

STUDY GUIDE FOR USE WITH

Emily's Hope

By Ellen Gable

Before reading the book:

Do you know?

1. What does the Catholic Church teach regarding sex before marriage?
2. What does the Catholic Church teach with respect to birth control within marriage?
3. What does the Catholic Church teach regarding the issue of abortion?
4. True or false: The Catholic Church teaches that sex is bad.

Chapter 1 questions (these can be one word or one sentence answers)

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning of the chapter and in one sentence explain how this passage describes Emily's self-esteem after the phone call with Rick.
2. In your opinion, why do you think Emily is pre-occupied with acquiring a boyfriend?
3. Emily appears at times to value her Catholic faith. List an example.
4. At other times, Emily appears not to value or respect her Catholic faith. List an example.

For discussion

5. Where does Emily learn most of her morals? Where do you think teenagers today learn most of their morals?

Chapter 2 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning and in one sentence explain how it describes Katharine's attitude toward sex.
2. What causes Katharine to engage in adultery?
3. Katharine tells Michael that she was abused by her father and that, in a sense, forced her into marriage with Harry. Do you think she had good reason to marry her husband, despite the fact that she did not love him or intend to remain faithful to him?
4. Emily uses television as an escape or distraction from the troubles of her life. What does

Katharine use as an escape or distraction from her situation in life?

Chapter 3 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning and in one sentence explain why it gives Emily hope for her father's salvation.

For discussion:

2. Why do you think dealing with grief is a long-time effort for some?

Chapter 4 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning of the chapter and in one sentence explain Jesus' attitude towards children. In one sentence, also explain Katharine's attitude toward children.

2. Katharine lacks empathy at times. Recount one event during this chapter where she is insensitive to the feelings of her husband.

Chapter 5 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning and in one sentence explain why Emily would have "shame of youth."

2. Like most teenagers of today, Emily wants to be considered "normal." What would make Emily feel normal and like the characters on television shows? Have you ever known someone who felt abnormal because they weren't dating?

3. Why do you think Emily is disappointed and even saddened after the incident with her first kiss?

Chapter 6 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning and explain the dishonest talk that Emily participated in with regard to her relationship with Ray. Do you think too many people overuse the phrase "I love you?"

2. What is the first clue that Emily receives from reading the ledger that her great-grandmother is not the person she seems?
3. The character Ray has “character and integrity” according to Emily. List at least one instance where he demonstrated character and integrity.
4. Why do you think Emily decides to give up drinking alcohol?
5. When Emily tells Ray that she wants to start “dating other people,” what does he say? Do you think he’s serious or do you think he’s trying to manipulate her into staying with him?

For discussion:

6. Emily doesn’t tell anyone about Ray’s threat. Do you think this is a good idea? If your boyfriend/girlfriend ever said they would kill themselves if you broke up with them, what would be the responsible thing to do?

Chapter 7 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning and explain how this describes Katharine.
2. How does Katharine find out she had a tubal pregnancy?
A tubal pregnancy is when the baby implants in the fallopian tube rather than the uterus in a woman. Explain why in Katharine’s case, it probably resulted from her promiscuity (pg. 101)

For discussion/homework:

3. Research and find out how many sexually transmitted diseases exist today. List the possible outcomes from getting these diseases and discuss whether there are cures for any of them. (reference www.pureloveclub.com and www.medinstitute.org)

Chapter 8 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning. On Page 62/63, Emily asks God to send her a man to marry. Do you think God always answers our prayers? Explain.
2. What does Emily learn about Jason while using the “stupid conversation starters.”
3. At the end of the chapter, Emily comments to herself that she thinks God has a sense of humor. Do you think that’s true?

Chapter 9 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage at the beginning and explain how this passage describes Jason.
- 2.. What does Emily learn about Jason's faults through his letters? What does she learn about his character or virtues?
3. Read the letters from Jason to Emily again from this chapter. Do you think he truly loves Emily?

Chapter 10 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Do you think Katharine purposefully turns her back on God?
2. When Michael informs her as to why they couldn't remain together, Katharine says, "To tell you the truth, Michael, it doesn't hurt one bit. You go ahead." Why do you think she lied to Michael?
3. What do you think love meant for Katharine?
4. Do you think Katharine experiences a form of grief when Michael leaves? Explain.

For discussion:

1. When a couple has been sexually active and then breaks up, what are some of the ways their past sexual activity will impact their lives going forward?

Chapter 11 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage and explain how the passage relates to Emily's situation with Jason.
2. Emily was willing to give herself physically to Jason because she loved him. In spite of advice from parents and church, what do you think makes so many girls willing to do the same in today's society?

For discussion:

3. In the beginning chapters of the book, Emily describes herself as "pro-choice," but personally

“pro-life.” Do you think it’s possible to be both pro-choice and pro-life? What is the irony of such an attitude?

Chapter 12 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage and explain how Emily’s and Jason’s growing relationship is not only joyful, but also frustrating and challenging.
2. What do you suppose it was that was poking Emily on the shoulder when she was bed with Jason after she sneaked down to be with him?
- 3 How likely do you think it would be that a young man aged 18 would be considering becoming engaged with his girlfriend in this day and age?

Chapter 13 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. In order to grow in their relationship with each other and with God, Jason and Emily had to exercise patience with their long-distance relationship. What effects do you think this will have once they are married?
2. Do you think Jason’s ideal of sexual intimacy, that is, using no contraception and only having sex after marriage, is too difficult to attain in today’s society? Why or Why not?
3. List three reasons why Jason believes that artificial birth control is immoral. Look up in the CCC (2370) as to what it states regarding the use of artificial contraception.
4. Why is Emily not open to the idea of using Natural Family Planning in their marriage?

For discussion:

1. The dormitory scene in which Jason admits to purchasing birth control – do you think, knowing Jason’s previous character, that this is believable? What kinds of things could have influenced even someone like Jason to be so open to getting sexually active before marriage?

Chapter 14 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Children who are aborted, are they really “gone”?

2. Why do you suppose Katharine is always looking for physical intimacy with other men besides her husband?

3. Katharine goes to downtown Philadelphia to seek an abortion. Why do you suppose she's so desperate to have an abortion?

Look in the CCCC (2270, 2271, 2272). Are there any justifiable reasons for having an abortion of a viable intrauterine baby?

Chapter 15 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. By waiting until marriage to have sex, Jason and Emily respected their bodies. Many studies have shown that couples who live together or are sexually active before marriage end up with a significantly higher divorce rate than couples who do not. What do you think are some of the reasons that would explain this?

2. For the first half of the book, Emily has not agreed that sex should be saved for marriage. In fact, she only goes along with it because of Jason. However, in this chapter, she has a conversation with her friend, Carrie, in which Carrie warns Emily that she will be in for trouble if she doesn't have sex before marriage to determine whether she and Jason are sexually compatible. What is Emily's response to this? Are you surprised at her response?

For discussion

1. Statistically, many couples who have sex before marriage do not have successful and happy marriages. Can you think of some reasons that sex before marriage can increase a couple's chances of divorce in the future?

Chapter 16 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Lust is described in the Catechism (2351) as the "disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when it is sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes." Do you think it's possible for a husband or wife to act lustfully in a marriage?

2. Have you ever heard of St. Maria Goretti, who is mentioned in this chapter? Why does it seem ironic to Emily that she was getting married in a church named for this particular saint?

3. As Emily begins to relate with her new husband, she is struck by the belief that their marriage is not just a "piece of paper," but a God-given bond which cements her to him. Do you think it's

possible to have this God-given bond if a couple is not married?

For discussion:

1. The gospel reading from the wedding, in part, reads as follows: “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit.”

One obvious fruit that comes from marriage is children. Discuss other “fruits” which a couple can bear during their marriage.

Chapter 17 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Katharine must hide birth control information because if she was caught with it, she could be arrested for possessing indecent materials. Nowadays, birth control is easily obtainable and pornography is easily assessable via the Internet. Back in Katharine’s time (early 1900’s), the divorce rate was less than ten percent. Today, it is 50 percent. What are some of the reasons why there might be a relationship between divorce rates and the availability of birth control and pornography?

2. In this chapter is Margaret Sanger’s credo of woman’s rights (The right to be lazy, the right to be an unmarried mother etc.) Which of these rights do you think are truly rights and which do you think are excuses to do wrong?

3. Katharine believes that she is helping woman by offering them information on birth control. In what ways did Katharine help these women? What other effects do you think Katharine’s information had on these women? What other resources could she have supplied that might have helped them more?

For Discussion:

1. Illegal back-alley and self-induced abortions were harmful to women and caused many to die, like the Hannah character in this chapter. What effects has widespread legal abortion had for women and society as a whole?

Chapter 18 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. The Levirate Law was an early Jewish law which stated that if a man died without leaving any heirs, his brother was supposed to unite with his wife to produce heirs. In this scriptural passage, Onan united with his sister-in-law but practiced “withdrawal” and spilled his seed so as to not allow conception and avoid having his children be his brother’s

heirs. He was not technically disobeying the Jewish Levirate Law, but instead acting with a contraceptive frame of mind and it is for this that God killed him. Why do you suppose so many Church-going Catholics have chosen to disregard the Church's teachings regarding the immorality of birth control?

2. In this chapter at the Marriage Preparation Course that Jason and Emily attends as a host couple, it is mentioned that up until 1930 every single Christian Church taught that birth control was wrong. Were you surprised at this information?

3. This chapter explains the two purposes of sex. List them.

According to JP II's Theology of the Body, the sex act should mirror God's love for us, that is, it should be "free, total, faithful and fruitful." Which two of these qualities does contraception remove from the sexual embrace?

4. Sex was designed by God to be the physical renewal of the couple's marriage commitment or sacrament. What does sex outside of marriage communicate?

Chapter 19 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Emily and Jason's two babies died early in the pregnancy. Do you see any value in a life that dies before birth? Why or why not?

2. An ectopic pregnancy occurs when the newly formed life implants in some place other than the uterus. Very often, ectopic pregnancies occur because of the mother's previous use of the IUD and/or sexually transmitted diseases. List some other consequences of sexually transmitted diseases for women.

Chapter 20 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Earlier in the book, Katharine shows momentary sympathy towards Michael because he will never know what it's like to be a father to Ruth. Do you think Katharine ever feels sorry for Ruth because she will never know her real father?

2. Why do you think Katharine wanted to keep the real truth secret about who Ruth's biological father was? Why do you think most women/men seek to have an abortion?

Chapter 21 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Though one of the aspects and purposes of sex is the creation of children, every sex act does not produce a child. Why do you suppose that some couples do not

ever conceive a child? What are some of the reasons that infertile couples cannot have children? Though it is not the case with every infertile person, could it be possible that some people are infertile as a consequence of their behavior?

2. Do you think Emily distrusts God at the beginning of the chapter?

3. JP II states, “human life is eternal...and when God gives life, it is eternal.” (Get proper quote). What do you think he means by that?

4. JP II also wrote that the “child is the seal of the covenant.” In what ways does a child serve this purpose?

For discussion:

1. Jason and Emily attend a Walk for Life event in this chapter. Why do you think many women “agonize” over the abortion decision?

Chapter 22 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Katharine is endeared by the artist Rodin’s apparent disregard for faith and yet his sculptures appear to show a somewhat strong faith. List one example of how these sculptures bring forth “light” to Katharine.

2. Look up a photo of Rodin’s Gates of Hell on the Internet. Why do you think Katharine is uncomfortable looking at this immense sculpture? Were you uncomfortable when you first studied a photo of it?

For discussion:

1. Rodin once said, “To the artist, there is never anything ugly in nature.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Chapter 23 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Have you ever read the Songs of Solomon (also called the Song of Songs)? Are you surprised at how erotic some of the language is in describing two lovers?

2. In a flashback of a conversation with her friend Carrie, Emily confides in her a list of things which her husband does to “turn her on.” Were you surprised at the list of things which “turned” Emily on or put her in the mood for marital intimacy?

For discussion:

1. Mature love, marital love, is a decision to love your spouse, not merely a “feeling of mutual attraction.” Have you ever chosen to love another person through a difficult or trying situation?

Chapter 24 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Whose heart is embittered?
2. Why do you think Katharine tries to deny that Harry could have killed Charlie?
3. Do you think this incident changed Katharine’s attitude in any way? Why or why not?

Chapter 25 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. What are some of the things that led Emily to self-pity? What are some ways that we can help a self-piteous person?
2. What do you think is Emily’s motivation for being self-piteous in the aftermath of two miscarriages?

Chapter 26 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. “Affliction makes for endurance.” Have you ever been in an accident or had an operation that was painful? By enduring and bearing the pain, do you think you have become a better person because of it?
2. What’s the difference between how Emily reacted to this life-threatening ectopic pregnancy and how she reacted to the miscarriages several years previously?
3. In what ways did that experience help you to grow to be a better person?

For discussion:

4. “Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends.” Look up St. Gianna Molla’s story on the Internet and discuss why her life illustrates this biblical passage.

Chapter 27 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Despite the fact that Katharine was not in love with Harry, do you think she nevertheless regarded him as a friend?
2. A few chapters ago, this study guide asked the question do you think the incident with Harry holding the gun to Charlie changed Katharine's attitude in any way? Do you think this chapter gives any more insight as to whether her attitude changed or not? If so, has her attitude changed?
3. At home after Harry's funeral, do you think Katharine finally begins to appreciate her husband? Why or why not? Do you think it's too late?

For discussion:

1. Like the boat Harry gave her, Katherine's sexuality was also a gift, and God had fashioned it in beautifully intricate detail, but she'd spent her whole life destroying it and wishing it away. She seemed to finally show some appreciation for the boat, but do you think it might be possible for her to ever understand or appreciate the great gift of her sexuality?

Chapter 28 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage for this chapter. When you or someone you know is grieving, it is difficult to imagine that the sadness or pain in one's heart will lessen. List positive ways that you can help someone who is grieving.
2. Though the loss of their child was difficult and heart wrenching, what feeling or action illustrates that Emily had grown spiritually?

For discussion:

1. Pg. 307 "Emily discovered that sex when lived and enjoyed with the right attitude, that is, during marriage and with no contraception actually facilitates a couple on the road to holiness."

In the book, *Theology of the Body for Beginners* by Christopher West: (page 82 TOBB): "In the Pope's book *Love and Responsibility*, he calls men to self-control and tenderness out of deep respect and reverence for their wives. The Pope wrote that if a husband is truly to love his wife, "it is necessary to insist that intercourse must not serve merely as a means of allowing his climax. The man must take the difference between male and female reactions into account...so that climax may be reached by both...and as far as possible occur in both simultaneously." The husband must do this, "not for hedonistic, but for altruistic reasons." In this case, if "we take into account the shorter and more violent curve of arousal in the man, such tenderness on his part in the context of marital intercourse acquires the significance of an act of virtue." (*Love and Responsibility*, pp. 272, 275.)

Is it surprising for you to read that the late Great John Paul II wrote that sex was meant to be pleasurable and enjoyable and that men are called to such tenderness and reverence for their wives?

Chapter 29 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Katharine married Harry to escape a bad situation. It appears as if Becky married for love. What do you think Katharine was feeling on her own wedding day? How do you think Becky was feeling on her wedding day?

2. What is the irony of the fourth paragraph on page. 322 re: Katharine saying her wedding vows.

For discussion:

When Katharine returns home from Becky's wedding, she is greeted by her dogs and the realization that these are the only two things she really has left in the world. Discuss reasons why Katharine may be feeling this way.

Chapter 30 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. "Fountain of light." Emily's faith and relationship with God helped her to discover how she and her great-grandmother were connected. Do you think she would have realized this connection if she hadn't been strong in her faith?

2. At the beginning of the chapter, Emily again has a conversation with Carrie and she mentioned the two aspects of sex. What are they? (Unitive, oneness and procreative, baby-making) These two aspects should never be separated.

3. What does Emily discover in this chapter about her great-grandmother's behavior?

4. What does Emily discover about how she and her great-grandmother are connected?

5. Do you think this connection seems reasonable or realistic? Do you think it could possibly happen that God allows our suffering to act as reparation for others?

Chapter 31 questions

1. Look up the biblical passage. Do you think it's possible for someone to live a life basically without faith, then at the moment of death come to believe and be saved? If so, do you think this is fair?
2. Why do you think Katharine feels a connection to the baby Emily?
3. Why do you think God allowed Katharine to see a vision of Emily as she lay dying? Do you think it's possible that Katharine was able to see how her life affected others? Do you think it's possible that somehow before this character died, God's grace found her?