

## ***Made for the Common Good: Parish Night Outline***

This parish night outline is provided as a suggested framework for use by clergy or pastoral leaders in facilitating group conversation of the themes from the USCCB's *Marriage Unique for a Reason* video "Made for the Common Good."

### **1. Introduction**

Write this quotation on the board before participants arrive. It will serve as a conversation-starter.

*"The common good embraces the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organizations to achieve complete an effective fulfillment."*  
- *Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress)*, #74

Once you have roughly the number of people that you expected at the gathering, ask them to introduce themselves to the people they are sitting near, and to discuss the quote with one another. Ask them to rate, from 1 to 10, how well they think America is advancing the "common good" today—emphasize that this rating is not just about politics, even though politics is one aspect of it. Give this about five minutes.

### **2. Preliminary Discussion Question**

Ask participants to consider the following question: How is the institution of marriage, as it was popularly understood before recent times as the union of one man and one woman, related to the common good? Give them some time to think, then ask one person to share their thoughts. (Let this person know in advance, if possible, that you will be seeking their feedback first). Allow a free discussion to follow. If there are not many comments, you may want to offer your own observations.

Some ideas, if you need them, are that children thrive the most when they are raised by their father and mother. The sexual union of a man and a woman is what brings children into the world, and the institution of marriage served to enforce the expectation that people be committed to one another before bringing a child into being, given the child's right to know and be loved by his or her parents. The healthier families are, the better off societies are, since societies are made of these "cells."

### **3. View *Made for the Common Good* (10 minutes)**

### **4. Post-Viewing Discussion**

The video makes three main points:

1. Marriage is a social justice issue
2. Sexual difference matters for children
3. Families affect society, for good or for ill

Starting with number one, you may ask why marriage is a social justice issue, according to the experts in the video. You may want to highlight that marriage is becoming more of an “elite” institution, and that children in lower socio-economic areas suffer from the lack of it in their communities.

Next, you may also ask about the emphasis, in the video, on children. Why do questions about the common good often become questions about what is good or best for children in the society? More importantly, the emphasis should be on the rights and needs of children. Why do you think that growing up with a married mom and dad makes such a difference to children?

Finally, you may ask the participants to consider, on a personal level, how they think their family (whether their family of origin or their own) has affected the community.

Remind participants about the USCCB’s advocacy arm, <https://www.votervoice.net/USCCB/home>, where they can write to representatives in Congress and support legislation that may address some of these issues.

#### **5. Other questions or comments**

Ask whether any of the participants has any other questions or comments about the video. Other subjects brought up by the video are third-party reproduction, incarceration, juvenile detention.