



TRUE HEART *for*
DATING CATHOLICS

*Deepen Your Faith
&
Discern Your Vocation*

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TEN-WEEK
TRUE HEART COURSE



ASPECTS OF TRUE HEART'S
DESIGN & BEST PRACTICES

This version of TRUE HEART for DATING CATHOLICS is designed to help you both deepen your individual lives of faith as well as provide the opportunity to share your faith.

Consider it a pathway to deepen the friendship and love you already share with each other.

So, expect to grow in your own individual faith and find new ways to share at the deepest level of your lives.

Nothing is more central to us and at the heart of our own personal identities than our faith and belief.

The fact that you have signed up for this course means that you are already looking at a way to deepen your knowledge and friendship.

It is also, most likely, a way for you to discern a path forward in your relationship, however that takes shape.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jer. 20:11

1. SOME PRACTICAL TIPS AND DATES TO SECURE

- a) Purchase the course **ONE WEEK** prior to your start time. This will you both have access to the program's materials for week one. Perhaps set a start date or an end date on a special feast that has special meaning for both of you.
- b) TRUE HEART has an exercise of a **Whole-Life Confession** at the end of Week Six. Early in the course, set a date with your pastor or a priest you know to schedule a time for the Whole-Life Confession. This is a key event for TRUE HEART and one you will find amazing and hopeful.
- c) The TRUE HEART program concludes with an **8-hour All-Night Vigil** in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. When you begin the course, set the day, times and location where you both will do the All-Night Vigil. Where ever you are in your discernment, this evening with Christ will transform your heart and lead you to a greater clarity on how Jesus is calling you to be a disciple in your life and your relationship. Be not afraid! You will be amazed at the graces you receive.



The TRUE HEART All-Night Vigil is an opportunity for you to conclude the TRUE HEART for Dating Catholics and gather the graces of the ten-week journey.¹

As you have been contemplating your life and relationship these weeks, perhaps some clarity has been given to each of you.

Nonetheless, it is common in the history of Christianity for an individual to do a "night vigil" when beginning an important mission.

You are contemplating your relationship in light of your faith for ten weeks is a mission you are both undertaking.

And from this point forward, no matter your final choice, you seek to give your life to serve Christ, the

Eternal King.

¹ Perhaps you might consider it as a spiritual form of an Outward-Bound solo adventure. On the organization's website, there is a quote from the American author, Caroline Myss: "Always go with the choice that scares you the most, because that's the one that is going to require the most from you."

Entry into knighthood in medieval times began with an all-night vigil in the chapel of a castle or a major church. Work with a pastor or friend to find the right location in a church or chapel where you can share this TRUE HEART capstone experience with the person you are dating. But be sure to give each other room to be “alone” for the time of the vigil. It will be tempting to talk during the scheduled breaks, but keep to your discipline of silence. You can fully share after the evening ends the next day.

2. TRUE HEART DRIP-SYSTEM FOR COURSE CONTENT

This course was designed and created by Fr. William Watson, S.J. TRUE HEART for Dating Catholics course is set up on a DRIP SYSTEM. This element is mentioned on the course description page.

You can advance week by week and the next week's lessons are opened on a 7-day cycle. (Another reason to sign up a week before the course start date).

Using the wisdom of St. Ignatius from the Spiritual Exercises, the drip system invites a measured and thoughtful engagement with the spiritual lessons--moving ahead slowly so the spiritual exercises have time to become heartfelt.

WATCHING VIDEOS: *The course is also designed to require you, the participants, to watch the videos before advancing so know this ahead of time even though it is mentioned on the course description page.*

3. PERHAPS CONSIDER HAVING A ONE-HOUR WEEKLY SHARING

Consider scheduling a 30–60-minute sharing meeting each week with the person you are dating to look back over the course material from the previous week. Here is the structure we have found to be the most helpful:

- a. Open with a short prayer of your choosing.
- b. Give each other the opportunity to share without any interruptions. But note: Not all the lessons need to be processed by discussion. Pick those that hold the most potential for discernment insights for each of you.
- c. When you have each shared without interruption, consider if there is anything to add based on what you heard. Again, let each other respond without interruptions.
- d. Allow time for general back and forth after the first two rounds, considering that of all that was shared, what was the most helpful for

each of you at this point your lives and the course. Allow discussion to flow freely.

Close with a prayer

4. WEEKLY 45-MINUTE IGNATIAN MEDITATION & EUCHARIST ADORATION

Each week of TRUE HEART ends with a 45-minute Ignatian meditation based on a Gospel passage. The content of the meditations fit the course materials.

Please engage these meditations as suggested in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. In the beta-run of TRUE HEART, most pastors had the men do the vigils in their parish before or after the weekly meetings. This was a great community builder for both pastors and participants. See if you can have your leader and participants agree to this “best practice” opportunity for your TRUE HEART course.

A few years ago, I asked Curtis Martin, founder of FOCUS, what was the greatest tool for evangelization FOCUS missionaries have found. His response was: “Father, without a doubt, Eucharistic Adoration.” We had set our weekly vigils and our all-night vigil before I heard Martin’s comments, but we were grateful to know that our intuition on the value of Eucharistic Adoration was confirmed so convincingly. Be Not Afraid!

Here is how the TRUE HEART Course describes the Weekly Vigils:

The Night Vigil meditations are modeled on Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. You use your senses (imagination, smell, sight, etc.) to enter the Gospel stories and “see” them in your mind’s eye. They provide a step-by-step way to enter the Gospel stories. However, feel free in praying them differently if you find them too scripted for your prayer style. We recommend doing them at night to model some of St. Ignatius’ most important moments in his conversion process. People find them very powerful ways to integrate the daily prayer experiences and draw close to Christ. We know you will benefit from them profoundly, and these will prepare you for the Night Vigil that concludes the TRUE HEART journey. I ask that you spend a full 45 minutes on these night vigils. You will benefit greatly in slowing down and being able to hear the voice of God speaking to you in these living Gospel stories of His Son, Jesus.

5. THE TRUE HEART PLATFORM HAD A THREE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

SSI took three years, running beta tests in Latin America and North America, to create the weekly/daily structure for True Heart and all its exercises. Extensive work and refinement have already gone into the method to ensure a dynamic result for multiple ages.

Our feedback reveals that when applied as described, the individual daily exercises, and taken as a whole, have profound effects in participant's lives. So, trust the structure. Our test subjects were 16 years to 35 years, so we know TRUE HEART has been successfully designed to hit a sweet spot for a wide range of men and women. TRUE HEART's "programable" elements are tuned in this rendition exclusively for dating Catholics

6. TRUE HEART WEEKLY METHOD/STRUCTURE

✠ **THREE QUIET PERIODS:** These daily periods are invitations not so much to do something, but rather to open space for the Lord. Each period is a technology fast at the beginning of the day, the end of the day, and for an extended period of time during the day. The individuals are welcome to use these time periods however they would like, as long as it is without technology. Ideally, they will find themselves more able to pray both during these periods, and outside of them as well.

✠ **THREE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:** There are two brief exercises for the beginning and end of each day, with the primary exercise laid out on the course material. Participants are encouraged to spend 15 minutes with this primary one at some point during the day.

✠ **THREE PRAYER TIMES:** Similar to the above, there are brief prayers for the beginning and end of each day, with the primary prayer period dedicated to *True Heart* prayer meditation on Creation, Presence, Memory, Mercy, and Eternity. There is an mp3 link on each day that participants can use to lead them through it the TRUE HEART Meditation.

7. SPIRITUAL MATURITY & THE EXERCISES OF TRUE HEART

Doing the True Heart program requires no previous prayer life or prayer routines. The lessons are simple and anyone should be able to engage them and gain some measure of grace and self-knowledge. Recall that our test groups were aged between 16-35 and we refined the exercises so they would be easily intelligible to this age range.

Each of you will gain something based on the work of the Holy Spirit and what St. Ignatius suggested for all spiritual progress—a generosity of spirit in opening one's heart to God. So, each of you be generous in opening your hearts to Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

This work of generosity is greatly enhanced by taking the times each day the schedule provides for quiet. One of the greatest challenges in the modern world to hearing and feeling the working of God in our lives is the lack of quiet. Be Not Afraid!

St. Ignatius constantly mentioned the need to ASK GOD FOR HELP AND ASSISTANCE when needed. God loves to respond to our Asking! Please develop the habit of **asking God for help**.

Do all the lessons as you are able. Our research shows that the more exercises done and done faithfully daily, will lead to much clearer and more reliable discernment on how God is calling you to serve him in your life.