total experience of falling in love.)

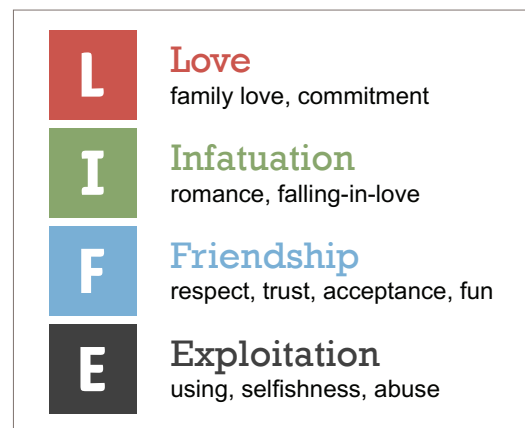


Diagram 1

Step  
1

## Core Concepts *continued*

This Venn diagram represents the faith dimensions of the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** program, as well as the inter-relationship of the four kinds of human relationships. The core concepts represented by the diagram include:

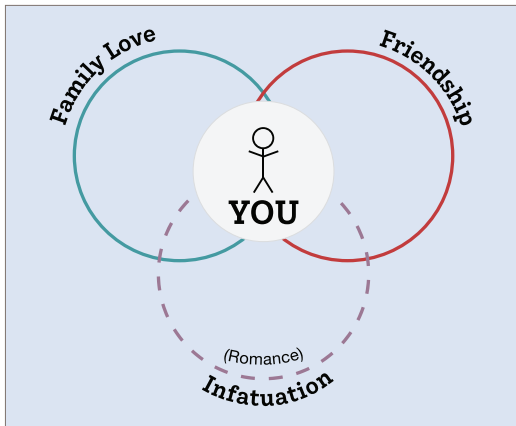


Diagram 2

**The GOD Circle:** Every person has been created by God: by love, for love, to love.

**GOD'S PLAN:** God desires an intimate love relationship with each person, a love relationship that will last forever. We learn to love God by learning to love ourselves and others in the three love circles.

**The INDIVIDUAL:** Every person is created with an intellect and a free will, the powers needed to know what is good and to choose to do what is good. God wants each individual person to learn to love and to choose to love.

**VIRTUES:** The diagram represents God's plan for teaching a person to love. As children mature they move from one love circle to another. They learn to love by practicing the virtues (positive character strengths) associated with each circle.

**The THIRD CIRCLE:** The third circle is represented by a dashed line, which signifies that the love circle is not yet complete. Most people are called by God to complete the circle through marriage: the joining of two love circles to form a new family love circle. Others are called to a life of celibate love as a priest or consecrated religious. Some are called to make the gift of self through commitment to a life-affirming cause.

**CHASTITY:** Learning to love in the third circle involves two life-long processes: a) coming to a personal understanding of one's own sexuality and that of others, and b) developing the virtues needed to direct one's sexual desires toward love and away from exploitation.

**FREEDOM:** Freedom is the gift that allows us to make loving choices. But freedom also allows us to make choices that are harmful to ourselves and to others. We use the words sin, evil, and vice to name the negative results of unloving choices; these can be found in each of the three circles and in the larger world around us.

**EXPLOITATION:** Any choice that uses another person without respect for his or her dignity and freedom is called exploitation. Children must be taught how to recognize and how to avoid all forms of exploitation.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT:** The adults in families, schools, churches, and other organizations are responsible for creating safe environments that protect children from exploitation of all kinds, especially sexual exploitation. As children mature, they learn that they themselves must help to create an environment that is morally safe for themselves, their peers, and younger children.

## Step 2

### Theological and Pedagogical Foundations

Understand the ecclesial documents, as well as the theological and pedagogical principles, on which the **L.I.F.E.** program is based.

It is important that those who direct the program have a basic understanding of these documents. A link to the ecclesial documents can be found on the homepage of the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** website ([GetFamiliesTalking.org](http://GetFamiliesTalking.org)). A link to a downloadable six-page outline of the theological and pedagogical principles can be found under Step 2 of the Facilitator Tutorial page. Duplicate to study later.

## Step 3

### Age-Appropriate Content

Understand how the core concepts of the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** program are developed in age-appropriate ways.

An explanation of their gradual development, year by year, from kindergarten through high school, can be found on the Program Benefits page on [GetFamiliesTalking.org](http://GetFamiliesTalking.org).

## Step 4

### Chastity Education and Safe Environment

Understand how the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** program encompasses the goals of both Chastity Education and Safe Environment.

Click on Authors in the main banner of the website for an explanation of how the **L.I.F.E.** program, which began as a response to the Safe Environment mandate, evolved over the past two decades into a full, parent-guided relationship education program.

## Step 5

### Components of Each Session

Understand how each session is developed to include an easy-to-follow Lesson Plan, a colorful PowerPoint, and an Activity Book for each participant, as well as an optional classroom adaptation with a send-home parent packet.

To learn more about the educational goals and objectives outlined for each of the thirteen lessons, please visit the About the Materials page on [GetFamiliesTalking.org](http://GetFamiliesTalking.org). On this page, you can read through the session goals for each individual lesson, as well as download Lesson Samples that include little post-it notes that give you hints for how to use the various materials.

After reading through the lesson goals, select the one lesson that seems to best fit the students you plan to teach this year, and tentatively plan which lessons you will use in the following years.

## Step 6

### Immediate Preparation

Prepare to facilitate the session(s) you have selected.

- Download and print the Lesson Plan
  - Read thoroughly the introductory pages.
  - Gather all materials called for; arrange them for easy distribution
- Download the PowerPoint
  - Learn to use the projector and any sound equipment
- Thoroughly study the Lesson Plan
  - Imagine each process being described and the goal of that process. Plan to facilitate the process for maximum involvement of the participants.
  - Practice using the PowerPoint as a guide through the lesson. Learn when to click for each concept.
- Download the Activity Book; duplicate one copy for each student
  - Become familiar with the activities called for
  - Have pens, pencils, scissors handy as needed
- Duplicate any additional facilitator materials called for by the Lesson Plan
- If you are following the Classroom Adaptation version, download the Parent Packet for each student and prepare the take-home envelopes
- Call for HELP if needed. If you are unsure about any part of the facilitation process, you can reach someone from the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** Team by calling 1-844-727-8672.

## Step 7

### Facilitate the Lesson!!!

- Pray for courage and confidence.
- Trust in the abiding presence of God in this work of love.
- Allow the PROCESS to unfold in the minds and hearts of the participants.

## Step 8

### Feedback

- Send us your Feedback. (Optional, of course) Tell us what worked, what caused problems.
- Give us your advice on how to improve the program or materials for future users.
- Send us pictures.
- Contact the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** Team by using the form on the Contact Us page on [GetFamiliesTalking.org](http://GetFamiliesTalking.org).

For an interactive version of the tutorial, please visit  
[GetFamiliesTalking.org/Facilitator-Tutorial](http://GetFamiliesTalking.org/Facilitator-Tutorial).