



8: "Contraception: Why Not"

CD by Janet Smith, Ph.D.

Study Questions

Each parish is receiving a copy of the CD in its Parish Resource Binder, and more copies may be ordered through *The Future Depends on Love* initiative. A CD order form may be found in the binder. Please encourage your pastor to ask for copies, if you are interested in using this resource. The CDs will be very inexpensive or even free!

The following study guide presents suggestions on how to use the CD in a classroom setting. First, a page of questions for participants is provided, to be photocopied and handed out. Then a facilitator's guide follows, which has the answers to the questions.

You are also encouraged to consider distributing the CD to parishioners to take home. Some suggestions: parents of children in religious education (especially in Confirmation classes); marriage preparation couples; and RCIA participants. You could also leave multiple copies at the back of the church or pick a Mass at which to distribute the CD.

This resource is also available in DVD/video format. The below study questions give the option of using either the CD or the DVD format. To order the DVD, please visit www.omsoul.com.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM USE

Teachers may adapt the following study guide to any time frame and setting. It has been designed for Religion, Health, Pre-Cana, RCIA, and CCD classes, and it is especially suitable for marriage and family classes. The focus and questions are intended to evoke higher level thinking skills, at the high school and adult level. A four-day presentation is recommended (approximately 15-20 minutes of "Contraception: Why Not" each day followed by discussion). Here is a suggested daily format:

Day 1: "The Historical Context" and "The Church's Response" 11 mins (CD) / 16 mins (DVD)

Day 2: "Societal Impact" 14 mins (CD) / 14 mins (DVD)

Day 3: "The Church's Position" 19 mins (CD) / 22 mins (DVD)

Day 4: "Natural Family Planning" and the "Formula for Success" 10 mins (CD)/ 13 mins (DVD)

Before playing the CD or showing the DVD, distribute the Study Questions to the students and preview each set of questions before showing related sections of the video or before listening to related sections of the audio recording, respectively. To encourage active viewing, require students to record answers while viewing the DVD or listening to the CD. Review these questions and answers. Be sure you know when to start and stop the DVD or CD. Divide into small groups for discussion. A recorder from each group may share responses with the entire class. Proceed with this format each day. **Another possible format** would be to send the CD and study questions home with participants before a session and ask them to listen to the CD and work on the questions before gathering as a large group to discuss.

Note: Further study materials and a transcript are also available at <http://www.omsoul.com/pamview.phtml?idnum=135>. Please feel free to copy them for your own use.



“Contraception: Why Not” CD Study Questions

Historical Context

1. List reasons why contraception was less widely practiced (compared to today) prior to the 1960’s.
2. How was the issue of contraception viewed by Christian churches prior to the 1960’s?
3. How was the issue of contraception viewed by the Roman Catholic Church prior to the 1960’s?
4. What event revolutionized contraception in the early 1960’s?
5. In what ways did society think that the use of contraception would be beneficial?

The Church’s Response

1. What document issued by the Roman Catholic hierarchy has established our position on contraception after Vatican II? Name the author of the document and the year it was written.
2. Did the content of this document represent new thinking on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to the use of contraception?
3. What did the author of this document predict would be the effects of widespread use of contraception?

Societal Impact

1. What effects has the widespread use of contraception had on society?
2. According to Dr. Smith, specifically how has the increased prevalence of premarital sex impacted marriage?
3. As presented by Dr. Smith, how did Pope Paul VI arrive at his predictions regarding widespread contraception?

The Church’s Position

1. What is the basis for the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching on human sexuality?
2. According to Dr. Smith, what is the nature and meaning of sexual intercourse?
3. What are the three main objections of the Roman Catholic Church to the use of contraceptives?

NFP and the “Formula for Success”

1. According to Dr. Smith, what are the main differences between Natural Family Planning and contraception?
2. State the four components of Dr. Smith’s “Formula for Success in Marriage.”

Concludes with Audience Questions and Answers



Facilitator's Guide

"Contraception: Why Not" CD—Study Questions and Answers

Notes to the facilitator: Please remember to maintain the proper tone in presenting this resource to a group. Many people in the group will have used or are currently using contraception. It is crucial to maintain a *calm and loving tone* and not to come across as judgmental. The Church teaches that using contraception is an objective evil, but only God knows the state of a person's soul and how responsible he or she is in committing an act.

One great strength of Dr. Smith's presentation is that she focuses on the objective reasons as to why the Church teaches what she does. The discussion should *stay focused on the objective*, not wander into the personal. It is to be hoped that the group discussion will inspire individual couples to discuss these crucial issues on a personal level together when they are alone.

In addition, she presents much *historical context*, referring several times to the 1960s and before. To prevent listeners from "tuning out" these sections, participants should be helped to see that these historical references lead us to understand our own times better.

Please *review* these questions and answers and listen to the CD (or DVD) before presenting to a group. If a difficult question comes up in the discussion, do not be afraid to say that you don't know an answer. See "The Benefits for Marriage of Cherishing Fertility" bulletin insert at www.MassCatholicMarriage.org for more information and for helpful websites for referring participants. Remember, you are a facilitator; *you are not expected to have all the answers.*

Historical Context (Day 1)

CONTENT QUESTIONS:

1. List reasons why contraception was less widely practiced (compared to today) prior to the 1960's.

- No good contraceptives were available.
- Protestant legislators had passed laws banning contraceptive use. Contraceptives were regarded as aiding sexual license (Griswold v. Connecticut overthrew these laws based on a "right to privacy" in 1965).
- Among Catholics, obedience was viewed as a virtue. In 1960, 66% of Catholics were obedient. Now only 4% comply with Church teaching.

2. How was the issue of contraception viewed by Christian churches prior to the 1960's?

Every Christian Church taught that contraception was wrong until the 1930 Anglican Church's Lambeth Conference.

3. How was the issue of contraception viewed by the Roman Catholic Church prior to the 1960's?

In 1930, Pope Pius XI reiterated constant Church teaching that contraception was wrong in his encyclical *Casti Connubii* ("On Christian Marriage"). Pope Paul VI reaffirmed Church teaching in *Humanae Vitae* (1968).

4. What event revolutionized contraception in the early 1960's?

"The Pill" became available as a much more dependable and less intrusive contraceptive.

5. In what ways did society think that the use of contraception would be beneficial?

- Over-population scare – Malthus predicted a geometric increase in population vs. arithmetic increase in food.
- Feminism – More women could enter the work force.
- Better marriages – Contraception would eliminate the fear of pregnancy, thus promoting happier marriages.
- There would be an enormous decrease in unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

1. Before 1960, why do you think Christian Churches and American legislators, who reflected society in general, thought that contraceptives aided sexual license?

They thought contraception would make it far too easy to be involved in adultery, fornication, etc.

2. Were society's predictions regarding contraception correct? Why or why not? Examine each prediction separately.

Society's predictions regarding contraception:

- a. Contraceptives would eliminate overpopulation problems—Population has increased greatly, but the problems from population have not materialized. We have more than enough food and resources to provide for the world's population. Poor distribution of resources, not population, is the real problem.
- b. Contraceptives would afford women more opportunity in the work place—Women now outnumber men in the workplace, but single women with children are still our largest poverty class.
- c. Contraceptives would allow for happier marriages—Greatly increased rates of divorce are a strong indication of less happiness in marriage, not more.
- d. Contraceptive sex would result in fewer unwanted pregnancies—Although it seems plausible that there would be fewer unwanted pregnancies and subsequently fewer abortions, this has not been the case. Actually there have been significant increases in the numbers of unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

The Church's Response (Day 1 continued)

CONTENT QUESTIONS:

1. What document issued by the Roman Catholic hierarchy has established our position on contraception after Vatican II? Name the author of the document and the year it was written.

Humanae Vitae – Pope Paul VI, 1968

2. Did the content of this document represent new thinking on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to the use of contraception?

No, it reiterated the Church's constant teaching.

3. What did the author of this document predict would be the effects of widespread use of contraception?

- a. General lowering of morality (Example: crime, TV, promiscuity, etc.)
- b. General disregard for psychological and physical wellbeing of women by men (Example: pornography, increase in poverty, increase in sexual abuse).
- c. Governments' use of coercive means of family planning (Example: China, Cairo conference).
- d. Treating bodies as machines – lose respect for body as integral with soul (Example: "designer genes" – buy a baby, surrogate mothers, in-vitro fertilization).

When you hear: "Tell me we're not treating our bodies like machines," then STOP - audio 11 mins/video 16 mins

FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

1. Judge the accuracy of the Pope's predictions by comparing the state of American society today to that of the 1960's. For example, how is the content of TV shows different? Do you agree that he was on target? Why or why not?

Pope Paul VI's predictions were accurate. The following have come to pass:

- a. the general lowering of morality in society, as exhibited by the acceptance of lewd and crude TV programming, rises in cohabitation and homosexuality, etc.
- b. the general disregard for the physical and psychological well-being of females by males, as exhibited by the huge outbreak of sexual abuse of women; a larger number of single women with children living at the poverty level; increased rates of divorce, abortion, out of wedlock sexual relations and consequent births.

- c. coercive contraceptive programs imposed by developed and lesser developed countries.
 - d. the treatment of our bodies as machines by using reproductive technologies such as surrogate motherhood, in vitro fertilization, etc.
- 2. How did Dr. Smith tie in the predictions of Pope Paul VI to the use of contraceptives? Examine each prediction separately.**
- a. Easier access to contraceptives did in fact cause huge increases in adultery, fornication, cohabitation, etc.
 - b. Cohabitation and pre-marital sex have led to increases in unwanted pregnancies and divorce of married couples. More and more people are being scarred by sexual chaos in our society, including children devastated by divorce and the loss of their innocence. Contraception helps a man use a woman without regard to her needs or desires.
 - c. Beyond replacement levels (on average 2.2 children per woman) additional children are seen as environmental hazards competing for limited resources. Therefore, contraception, sterilization, and abortion are touted as necessary (evils) to avoiding an overpopulation problem. Ready access to contraceptives made it easy for governments to create oppressive population control programs.
 - d. On one hand, our culture considers it OK to eliminate large portions of future generations through the use of contraceptives, sterilization, and abortion. On the other hand, many people suffering with infertility problems are resorting to in vitro fertilization, etc. for the purpose of posterity. Once we are used to controlling our fertility with contraceptives, other dehumanizing reproductive processes are similarly attractive.

Societal Impact (Day 2)

CONTENT QUESTIONS:

1. What effects has the widespread use of contraception had on society?

- a. Divorce rate doubled in 10 years (1965: 25% to 1975: 50%)—Demographer Robert Michael noted that the use rate of contraceptives paralleled the divorce rate. This only leveled off when contraceptives saturated the market. Michael claims that 45% of the increase in divorce is due to increased use of contraceptives.
- b. Fewer children later in marriage—(Children earlier in marriage help encourage couples to work out problems that arise in early marriage; children necessitate selflessness; makes each spouse a better person.)
- c. Much more adultery (easier to have affairs when the perception is that there's no possibility of a baby)
- d. Women are more financially independent.
- e. More unwanted babies—In 1960, 6% of white babies were born out of wedlock, now it's 22%. In 1960, 22% of black babies were born out of wedlock, now it's 68%.
- f. More abortions—There are enormously more surgical abortions with reports from abortionists and pregnancy support centers indicating 50-70% of abortions are done for women who claim they were using contraception). According to the Supreme Court, "For two decades, couples have based their intimate relationships on the availability of abortion should contraception fail (Planned Parenthood v. Casey, 1992)."

2. According to Dr. Smith, specifically how has the increased prevalence of premarital sex impacted marriage?

Pre-marital sex means that more people have been lied to and experienced broken promises. There is more loss of trust in others and self. (Can I keep a commitment?) Also, a sexual relationship obscures one's judgment in choosing a spouse.

3. As presented by Dr. Smith, how did Pope Paul VI arrive at his predictions regarding widespread contraception?

He had the history of Church teaching behind him. He was guided by Church teaching on Natural Law. In addition, the Holy Spirit guided him.

When you hear, "It has turned out to be dead wrong," then STOP - audio 14 mins/video 14 mins

FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

1. **Why is a sense of trust so essential to marriage? How can pre-marital sex erode a sense of trust or the ability to make a commitment?**

Trust is essential in a marriage because you must have faith that your spouse will be committed to you in a life-long relationship. Pre-marital sex is not good for a marriage. Trust is broken after people have experienced lies and broken promises. People carry baggage of mistrust and broken relationship with them. Hence it becomes harder for people to commit to another person (in marriage) when they don't trust their partner or even themselves to live up to that commitment.

2. **According to the Supreme Court (Planned Parenthood v. Casey), what is the link between contraception and abortion?**

The Supreme Court decision Planned Parenthood v. Casey effectively stated that we must have abortion because we have contraception. In other words, the decision to contracept requires that abortion be the failsafe should contraceptives fail.

3. **As defined in the video, contraception means "against the beginning." What similarities in attitude would you expect in those who favor the availability of contraception and abortion?**

Most couples pursue "sex without consequence," believe that sex was made for pleasure instead of babies and bonding, and that abortion is an acceptable form of birth control. They believe that too many children can be hazardous to the environment; hence they are treated as expendable resources. The availability of abortion signifies a devaluation of human life. Also, contraception excludes God from the sexual act.

The Church's Position (Day 3)

CONTENT QUESTIONS:

1. **What is the basis for the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on human sexuality?**

Natural Law: If you want things to prosper, you have to act in accord with their nature.

2. **According to Dr. Smith, what is the nature and meaning of sexual intercourse?**

Sexual intercourse is for babies and bonding. The Catholic Church bases this idea on simple reasoning:

Why do we have sex? What is its purpose? To bring husband and wife closer together (unitive) and to bring babies into the world (procreative). Each act of intercourse needs to be open to both.

Pleasure is not the purpose of sex; it's the motive or consequence of sex, as pleasure is not the purpose of eating or sleeping.

3. **What are the three main objections of the Roman Catholic Church to the use of contraceptives?**

- a. Contraceptives do not let God perform His creative act in the "arena" he designed for it. New human life is His desire. Children are infinitely precious, not "options," "burdens," or "environmental hazards."
- b. The contraceptive mentality implies (and acts in) hostility to fertility. Pregnancy is treated as a disease for which we need "the Pill." Fertility, however, is a healthy state and the Pill often has unhealthy side effects for women. (For example, the Pill's packet insert lists the following: blood clots, heart disease, irritability, weight gain, depression, reduced libido.)
- c. Contraception also violates the unitive meaning of the sexual act – "I love you, but not that part of you." You are withholding part of yourself, a part that belongs in an act meant to be totally self-giving.

When you hear, "...when all of your acts of sexual intercourse leave open the ordination to procreation," then STOP - audio 19 mins/video 22 mins

FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

1. **From the videotape/audio, there seems to be a lack of concern in our society for women's health, especially when it comes to her fertility. Who do you think are more burdened with the consequences of contraceptive use and contraceptive failure, women or men? Why? If**

you add this to the negative consequences of divorce (sharp increase in poverty level for women and children), what can you conclude about the liberating effect of the Pill on women?

Women are more burdened with the consequences of contraceptive use and contraceptive failure because they are the ones harmed physically, emotionally, and spiritually by chemicals, STDs, and relationships that relegate them to being used as sexual objects. When contraceptives fail and children are conceived, abortion becomes an unfortunate and devastating option. Women who choose to parent alone are more likely to live in poverty with their children. Hence the Pill actually enslaves women to an unhealthy lifestyle, though it is touted as “liberating” women.

Natural Family Planning (Day 4)

CONTENT QUESTION:

According to Dr. Smith, what are the main differences between Natural Family Planning and contraception?

NFP

Open to God during intercourse

No bad social consequences

Enhances relationship

Respects fertility

CONTRACEPTION

Prevents God’s creative power during act

Increased divorce, more unwanted babies, more abortions, unhealthy side effects

Interferes with bonding aspect of sex

Hostile to fertility

“Formula for Success” (Day 4 continued)

CONTENT QUESTION:

State the four components of Dr. Smith’s “Formula for Success in Marriage.”

- a. No sex before marriage. If you are sexually active, stop for a year or two years before getting married.
- b. Get married in a church, and go to church regularly.
- c. Use NFP, not contraceptives.
- d. Tithe. (Give 10% of your income to charities and/or church)
- e. “If you get God, sex, and money in the right place, everything else is easy.”

When you hear, “So I promised them this,” then STOP - audio 10 mins/video 13 mins

FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

1. Is each component of Dr. Smith’s “Formula” essential? Why?

Dr. Smith’s formula for a successful marriage is a sure-fire way of assuring that the marital bond is life-giving and sacramental, leaving little possibility for divorce. Each component is like a leg on a table—offering great strength and stability.

2. Do you think she’ll be paying out many \$1000 bills?

No, if couples adhere to this formula, divorce would be improbable and Dr. Smith would not be paying out \$1000 to couples.

Audience Questions and Answers

Note to facilitator: These questions have not been included in the participants' study guides. These responses are included in case there is a question from one of the participants concerning this section. You need not play this section for the group.

1. Why have some priests permitted contraception by telling people that contraception is alright if their consciences tell them so?

Some older priests have been doing what they've been taught. After 1968, some priests were taught that the Church was going to change its teaching on contraception someday. Hence they taught that Catholics in good conscience could dissent from the Church if their consciences told them this was acceptable.

2. How is there a loss of grace in marriages due to contraception?

Those who contracept do not fully embrace Church teaching and so cannot participate as truly enthusiastic members. Contraception often makes a couple's sex life flat. NFP couples generally have fulfilling sex lives built on trust and open communication.

3. Chastity is understanding what your sexual powers are for and, in a certain sense, ordering your life in such a way that those sexual powers will be reserved to the time when it's appropriate. How are chastity and NFP related?

John Paul II says NFP brings about the virtue of self-mastery, which is the same as the virtue of chastity. He believes it makes people better lovers because now they're making love to the person they love rather than to some fantasy. Instead of satisfying some sexual urge, they can control those sexual urges, and now they're acting upon a love impulse and not a sex impulse.

4. What is a good way to evangelize (share) the message about contraception?

One good way to start is to give people tapes/CDs to listen to and literature they can read, instead of talking to them yourself. Later open up a line of communication with them and reflect on what they've listened to or read. Another suggestion is to encourage the formation of study groups that could meet and read a Church encyclical, for instance, a few pages at a time and talk about it.

"Thank you all very much."

STOP - audio 12 mins/video 13 mins

Derived from the Study Guide at www.omsoul.com