



Marriage: Covenant with the Lord

Lesson Overview

1. BrainBuilder

What is commitment?

2. Read

The marriage covenant is twofold: it is civil and spiritual. The civil covenant relates to society's laws of marriage; the spiritual covenant relates to our promise to honor the Lord and His laws in a marriage. The name given to this spiritual covenant is conjugal love. This love is eternal and offers unceasing blessings. pp. 1-2

3. Discuss

Discuss the differences between thinking of marriage as a civil and as a spiritual covenant. p.2

4. Optional Activity

Make a bracelet or anklet using 3 strands to symbolize the Lord, a husband, and a wife. p.3

New Church Concept From the Lord Alone

Truly conjugal love is not possible except between two; neither is it possible between two except from the Lord alone. Engraved on this love is heaven with all its blessings. *Conjugal Love* 332:1

FaithBuilder 2 | Lesson 22 | Conjugal Love

BrainBuilder

Give students a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask them to write a definition of "commitment" in their own words. When they have finished, read the following definition out loud.

Commitment is the state of being committed to a worthy goal, issue or concept. With commitment comes a pledge to uphold a promise, to fulfill an obligation, or to complete an involvement.

1. In what ways is your definition similar to or different from it?
2. What commitments do you have to your (friends, family, country)?
3. In what ways are commitments limiting?
4. In what ways can keeping a commitment be fulfilling?
5. In what ways is a commitment different from a covenant, a *two-way* agreement between two or more people?

Read

The Old and New Testaments use the word "covenant" when talking about the relationship between a person and the Lord. At the time the Lord gave the Ten Commandments He invited the children of Israel to enter into a covenant with Him, promising,

[I]f you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me.... Exodus 19:5

And when the people heard the laws they promised,

"All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient." Exodus 24:7

The Marriage Covenant

When two people marry they make a binding covenant with each other on two levels. The first level is a civil covenant, which couples agree to when they sign legal documents at the time of their wedding. The civil covenant is administered the government and it gives a couple legal rights, privileges and responsibilities, such as

Couples who bring their relationship before the Lord in a betrothal and marriage ceremony enter a spiritual covenant as well as a civil one. A spiritual covenant is a three-way covenant between a man, a woman and the Lord.

During the betrothal ceremony a minister asks a couple,

Will you now, in the presence of the Lord, declare your undivided love for each other, *and your desire to be led and taught by Him?* *Liturgy 209*

Later, during the marriage ceremony, the minister asks,

Will you have (*name*) for your husband (or wife); will you love, honor, and comfort him, and cherish him alone, that you may live together *in the holy state of marriage according to the ordinance of God?* *Liturgy 239*

As the wedding rings are dedicated by the minister he prays that the

...rings be a sign and token of *love truly conjugal*. *Liturgy 239*

Couples experience the spiritual joys of conjugal love, the spiritual love of marriage, to the extent that they look to the Lord and keep covenant with Him.

No others come into conjugal love and no others can be in it but those who go to the Lord and love the truths of His church and do the good things it teaches; that this love comes from the Lord alone.... Conjugal love depends on the state of the church in a person, because it depends on the state of his wisdom. See *Conjugal Love 458*

The Lord gifts marriage with amazing blessings such as innocence, peace, tranquility, inmost friendship, complete trust, delight and bliss, when married partners work on keeping a covenant with the Lord. (See *Conjugal Love 180*).

Discuss

Choose one or two questions to discuss.

1. How might a couple's commitment to religion affect the happiness of their marriage?
2. Why is it important for a husband or wife to be in a relationship with the Lord? What difference would this make to their own lives, or to their life as a married couple?
3. How can following spiritual laws, the laws of heaven, draw a married couple closer together? (See *Arcana Coelestia 1038* in the sidebar on right.)
4. What are the benefits of getting married in a church, before the Lord?
5. In the Old Testament the Lord says that when we obey His laws, we do well; when we disobey them, we find life difficult. How might following or not following the Lord affect your relationship with another person?

Love truly conjugal is the union of two minds, which is a spiritual union, and all spiritual union descends from heaven. From this it is that love truly conjugal is from heaven, and that its first being is from the marriage of good and truth there. The marriage of good and truth in heaven is from the Lord; wherefore in the Word the Lord is called the Bridegroom and Husband, while heaven and the church are called the bride and wife; and therefore heaven is compared to a marriage. *Arcana Coelestia 10168*

The purpose of any covenant is conjunction, that is to say, its purpose is that people may live together in friendship or in love. This also is why marriage is called a covenant. The Lord's conjunction with man does not exist except in love and charity, for the Lord is love itself and mercy. He wills to save everyone and by His mighty power to draw them towards heaven, that is, towards Himself. From this anyone may know and conclude that it is impossible for anybody to be joined to the Lord except by means of that which He Himself is, that is, except by acting like Him, or becoming one with Him - that is to say, by loving the Lord in return, and loving the neighbor as oneself. In this way alone is conjunction brought about; this constitutes the very essence of a covenant. When conjunction results from this, it quite plainly follows that the Lord is present. *Arcana Coelestia 1038*

Make a Friendship Bracelet or Anklet



Marriage is a three-way covenant between the Lord and a husband and wife. Make a braided friendship bracelet or anklet using gold embroidery thread to represent the Lord, red embroidery thread to represent a wife, and white embroidery thread to represent a husband.

Materials

- Gold, Red, and White embroidery thread
- Safety pin
- Scissors
- Ruler

Directions

1. Measure and cut one 24 inch (60 cm) piece of each color of thread.
2. Lay the strands out so that they line up together.
3. Fold the strands in half and tie a knot at the folded end to creating a loop of thread above the knot (fig. 1).
4. Use the safety pin to secure the loop of thread to something that will hold it still, such as the knee of a trouser leg.
5. Now separate the thread by color – you should have 6 strands, 2 strands of each color (fig. 1).



6. Begin with the thread on the **left**. Cross it over the thread in the **middle**.
7. Now cross the thread on the **right** over the thread in the **middle**.
8. Continue this pattern, keeping the threads tight against each other (fig. 2).
9. As you reach the end of the thread, tie the threads together into a knot to finish the bracelet or anklet.