

THE HEART

OF A WOMAN



SAMPLE

STUDY 1
TRUE BEAUTY



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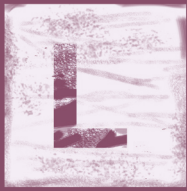
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TRUE BEAUTY

THE HEART OF A WOMAN

OVERVIEW

“You...complete me.”

Those three little words from the mouth of Tom Cruise in *Jerry Maguire* were enough to make all the young ladies in the movie theater swoon over their popcorn and burst into tears. Why? Because that tiny phrase cuts to the very heart and soul of every woman. The promise of finding the perfect man to fill that empty piece of her heart—and for her to fill his—is the same hope that brings us back to the movie theater for chick flick after cheesy chick flick.







The beauty of this promise is that, regardless of our relationship status, it has already been fulfilled. Jesus Christ, our Prince, our Savior, our “one-and-only,” has been there all along, waiting eagerly for us to find Him.

In this study, we’ll discuss the nature of a woman’s heart, how its nature differs from that of a man’s heart, and finally, how a relationship with God keeps young women on the right track when they find themselves attracted to, or in a relationship with, a young man.

By the end of the study, your group will have a better understanding of how men and women differ in nature and how the devil uses those differences to tempt them into sin. As women, they will learn how Jesus is the one man who will always fulfill their emotional desires and lead each of them to a man who is worthy of her heart.

Each young lady will leave the study with concrete ways to avoid the temptation to use others as objects of emotional fantasy while growing closer to Christ and His unfailing love for her.

Below is the outline for the study. Use the time allotments as a guideline, as the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group. Also, be sure not to spend too much time on the first few scenes! The most fruitful discussion will come during later scenes.

Time	Section	Section Overview
10 minutes	Dig In 	Introduce the study topic with an activity called “The Perfect Husband.
5 minutes	Plant Seeds 	Read CCC 369 and lead the opening prayer.
45 minutes	Sink Roots 	In this section, your group will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Scene 1—The differences between the natures of men and women. → Scene 2—The differences between sentimental and sensual attraction. → Scene 3—How sentimental attraction affects women. → Scene 4—How emotional fantasy can lead to sin.
15 minutes	Live It! 	→ Scene 5—Your group will learn ways to overcome temptation and draw more closely to Jesus.
5 minutes	Take It to Prayer 	Review the prayer application in the Study Guide. Encourage your group to reflect on this meditation during the week.
5 minutes	Bear Fruit 	Summarize the main points from the study, and encourage your group to set resolutions for how they can live out what they have learned.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Bibles
- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Study Guides
- Pens or pencils
- Snacks (optional)
- TV/DVD player
- True Beauty DVD
- A vase full of flowers—one flower for each one in the study

PREPARE IN ADVANCE:

- Preview the video segments, and cue the DVD to begin.
- Choose brightly colored pens and pencils to encourage note taking and creativity.



According to Pew Research, 80 percent of young women want to have a successful marriage. But Barna Research Group reported that young people don't believe marriage will happen at a young age. Only 58 percent of young women believe that they will likely be married by the age of 25. College degrees and a great-paying job top the goals they see as attainable by the time they're 25 years old. The downside? Many young women are engaging in intimacy without the commitment of marriage. Remember that someone in your group may have already engaged in various sexual activities and this study may bring out all sorts of feelings. Regardless of their past, remind your group throughout this study that they can recommit to purity and that God is all about forgiveness and fresh starts.



DIG IN

Use this opening activity as a fun way to draw your group into the subject matter of the study. It should help create an atmosphere for fun, learning, and participation. It will aid in setting the tone for the session—so enjoy it!



The Perfect Husband

You'll need the Study Guides and pens or pencils for this activity.

SAY: We all have hopes and dreams for our futures. Whether they are where we choose to go to college, what our careers will be, where we will live, or just what our plans are for the next weekend, we all dream about what awaits us.

Certainly, one aspect of those dreams is who our future husband will be! Each of us has an idea in our minds of what that man might be like and what sort of person he will be. Over the next three minutes, I want you to write down as many words or phrases you can think of that describe who he is as a person and why you would choose him to be your husband. There's a space in your Study Guide to write.

Give them 3 minutes for this activity. Then ask for volunteers to share a few of the words and phrases they came up with. Have them keep that page handy because you'll return to their descriptions for the Bear Fruit activity at the end.



PLANT SEEDS

READ: “Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity ‘in the image of God’. In their ‘being-man’ and ‘being-woman’, they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness.” —CCC 369

Be sure to read this Catechism reference slowly and carefully, dwelling on the fact that each of us is made in God’s own image.

Young women in particular often struggle with realizing their own inherent dignity and worth. To stress its importance, repeat the last sentence to them before praying.



Read this verse aloud to your group: “She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.” —Proverbs 31:25

Talk about what true strength means for young women and how these characteristics can empower young women when they feel sexual pressure from guys, their friends, and the world. Tell them to use a dry erase marker to write this verse on their bathroom mirror so they can read it first thing in the morning and feel empowered by the strength that God gives them to courageously live a life of purity.



Opening Prayer

PRAY: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.



SINK ROOTS

SCENE 1

This clip will last approximately 3 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Lisa discusses the differences she noticed between men and women when she was a college resident hall director.
- The men in her hall were generally very physical and visual.
- The women in her hall were generally involved in communication with others and spending time with friends.
- In general, she observed that women are more relational than men and more aware of their own—and others'—emotions.
- By examining and embracing these differences, it is easier to understand why we do the things we do.



When the video pauses, have your group take a moment to discuss this question:

→ **How have you noticed these differences between women and men in your own life?**



According to Fox News Magazine, the top five things women want in a relationship are time, appreciation, understanding, fun, and kind gestures. Talk with your group about what they're looking for in a mate. Ask them what they are doing in their own life to be the kind of young women that the young man they just described is looking for.

Seventeen Magazine surveyed teenage boys about dating and sex, and some of their findings revealed that it's not just boys doing the pressuring for sex; 78% said there is too much pressure from society to have premarital sex, and 60% say they've lied about something sexual to ward off the pressure they receive from others. Also 21% said they were pressured by a girl to have sex, and just over 56% felt relieved when their girlfriend said she wanted to wait to have sex.

After the discussion, start the video to begin the next scene.

SCENE 2

This clip will last approximately 5 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Lisa discusses how the devil uses the different natures of men and women to tempt them.
- Men are tempted physically and visually.
- Women are tempted through emotions and relationships.
- Lisa introduces two different types of attraction that men and women feel for each other, from the book *Love and Responsibility*:
 1. Sentimental attraction: emotional and relational
 2. Sensual attraction: physical and visual
- Both types of attraction are good and necessary for true, genuine love between a man and woman. However, the devil also uses these types of attraction to get in the way of relationships.



When the video pauses, have your group take a moment to discuss the following question:

- **Talk about a time when you had an emotional reaction. Was it a positive reaction or a negative one?**

“Passions are said to be voluntary, ‘either because they are commanded by the will or because the will does not place obstacles in their way.’ (St. Thomas Aquinas).” —CCC 1767

Emotions and feelings can be taken up in the virtues or perverted by the vices.” —CCC 1774

For an encouraging way to wrap up conversation, have group members open their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 10:13 and ask a volunteer to read.



Briefly explain that our Heavenly Father has complete confidence in our ability to make the right decision in the face of every temptation. It is up to us, as women of God, to consult Him and the wisdom He gives us when choosing how to react to our emotions.

Share this video clip from the movie The Mighty Macs your group: www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/the-mighty-macs/break-up. Talk to your group about the emotions that can be involved when they give themselves completely to a boy, and remind them that their identity isn't found in others—it is found in Christ.

After the discussion, start the video to begin the next scene.

SCENE 3

This clip will last approximately 5 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Emotional images like chick flicks and love songs can tempt women away from Jesus.
- As women, we see these images and get impatient.
- Temptations come from things like “mentally stalking” and “creeping.”
- By allowing our emotions to take over, we find ourselves completely attached to a person in our own imaginary relationship.



When the video pauses, discuss these questions:

- **Are things like “mental stalking” and “creeping” problems for you or anyone you know?**
- **How do they affect you and your emotions?**

To wrap up conversation, share the following quote with your group:

“A person’s rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use.” —Karol Wojtyła, Love and Responsibility

Explain that by treating one another as objects of love, we create a bond that helps us grow closer to God.



A study conducted by the Girl Scout Research Institute discovered that reality shows such as The Bachelor and The Bachelorette are watched mostly by females—including a lot of teens. The survey found that 75% of teen girls who watch these “reality” type shows believe that they aren’t scripted and the shows depict real life. Take time to talk to your group about the reality of relationships—they aren’t found on a TV show, and they take time to grow and mature. Remind your girls that the kind of relationship they want to have as a forever relationship is one that has Jesus at the center and not one person, sex, or material things.

Be aware that someone in your group may have already experimented sexually and this behavior can take its toll on young emotions. They often feel guilty for even fantasizing or dreaming about sexual situations and are unsure how to handle the emotions that go along with these situations. A survey conducted by the University of California-San Francisco revealed that girls are twice as likely as boys to feel bad about themselves after having engaged in sexual activity and are three times more likely to say they felt used as a result of sex. Those in your group that are struggling need your guidance to begin to heal and restore their sense of self-worth. Take care not to cast judgment, but instead love unconditionally and with grace.

After the discussion, start the video to begin the next scene.

SCENE 4

This clip will last approximately 4 minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- Our hopes and dreams about the future are good, but we need to make sure we're not trying to fill a void.
- Oftentimes, we think that being in a relationship with a guy will fix everything and fill that void.
- The only person who can truly fill us is Jesus.
- Mental stalking and creeping cause us to sin by using a person to fill a void. No person should be used for mental fantasy – whether it is a physical mental fantasy or an emotional one.
- As women, to be truly pure, we must begin with our hearts. Where our hearts go, our bodies will follow.



When the video pauses, have your group discuss the questions on the screen:

- **How does an emotional mental fantasy affect your own heart and your relationships with others?**
- **How does it affect your relationship with Christ?**

After the discussion, start the video to begin the next scene.



LIVE IT!

SCENE 5

This clip will last approximately 6½ minutes.



The following is a summary of the video segment:

- How do we make sure that Jesus is number one in our hearts? How do we make sure that we're not using people emotionally?
- Tip 1: Guard your heart. *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."* —1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Tip 2: Say "no" to mental stalking and creeping.
- Tip 3: Have good girlfriends. They understand what you are going through.
- Tip 4: Instead of mentally stalking guys, mentally stalk Jesus. Fix your eyes and heart on Him.



When the video pauses, have your group discuss the following questions:

- Which of Lisa's four tips do you think you will struggle with the most?
- What kind of actions can you take in your own life to prevent yourself from mentally stalking and creeping?
- When do you feel most challenged to keep Jesus number one in your heart?



TAKE IT TO PRAYER

This is an activity your group can do during the coming week to incorporate the things they have discussed in this session into prayer. Encourage them to take time during the next week to enter into this prayer experience.



Be sure to take time before this study to try the exercise yourself. Your personal reflection will inspire your group to experience this prayer on their own.

SAY: In this study, we discussed how our own thoughts and imaginations could lead us into using others for our own emotional pleasure. By creating a fantasy world that is not centered around God, we not only set ourselves up for disappointment, but we also sin against our brothers in Christ by making them an object for our own use.

The good news is that we can turn our imaginations into a beautiful prayer that keeps our hearts and minds fixed on Jesus! This week, set aside a few minutes to spend with Jesus in this form of contemplative prayer. Begin by opening up your Bible and choosing a favorite story from the Gospels. Here are some suggestions:

Luke 10:38-42
Matthew 14:13-21
Matthew 14:22-34

John 2:1-11
John 8:2-11

If time permits, review these steps for this take-home prayer activity:

- Find a quiet place where you can pray without being interrupted.
- Begin your prayer by making the Sign of the Cross and saying, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”
- Read your chosen passage once so that you are familiar with it.
- Ask God to help open your heart and mind so that you can have a better understanding of Jesus through this passage.
- Read the passage again, and then close your eyes. This time, set the scene for the story using all five senses. What do you hear, see, smell, feel, or taste?

- Take your time, and put yourself in the shoes of one of the characters in the passage. Slowly let the passage play out with you in it.
- As the story ends, think about any words or images that stood out in your imagination. Take a moment to write about them in your Study Guides.
- In your own words, thank God for the beautiful gift of prayer and for helping us to see Him in such a special way.
- Close with the Our Father.



BEAR FRUIT



The Perfect Husband

For this activity, you'll need a flower for everyone and the Study Guides.

SAY: Let's look at that list where you described your future husband. How does Jesus fit your description?

Have each one in your group share how Jesus fulfills the image she has created.

Jesus truly loves each of you more than any person here on earth possibly could. Like Lisa said, He thinks about you constantly. He knows your heart, understands your every emotion, and wants to spend every waking second with you – for all of eternity!

Have everyone in your group pick a flower from the vase.

SAY: When you go home today, put this flower in a place where you'll see it often. Think of it as a gift from Our Lord. Over the next few days, every time you catch a glimpse of it, spend a moment in prayer with Jesus. Be reminded of how much He loves you, and place all your trust in His plans for you and your future.

After this discussion, remind your group about the Bear Fruit ideas in the Study Guides. Encourage them to try some of the suggested activities during the upcoming week.



Closing Prayer

Take a few minutes to ask if your group needs any prayers for this week. As you close the study with a time of prayer, lift up their personal needs and intentions.

PRAY: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the beautiful gifts You have given to us as women. Help us discover how to use our hearts and minds for Your greater glory and to always keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, that we may have the strength to surrender our hearts to Him and find peace in Your will for our lives. Amen.

ADDITIONAL BEAR FRUIT IDEAS

The following ideas are also in the Study Guide:

- **Fix Your Eyes on God:** Commit to giving up Facebook or other social media for a week. Every time you feel the need to visit Facebook, Google the Saint of the Day instead. Take that time to learn a little bit about a particular saint and thank God for the extraordinary example he or she gives us in living our day-to-day life.
- **Redirect the Conversation:** How can we help our friends from gossiping while holding ourselves accountable at the same time? If you hear a friend, family member, or yourself speaking negatively about another person, humbly take a moment to chime in with something positive about him or her and move on to a new topic.
- **Represent With Style:** We discussed how emotional mental fantasy clouds our judgment and prevents us from keeping our eyes on Jesus. For men, visual and physical mental fantasy presents a huge roadblock in their walk with Jesus. The next time you go shopping with friends, think about how your choice of outfit could have an effect on someone's relationship with Jesus. Have fun taking on the challenge to find something that is not only beautiful and stylish, but also respectful to your body and to your brothers in Christ.



The session titled "Body Image" at YDisciple.org. would be a good follow-up session for this topic.