CHASTITY EDUCATION AND PERSONAL SAFETY CURRICULUM

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A Curriculum for Christian Education in Sexuality and the Family

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GRADE 6

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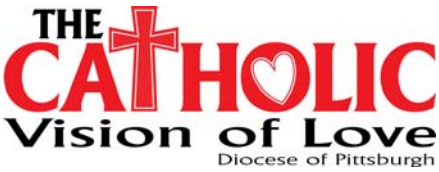

This notebook contains three sections. A Table of Contents can be found in Sections One and Two and Directions for Use in Section Three.

SECTION ONE • Guidelines

These are the general guidelines to be referred to and followed by all catechists as they prepare to teach *The Catholic Vision of Love.*

SECTION TWO • Catechist's Notes

This section contains grade-specific notes that correspond to each of the four student lessons.

SECTION THREE • Student's Lessons

This section contains the blackline masters of the five lessons that can be reproduced for each student. The fifth lesson on personal safety includes both **catechist notes and student lessons.**

THE CATHOLIC Vision of Love
Diocese of Pittsburgh

Section One

GUIDELINES

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I. INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines seek to apply the teachings of Christ and of His Church to pressing needs of the time.

God Himself created us male and female. He called us to find in love and marriage the fulfillment of deep desires, which He Himself planted in our hearts. In marriage as well as in chastity, accepted for the sake of the Kingdom, God has provided ways in which generous love is made to last, homes made strong, children protected, and the most basic of human goods guarded.

The Church has good news to proclaim about the family, and about human love and sexuality. The Church is called to make clear "the biblical foundations, the ethical grounds, and the personalistic reasons" (Pope John Paul II, *The Christian Family in the Modern World* [*Familiaris Consortio*], n. 31) for the Christian teaching that she hands on concerning human love and sexuality.

In her most basic teaching of the faith, both to adults and to young people, the Church must teach in appropriate ways the vision of love and sexuality that she has received from her Lord as a gift to all the faithful. These *Guidelines* then present the Church's teaching about love, marriage, and the home as what it truly is: an integral part of the catechetical task of the Church. They give guidance to all who assist in handling on the message of faith.

Pastoral guidance from the Church

Christian teaching about sexuality is true and it is liberating. It heartens people to live their lives with generous love in furthering the basic good things for the sake of which God has made us sexual beings. It enables us to escape the despair that causes so many in the materialistic age to abandon the hope of finding a generous and joyful love such as God intended us to find and to live.

Catholic teaching on sexuality

In our own day the Church has spoken forcefully and clearly of the very meaning of sexuality. This comes in the face of many bitter and inhuman teachings about sexuality that are focused widely today. She has taught also the moral principles that should guide our consciences and our lives if sexuality is to be the blessing that God intended it to be.

The doctrine taught in these *Guidelines* is that of the Church herself. It is rooted in Scripture; it has been constantly taught in the family of faith; and it has been found in the experience of faith over the centuries to be essential for strengthening the family, for making love endure, and for the defense of lives lived in faith and in love.

Among the more important Church documents that should be familiar to all who teach about sexuality in the Church's name are:

Second Vatican Council. The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) Part II, Chapter 1 (1965).
Pope Paul VI. Encyclical Letter, Of Human Life (Humanae Vitae) (1968).
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Declaration, Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethic (1975).
Pope John Paul II. Apostolic Exhortation, The Christian Family in the Modern World
(Familiaris Consortio) (1981).
Pope John Paul II. Encyclical Letter, The Splendor of Truth (Veritatis Splendor) (1993).

The Church has good news to proclaim about the family....

The teaching of the faith on sexuality can be found in Bishop Donald Wuerl, et al., *The Teaching of Christ*, Fourth Edition, (1995), with \ reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (English edition, 1994). There, and in the section below on "Catholic teaching on education in chastity," will be found more abundant reference to documents on the universal Church and of the Church in America on this subject.

Catholic teaching on education in chastity

Catholic teaching on the nature, goals, and proper principles for education on the meaning of sexuality, chastity, and the family can be found in the following sources:

Pope Pius XI. Encyclical Letter, *On the Christian Family (Casti Connubii)* (1930).
Second Vatican Council. Declaration, on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis) (1965).
Pope John Paul II. Apostolic Exhortation, On the Family (Familiaris Consortio) (1981).
Congregation for Catholic Education. Declaration, Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983).
Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania. Education in Human Sexuality (1989).
National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective (1990).
Pontifical Council for the Family. The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family (1995).
Pontifical Council for the Family. Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage (1996).

II. FOUNDATION

These Guidelines are centered around eight foundational principles.

1. Education in the Catholic vision of love and human sexuality is education in an integral part of Catholic *faith* and *life*. It is formation in ways of living that are inseparable from the Gospel. Education in human sexuality is *inseparable* from our overall faith education and formation.

This education is not only *instructional*. It addresses also the emotions and the whole person. The purpose of this education is to move a person to exercise a personal freedom to choose ways of living that are faithful to the Gospel call. Thus, its concern is to prepare students to have the ability to make intelligent choices regarding their sexuality; to help them integrate their attitudes toward sexuality with their faith and their whole vision of life; and to enable them to acquire self-possession and to exercise authentic freedom.

2. There are certain doctrinal and moral teachings of faith that underlie the program. These basic tenets illumine ways of living our personal lives and of shaping our love and affection in Christian ways. That is, the program emphasizes a *positive vision* of what human love and sexuality mean — a vision that flows from the Word of God and the teachings of the Church. These basic tenets would include:

- The human person is made in the *image of God*. In our masculinity and femininity God has given us ways to imitate the personal goodness that is at the heart of the very life of God.
- Sexuality is *God's work*. It is something *very good*. Much of the joy and energy of human life flow from a recognition of the goodness of all dimensions of the being the Father has given us, including our sexuality.
- Sexuality is to be understood in the context of *human fulfillment*. By our very nature, we long for the good things that we need to have happy and *fully human lives*. By our nature, we seek to escape the loneliness of the human condition and find "enduring love" — a love that gives all of itself to another.
- Sexuality is a *natural sacrament*, or a visible sign of what enduring love means and needs to be among human persons. All our longing is indeed toward a richness we know that we cannot quite express. Thus, it is God we must first learn to love with all our heart. In learning to love Him, we learn to love one another.
- Those sexual acts which faith has always taught to be sinful (such as masturbation, adultery, homosexual activity, contraception, and all extramarital sexual activity) are truly immoral. They are not simply forbidden; they are in truth bad kinds of acts. They use sexuality in ways that fail to respect the very meaning and purposes of sexuality. They keep people from obtaining the good things for the sake of which God created sexuality. They undermine the dignity and happiness of human life.

3. There are certain major practical problems that must be faced today. An education in human sexuality must treat these problems effectively. These problems include AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, the rise in teenage pregnancies, abortion, and a variety of promiscuous attitudes. Our young people's understanding of love and sexuality is dramatically affected by a culture caught up in materialism, hedonism, unbelief, and even despair. However, while the program will face these contemporary issues, its primary focus is not one of *avoiding certain grave moral evils* but one of *positively guiding people toward living excellent lives* in all that touches love, affectivity, and personal relationships.

... it is God we must first learn to love with all our heart.

4. Sexual education is primarily the responsibility of the *parents*. Thus, an education in love and sexuality will be effective only to the extent that parents cooperate and take an active role. The aim of the teachers is to *assist parents*: to help them to communicate with their children in these matters. The *principle of subsidiarity* reminds us that such tasks are only effectively accomplished if the essential smaller units, in this case families, are doing their tasks. The program is meant to cooperate with parents and *not substitute* for them. On the other hand, teaching is so critical in this area, it simply cannot be taken for granted that parents are capable of doing it on their own with no assistance from the Church.

5. Human sexuality education is to be integrated with education in Catholic faith and life generally. The education will be designed to be *integrated into the religion curriculum itself*. This will be a total parish program involving both Catholic school and Religious Education programs.

6. Only those who can and do agree with Catholic teaching in these matters can be permitted to teach *The Catholic Vision of Love.* There is a need for adequate catechist formation and training prior to beginning the actual teaching of this material.

7. Education and materials need to be provided for parents and other adults. Assistance should be given to the clergy who will be instrumental in the implementation of this pastorally important education. The media, the internet and contemporary pressures tend to press all people toward attitudes and practices which contradict Christian principles. The whole community needs to get a firmer grasp on basic Catholic moral principles if it is to communicate these principles effectively to its young members.

8. Education in the proper use of media is an indispensable part of any effort at human sexuality education.

III. GOALS

Christ is the Teacher of life. He came that we might "have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

This program aims at assisting all to lead richer and happier lives by following Christ's guidance in walking in the ways of love. He is the best teacher about such basic realities. We learn from Him about the kind of love that can endure in this world, about the home and family, about the preciousness of life and of chaste and human love.

The principal goal of *The Catholic Vision of Love* is:

> *To present Christ's vision of love and sexuality, and to encourage all to live according to the Good News of His teaching on love, marriage, the family, sexuality, and the freedom of self possession.*

All the other goals and objectives follow from this principal goal. These more specific goals are:

- To show that God is our Father, the Creator of *all* our being: that our sexuality is God's rich gift, which affects all that we are and serves precious human goods, when it is understood in the light of Christ's gracious teaching.
- To stress the sublime importance of every person and the essential equality of all persons; and to show that each one is called to greatness of heart and to friendship with the Lord.
- To teach the profound Christian motives for reverence for every person, and for a healthy self-esteem; to make clear how precious every person is to God, and how by God's grace each is capable of living the excellent ways Christ makes known.
- To guide all toward a fuller understanding of what Christ teaches in His Church about sexual morality and self possession, and to assist them in seeing how good Christ's teaching is, and how important it is to shape our consciences to live in His ways.
- To lead all toward understanding and acceptance of all the dimensions of our human lives: spiritual, moral, psychological, physical, emotional, sexual, intellectual, and social.
- To seek to guard all from exploitation by providing a clear understanding of everything one needs to know about sexuality to be secure and fortified to live in this contemporary world.
- To support all persons in their efforts to acquire the skills, insights, and virtues they need to have confidence and peace in leading chaste lives.
- To motivate and assist all to follow Christ's vision of love, guarding all the good things God intended sexuality to serve, in lives enriched by heeding the commandments and beatitudes, and by doing the works of mercy.

IV. THEOLOGY

The *Catholic Vision of Love* is rooted in the Scriptures. It has been taught in the Church through the centuries and faithfully presented for our time in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and in other recent Church documents. Christ continues to teach in the family of faith, and His teaching is true and liberating. Through this teaching He defends indispensable human goods that serve both human happiness and the dignity of the person.

Scriptural roots

The teachings of the Church about marriage and sexuality can be traced through their development in both the Old and New Testaments.

Old Testament

There is a *religious context* to the Old Testament teaching on sexuality and sexual morality.

The Old Testament understanding of sexuality is deeply related to its understanding of God. The God of revelation is very different from pagan gods such as Baal. This difference is reflected in the distinctive nature of sexual morality in revealed teaching. In the myth of Baal, the gods themselves are sexual beings, capable, as fallen beings are, of selfish and unrestrained lust. Pagan fertility cults presented sex, even its selfish and cruel manifestations, as participation in the divine. But the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not like Baal: He is not sinful and selfish as we can be; He is different, and altogether good. We are flawed, and inclined toward behaving badly. But God calls us to be His friends, and so to lead good lives, after the pattern He teaches us.

Though not every kind of sexuality activity is good, the Old Testament sees sexuality itself as good. Sexuality has intelligent purposes and deserves to be treated with reverent care. It is the gift of an all-good and transcendent Creator. This is the thrust of each of the narratives in Genesis of the creation of man and woman.

Human beings are not created to be isolated individuals. "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). The two accounts of the origins of male and female, and indeed also of marriage, in the book of Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2, each stress different goods that sexuality furthers. The account in Genesis, Chapter 2, speaks of the great good of interpersonal love, of the need of each bodily person for another with whom to share life. It calls for spousal love to be a kind of love like the Lord's that is full of generosity and self-giving. The account of Genesis, Chapter 1, stresses the procreative good, which later inspired writings will celebrate so richly: the joy that children are to parents.

Thus for the Old Testament, sex is a blessing from God, Celebrated with great joy in the Song of Solomon, sexuality is yet a reality to be responsibly controlled. Human beings are to integrate their sexuality by understanding its meaning and purposes. Throughout the Old Testament marriage is presented as something holy. The sexual relationship in marriage should mirror the relationship between God and His people. This is a reciprocal relationship: What we learn, by experience or revelation, teaches us about God's covenantal love; and what God teaches us of that love reveals what spousal love should be like.

The Old Testament's moral precepts about sexuality, as contained in the Decalogue, are right and good; but they reflect the imperfection of a not fully developed state of moral revelation and teaching. But clearly the Old Testament recognizes the great dignity of wife and mother. Wisdom literature repeatedly counsels husbands and wives to love one another truly and to be faithful to one another. It urges young men to live chastely, avoiding harlots and wayward women, as paganism did not. Faithful, lifelong marriage is the normative context for sexual love.

Thus for the Old Testament, sex is a blessing from God.

The Old Testament clearly condemns many of the kinds of sexual acts that do not further faithful love and the procreative good, and threaten marriage. It condemns adultery, and homosexual and bestial acts; it rejects all activity that surrenders to impulse rather than governs sexuality by love of authentic goods; implicitly it rejects fornication (sexual intercourse between unmarried persons) and it forbids the internal act of "coveting thy neighbor's wife." The moral teaching of the Old Testament is clearly no mere expression of Semitic culture and social conditions. Other Semitic people accepted the myths of Baal and the sexual morality of other nations. It was their covenant with the Lord that led the Jews to so sublime an understanding of sexuality.

New Testament

The Good News that Christ taught puts all things, even sexuality, in a new light. This new perspective is seen very clearly in the new evaluation of celibacy and virginity accepted willingly for the sake of the Kingdom (see Matthew 19:12). Of course, the New Testament takes for granted the teachings of the Old Testament on the goodness of sexuality and on the beauty of faithful marriage. But the Gospel advances these teachings to a more profound level of understanding.

Generally speaking, the Old Testament clearly disapproves of divorce (see Malachi 2:16) and in the Gospel Christ clearly condemns divorce and remarriage. Human acts of divorcing cannot break the indissoluble bond of valid marriage. It would be adultery to live as married to a partner who is not a real spouse (see Luke 16:18). Christ points out that the man who divorces his wife and marries commits adultery against her. His teaching seeks to guard the rights of women, their personal dignity, and equality with men.

For Jesus, sexual morality if not merely a matter of external behavior, but one of a person's internal disposition and will as well. "Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Evil acts coming from the heart, are what corrupt a person. These evil

acts are said to include adultery *(moicheia)*, fornication *(porneia)*, and sensuality *(aselgeia)* (Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-22). There are difficulties in analyzing the precise sense of each word. But it is clear that lustful acts include more than adultery. *Porneia* is used in the New Testament to include acts properly designated by the English term *fornication*.

The writings attributed to Saint Paul also illumine faith's vision of sexuality. Writing to Gentiles living in a pagan world, affected both by licentiousness and by an antisexual Gnosticism, Paul stresses the goodness of marriage and of sexual union within marriage. Everything is to be experienced "in the Lord," including their sexuality and their married lives. The holiness of marriage, and its sacramental ties with the love of Christ for His Church, are stressed in Ephesians 5:22-23.

All is transformed by Christ.

All is transformed by Christ. Our bodies need reverence: They are members of Christ and temples of the Spirit. But since sexual immorality affects the Christian person in so intimate and bodily a way, it is a sacrilegious desecration of the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. "Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18).

Because authentic human love and marriage are such indispensable goods for ordinary Christian living, sexual sins have a tragic seriousness. Like the Gospels, Paul too gives a list of sexual sins and notes how fearful are their consequences. "Neither the immoral, not idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals...will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Hence chaste hearts and self-possession are necessary for the Christian. The form of life that guards spousal love, homes, and the family, and nourishes enduring love, is the form of life that is needed both for human happiness on earth and for finding relationships with God that make one worthy of life forever in Him.

Bibliographical notes: Some studies helpful for grasping the vision of sexuality found in Scripture include:

Pope John Paul II. *The Original Unity of Man and Woman, Catechesis on the Book of Genesis*. Boston: St. Paul Editions (1981).

_____. *Blessed Are the Pure of Heart*. Boston: Saint Paul Editions (1983).

E. Schillebeeckx. *Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery*. 2 volumes. New York: Sheed and Ward (1965).

See also Lawler, et al. *Catholic Sexual Ethics*. Our Sunday Visitor (1985), Chapter 2, *The Biblical Teaching on Sex*.

Catholic teaching through the centuries

Catholics are heirs to a long theological tradition. From apostolic times to the present, that tradition has taught, and continues to teach, that the union of man and woman in marriage is good and indeed holy. It teaches that the virtue of chastity is necessary for all persons, male and female, married and unmarried, so that they may fully have self-possession and not be controlled by lustful forms of sexual desire. It teaches that some specific forms of sexuality activity —

namely, adultery, fornication, and sodomy, for example — are incompatible with the form of living appropriate to a person who has become one body with Christ through Baptism. It teaches what the Church learned from Scripture and has always taught: All acts of marital love should be open to life, and so respect the very meaning and purposes that God has given to sexuality. Hence those forms of family planning that are contraceptive are wrong. They deliberately seek to destroy the life-giving power of acts of marital love.

The Fathers drew their sexual teaching from the Scriptures, and applied it to the pastoral problems of their times. Against Gnosticism, they taught the holiness of marriage, and because of its anti-life spirit the Fathers stressed the procreative purpose of marriage. In a pagan world they extolled the greatness of a virginity generously lived for the Kingdom, but it had to be always rooted in the context of reverence for marriage and the family. The misery experienced in the pagan world as a result of a lust that destroyed homes and the hope for enduring love led the Fathers to develop more fully scriptural teaching on the fallen state of the human person: Sexual appetite, while itself good, had been notably wounded by sin.

The important work of the medieval, modern, and contemporary scholars in developing the Gospel vision of sexuality can be studied in some of the works cited in the bibliography section at the end of this chapter.

Magisterial teaching

Catholics believe that Christ Himself continues to teach in His Church. He commanded those He sent to proclaim the Gospel and His saving precepts to all nations. He promised that He would remain with them always in their teaching. The Church believes that the pope and bishops, successors to Saint Peter and the other apostles, teach moral matters authoritatively, and sometimes infallibly, since Christ teaches through them. Moral teaching is infallible not only when it is solemnly defined (very few moral matters are so defined), but also through the ordinary teaching of the Magisterium, when all the bishops and the pope teach in one accord something in morals that is to be held definitively (Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen Gentium*), n. 25). What the Church teaches infallibly, we are to accept with firm faith; what she teaches authoritatively, we are to accept with internal religious assent, and to follow that teaching in our lives (*ibid.*).

Catholics believe that Christ Himself continues to teach in His Church.

Early councils taught firmly the goodness of marriage. The Second and Fourth Lateran Councils defended the goodness of the marital union against the challenge of medieval neo-Gnostics. The Council of Florence affirmed that marriage is a sacrament, and proclaimed Augustine's teaching on the three basic goods of marriage: 1) the begetting of children, and educating them to love God; 2) the faithful love of husband and wife for each other; and 3) the indissoluble union of the spouses, mirroring Christ's indissoluble love for His Church. Councils did not need to define the constant teaching of the Church on the sinfulness of adultery and other sexual sins that were part of the ordinary teaching of the Church everywhere, and hence decisively part of faith's teaching.

The moral teachings of the Church touching sexuality were presented by the bishops and their priests, and received by the people, as the teaching of the Lord. When Christendom was divided at the Reformation, the new Christian communities continued to teach the moral teachings, so rooted in Scripture and so familiar to the people of God. Obviously, not all were faithful to these teachings; but their authority was not rejected. But as philosophies alien to Christianity became more influential in the thought and practice of the world, authentic Catholic teaching had to articulate with greater care the message it had received and had a duty to teach. Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI, for example, set forth the Christian vision of marriage and of sexuality in a number of encyclicals.

But in our own time, facing strong attacks on the family, misunderstandings of chaste love, new forms of hedonism and of moral skepticism, the Church has sought to hearten her people with strong defenses of Catholic teaching about marriage, the family, the meaning and purposes of sexuality, and the gifts God gives to make possible living the excellent ways that guard indispensable human goods. The Second Vatican Council spoke forcefully of the whole Christian vision in this matter, and later Church documents have further illumined and defended the Catholic vision of love and sexuality.

Church directives to theologians, pastors, catechists, and pastoral leaders regularly and rightly insist that authoritative teaching is to be faithfully adhered to even if one should have certain difficulties with it at times. The *Instruction* from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled *The Ecclesial Vocation of Theologians* (1990) gives excellent advice for pastoral practice when these kinds of difficulties occur. Two things remain important: to be faithful to the teachings of the faith, and to be gentle and helpful to those who have been scandalized or who have erred. One strives to help them recapture the vision of faith.

Bibliography: Selected Church documents in sexual ethics include:

Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution. *The Church in the Modern World, Part II, Chapter 1: On Upholding the Dignity of Marriage and the Family.*

_____. Declaration, *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis)* (1965). Nn. 1-3 treat some principles of sexual education.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation. *The Christian Family in the Modern World (Familiaris Consortio)* (Nov. 22, 1981).

_____. Encyclical Letter, *The Splendor of Truth (Veritatis Splendor)* (1993).

Pope Paul VI. Encyclical Letter, *On the Regulation of Birth (Humanae Vitae)* (July 25, 1968).

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Declaration, *Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (Persona Humana)* (1975).

Congregation for Catholic Education. *The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986).*

_____. *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation* (1987).

_____. *Educational Guidance in Human Love* (1983).

National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA). Pastoral Letter, *Human Life in our Day* (1968).

_____. Pastoral Letter, *To Live in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life* (1976).

_____. *Pastoral Guidelines for the Catholic Hospital and Catholic Health Care Personnel* (1991).

United States Catholic Conference Department of Education. *Human Sexuality. A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning.* Washington, D.C.: USCC (1990).

SUMMARY

Doctrinal teachings

1. We are created in God's own image. God made us male and female; our sexuality is good because it is from Him, and it serves basic human goods, especially spousal love, and newness of life.
2. God is the author of marriage. It did not flow from merely human choices or cultural conditions. God also wished marriage to have certain essential traits needed to guard spousal love and other human goods: unity, indissolubility, exclusiveness, openness to life, sacramentality.
3. Christ has raised marriage to the dignity of a Christian sacrament. Marital love should reflect the qualities of God's love for His people and Christ's love for His Church. As a sacred sign, matrimony is a gift through which God promises assistance to His people, assuring them that despite the many trials married people may face, they will be able to be faithful to God in their marital commitment if they seek His gracious help.
4. The marital act is good and sanctifying when in marriage it is an expression of marital love. But the proper place for sexual intercourse is *always* within marriage.
5. Christian teaching is good news for the family. Its doctrinal and moral principles serve to strengthen marriages and homes, and through these the happiness of people, who need secure marital commitments and faithful love within the family if their lives are to have the happiness they seek.
6. All valid and sacramental marriages have an indissolubility; it is not within any human person's power to dissolve them. Faith teaches, however, that God grants the Church authority in certain cases to dissolve marriages that are not sacramental (e.g., the Pauline privilege) or that are not consummated. Sacramental marriages that been consummated are entirely indissoluble. God does not grant even to His Church the power to dissolve such marriages for any reason. Declarations of nullity are not divorces or dissolutions of a marriage. They are judgment that an apparent valid marriage was, in fact, because of serious cause (e.g., the inability of one of the partners to consent to the marriage), never a truly sacramental marriage.

7. In the sacrament of matrimony, and in the other sacraments, and in the gifts flowing from prayer, God offers to His people the power to lead lives of faithful love in marriage. God makes it possible for people to lead excellent lives in marriage, so that their hopes for lasting love, and for divine assistance in caring for their children, and for living peaceful lives in divine grace may be realized.

Christian teaching is good news for the family.

8. Sexuality is a gift of deep importance to human life. It is not a trivial reality, and needs to be treated with reverent care. Christian teaching on sexuality guards indispensable human goods: the hope of enduring love, the protection of children and the procreative good generally, the defense of the basic social unit, the home, the care for the sacramental dimensions of human love.

Moral teachings

Objective norms

- *The excellence of sexual love in its proper context.* Conjugal love "is uniquely expressed and perfected through the marital act. The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones" (Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 49). While spouses are indebted to each other in this matter, they should engage in such acts freely and willingly, in ways that show mutual respect, and further the ends of marital love.
- *Sins against marital values.* Those acts which involve choices directly against the basic values toward which sexuality is ordered are always objectively sinful. Thus, acts of adultery, fornication, homosexual actions, masturbation, and the like are gravely sinful if they are engaged in with sufficient knowledge and freedom (*Persona Humana*, n. 10). Similarly, acts intended precisely to stir up sexual arousal (e.g., lustful forms of kissing or fondling) in circumstances unrelated to marital love are gravely disordered.

Natural family planning . . . may be used without fault in proper circumstances.

- *Contraception and sterilization.* The Church is certainly aware of the many complex problems which couples in many countries face today in their task of transmitting life in a responsible way. However, consideration in depth of these problems offers a new and stronger confirmation of the importance of the authentic teaching on birth regulation reproposed in the Second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes,* n. 51) and in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, n. 14. See also Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 31. Hence there must be excluded as intrinsically immoral "every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or a means, to render procreation impossible" (*Humanae Vitae*, n. 14). (See also what is said below under "Pastoral considerations," nn.1-3.)

- *Natural family planning.* This does not mean that all family planning is excluded, however. Providentially, effective forms of natural family planning have been developed, which in their moral structure are radically different from contraception (*Familiaris Consortio*, n. 32). These may be used without fault in proper circumstances (ibid.) The Catholic community has a duty to make accessible to its people the assistance that natural family planning can provide for living a chaste life.

- *Artificial generation of children.* Although the Church commends those who seek to help the apparently infertile to have the children they desire, it points out the inhumanity and wrongness of some forms of generating children, notably, artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization. Human life should come to be as a fruit of an act of interpersonal and fully human love, as the fruit of an act of marital love. It should never be reduced to a technological "making of a child, even if this producing of a child has good motivation. (See *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin* [1987].)

Pastoral considerations

- *Importance of moral truth.* Many circumstances in the contemporary world make it difficult for the faithful to recognize the truth of the certain teachings of faith in this area. Hence, it is important that those who teach Catholic sexual morality seek to present "the biblical foundations, the ethical grounds, and the personalistic reasons behind this doctrine" (*Familiaris Consortio*, n. 31). Since the Church teaches a revealed morality, and the faithful are powerfully moved by their confidence in the teaching of Christ, the certainty that this is the teaching of Christ in His Church is to be made as clear as possible. But other kinds of reasons are also needed. It is important to show that the teachings of faith are not merely laws imposed by the Lord or by the Church; they are moral teachings that point out excellent ways of living, and guard human goods of indispensable importance for human happiness. It is necessary also to show that the Lord indeed makes it possible for His faithful to live in this excellent way. Moral teachings, moreover, are never imposed by force. They are addressed to the freedom of persons, and they enhance the personal dignity of those who willingly live by them.

It is necessary also to show that the Lord indeed makes it possible for His faithful to live in this excellent way.

- *Subjective considerations.* Sins of lust, such as fornication and masturbation, are objectively gravely sinful. This does not mean that those who perform such acts always sin mortally. It is quite possible in this field that those who perform such acts may be excused from grave sin because of failures to realize the gravity of the matter or because they substantially lack freedom in the actions performed. Pastoral wisdom is needed in giving guidance especially to the young in these matters. One should be realistic in estimating moral responsibility.

  Modern psychology has much that is valid and useful to offer on the subject of

masturbation. It is helpful for gauging responsibility more accurately and for directing pastoral action along the right lines. It can enable one to understand how adolescent immaturity, which sometimes outlasts adolescence, the lack of psychological balance, and ingrained habit can influence a person's behavior, diminishing one's responsibility for one's actions, with the result that a person is not always guilty of subjectively grave fault. But the absence of grave responsibility must not always be presumed. To suppose that would involve a failure to recognize the human person's ability to behave morally (*Persona Humana*, n. 9). The principles noted here are, of course, applicable to other sexual sins as well.

- *Objective truth*. Pastoral care is concerned with more than subjective guilt or innocence in this matter. Catholic moral teaching speaks the truth about how we are to live and please God, and guides us correctly toward the excellent forms of life which are needed for human happiness and which will lead to holiness of life. Lustful actions are really harmful for human beings, even if they are not known to be bad and even when they are not morally imputable to the one performing the action. God has taught us how we are to live, and has instructed the Church to teach the faithful in His ways, because they are good. And because it is good to walk in the light of the Lord, "To diminish in no way the saving teaching of Christ constitutes an eminent form of charity for souls" (*Humanae Vitae*, n. 7).

Young people often need specific help in understanding ways to conquer temptation....

- *Providing gracious assistance*. Pastoral teaching does not merely instruct the faithful in their duties, but also offers them the practical helps that enable them to experience that the excellent ways of living are not excessively burdensome (cf. Matthew 11:28-30). The experience of confessors has long been that those who come to a personal desire to do God's will faithfully in these matters find that God does not fail them. In fact, they become able to keep His precepts without overwhelming difficulty. They need to realize that God's grace is very strong, and that prayer and the sacraments are powerful supports to a chaste and self-possessed life. Practical assistance is greatly needed: Spouses need to have excellent instruction in natural family planning that is readily accessible. Young people often need specific help in understanding ways to conquer temptation; they need assistance in psychologically sound ways to overcome problems that underlie their moral difficulties.

- *Social dimensions*. Difficulties with chastity often have social dimensions. Pastoral care must teach the faithful, especially the young, ways to overcome the pressures of peers and of the media. It is important that the faithful realize the naturalness and goodness of a life of self-possession. We must help them realize how many people do live chaste lives in tranquility and joy.

- *Self-esteem*. Education in chastity requires that we assist people to have a right self-esteem (which is entirely compatible with humility). Indeed, it is awareness

of the goodness that God has planted in their hearts, and the greatness that they have because of the love of Christ, that heartens people to pursue excellent forms of life that serve the most indispensable of human goods. Although we teach the grave sinfulness of certain disordered sexual acts, we do not teach people that they are worthless because they have sinned. Rather, we must constantly hearten people to trust in the powerful grace of the Lord, and to have confidence that He will give them power to live as the sons and daughters of God that they are called to be.

- *Conscience*. Catholic sexual ethics must be taught in a context that respects the general moral teachings of the faith. Thus, it must be supported by sound teaching on conscience, and on the duty to form conscience properly. It is necessary to teach it in a context that recognizes the ability of people to live, with the assistance of God's grace, by His saving precepts, even when they appear difficult. Catholic teaching on mortal sin must be respected. Mortal sin is a tragic evil. By it persons whom Christ died to save can separate themselves from the love of God and the secure hope of eternal life. A mortal sin is a gravely wrong kind of act (an act like adultery, fornication, or perjury) which is done with sufficient reflection and with full consent of the will. Venial sins are acts that are not so gravely wrong, or are performed without sufficient knowledge or freedom. To enable the faithful to grasp clearly and to appreciate moral teachings of the Church involves notable difficulties in our contemporary age. But the teachings of faith are strong defenses for good human lives and person happiness. They hearten people to acquire the generosity that the Gospel calls for in those who seek eternal life. To teach well such matters is a great work of love.

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V. EDUCATION

The Catholic program speaking of education in sexuality should first of all assist us in understanding what faith itself teaches us about our sexuality, about our being men and women. It presents the insistent teaching of faith that sexuality, made by God, is good, and serves excellent purposes, although, like other good realities, it can be abused and treated sinfully.

Our attitudes towards sexuality and right moral conduct are deeply affected by cultural pressures. The media today bring to our homes and to our lives factors that deeply affect our convictions and our conduct. Christians need to learn to handle these media intelligently. In a fallen, sinful world sexual misconduct is not rare and many are inclined to despair of attaining self-possession and the freedom which self-discipline brings with it. A good sexuality education makes clear the many resources that God has given to make really possible for us a life of fulfillment and happiness, a life of chaste self-possession and freedom.

Sexuality education speaks also of various kinds of harm to be avoided by intelligent self-discipline and good living. Thus, it treats the bitter problems of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies, abortion, broken homes and families, and other physical harms that often follow from using sexuality unwisely. But its focus is on the richness of life that God intended human persons to have in the right use of sexuality, and on heartening people to lead their lives in ways that direct them toward genuine fulfillment.

Different sense of "sexuality"

Sexuality itself has different senses. At times "sexuality" has a very *broad meaning*. We are sexual beings. Our being male or female is deeply rooted in us, and concerns far more than our inclination to distinctively sexual activities and matters closely related to them. All the dimensions of our life are affected by our being male or female. The dynamism associated with being sexual in this broader sense extends to all areas of life. In this broader sense, sexuality speaks of all the emotional and affective ties that tend to bind human beings together in many kinds of friendships and affectionate concerns.

In its *narrower sense*, sexuality refers either to the biological aspects of being male or female (i.e., as a synonym for one's gender) or activities, emotions, feelings, or indeed anything clearly related to genital sexual activity or sexual pleasure. Some documents prefer to reserve the word "sexuality" for the broader sense noted above, and to use the word "sex" for this latter sense of the word (cf. USCC, *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective* [1990], p. 9).

Diverse aspects of sexuality education

Sexuality education is concerned with sexuality in both the broader and narrower sense. It speaks of the morality of sexual activity: its moral goodness in the committed love of marriage; its moral badness when it is separated from the committed faithful love, and the openness to new life that is should express. It speaks of the reasons why a chaste life can be an excellent and full life, and it addresses both the general and the distinctively Christian motives for leading a chaste life.

Even in its narrower sense, sexuality education speaks of the great goods for the sake of which God gave human persons sexuality: the good of enduring personal love that heals the loneliness of the human spirit; the procreative good which makes fruitful in the child the love shared by spouses; the rich goodness of the family; and the blessings that flow from keeping the family strong. It is in terms of the good things to which sexuality is ordered that the truth of Christian moral teachings about sexual activity can be properly understood.

VI. FAMILY

These *Guidelines* wholeheartedly support the traditional Catholic teaching that parents are by right the primary educators of their children, in teaching about love and sexuality as well as other areas. The Christian community owes parents assistance in their task of providing a good education to their children.

Pope John Paul II emphasized the principle that parents are called to be the primary educators of their children:

> The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others. In addition to those characteristics, it cannot be forgotten that the most basic element, so basic that it qualifies the educational role of parents, is parental love, which finds fulfillment in the task of education as it completes and perfects its service of life. As well as being a source, the parents' love is also the animating principle and therefore the norm inspiring and guiding all concrete educational activity, enriching it with the values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness, and self-sacrifice that the most precious fruit of love (*Familiaris Consortio*, n. 36.)

The Pontifical Council for the Family has emphasized this point in its document *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*: "This right also implies an educational duty. If in fact parents do not give adequate formation in chastity, they are failing in their precise duty" (n. 44; see as well nos. 37-49).

Parents especially are called to hand on the faith and the Christian pattern of life to the next generation. To do this well, parents must be adequately formed in the faith. The more securely parents themselves possess the Catholic vision of love, the more effectively they can pass it on to their children. The National Directory for Catechesis stresses the importance of the home in all areas of education and catechesis.

The vital influence of parents on the social and religious development of their children must be more widely recognized. Family life needs to be strengthened so that children and youth will derive their values from the home, rather than from potentially undesirable sources outside the home. The Church, especially through the parish, should provide an intensified support system for family life (89809*Sharing the Light of Faith*, n. 25).

Parents must make every effort to educate children in the essential values of human life. The "positive and prudent sexual education" that the Second Vatican Council called for (*Declaration on Christian Education* [*Gravissimum Educationis*], n.1) requires the loving communication of the concept that sexuality is a gift that affects all the dimensions of our life. Since human sexuality education "is realized in full in the context of faith" and should be provided in the context of human and family relationships and experiences, it must be penetrated with concern for Christian love, self-esteem, and reverence for self and others (Congregation for Christian Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, n. 43).

Good parents wish their children to have such an education. However, the circumstances of the times, the pervasiveness of the media, the contradictions of the surrounding culture, the awkwardness of communication with young people often dominated by their peers, and the innate sensitivity of the task all serve to make this responsibility of speaking about sexuality with their children very difficult at times. Parents have a right to expect from the Church community assistance in this task; not an assistance that replaces their role, but one that fortifies them and enables them to do this important parental task well.

As "a community of persons bound together by love" (*Familiaris Consortio*, n. 18), the family seeks to form both the mind and heart of its young members. This education of the heart, this guidance given to feelings and affections as well as to the mind, is also stressed in these *Guidelines*. Full personal development requires growth in understanding of our own feelings and affections and in learning how to shape and direct our affections in ways that are faithful to those we love and to all that is good and helpful in directing our lives wisely.

It is in the home that his affective education is best provided. Each person is unique, and the attentive (but not dominating) care of those who love the young is needed to help them integrate their deeply felt feelings with intelligent and faithful love for the goods that faith and intelligence grasp. No one can become more helpful than parents in assisting children to realize in concrete circumstances what the Lord expects of them in these matters.

The United States bishops continually stress the centrality of the family in shaping the whole person and in instilling values. The bishops note the value of the good family's witness as a sign of fidelity and hope:

> For the believer the family is the place where God's image is reproduced in his creation. The family is the community within which the person is realized, the place where all our hopes for the future person are nourished. The family is a learning experience in which fidelity is fostered, hope imparted and life honored; it thus increases the moral resources of our culture and, more importantly, of the person. The family is a sign to all mankind of fidelity to life and of hope in the future which becomes possible when persons are in communion with one another; it is a sign to believers of the depth of this fidelity and this hope when these center on God; it is a sign to Christians of the fidelity and hope which Christ communicates as the elder brother of the family of the Church for which he died (*Human Life In Our Day*, 1257, pp. 356-357, USCC Publications Office [1968]).

"Like every other reality, the family, too, is called upon to develop and grow" (*Familiaris Consortio*, n. 65). It is called to shape well the intimate depths of its members, and to urge them to faithfulness in their broad social responsibilities as well. The *Guidelines* acknowledge the importance of the ongoing education of the family, which is challenged to form persons in love and also to practice love in all relationships, so that it does not live closed in on itself, but remains open to the community, moved by a sense of justice and concern for others, as well as by a consciousness of its responsibility toward the whole of society (The Sixth Synod of Bishops, *Message to Christian Families in the Modern World*, October 24, 1980, n. 12).

VII. INTEGRATION

These *Guidelines* provide a broad general plan for an authentically Catholic education in love and sexuality. Many people share the task of carrying out this educational program. Parents are to be the primary teachers of their children; pastors are the be witnesses of faith teaching to the whole community; at various levels, teachers in marriage preparation programs, in adult Religious Education programs, in schools and Religious Education programs, and in other contexts, are to assist in this important task.

Parental tasks and tasks of religious educators

The education of children in sexuality is primarily the task of their parents. But parents deserve and often need the assistance of others in carrying out their responsibility.

When parents speak to their children about sexuality, they speak in personal tones, supported by their more intimate understanding and love that they have for those to whom they are close. They speak out of their faith and out of their personal experience and wisdom. Hence more intimate and personal direction is ordinarily better given by parents themselves or by those the parents choose to assist them in this necessary task.

But parents deserve and often need the assistance of others in carrying out this task. Religious educators also speak to their students out of faith and love, but theirs is the voice of the family of faith, a broader witness helping students to realize together that what they have learned from their parents in not something singular. The voice of the parents is a familiar one, concrete and sensitive to all the individual sensitivities of the child. The sensitivity of religious educators has a different focus. It is seeking to cast the light of faith on a dimension of life that is not only deep personal, but also an important part of social life. Consequently the believer needs the communal witness of facilitators and teachers of faith. The religious educator helps young people to get another kind of grasp on the teaching first received from parents, and helps to deepen young peoples' grasp on what the Gospel invites them to realize.

What the religious educator teaches about love and sexuality

Many things concerning love and sexuality are part of the essential teaching of faith. Catechesis must present a Christian anthropology — a sound vision of what it means for us to be men and women. It must teach the transcendent dignity of each individual, the truth that God is the author of sexuality, which is good and ordered to the flourishing of enduring love and of the family and of other indispensable human goods. In the face of alien philosophies that penetrate the media and challenge the Gospel, Christian catechesis must provide a solid and true account of the meaning of the sexuality God has given us.

Part of any complete catechesis must be moral instruction. We must teach courageously that many forms of sexual behavior often defended in our society are morally wrong, inhuman, and harmful. We must teach both the young and the mature how to acquire that strong freedom which flows from chastity. Moral teaching must be presented in ways that realistically help the young both to avoid harms which often follow immoral sexual conduct and to achieve the kind of good life that God wishes them to have.

Characteristics of an education in the Catholic vision of love

The program being implemented in the Diocese of Pittsburgh integrates essential teachings about sexuality into the catechetical program as a whole. There are certain real advantages in this. It stresses the universal importance of this education: It is providing material that a rounded teaching of faith must provide. Clearly, for Christians, sexuality education must be an education in Christian values and in the Christian vision of what human persons are. But the time in fact available for courses in Christian values is plainly finite. If parishes would wish to have both regular Religious Education and special programs in human sexuality education, it is very likely that many of the students would not take both programs. In planning what is important for all students to have, it seems best to integrate the education in a Catholic vision of love into the catechetical program as a whole. This approach ties this education in with the basic truths and central values out of which such study should grow, and helps young people to feel that the proper matrix for understanding so central a reality is in the study of the whole faith and life to which Christ invites us.

The education of children in sexuality is primarily the task of their parents.

Catholic documents on sexuality education tend to stress certain factors: the dominant role of parents, and the need to assist rather than replace them as teachers; the importance of giving good and needed knowledge, but the importance also of not excessively stimulating curiosity or of making intimate matters of sexuality seem to appear appropriate objects for casual talk. Care should be exercised by parents in being "attentive to ways in which an immoral education can be passed on to their children through various methods promoted by groups with positions and interests contrary to Christian morality" (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, n. 135; see also nos. 135-42).

The emphasis in such a program is very different from that of secular programs in sexuality. The aim is not to teach "all you ever wanted to know" about sexuality, or to assist people in coming to think and to feel about sexuality as something commonplace, to be discussed in all its intimate details without any concern for an appropriate modesty or without appreciation for the emotional resonances associated with sexuality.

The focus of a catechetical program is not on biological aspects of sexuality, yet it certainly does not fear these realities. Faith indeed provides a right perspective for

studying the biological dimensions of sexuality. It surely wishes to stress the goodness of all the body, and the importance of sensitive care in speaking of intimate sexual matters. As children grow, they need to know more things about sexuality; and often they need the warm help of one very near them, especially in ways that counter fears and timidity, and help them grasp information with maximal emotional tranquility, and in ways that gently help them to understand what they learn with a concrete feeling for the values that are relevant. That is, they need to obtain the knowledge they should have in a context that makes it easier for them to grasp what they learn within the total vision of a living faith.

At times parents find it almost impossible to speak in satisfactory ways to their children, but if they can be helped to do so, much good can result. In cases where parents cannot or will not provide the elements of sexuality education that best come from parents, those who have pastoral care for children and adolescents may need to cooperate with parents in other ways: Perhaps, with parental consent, finding surrogate parents (perhaps grandparents or other good people the parents can rightly and fully trust) to speak with children in the personal and sensitive ways that young people generally need at certain stages of maturity.

VIII. ADULT EDUCATION

Adults especially need to be well educated in the Catholic vision of love and sexuality. Their lives are more complex than the lives of young people; they have had more experiences. They are capable of a fuller and freer adherence to the teaching of faith. They need an excellent education in the Catholic vision of love also because faithfulness to right ideals is often difficult. They deserve help in countering pressures from our culture to adopt positions hostile to the vision of faith.

Moreover, adult understanding of and adherence to the Catholic vision of love have exceptional importance because of the many *responsibilities* that adults have. Adults, as *parents* and *teachers* and persons of significant influence in many ways, deeply affect the lives of younger people, and, indeed, of the whole community. Those who are shaping and guiding others need to be well informed themselves.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has, then, reminded us of the reasons why religious education of adults, not least in understanding the Catholic vision of love, is of central importance:

> The continuing education of adults is situated not at the periphery of the Church's educational mission, but at its center. . . . The adult programs should reflect the three interrelated purposes of Christian education: The teaching of doctrine, the building and experiencing of community, and service to the other. . . . In seeking to instill this understanding of the Christian family's role, family life education must employ such means as premarital instruction and marriage counseling, study, prayer and action groups for couples, and other adult programs which married persons themselves may plan and conduct in collaboration with the Church leadership (*To Teach as Jesus Did,* n. 43, 1972).

Parents have the task of handing on to their children the Gospel pattern of love. All adults, single, and celibate people as well as parents, have the responsibility of handing on to young people generally, to a young and growing generation, the saving message of Christ's love that all need to possess to find fulfillment.

Education for young adults

Young adults deserve special attention from the Church. The years after high school, that for some are years in colleges and universities, while others are early years in various levels of employment, are critical years of Christian formation. In these years young adults can easily drift from Catholic ideals and practices, or learn to take fuller possession of them. Many will soon be entering marriage, with all its responsibilities. They have a need for, and a right to, a Catholic education in love and sexuality that meets their specific circumstances.

College and university contexts

In college and university contexts *campus ministry leaders* are entrusted with the responsibility of providing excellent education for young adults. An important part of their teaching must be a sound education in the Catholic vision of love. Catholic centers on campuses must provide our young people with intelligent support for chaste living. Whenever possible, courses on the family should be made available to them, so that as they approach the time when they shall marry, they may have a better vision of the Catholic form of living the married vocation to which they are called.

Parish contexts

Parishes too must provide for the needs of their young adults, whether or not they attend a college or university. The future of the parish depends upon young adults so strongly that parishes must keep close contact with them. Their priest must help them realistically to grow in their faith and in a Christian way of living their personal and moral lives, if they are to have the help and strength they will need to enter securely into the full responsibilities of adulthood and parenthood.

Things to be taught to young adults

The Catholic vision of love needs to be taught in a context of intelligent faith. Often remedial work needs to be done. Many young adults seem to posses personally few intelligent reasons for being Catholic Christians, and they need to be assisted in recapturing strong personal faith, if they are to appreciate adequately the Catholic vision of love.

The Catholic vision of love needs to be taught in a context of intelligent faith.

What faith teaches about love and sexuality is of great interest to young people. When it is well taught, it is recognized as the blessing it truly is. Obviously education in love and sexuality is not a matter of proclaiming duties to be blindly accepted, but the answer to the real questions, serious problems, and earnest hopes that our young people have experienced in their own lives.

We should be teaching young adults a vision that enables them to understand more clearly how great is God's gift of sexuality. We are seeking to share with them an understanding we ourselves have grasped: that the generous patterns of love taught in the Gospel are not burdens to life and love, but sources of freedom, and they support the good things human hearts and homes need so deeply.

Hence education in sexuality is not simply education in rules, but in the ways in which enduring love is made possible, in the importance of the home for human happiness, and in the ways in which personal love and the family can be enriched. A Christian study of sexuality is focused especially on the good things sexuality serves. But it does realistically point out how much life is harmed when sexuality is badly understood and lived, and why those sexual acts that faith rightly calls immoral are also hostile to one's own fulfillment. Christian moral principles are not taboos. They are insights into the ways one must live if one wishes life to work well.

Important in such education is the *witness* of other young adults who have willingly led good Catholic lives, and who can speak to their peers with entire honesty of the good fruits that Christian principles have had in their own lives.

Social teaching is a large part of an education in love and sexuality. We must speak plainly of what faith says about divorce, homosexuality, contraception, and related world problems today when the secular culture preaches a vision of life sharply contrary to the Gospel. The Catholic vision of love is a powerful and bracing one, and those who are taught it well are given strong supports to their own lives. During this time of life the realism of Catholic moral principles needs to be taught effectively.

Natural family planning must be understood by our young people, at least in its foundational principles and in the humane nature of its practice, if they are to realize that faith does indeed work in human life, and bears surprisingly good fruits. Often young Catholics become embarrassed by the teachings of their faith, when in various courses they are taught that it fails to face the grave problems of our times. But when they are well instructed in the Catholic vision, young adults are heartened by the realization that both secular concerns and personal and moral interests are served splendidly by the Catholic vision of life.

Textbooks and resources. Those who teach in this field should choose resources wisely. Many excellent textbooks are available; and experts to assist in every aspect of this teaching are near at hand as well. But leaders of programs should be careful that textbooks and persons chosen to teach are able and disposed to serve the authentic Christian ideals defended in these *Guidelines*.

Marriage preparation programs

We are seeking to present the better vision that faith offers....

Remote, *proximate*, *immediate*. There are many stages of preparation for marriage and family life. All of the young years of a person's life can be seen as a *remote* preparation for their vocation to married life. But here we speak of the *immediate* preparation for marriage, that is, of the guidance and instruction given to couples in the time immediately preceding their marriage (see *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 66, and *Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage*).

Those who provide immediate marriage preparation. Such marriage preparation programs can be provided in a variety of ways. Pastors and others who will preside at weddings have a responsibility to see to it that the kind of preparation faith calls for is in fact provided. It can be provided in parish, deanery, or diocesan programs. Programs are at times provided by special groups, by Cana Conferences or Engaged Encounter programs, or by couples specially prepared to assist other couples in this way.

All programs should be carefully coordinated by parochial and diocesan leaders who are charged with seeing to the adequacy of such programs. The good of families and of the whole Church is at stake; the matter is too important to permit programs that do not provide well the Catholic guidance and support such programs must always have.

Realism in these programs. Marriage preparation programs must be excellent to be truly helpful. We are seeking to present the better vision that faith offers, but the unbelieving world presents a vision of sexuality that has its own strong attractiveness on certain levels. The vision that faith offers cannot be effective in our times if it is not presented intelligently and with evident affection and concern for those who are instructed.

Restoring faith. Marriage preparation courses must respect fully the dignity of those they address. It is foolish to speak to those preparing to marry of the precepts that flow from faith if we have not first assisted them, when this is needed, to get a firmer personal grasp on their own faith. Many people today do not have good reasons for believing what the Gospel teaches and what faith presents to us. In some way, we must provide a context that helps those preparing for marriage to realize the good reasons they have for living in a Christian way. The motives one appeals to in encouraging a renewal of faith must be those that speak warmly and authentically to those whom we address.

We are calling them toward that generous love that alone can make their marriages and lives secure.

The time of marriage preparation is, to be sure, a time of many distractions and concerns. But it is also a time of special grace. The people about to marry should be given reasons that make sense to them for taking seriously the vision faith offers. Commonly they do have a serious desire to have the love of their marriage last. They foresee being parents, and want to be good parents to their children, and to have resources to guide them to happy and rich lives. Devoted teachers can appeal to motives that really rest in the young adults' hearts. These teachers can often help the couple to realize how friendship with God and a life of grace can assist them greatly in becoming the kind of persons they long to become. This can be more effectively accomplished to the degree in which these teachers themselves have tasted and seen how much faith does to enrich their own lives and the lives of others, especially the young adults to whom they are ministering.

Witnesses. In all education of adults the witness of those who have found the ways of Christ good is critically important. It is useful, when possible, to weave into courses the witness of the lives of those who have found their faith a strong support to their own married love and to their homes.

The assistance of witnesses is especially important when one is speaking of those elements of a Catholic vision that are likely to seem unrealistic to contemporary young adults who are deeply affected by the vision of sexuality furthered by secular electronic media. For example, when teaching the Gospel requirements of chaste love in marriage, it is important to show in the experience of real people that what the world declares too difficult is not found too burdensome by those who earnestly seek to fill their married lives with the kind of love Christ has taught us.

Again, in teaching the benefits of natural family planning, two kinds of presentations are needed. The objective advantages must be taught clearly:

the fact that this form of family planning is, when it is well taught, effective for all couples; that is has no bad physical side effects; that it has many kinds of personal advantages, advantages so strong that the divorce rate for couples using natural family planning is far lower than it is for other couples. But beyond this objective teaching, *personal witness* is needed from those who have found that what is said of natural family planning is very true in practice, that it is not a heavy burden, and that the blessings it brings to a Catholic life are very rich indeed.

Faithful teaching. It is important that Catholic teachers offer young people the whole Catholic vision of love, of sexuality, and of the family. It is easy to understand how some are pressed by the media, and by the power of secular voices in our midst, to turn aside from some of the excellent elements of the Catholic vision, for fear that they may prove too burdensome. Some tend to drift toward ambiguity: to saying dubious things about moral requirements of faith, and about the nature of conscience. But we owe our own people more than this. We are calling them toward that generous love that alone can make their marriages and lives secure. We must give them the strong and vibrant support of the authentic message of faith, and fortify this, as it deserves to be fortified, by the witness of those who have lived in Catholic ways, and found such ways to be very good.

Programs for young parents

Assisting the family. The family has a great dignity. It is to be a school of faith, a school of love, a school in which the deepest and most personal lessons of life are taught and learned (*Familiaris Consortio*, Part III).

Even in very ordinary matters, young families deserve the assistance of the Church community. Young parents often need assistance in very basic things, sometimes even for food and medical help in times of emergency. They may also need the assistance of others in basic parental teaching roles: in learning effective and good ways of teaching children to pray, of helping them wisely guide children in the use of the media, in defending them in difficult circumstances from the special dangers young people face today.

. . . the Church cannot flourish if the family is not strong.

The Church willingly recognizes her responsibility to assist families, especially young ones, as they face the difficult problems that can arise in the active sharing of family life. The "larger family," the Church, must assist the "small Church," the family; for the Church cannot flourish if the family is not strong. Helps given to the family must be provided with reverent attention to the needs of the family. They must be provided by competent people, who are able to integrate the vision of faith with the human skills that are needed to serve the family well (*Familiaris Consortio*, nn. 69-70).

Sources of this assistance. Assistance is to be given to the family from many sources. Often the best assistance is given by other families, by couples who have experienced and mastered the difficulties that are met frequently

today. Groups like the Confraternity of Christian Mothers and the Christian Family Movement were created to make it possible for parents to assist one another in the important tasks that homes regularly face.

Many kinds of expertise should be placed at the assistance of the family. Pastoral leaders are not expected to have all these skills, but often they are able to recruit the services of skilled professionals to serve the family. Religious leaders themselves should assist those in various professions to integrate the vision of faith into the work that they are doing in the service of the Christian family.

The resources of the Church are limited, but they can be enlarged by the gift of Catholic professionals who are able and willing to put their skills at the service of faith, and of the families that are the future of the Church and of the world. Our professional leaders should be invited to take an interest in meeting the problems of young families in areas in which they are themselves especially skilled.

In a special way pastoral leaders need to assist young parents in overcoming problems that are a threat to their lives of faith. Natural family planning should be made readily accessible to young couples. Many who did not realize the importance of this at the time of marriage come by the experience of married life to realize how precious family planning that is fully in accord with their faith can be to them. Pastoral leaders should seek to become aware of and to make accessible to young couples the many counseling resources that are available. In addition, these leaders should be able to give advice on which resources can be confidently used because of the respect that the practitioners have for the faith and the values of those whom they assist.

IX. CHILD EDUCATION

Children can begin to learn from their youngest years that life and love are precious gifts. They can begin to realize that some forms of behavior do not honestly express what love calls for. Hence, parents do well in educating their children and forming in them ways of living that stress the centrality of love.

In teaching children not to behave immodestly, and not to watch television shows or go to movies that offend Christian ideals, they should know that they are not simply being negative. For in these important matters they are indeed teaching children what love should be like, and what true love must do and what it must avoid. All teaching of commandments is rooted in love. That is why the book of Deuteronomy urges us to be concerned with the commandments:

> "Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your hearts, and with all your soul, and with all might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your head, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Time and patient persistence are needed in teaching love and in shaping lives in the ways of love. Teaching children how they should guide their affections and discipline their pursuit of pleasures takes strong and gentle direction, as Deuteronomy suggests and parents experience. Children need to love and to be loved; but they are also attracted to things and experiences that simply please them. Therefore, they need to learn how to direct their drives in the service of what they gradually realize is required by love. This is foundational in sexuality education. With little children, genital sexuality need not be much discussed, but the principles that will help them direct their love, feelings, and free choices need to be sown.

Before we learn to live as love requires and to direct our drives wisely, we tend to be torn. We wish both to love and be loved, and also to have gratifications and express hostilities that militate against love. Growth is toward integration: toward finding ways in which all our affective responses need to be integrated, in the service of the love in which we seek to grow.

If parents and educators are to lead children toward this kind of personal integration, they themselves need to have learned to direct their own emotions, drives, and feelings, putting them in the service of what authentic love requires.

Theses teachers should have the mastery of their love and their drives, not in repressing them, but in having possession of them and the ability to integrate their love, feelings, and drives in ways that reverence the teachings of faith and the inner requirements of honest love.

Catholic parents wish to help their children lead lives in accord with their faith. To be helpful guides toward a life in accord with faith, parents must themselves have taken possession of their own faith, and have learned to lead their lives in the good ways that faith teaches. Children will hardly believe that they must resist strong pressures toward unchaste ways of living if their parents seem to have judged that such efforts are not required of themselves. Hence, education in chaste living for the young must be rooted in Christian families and in a Christian community that seeks to understand and live in the light of faith.

Parental role in educating children

Parents and other family members play essential roles in helping children realize that they are deeply loved and that their own love for parents and others is precious. Family members help the child gradually realize that emotions that sometimes seem to turbulent can gradually be brought under personal control and put in the service of love.

Thus, it is within the family context that children absorb a sense of their own sexuality; that is, they are of their very nature inclined toward loving and being loved, toward having feelings and emotions that affect the innermost depths of their lives. In the home they learn that love and affection are good and not to be repressed. But love needs wise direction. Parents help children begin to grasp how love needs to be guided and how feelings need to be brought under personal control for life to have the goodness and joyfulness they seek.

. . . it is within the family context that children absorb a sense of their own sexuality. . . .

Important, too, are the attitudes that young children have toward their own bodies and toward being the boys or girls that they are. The intelligent and balanced attitudes of parents toward the sexuality of their children and toward their own sexuality shape the attitudes of children far more than any verbal instructions could.

All recent Church statements on education in sexuality for children stress the centrality of the parental role in this education. Hence the primary focus of these *Guidelines* lies with the family as the most appropriate setting for all children's education in the area of human sexuality.

These *Guidelines* have been prepared for parents and family members to apprise them of all the normal needs for education in human sexuality at various levels of physical growth and development.

In the diocese and in individual parishes, programs need to be shaped and resources need to be made available to assist parents in their important task of guiding their children well in these areas. The purpose of this education in human sexuality is by no means to replace the parents in the education of their own children, but to help them carry out their own irreplaceable role well.

The Church supports, assists, and encourages parents in their role as the primary educators of their children. The positive influences which parents have planted in the hearts of their children are most important. They are reinforced through the positive teaching of the Church about the meaning of sexuality, the responsibilities of chaste love, and the respect always to be given to human life and love.

Content specific to age level

Pre-Birth

Education in sexuality begins in a sense even before birth. Even unborn children are affected by the care given them. The ways in which the child is touched and formed by affection and tender love even before birth are still being explored, but the reverence and love shown for the child in the womb is certainly important.

Moreover, when parents realize that their "trinity-on-earth" (father, mother, child) reflects the divine Trinity, when they see that creative role as having sacred and creative dimensions, and when they reverence each other in the role they have had in bringing the child into being, they are preparing themselves to guide the attitudes and hearts of their children well. Their positive attitude toward their own sexuality, when they reflect on the greatness of having children, should continue through the years to have a happy effect on the children's own psychosexual development.

Their own chastity and modesty affect the way they treat their children, and communicate to them, even in infancy, the attitudes and affections which are of great importance of their development.

Birth to Three Years

One of the most important means of shaping a child's affective life well is enabling the child to realize how deeply he or she is loved. A child who has experienced love and care has received the strong foundation necessary to deal with stressful situations throughout life.

A child who has experienced love and care has received the strong foundation necessary to deal with stressful situations throughout life.

All the loving manifestations of parenthood: attending the needs, showing affection, playing with the child, guarding him or her from dangers both by action and by insisting on some kinds of conduct, serve to provide a balanced emotional growth. From the earliest days, the child's moral development is enhanced by careful training even in such areas as motor skills and personal safety. The "No!" given to an action that is physically harmful is the precedent to the "No!" to actions that are morally harmful. Children can come to realize that even when they are forbidden to act as strong feelings might incline them, they are being loved, cared for, and protected by those who love them. Self-esteem need not be harmed by firm but *loving* instructions.

Self-respect grows as the child realizes that the efforts made in toilet-training and other forms of self-discipline pay off. The self-possession acquired and the esteem merited are early evidences of the advantages of guiding life intelligently. The first steps of control over the body taken under the parents' loving guidance become early patterns for education in virtue.

Three to Seven Years

In these years the child should be helped to learn prayer, to begin to grasp the roots of a moral life, and to grow in a healthy attitude toward love.

Interest in sexuality in these days is on the simple level of early childhood. But children's questions about their reproductive organs, about the origin of babies, and about other related matters should be answered with the truth and simplicity that is proper for their age. We would not project on their questions the same meaning that the questions older children have. At a very early age children should gently be taught modesty. This is helped by the use of age-appropriate words for speaking of bodily parts and functions. What the parents aim at is helping children come to healthy attitudes toward elemental human things, not at an understanding beyond their age.

Seven to Ten Years

In these often relatively tranquil years before puberty ("the years of innocence" as described by Pope John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 37), there can be much important growth in the child, much development in attitudes and convictions and traits of character that will serve them well in later times of stress. Parents in these years should seek to help their children grow in faith and in prayer, in self-possession (in learning and experiencing that one can master drives that could create turmoil in life), in awareness of their personal importance to God and to all who love them. Before adolescence, children must be deeply convinced that they are loved by their parents, and that his love is strong. Love often has to require and to help them not to do things that seem attractive but are in fact hurtful for them.

The Christian family atmosphere should protect the child in these years.

The Christian family atmosphere should protect the child in these years. Catholic homes ought not simply accept the cultural pressures that in various ways stir up unsuitable interest in genital sexuality or permit intrusion into the life of the child by media presentations of sexuality that do not respect human dignity and right values. Parental care should keep a concerned eye on the television habits of children as well as on the movies they see.

Parents should be concerned about the friendships their children have and the kind of language their children begin to use. Parents need to give calm guidance in years of premature tensions. There should be encouragement to achieve the normal strengths of these years: times when hobbies, appropriate friendships, and growth in ordinary interests of young boys and girls are allowed to flourish before the specific interests of adolescence create a new situation.

Without pressing children to be concerned about sexual questions that do not deeply concern them, parents can and should give right and appropriate answers to specific questions. If children are concerned with the physical developments that take place in those a few years older than themselves and are interested in their own future growth, simple and right answers should be given. These answers should not press further than the child's interest suggests. In our times, children often get very much information about sexuality at early ages from a variety of sources, and not always in helpful ways. Parents should be a source of tranquility for their children, helping them

to manage what they hear and to understand what they have concerns about, without seeking to stir up anxious concerns before the child wishes to be helped. "This period of tranquility and serenity must never be disturbed by unnecessary information about sex ... prudent formation in chaste love during this period should be indirect, in preparation for puberty, when direct information will be necessary" (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality,* n. 78).

Ten to Fourteen Years

These years, too, can be good years of growth for children, especially if earlier years have been blessed by good guidance. During these years gender identity tends to be solidified, and there is great need that each child have the presence and support of both parents during this phase of growth. In an age of broken families, the Church needs to be a supportive larger family that helps single-parent families and other homes that have special burdens to find good and wise ways to give direction in circumstances that are not easy.

As adolescence approaches, difficult emotional problems often arise. As young people seek to establish their own identity, they can have hostility toward parents, excessive dependence on peers, and times of anxious rebellion. But these years also have their important strengths. Wise parents, getting assistance also from those who know well the ways of young people, can appeal to young teenagers' sense of fairness and idealism and to the faith that has been already implanted in their children's hearts, to maintain the love and the shared concern to help the adolescent master the problems of new times with a strong heart.

As friendships between members of opposite sexes begin, and young love begins to reveal itself, parents need to draw on the resources of their own mature and balanced sexuality to understand and to be able to help their children meet the complex realities of a new life with realism and unselfish goodness of heart. When relationships between children and parents are good, the concern and vigilance parents have for the important but delicate new dimensions of their children's lives can be accepted with a certain peace.

X. TEEN EDUCATION

Adolescence is a time of intense physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. Young people are pressured by many influences in these years. Peers, media, and countless cultural forces exert their impact.

But adolescence is not simply a chaotic and puzzling time. It is also a time when young people can grow well and begin to integrate freely into their lives the values they have been taught even in earlier years. But adolescents need assistance from parents and others who love them, who seek to understand them, and who know how to speak to them wisely of the authentic human values that faith rightly commends.

Normal impulses and feelings experienced by adolescents, amplified by the media and other resources of an erotic age, could lead these young people toward sexual experimentation and expression in ways that are both morally wrong and personally disastrous. Parents and religious educators owe these young people assistance by their words and by the example of their own lives.

Parental teaching. Parents must help adolescents begin to understand personally the sensible and helpful things faith speaks to them about such things as dating, infatuation, physical affection, and sexual orientation. In an age that misunderstands sex so badly, parents should help their adolescent children to grasp well what sex is really all about, and why God has blessed us with our sexuality.

Parents should help their children understand that the moral teachings of the faith concerning sexuality are not irrational impositions, but intelligent defenses of realities that children themselves can see are important: homes, families, children, enduring love. Adolescents indeed need the support and cooperation of their concerned parents and of pastoral leaders. When intelligent efforts are made, parents are able to speak persuasively to their adolescent children of the value of personal modesty, the avoidance of sexually suggestive situations and entertainment, and they can lend their support and knowledge to adolescents as they enter and an age of difficult moral choices.

Parental example. But parental teaching also depends, as all teaching in lives of virtue and faith does, on the form of life of the parents. Parents' love for their children should strengthen parents themselves in leading lives of generous love and of chaste self-possession that will not only enrich their own lives, but also give their children indispensable helps in living with intelligent love in a disordered time.

Parents can serve as models of Christian marriage, and of the attractiveness of generous love. This strong parental example can help their children withstand pressures from some peers and from the contemporary world.

Since a chaste life is not easily lived without the supports of faith and grace, parents should see to it that their teens realize how important the practices of faith are to their parents. When parents themselves attend Mass

regularly, receive the sacraments devoutly, bring thoughtful prayer into the home, and reveal how much strength and satisfaction faith brings to their lives, they give priceless help to their children.

Catechists and youth ministers. Catechists and youth ministers can affirm and support for adolescents the Christian values of their parents. They can do this by instruction, by helping the young to find good role models, by assisting young people to be supports to one another, and by the example of their own faith and lives.

A primary task of the catechist-youth minister is wise *instruction* in the Catholic vision of sexuality, in the meaning of Gospel morality, and in the authentic nature of conscience and of sound conscience formation.

Christian morality is not merely a set of rules. It is rooted in personal love, in appreciation for the priceless value of each person, and in the human goods needed for personal fulfillment. Christian sexual morality is not a matter of repression and taboos, but of understanding how indispensable are the great human goods that sexuality was made to serve (such realities as enduring and generous personal love, the family, the value of children, the understanding of God, and of the meaning of life that flows from an intelligent grasp of sexuality).

Parents can serve as models of Christian marriage, and of the attractiveness of generous love.

Youth ministers assist the young also by helping them to find good *role models* and in *supporting one another* in taking possession of an intelligent view of love and sexuality.

The world is by no means devoid of good models. Young people often need the help of strong role models to realize that they are by no means alone in wanting to have a form of life that is compatible with the vision of the Gospel. Education should not be entirely abstract. It should make known the stories of thoughtful and strong people who live vigorous Christian lives in a wide variety of ways. It should provide help toward discovering the literature and entertainment that assist young people to experience the reality of the excellent kinds of life not often featured by the mass media.

They assist the young people also by their own strong love for them, and by the courage with which they hearten young people to become responsible for shaping their own lives and to support one another in larger peer groups.

Specific areas of guidance and instruction. Catechists and youth ministers have much to say about a Christian vision of sexuality to assist adolescents.

They should teach students in early high school years what is most needed to help them live chaste lives. They should teach them clearly and sensitively what faith teaches us about the meaning and purposes of sexuality, and how sexuality is related to communicated and enduring love, and to the family. They should teach such matters as Catholic teaching on masturbation, premarital and extramarital sex, and contraception. But such education should be accompanied by a realistic explanation of the kinds of supports faith provides, so that what is taught is rightly seen as entirely possible, human, and a real defense of their personal dignity and of fundamental human goods.

They should be helped to acquire a Christian understanding of such contemporary issues as AIDS and homosexuality. They should be taught their right not to be exploited or victimized. They should be helped to see the equality and complementarily of the sexes.

Teachers should help adolescents realize the good sense of the Christian vision of sexuality. Sexuality is clearly not a trivial matter. It enters deeply into our very being, and into the meaning of our lives. Sexual activity is not intended to be a casual and passing pleasure, indulged in thoughtlessly. Rather it is made to go with enduring love, with the promises, the generosity, and the responsibilities of marriage. It is intimately connected to the gifts of God that enable love to be responsible and lasting.

In late high school years they should be given excellent education in the family. They should be taught the meaning of marriage, the importance of the home, and the rewards that chastity brings in enduring love, in guarding children, and in serving generous and deeply rewarding forms of life.

This education on the family and the home must be concrete and persuasive. Catholic teaching on marriage and its precious goals, the tragedy of divorce, and the helps given to life by the sacrament of marriage need to be presented with concreteness and persuasiveness. One can speak of such things in an age of broken homes and single-parent families without any lack of reverence or respect for those whose home lives are not ideal. Charity finds ways of speaking strongly but graciously all that is needed to encourage young people to pursue patterns of life that really work.

Happily, genuine freedom and the intelligent guidance derived from the Gospel go well together.

Adolescents need to be taught forcefully the truth that every person's life is meaningful. God has a personal concern for each one, and each has a *vocation*. The married life is itself a sublime vocation, and in teaching it one can come also to teach realistically the other vocations to the priesthood and religious life or to the single state. These other vocations too are given by God as supports to the lives of ordinary people, to the home, and to the young, and to the support of the whole Christian family in the vision of love that all need to have lives illumined by the Gospel.

A challenging but rewarding task. Adolescents are becoming more capable of serious thinking and challenging argumentation. To teach them is to teach people whose thoughts and interests are far more complex than those of children. Their lives are becoming richer. They want more intense and focused guidance from parents and catechists at a complex time in their lives, but they also want more freedom and greater independence.

Happily, genuine freedom and the intelligent guidance derived from the Gospel go well together. To help young people see that the ideals we draw for them are what their own hearts long for may not be an easy task. But serious parents and teachers know that the young people they keep close to are capable of great things. With the assistance of friends in the faith young people today can take personal possession of the vision that faith makes possible for them.

XI. SPECIAL NEEDS

***The Catholic Vision of Love* is a catechetical program for all children. This program therefore includes children with disabilities and developmental delays. The preceding chapters were written about *The Catholic Vision of Love* as it applies to "typical" children. The material presented in those chapters on young children through adolescence is also written for the child with special learning needs. The information contained in those chapters may need to be adapted or modified for special children, but the message is the same for all young Catholics.**

As a parent of catechist presents the lessons of *The Catholic Vision of Love* to children with developmental delays, special emphasis should be placed on self-respect and self-esteem. A strong sense of self-respect and self-esteem will equip the children to deal with the many challenges they must face in today's world.

A parent or catechist will also emphasize God's unconditional love for the child. The special child may experience ridicule or rejection by typical peers. It is most important that the parent or catechist remind children of God's personal and unconditional love for them. Children need to be told that they were created in love by a God who loves them forever and unconditionally.

As the special child becomes more aware of God's unconditional love, emphasis can also be stressed on friendship with a loving God, and God's Son, Jesus. This may also be a time to introduce the care, solicitude, and friendship of Mary and the saints.

Since children with disabilities and developmental delays are among the most vulnerable in society, they also need to be taught ways to protect themselves from sexual abuse. A program entitled "Circles: The Right to Say No" will be used in this section of *The Catholic Vision of Love*. This program, which has been designed for children with developmental delays, gives the children a tool to understand appropriate and non-appropriate touching and improper advances toward them.

Many children with disabilities or developmental delays will not have the experience of a marital relationship, so it will be important to guide them in an understanding of the great value of human friendship and the lasting treasure of friendship with God. All throughout the guidelines, there will be emphasis placed upon friendship with God, the Blessed Mother, and the saints.

Education in human sexuality is as necessary for special children as it is for all children. Grounding the lessons in catechesis will give special children, as it will all children, a true understanding of the beautiful gift of human sexuality in all its various dimensions.

XII. FOR TEACHERS

Catholic teaching on love and sexuality is of immense importance for the shaping of good Catholic lives. Those who undertake the task of teaching *The Catholic Vision of Love* deserve not only gratitude, but also strong assistance in carrying out their responsibilities.

Right to sound Catholic teaching. Those who study the family, chaste love, or what faith teaches about sexuality in any of our Catholic diocesan or parish programs have, of course, a right to receive authentic Catholic teaching. In theses times of spiritual confusion, it cannot always be assumed that persons of good will understand and accept all that the Church teaches about sexual morality.

Careful selection of teachers. For this reason, those who direct schools, Religious Education programs, marriage preparation programs, or any other programs touching on sexuality or family education must see to it that the teachers are chosen carefully, and given sufficient preparation to perform their tasks faithfully and well. In all programs in the diocese in which there is education in the Catholic vision of sexuality, love, and the family, teachers should be selected from among those who are committed to sound Catholic teaching in this area, and who are willing to accept whatever in-service formation is judged necessary to do the task well.

Oversight of programs. Diocesan and parish leaders who oversee any programs giving instruction in matters effecting sexuality, chaste love, and the family have the duty to see to it that what is presented in such courses is indeed faithful to the *Catholic* vision of love and sexuality. The doctrinal and moral directives presented in these *Guidelines* apply to all programs in which this Catholic vision of love and sexuality is taught: in school and Religious Education programs, in marriage preparation programs, in youth ministry programs, in campus or young adult programs, and the like.

In-service classes for teachers. Those who teach *The Catholic Vision of Love* in Catholic schools and Religious Education programs must receive teacher preparation sessions in accord with current diocesan standards. All teachers will be required to participate in a five-hour in-service in Catholic doctrinal and moral teaching on sexuality. Teachers in grades five to eight will be required to take an additional five hours in which they will learn ways of teaching *The Catholic Vision of Love* to young people. While special emphasis will be placed on methodological and pedagogical concerns, efforts will be made to ensure that these teachers understand the importance of being true witnesses and role models for what the Church proclaims and teaches. They will also receive assistance in handling the diocesan materials for the program. Those who teach in all our educational programs must be taught faithfully the principles and policies that are articulated in these Guidelines. Eventually, components of this education in Catholic moral teaching in the area of human sexuality will be totally integrated into the various certification programs for all catechists.

Teachers are trained to be particularly sensitive to the fact that each child is a unique person. Teachers must be sensitive to each student's needs and developmental stage, working in close collaboration with parents in regard to the curriculum as outlined in Appendix D. (See *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, nn. 65-67).

XIII. APPENDICES

THE CATHOLIC
Vision of Love
Diocese of Pittsburgh

APPENDIX A

The preparation of these guidelines

The Diocese of Pittsburgh convened an Advisory Committee on Human Sexuality Education on October 19, 1987, and charged its members with a twofold task:

1) To prepare an educational curriculum for all Catholics, particularly for parents seeking to instruct their sons and daughters in the area of human sexuality from a Catholic perspective; and
2) To make recommendations concerning the scope, content, and implementation of an education curriculum in human sexuality for the young people of the Church of Pittsburgh.

The Advisory Committee was comprised of more than forty members with diverse professional and experiential backgrounds: parents, clergy, educators, pastoral and legal counselors, religious men and women, diocesan administrative personnel, and medical professionals. The names of those who served on this committee are listed at the end of Appendix A.

To meet the varied educational and pastoral needs of the members of the Church in Pittsburgh, the Advisory Committee formed five subcommittees, whose tasks were to consider content, scope, and methods for successful implementation of a Catholic human sexuality education program. The five subcommittees treated:

1) Theological and Faith Issues in Human Sexuality
2) Human Sexuality Education for Children
3) Human Sexuality Education for Adults and Family
4) Human Sexuality Education for Adolescents
5) Human Sexuality Education for Persons with Disabilities

From the onset, this education in the Catholic vision of love and human sexuality was understood to be education in Catholic faith and life. It is formation in ways of living that are inseparable from the Gospel. Thus, this education is to be fully and totally integrated into the Religious Education curriculum.

In 1989 the Advisory Committee had completed a draft of the *Guidelines* to direct education in chastity in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. They were submitted to the Diocesan Theological Commission and other consultative bodies in the diocese for evaluation. It became clear that the program needed a director to guide the implementation of the program; that is, to oversee the selection and production of materials that would be needed by parents and by teachers, and to begin to put the program into effect.

In October, 1990, Reverend Douglas R. Nowicki, then Secretary for Education (now Archabbot at St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe), asked Reverend

Ronald D. Lawler, O.F.M. Cap., to serve as advisor to the project and to assist the Advisory Committee in the completion of the project.

Under the guidance of Dr. Rosemarie Cibik, Secretary for Education in the Diocese, the program expanded. Efforts were made to revise the *Guidelines* in the light of suggestions received from the Theological Commission and others. Curriculum materials were prepared for students in the fifth to eighth grade, together with extensive teachers' notes for effective implementation of the lesson plans. A manual was devised for parents to assist them in speaking with their children about the Catholic vision of love. Father Ronald Lawler; Father Kris Stubna; Monsignor Daniel DiNardo; Sister Ursula Kelly, S.S.N.D.; Carole Obrokta; Sister John Martin Sullivan, A.S.C.J.; and Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Garver and others assisted in the writing and editing of these materials.

Progress toward actual implementation of pilot programs for the education of elementary age children required the cooperation of many people. Dr. Kenneth Garver, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, and other representative members collaborated closely with Father Lawler and the Secretariat for Education as work progressed. Meetings were held with parents in each of the six parishes which were to have pilot programs beginning in the fall of 1991. Sessions for parents were designed to give them full information on the program, and to make clear how much the success of any such education depends on the parental involvement.

Detailed plans were made for the in-service classes for those who would teach the program. Ten hours of class were provided for all teachers to assure both their secure grasp of Catholic teaching in this area, and to help them find confidence in teaching the class materials for their students.

Meetings were held also in which pastors, parochial vicars, principals, and directors of Religious Education discussed the program with personnel from the Secretariat for Education. Meetings were also held within each parish to coordinate the input of all whose assistance would be needed to make the program work. Everywhere it was made clear that the program had to be entirely faithful to the teachings of the Church at all times. Parents were always to have central role in the program. Education in the Catholic vision of love through this program was always to be an education in chastity, in full accord with the guidance that the Church continues to give us.

Evaluations of the work done in the first year of the pilot program were favorable, but important suggestions for improving the program were made by parents, priests, principals, directors of Religious Education, teachers, and students. These suggestions were then incorporated into the program, as the program entered another expanded year of pilot programs in 1992-93. Father Kris Stubna, Assistant Secretary for Education, took over supervision of the program in the fall of 1993. Further development of the program, with one entire deanery entering the pilot program, went on in 1993-94, with another deanery scheduled for piloting in 1994-95.

All those who guided the pilot programs were encouraged by the warm cooperation shown everywhere by parents, parish leaders, teachers, and all involved. Evaluations continued to be overwhelmingly favorable. Parents,

teachers, and administrators alike expressed their satisfaction in the way this material was helping young people to acquire a better understanding of what God teaches us about sexuality and chaste lives.

With the positive evaluations from the pilot programs, the program has continued to expand. Under the leadership of Father Kris Stubna, the current Secretary for Catholic Education, *The Catholic Vision of Love Guidelines* and program for implementation were finalized, presented to the consultative boards of the diocese, and approved by Bishop Wuerl. By the 1996-97 academic year, all parishes in the Diocese of Pittsburgh became responsible for implementing *The Catholic Vision of Love* in all facets of parish life.

In light of recent diocesan and national policies on child safety, the *Catholic Vision of Love* program received acknowledgment from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as the program in place in the Diocese of Pittsburgh for the safety of children. In the Fall of 2010, at the request of the auditors from the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, Safe Environment Committee, a lesson on Personal Safety was added to each of the CVOL student lessons (grade 5 – 8). Additionally, lessons on Personal Safety were created for children in Kindergarten through grade 4.

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APPENDIX B

Using media with *The Catholic Vision of Love*

Today we are all bombarded with media messages that are contrary to Catholic teaching. Media literacy education in conjunction with *The Catholic Vision of Love* provides an opportunity for the catechist or parent to teach as Jesus did. It is important to recognize teachable moments and to capitalize on the young person's own knowledge and involvement in the media world that surrounds him or her.

A proven approach to media literacy utilizes a four-step process (The Pastoral Circle) that includes: awareness, analysis, reflection, and action. The Pastoral Circle helps us to confront, challenge, and change the way television and all of mass media controls our lives and those of our young people.

Awareness — Generally, most people don't realize the impact of the mass media on the formation of values. It is virtually impossible to remove oneself from the influence of mass media. The only solution to the situation is to become media literate. Ask yourself questions regarding the messages that are being conveyed. For example: Are most of the people portrayed as young, thin, and rich? Are the elderly shown as burdens instead of sources of wisdom? Are people valued for their material possessions? Are disabled people even included?

The *Awareness* step opens the door for growth in understanding and the ability to change.

Analysis — Secondly, we must begin to teach our children at home and in school how commercial interests determine the content and appeal of programming. Sponsors target different segments of the population and gear their programming accordingly. For example, Saturday morning cartoons target children and sell toys, sugar cereals, and candy. Developing skill in this type of analysis allows us to be more cautious in accepting what we see and hear on television.

Reflection — It is at this point that we begin to integrate our faith dimension into the everyday exposure of media. With Scripture and the tradition of the Catholic faith, we have the necessary tools to discover what values we can call upon to make choices. Jesus brought us the truth and taught us how to live. In that light, how we see marriage and family living portrayed on television might be in direct opposition to what we know as right and wrong. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me; do not try to stop them; for to such belong the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mark 10:14). We cannot determine the faith commitment of our young people, but we can structure the media environment in our homes so that the faith that *is* present will be nurtured and fostered appropriately.

Action — Appropriate action might be as simple as consulting the TV guide to monitor the evening's entertainment. On the other hand, direct confrontation such as phone calls or letters to the television station when offensive material is broadcast might be a solution to the problem.

(Although the steps described above relate primarily to television, mass media also include movies, music, magazines, billboards, the internet, etc. and this process is adaptable for all forms of media.)

Proper utilization of catechetical media

It is imperative to utilize catechetical media properly in our technological age to compete with all the values communicated by the secular mass media (television, movies, music, print, the internet).

Unfortunately, many catechists look at media utilization within the catechetical learning experience as a waste of time. Actually, research has proven and experience has confirmed the fact that children and adults learn far more readily from a multisensory and imaginative presentation than from the catechist's voice alone. There is no doubt that the investment of planning time is greater when media are utilized properly, but the benefits always outweigh the work.

The following steps are offered as a guide in planning:

1. Assess the goal of your lesson

It is important to analyze the core of the lesson. The *Catechist's Notes* of *The Catholic Vision of Love* will help one to determine the key concepts to be communicated to the student.

2. Consider the students

Be sensitive to the developmental, educational, emotional, and sociological level of the student. Keep in mind the length of the media in respect to the learning experience time. How familiar is the student with the subject matter? A review of materials is certainly different from first-time exposure. How well do the students in the class know each other? Is it the first year of catechesis in a new setting or have they been together since first grade? All these factors are important to take into consideration. One must choose the media involved accordingly.

3. Consult a specialist

After one has the key concepts in mind, consult a media specialist to help select the best media to fit the specific needs. Be open to suggestions and read catalog descriptions to discover the options.

4. Preview the media

Everyone has a different style of teaching, and no two groups of people will react the same every time to a particular media piece. A video that seemed to fit the lesson perfectly last year might not evoke the same response this year. Ideally it is better to view the media selections a couple of times to prepare questions and related activities, and to prepare yourself to conduct discussion on the concepts communicated.

5. Make a decision — choose

We all make mistakes; everyone has a story about the audiovisual that flopped. On the other hand, remember the learning experience that made a significant effect on the students and the feeling of accomplishment you felt. Trust your good judgment; planning is ninety percent of the process.

6. Integrate the media

Examples: set a mood — visual prayer — present a life experience — tell a story/parable — relate facts and information — present opinions of others.

Determine a position for the integration of media into the learning experience. Is this video factual and informative regarding respect life issues? Is the film posing a personal situation that will cause a heartfelt reaction? All of these questions and more are needed in the planning of the learning experience.

7. Know how to operate the equipment

Be sure, for example, that the DVD player is in good working order. Do you need an extension cord or adapter? Do you have an extra bulb for your data projector? Murphy's law always applies — what can go wrong, will. *Be prepared!* Make sure you block-out the light in the classroom for a better picture quality. If possible, have the equipment set up and ready to operate so that valuable teaching time is not wasted.

8. Follow-up

Provide time after showing the media for reflection on the experience, perhaps aided by appropriate music. A video, for example, may be stopped before the ending to create an open-ended situation for the students to determine a solution. Allow the students to share their reflections and insights with each other in groups or to the class as a whole. Providing discussion questions is always a good idea to assist in promoting feedback.

APPENDIX C

Content focus — Grades K through 4

Our goal is to integrate these themes into the religious education curriculum, in- self. No separate lesson plans will be written for kindergarten through grade four. Rather, some foundational principles for a Catholic understanding of the human person, family, and love will be emphasized and highlighted.

1. Jesus and our homes: why Jesus lived so long in an ordinary home. Homes are places where people can be most happy: Why is this true? Homes are places where we learn how to love. We can help our homes be happier places. How can we do this?

2. Praying at home: finding a quiet place for prayer at certain times. Being willing to pray: at meals, in the morning, at night. Letting parents know we like to pray with them sometimes. How prayer helps us to know how important everyone is, and how much each one should be loved and respected.

3. Television: handling it with care. Sometimes television is very fine. But parents naturally want to control it. Our homes are too special for television to be invading them too much, or at wrong times. Sometimes television can keep us from learning to know and love each other better. It can prevent us from doing good things with each other, spending time with one another. We need to be careful about our television, music, and what we read, so it makes us more like Jesus wants us to be.

4. Talking with our parents: having happy times to talk with our parents. Learning to talk about things that are not always easy to begin talking about. Why parents want to know so much about you! Parents are really special kinds of friends. We need to trust them, share with them lots of things about ourselves and our lives. We need always to turn to our parents first.

5. Modesty: gentleness and goodness of modesty. Why being modest is a way of being kind and respectful. Television — friendly at times, but not always Christian, not always modest. Not wanting to be exactly like everybody else in the world, the specialness of being a Christian, and the specialness of being you. Joy in remembering the nearness of Jesus, and the dignity of our bodies, which are temples of God. This demands that we choose wisely the things we wear, what we say and do, so as to respect our bodies!

6. Saying no when we should: happy and good hugging, but touches and hugs are not always good. Why parents don't want us to let just anybody give us hugs. Kinds of touches that disturb us, and why we should not put up with them. Why parents do not want us to get into cars with or enter the homes of people they do not know, and do not give us permission to enter.

7. Our families and our friends: the very special importance of our homes, and our parents, and our brothers and sisters, even when we begin to have friends ourselves. Why our parents want us to talk with them about our lives outside the home, about those who are our friends and all that we are doing together. The joy of having life at home and outside the home fit well together.

8. Cruelty of words: words that hurt. Words that are called bad or dirty, or impure words that forget the importance of everyone, and the goodness of our bodies, and the nearness of Jesus to our lives. Why parents care very much about the words we use, and why we should too.

9. Everybody does it! Thank heavens everyone isn't the same! Why you are special, and not everything everyone does is for you. Why Christians are special, and do not do things that many people do, if they love and honor Christ. "I want to do what my friends do!" The value of being with friends, but the foolishness of wanting too much of this. Letting our friends be what God wants them to be, and becoming ourselves what God wants us to be.

10. Changing and growing: As we grow older, our bodies slowly change and develop, our minds become better and sharper, our whole lives begin to mature. We are becoming the person God plans for us to become. We need to recognize the changes, understand them, and not be embarrassed or afraid to talk about how we are changing or how we feel with those we trust. We need to talk with our parents, grandparents, and teachers. They will help us to understand.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON OBJECTIVES

KINDERGARTEN and FIRST GRADE

Lesson 1:

The students will:

- a) Listen to the teacher's explanation of how we are children of God and special; b) Orally tell how they are special by telling his/her own characteristics.
- Listen to the teacher's explanation of why/how God made us special.
- Draw pictures of themselves identifying his/her own unique characteristics/specialness
- Identify/demonstrate ways to get along with others by a) playing a game following the rules; b) responding to teacher questions recognizing how rules keep us safe and why rules are fair.

Lesson 2:

The students will:

- Orally recall what they learned about using rules and why rules are fair.
- Listen to the teacher connecting the concept for obeying rules and how rules help us show respect for God's people and other people's things.
- Respond to question about how we respect our bodies.
- Respond to questions demonstrating the ability to connect the concept that there are good rules to follow to show we respect our body.
- Do the face activity to demonstrate the ability to recognize different feelings and to respond to teacher questions about recognizing feelings.
- Respond to closing questions by telling what they would do when recognizing different feelings in friends to demonstrate their comprehension of the concepts taught.

Lesson 3:

The students will:

- Review what they learned about rules and how to recognize feelings by responding to teacher questions and doing the Handout K-1B.
- Role play to demonstrate the ability to identify and manage proper playing by the rules and respecting others' feelings.
- a) Listen to teacher reinforcement of proper management skills and proper reactions to stressful situations; b) Respond to teacher questions to demonstrate understanding of the concepts.
- a) Listen to the teacher expand the concept of responsibility and being in charge on one's own body; b) Listen to how to report to someone when something doesn't feel right or when something or someone makes one feel uncomfortable.

Lesson 4:

The students will:

- Demonstrate assertiveness with respectful responses in safe situations with older children and adults (e.g. "I HAVE TO CHECK FIRST"— check with a parent, guardian, or other trusted adult first) by orally responding to the "practicing the rules" activity.

(Grades K-1 continued…)

- Demonstrate assertiveness in unsafe situations ("SAY NO," "GET AWAY," and "GO TELL") by participating in the "Practicing the Rule" activity and practicing what to say.
- Describe and role-play what to do when approached by a stranger/non-stranger or on the telephone by participating in the "Practicing the Rule" activity and using the pretend phones.
- Identify who to tell if there is a touching problem by orally responding to a short story and b) responding to teacher's questions.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON OBJECTIVES

THE CATHOLIC Vision of Love
Diocese of Pittsburgh

GRADES TWO and THREE

Lesson 1:

The students will:

- Identify the goodness of rules that keep us safe by discussing why the family, school and society have rules and laws.
- Describe positive characteristics they like about themselves and others by picking out good qualities from a list on Handout 2-3A.
- Identify that all things have a purpose by naming good things they can do with items like apple, sun, house, person, and body parts like nose, ears, feet, teeth.
- Identify what makes a good friend by naming that a friend always wants what is best for you.

Lesson 2:

The students will:

- Identify non-verbal communication skills by naming feelings acted out by the teacher and other students.
- Name how showing their emotions in a good ways helps us get along with others.
- Discuss how some things and people change by describing changes from a group of pictures.
- Describe and discuss how he/she is a unique and special person by naming choices they have made and ways they have grown from a baby till now.

Lesson 3:

The students will:

- Identify positive (good effects) and negative (bad effects) of peer pressure through the use of balloons, pictures and stories.
- Describe his/her uniqueness as a person who is continually growing and changing.
- Demonstrate appropriate ways to react in a stressful situation by responding to questions about stories.
- Differentiate between healthy and unhealthy ways to express feelings by reacting to situations in pictures and stories.

Deeper:

- Demonstrate that he/she recognizes non-verbal communication skills by answering questions related to situations and/or pictures.
- Demonstrate respect for the rights and feelings of others by answering appropriate questions.
- Identify skills necessary to build enriching friendships by participating in the exercise on "Peer Pressure."

Lesson 4:

The students will:

- Name rules that keep them safe.
- Explain what makes something public and what makes something privates
- Explain the bathing suit rule.
- Name the fact that no one has a right to touch their body without permission.

Lesson 5

The students will:

- Name people who can help keep them safe.
- Practice detective skills to be able to help in emergency situations (review things & people as observed for homework for last lesson, describe the visitor to the classroom).
- Identify safe responses to situations where they may be separated from an adult family member or when someone unknown approaches them.
- List and role-play appropriate behaviors that assist the individual in maintaining his/her personal safety (e.g. "SAY "NO," "GET AWAY," "GO TELL").

GRADE FOUR

Lesson 1

The students will:

- Demonstrate respect for the rights and feelings of others by listening to/reading the story about St. Therese Liseaux in the *Catholic Safety Agent* booklet and participating in the exercises.
- Differentiate between healthy and unhealthy ways to express feelings by participating in the exercise about feelings and playing the game to determine someone's feelings.
- Differentiate between behaviors that contribute to a positive attitude and those that contribute to a negative attitude by acting out what they read on the *Feeling Cards* exercise, and by naming the feeling and what caused them to feel a certain way.
- Identify self control skills by participating in the lesson on page 4 of the *CSA Notebook* regarding behaviors and feelings.

Lesson 2

The students will:

- Demonstrate self control skills by acting out situations that the teacher gives them to show self-control.

- Identify behaviors that may cause conflict or stress and ways of dealing with them through discussion about safe situations and situations that cause stress.
- Name appropriate ways to react in stressful situations by participating in the brainstorming session about a "*stranger at the door"* and discussing appropriate ways to deal with the stressful situation.
- Identify personal strengths and weaknesses and their impact on others by completing the exercises on page 6 and 7 of the CSA booklet – *knowing our strengths and weaknesses*.

Lesson 3

The students will:

- Name behaviors that show a positive attitude and those that show a negative attitude by listening to/reading the story about St. John Bosco and how he treated others.
- Show healthy ways to have fun by acting out (through the game of Charades) fun things they enjoy doing with a friend.
- Identify peer influence on his/her feelings, behavior, and decisions by participating in the exercise on "Peer Pressure."
- Identify characteristics of a friend by participating in the exercise on "*what is a good friend*" and reading about good friends on page 9, "*A Friend is Someone Who,*" and page 10 of the CSA booklet.
- Name what Peer Pressure is by participating in the exercise and answering the teacher questions on peer pressure, and completing the exercise on Peer Pressure on page 11 of the CAS booklet.

Lesson 4

The students will:

- Name the steps to making appropriate decisions by completing the exercise on page 12 and 13 of the CSA booklet.
- Practice refusal skills by participating in the *Safety Agent – Act 1 game*.
- Identify behaviors that may cause conflict or stress and ways of dealing with them by looking at situations on the Act 1 cards and naming the proper way to handle each situation.

Lesson 5

The students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to accept responsibility and consequences for their actions by participating in the *Act – 2 Situation Cards – "Stressful Situations."*
- List and role-play appropriate alternate behaviors that enhance personal safety: SAY "NO, GET AWAY," and GO TELL.
- Demonstrate assertiveness with respect in response to a safe situation through the group exercise with the *Act – 2 Situation Cards.*
- Practice communication skills by acting out ways of communication – by phone, e-mail, hand signals, and body language.

Lesson 6

The students will:

- Describe ways of preventing abuse: emotional, physical and sexual through review of previous lessons and through group discussion about the people we can rely on to keep us safe (parents, older siblings, police, firemen etc.) and family rules and guidelines for safety.
- Demonstrate assertiveness in response to an unsafe situation by practicing with the teacher, *"No, Get Away!"* after each situation presented.
- Name interpersonal situations that may pose a threat to his/her personal safety (secrets, bribes, tricks) by repeating each clue after the teacher: 1. They want you to keep secrets; 2. They always want to be alone with you. 3. They try to offer you bribes; 4. They always want to hang out with kids and never seem to want to be with people their own age.
- Identify ways to help others as sources of help by participating in the exercise on things that make a place or situation safe.

APPENDIX D

Curriculum outline — Grades 5 through 8

GRADE 5, CLASS 1:
Self-respect: Acknowledging why you are so important

General aim

This lesson seeks to help the students realize how immensely important each one of them is, in truth and before God. It helps them see how important their lives are, and how important are the things that deeply affect their lives. In a special way, it helps them see the importance of their sexuality, and of responding to the gift of sexuality in the light of the Lord's teaching, and in ways that respect how things really are.

Specific objectives

1. To assist the students in realizing personally — in the light of faith and their experience — how very important each one of them is, and how important it is that they lead their lives wisely and well.
2. To recall the problems that arise for people who are wrongly persuaded that they are not worth much, and are not very much loved.
3. To help students realize that thinking and feeling rightly and wisely about sexuality is very important for them.
4. To help the students realize that sexuality has important purposes. God created sexuality to serve the wonderful and lasting good things He wishes it to bring to our lives.

GRADE 5, CLASS 2:
Understanding the changes we experience

General aim

To help the students to see that the many changes that come with adolescence should not be sources of anxiety, but are meant by God to be steps toward a richer fulfillment in life.

Specific objectives

1. To help students appreciate that it is good that our life advances in stages, that the good things of earlier years are meant to be fulfilled by better things as time advances.
2. To help students realize how many aspects there are to maturing. We are to grow not just physically (which we cannot help doing) but also emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.
3. To show that in God's plan everyone is special. Each one is different in a variety of ways, and that is good.

4. To make clear that it is all right to be different! We mature at different rates, and that is fine. Different people have different natural strengths and weaknesses; none of these make us unable to have great and good lives.
5. To show that sexuality is a gift from God, and that the physical growth that reveals our maleness and femaleness is a good thing.

GRADE 5, CLASS 3: Friendship, love and life

General aim

This lesson seeks to help students understand what friendship is, and why it is so precious a gift. Friendship makes life much happier, and enables us to be better persons. The lesson seeks to explore the truest kind of friendship, and see why it lasts longer and is more rewarding than less perfect kinds of friendship. In a special way it treats romantic friendships, and what characterizes true and lasting friendships to serve life well.

Specific objectives

1. To understand the reasons why friendship is both so attractive and so important for our lives.
2. To be able to tell the difference between *true friendships* and less solid kinds of friendships.
3. To reflect on how Scripture praises true friendship, and why Christ wants to be a friend to each of us.
4. To think about a special kind of friendship, romantic friendships, and to understand why God wanted friendships like these to be.
5. To understand how important it is that we have truthful, generous, and pure hearts in all our friendships.

GRADE 5, CLASS 4: Christ in my home and in my life

General aim

This lesson speaks of the importance of the home. It speaks of the ways in which Christ taught us to love the home, and encouraged us to make our homes the happy places He wants them to be. The Lord meant homes to be schools of faith and love, places where our hearts learn life from people who deeply love us. It recalls how Christ wants us all to have happy lives, by tasting first the joy of being loved by generous parents, and the joy of loving those in our homes, and so learning the goodness of real love.

Specific objectives

1. To assist the students in realizing how important homes are; how glad we should be for the good things God wants us to find in our homes; how true it is that all of us must do all we can to make our homes places of generous love.
2. To recall the things Christ did to call homes to be faithful to what God wants them to be, and how much He wants each of our homes to be happy and good.

3. To show that even homes that are broken, and have many trials, can be healed and helped by closeness to Christ.
4. To show that everything the Lord teaches us about sexuality is aimed at helping us learn that generous kind of love that can make homes and lives happy; impure acts are wrong because they undermine real love, and makes homes suffer.
5. To urge students to thank God for their parents and their homes, and to pray that they themselves will have love generous enough to make their homes happier places.

GRADE 5, CLASS 5: Personal Safety

- Relationship Boundaries: Stranger danger, Respecting ourselves, Respecting our bodies
- Lesson Outline:
  1. Introduction and opening prayer
  2. Teaching on Friendship and Respect, focus on Relationship Boundaries
  3. Activity – Talking about boundaries using scenarios
  4. Wrap-up and connection to Catholic social teaching and the dignity of the human person
  5. Closing prayer
- Lesson Background: Human life is sacred.
  "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (CCC 56)

GRADE 6, CLASS 1: Vocation

General aim

This lesson seeks to strengthen in students a sense of vocation, a realization that their lives are important, that God has a great role for each of them to play in life. It seeks to show that reflection on what we are meant to be is important for the fulfillment and happiness of our lives.

Specific objectives

1. To understand again the general idea of having a vocation by reflecting on the vocation of Christ to be our Savior.
2. To help students to realize that each one of us, without exception, is important to God, and each is called to an important and special vocation by the Lord.
3. To show how it is that one comes to realize what his or her special vocation is.
4. To reflect on various kinds of vocations, and how God calls each person to a kind of vocation in an entirely distinctive way.
5. To point out how chastity is important for every kind of vocation.

GRADE 6, CLASS 2: Being responsible for our own lives

General aim

To help students understand the great gift of freedom, and to be able to tell the difference between "things happening to them" and "things they do." It is always important for young people to realize that life is not just something that happens to them (though many things happen beyond our control). Life is most of all something we live, and the free actions that we do. Many people want to be good, but get discouraged, forgetting that Christ is strong even when they are not. Christ will help them to use their freedom well if they really want to take charge of their own lives, and not let the world dominate them.

Specific objectives

1. To help students realize that they are responsible for their own lives, and that it is a good thing for them that they are.
2. To help students see for themselves why the excuses we make for the bad things we do are often silly and irresponsible.
3. To help students realize that even though it is often very sad when bad things happen to us, doing bad thins is really much worse.
4. To help students see that in the turmoil of the world, where impure thoughts and attitudes and acts can often seem impossible to escape, their lives are in their own hands. They have the freedom to live good and responsible lives. Christ will protect their freedom if they wish to guard it.
5. To help students realize, in a world that seems not to know what sin is, that doing things that are really bad not only offends God, but also makes us feel miserable and unhappy.

GRADE 6, CLASS 3: Life is worth living

General aim

This lesson had a very basic message. God made us to live! To live great lives! (See John 10:10.) He made us to live happily and well in this life we now have on earth, and so deserve to have an even better and richer life with Him and one another in eternal life. Our life now works best, and feels worth living, when we try earnestly to get things right and do things well. In special things, like sports and games, we see this clearly. Things go well when we put our whole hearts into them. And this is even more true of the big things of life. Life is dear to us when we realize what it is about, and try to live it well. Large things like love and sexuality will be blessings to us, if we understand them for what they really are, and follow the wise teaching of Christ.

Specific objectives

1. To help students see that all the things we do in life — like playing musical instruments, or taking part in sports — are much happier and dearer to us if we can do them well.
2. To help students understand that doing anything well — even cooking, or using a computer — can be important and rewarding. But it is much more important to live life well — to know what it is really about, and to begin to live with style and great hearts.

3. Of course it is true that not all of us can be great athletes, or great mathematicians. But Christ promises that anyone can live a great life, with the help of God's grace, if they deeply want to, and come to Him for help.
4. To help students understand that some coaches and teachers — in sports and other skills — are better than others. In learning to live well, Christ is the best of all teachers. He is the Lord, and we are His disciples.
5. To help students understand the moral life as new life in the Spirit.
6. To see that love and sexuality are important parts of life. But they can be confusing, and sometimes they are badly taught. We need good teachers for such important things.
7. To understand that many people in today's world try to teach us what sexuality is all about. But Christ the Lord is the best teacher of these things because He created them. He also knows us best, and cares about what we say and do. The teachers who teach us His ways are very important.

GRADE 6, CLASS 4: Learning how large love is

General aim

This lesson aims at helping the students understand the central message of Christ: that genuine love is the most important of all things. All our duties flow from the most important duty of loving God and of loving one another with generous love. And all our hope flows from love; only when we are willing to learn what true love is can we have happy homes, deep and lasting friendships, fairness to the weak and the poor, and greatness and joy.

Specific objectives

1. To explain why Christ is the best teacher of how great love is (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) and of how we learn to find honest love, in a world which so much wants honest love, but suffers because so many confuse real love with phony love.
2. To show that Jesus teaches us that generous love is necessary to save all the best things of the earth: homes and friendship, and every great and good thing our hearts long for.
3. To make it clear that generous love guards life in all the world. It guards the weak and helpless, the old and weary, and it guards all our hopes to be fair and good people. From people who love with true generosity, like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, we learn why abortion and euthanasia are so cruel.
4. To show how love gives people power to have pure hearts, and to be truthful and generous in their dealings with one another. All the Lord's teachings about chaste living are teachings about loving rightly.

GRADE 6, CLASS 5: Personal Safety

- Practicing Boundaries – home, school, and online safety guidelines for children.
- Lesson Outline
  1. Introduction and opening prayer
  2. Teaching on human dignity and communicating boundaries
  3. Activity – talking about boundaries using scenarios

4. Wrap-up and connection to Catholic Social Teaching and the Dignity of the human person
5. Closing Prayer

- Lesson Background – Human Life is Sacred
  "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (CCC 56)

GRADE 7, CLASS 1: Vocation — God's call

General aim

This class is planned to help the students realize the goodness of our vocation: our call to be Christians, and our call by God Himself to an important life. It could be a call to a religious kind of vocation, or it could be a divine vocation to enter marriage with a very special person, and to have children. We are all called to find our way to heaven by doing great things on this earth in ordinary circumstances.

The whole idea of vocation is explored here: God's deep concern for everything in our life, how we plan our lives, and the ways we learn to put all that we are as boys and girls into becoming men and women.

Specific objectives

1. To recall the first vocation we have: to be personal friends and followers of Christ, and to shape everything in our lives in ways that are faithful to the Lord.
2. To think about our special vocations: how God cares very much about the life each one of us will live. To explore the kind of life God invites us to and the kind of life that each one of us decides to live.
3. To understand how vocations work: God calls us freely to something important, and we freely decide. There is a call, a consecration, and a commitment.
4. To survey kinds of vocations, and to invite the students to think about, and to pray about, what kind of life they wish to have before God.
5. To study the relationship between our sexuality and our vocation, and how every vocation calls on all the gifts that God has given to us.

GRADE 7, CLASS 2:
Modesty — A strong and thoughtful virtue

General aim

To help students grasp the meaning of modesty and appreciate its attractiveness and goodness, and to help them understand why Christ wants us to have modesty in our hearts and in our lives.

Specific objectives

1. To help students see why modesty is an important virtue in our times too, because it is so closely related to self-respect and reverence for other people, and because it helps us to face sexuality more sensibly.

2. To make clear that the most important dimension of modesty is modesty in our minds and in our heart.
3. To explain why modesty in speech and in dress may important good fruits.
4. To show how modesty affects everyday life.

GRADE 7, CLASS 3:
Reconciliation in our years of growing up

General aim

This lesson seeks to help young people to make good use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in ways that will help them most in their years of growing up. At this time of their life this sacrament is a necessary support for their life of faith and grace. It offers the help they need especially now, even though this is also a time in which they are especially tempted to neglect this sacrament. Temptations at this time of life are more disturbing, and sins are most embarrassing, and life, in general, gets more confusing. They need now certain special helps from the Lord, so that as they grow up in many ways, they may grow also in the life of faith. Regular use of this sacrament will help them to get a strong hold on their faith and on their will to live in ways Christ calls them, even in times of great confusion and stress.

Specific objectives

1. To show why, in the chaotic years of adolescence, when faith may begin to feel less important to us, and our friendship with Christ seems to fade, this special sacrament is so strong a help in renewing and deepening our friendship with Christ.
2. To show the many specific good things that an intelligent use of confession does for us as we are growing up.
3. To show how a thoughtful use of confession helps young people face problems regarding sexuality much more sensibly.
4. To help young people learn again how to go to confession with tranquility, and without embarrassment.
5. To help young people understand that we receive the grace of conversion only after the Holy Spirit asks us to seek it.

GRADE 7, CLASS 4: Christ and the courage to be pure of heart

General aim

This lesson helps the student know what the beatitude “Blessed are the pure of heart” means, and realize how true it is. It helps them see why it takes courage to have a pure and honest heart, but that life is badly hurt if we become cowards in this. For love is the most important of all things, and a pure heart is one that makes love be true to itself. The pure heart does not confuse selfish and lustful mistreatment of self and others with love, but knows that love really cares for the ones we love, and wants them to have what is truly good.

Specific objectives

1. To show that pure love (love not mixed with selfishness and dishonesty of heart) is the strongest and most burning love, just as pure gold is better than gold mixed with lead.

2. To clarify the differences between real and pure love, which shines in people who really care about us and want us to be happy and have what is surely good; and false love, seen in people who pretend to care about us, but are only pretending, or looking out for themselves.
3. To show why the world that does not know Christ, or the goodness of the generous love He teaches, also is an impure world. Love was made to be pure, to be true love, and so generous and truthful and a blessing to all. But the world mixes the love it longs for with many kinds of selfishness, and so turns its broken love into something false and the cause of much pain.
4. To show how, just as impurity and dishonesty about love hurt everything, so a pure heart helps everything, because it cares honestly about generosity in love, and about lasting love, and homes, and the care of children.

GRADE 7, CLASS 5: Personal Safety

- Communication Boundaries – texting, touching, and talking about ourselves and others.
- Lesson Outline
  1. Introduction and opening prayer
  2. Teaching on respect, focus on the dignity of the human person
  3. Activity – talking about texting, touching and taking responsibility for our words
  4. Wrap-up and connection to Catholic Social Teaching and the Dignity of the Human Person
  5. Closing Prayer and activity
- Lesson Background – Human Life is Sacred
  "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (CCC 56)

GRADE 8, CLASS 1:
Your vocation: To make the world a better place

General aim

This class seeks to stress for students the importance of accepting our responsibility for making this world a better place, for seeking to overcome abortion and the injustices involved in poverty, and to enable them to realize how necessary chastity is for overcoming abortion and social injustice.

(**Note**: Despite the second word in the title, this is not a class about "vocations." Rather it is a class about responsibility to make the world a better place. The idea of "vocation" is in some way relevant, for our vocation as Christians includes the call to make this world more of a presence of the Kingdom of God. But vocations as such and their relation in our sexuality, are treated in other places in this course.)

Specific objectives

1. To help students understand how the Holy Spirit assists us in discerning the Father's will for our lives.

2. To help students realize their social responsibilities in this world: "We are all really responsible for all!"
3. To show students why they should be firmly on the side of life in the abortion controversy, and to show how un-chastity leads to abortion.
4. To help students see how seriously the Gospel requires us to care about justice for the poor.
5. To help students realize why they will not become just and merciful if they do not also have self-control and chastity.

GRADE 8, CLASS 2: Living in a world that suffers from AIDS

General aim

This lesson seeks to help young people understand some of the bitter evils that have arisen from the misuse of sexuality. It speaks of AIDS, and of other sexually transmitted diseases, and of other serious harms. Sexuality is a gracious gift of God. But we invite tragedy when we use excellent things badly. It is never good and never safe to abuse sexuality. Still, the physical harms that come from abuses of sex are not the worst of its bad effects, and fear of these evils is not the best motive for being chaste. Treating sexuality intelligently is itself good; it makes friendship and all of life richer and happier. Chastity if not terribly difficult; we do not have to advise people to rely on the highly unreliable forms of "safe sex" foolishly taught by some today. There are secure ways of really being safe, and of having really good lives. Something as important as sexuality deserves to be treated intelligently!

Specific objectives

1. To remind people that Christ calls them to good and happy lives: the ways that He teaches securely guard us from the great harms that sinful activity causes.
2. To give a truthful picture of AIDS, how tragic it is, how common it has become, and what are its causes.
3. To show how so-called "safe sex" (deciding to use sexuality casually, while making use of unreliable devices to keep sinful activity from doing us physical harm) simply does not work.
4. To point out how easily one can escape AIDS if one so wills.
5. To remind students of the many other sexually transmitted diseases, how sin can have physically bad results. And these are not even the worst effects of sexual sins!
6. To show how unnecessary it is to commend insecure defenses against such terrible disease and the many harms they cause. A better way is readily possible. Chastity is not too difficult; it alone is really "normal." Chastity is possible with God's grace.
7. To recall the practical things we need to do to make an intelligent and chaste life easier and more attractive.

GRADE 8, CLASS 3: Christ and my conscience

General aim

Years of adolescence are often years of confusion. But young people do want to be good. They have high standards for others, and they want to be honest, and live by high standards themselves. Yet the world does much to confuse their ideas of right and wrong, as it does for all people. Often they let themselves be led astray, and feel that it is all right to do things that their peers do, because they don't feel bad about doing such things. This lesson is intended to help them in something of greatest importance to their lives: in coming to realize what conscience really is, and how they can be radically honest in facing what is truly good or truly bad in the shaping of their own lives.

Specific objectives

1. To help students get a clear and honest understanding of what conscience is, and of the importance of a good conscience.
2. To help them appreciate that what Christ teaches us about conscience is really true, and that my life will be more honest if I allow the Holy Spirit to guide my conscience.
3. To show how a good conscience keeps one from painful confusions, and tragic decisions, touching sexuality.
4. To explain that knowing how to confess embarrassing sins can be a great help for us in keeping our lives honestly in order.
5. To show the distinctive ways in which a Christian conscience helps our lives.
6. To show how the Holy Spirit prompts us to seek repentance and conversion.

GRADE 8, CLASS 4: The Eucharist and love

General aim

This lesson seeks to show how the Eucharist is a gift of God's most generous love, and shows us how to be generous in love in every part of life, and so wise in living. Jesus gave us the Eucharist the night before He died willingly for us, to remind us how much He would always love us, and to give through this sacrament the real power to love each other generously and strongly. The Eucharist constantly calls us to strong and true love, for Christ, and for each one of our brothers and sisters; and so the Eucharist calls us to live free from sin (which is the enemy of love) because we are so near to Christ, who is perfectly good, and calls us to be good to one another.

Specific objectives

1. To help us see why the Eucharist is a gift of pure love: love that is generous and honest, and give warmth of life.
2. To recall that Jesus gave us this sacrament, so we could love purely too: to have honest love for the Lord and for each other.
3. To remember that must be free from the selfishness of mortal sin to receive Communion well. We must be in the state of grace, seeking honestly to love God and one another, and so to make all the world a richer place.

4. To see why it is true that impure acts, which are such powerful forms of selfishness, and turning from what is really good, especially make the joy of Communion fade.
5. To help the students see why we should trust Christ, and to know that He will make it very possible for us to have generous and truthful hearts, if we come to Him with honest and truthful hearts in Communion.

GRADE 8, CLASS 5: Personal Safety

- Body Boundaries – what we wear and what we do.
- Lesson Outline
  1. Introduction and opening prayer
  2. Teaching on respect, focus on the dignity of the human person
  3. Teaching on modesty and chastity as safe body boundaries
  4. Activity – talking about what we wear and what we do
  5. Wrap-up and connection to Catholic Social Teaching and the Dignity of the Human Person
  6. Closing Prayer and activity

- Lesson Background – The Vocation to Chastity
  "Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological worked is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman." (Catechism of the Catholic Church Article 2337)

THE CATHOLIC Vision of Love
Diocese of Pittsburgh

Section Two

CATECHIST'S NOTES for Grade 6

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VOCATION

CATECHIST'S NOTES

Grade 6 • Class 1

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This lesson seeks to strengthen in students a sense of vocation, a realization that their lives are important, that God has a great role for each of them to play in life. It seeks to show that reflection on what we are meant to be is important for the fulfillment and happiness of our lives.

Specific objectives

1. To help students understand again the general idea of having a vocation by reflecting on the vocation of Christ to be our Savior.
2. To help students realized that each one of us, without exception, is important to God, and each is called to an important and special vocation by the Lord.
3. To show students how it is that one comes to realize what his or her special vocation is.
4. To reflect with students on various *kinds* of vocations, and how God calls each person to a kind of vocation in an entirely distinctive way.
5. To point our how chastity is important for every kind of vocation.

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

1. God's own "vocation" was to bring us to salvation.
2. God creates each person for a specific vocation or mission.
3. God calls people to live life through one of several vocations.
4. God has ways of guiding us to understand what He wants of us.
5. Every vocation requires a chaste heart.

Path through the lesson

Prayer for vocations (from the National Catholic Vocation Council)

Creator God,
Life is your gift to me.
Through Baptism, you invite me to share the gift of my life in service
to others.
Be with me as I choose each day to show your presence in our world.

Give me the courage and generosity to respond to your love, to your call.
I pray especially for those who serve you as priests, brothers, sisters, deacons, and lay ministers.
Keep them close to you.
Open the minds and hearts of many other men and women that they may accept your challenge to build the Kingdom. Amen.

1. Our Lord's vocation

One should not give too much time to this section. It is an introduction, and not the basic subject of the class. Yet it speaks of great ideas of faith. It should be handled as background to personal vocation. Elements to touch briefly: A) There is a reminder of the larger background of salvation. The context of our lives is not just that we are in this world, wondering what we would like to do. We are in a world in which we must make efforts to work out our salvation, to care about our love for God and one another so that we can come to that earthly and eternal fulfillment for which God made us. B) We live in a world that has sinned, and in which Christ has saved us and made both happiness in this life and life with God forever possible. The vocation of Jesus was to save us, and He gladly paid all it cost to do that. We too have vocations to do great things for the Lord and one another, and we find satisfaction in doing what we are called to be and do.

2. Your vocation is important also.

This is one of the most important points to stress in the class. Note especially the points made in this section: "Your vocation is important also" and the next, "God calls all people to a vocation." Here the effort is to draw out of the students a realization: God cares about my life! There are things I am called to do in this world, and that I can do as no one else can. My life is meant to achieve something important and precious! God has a destiny for me which is important, worth seeking out and following. Questions can arise: Am I free? Will I necessarily become what I am called to be? And we must help students recall that God calls us, but He does so freely. He wishes us to choose what He invites us to. He does not force us, but our happiness will be the greatest if we accept His invitation.

DISCUSSION: Thinking about vocation

These questions can be important in helping the students realize the universality of vocation: *Everyone* is called by God to be important to the whole world! Especially the last question may be stressed.

3. God calls all people to a vocation

While this section is brief, it is very important. If we can make the question clear, it will be very interesting to the students. "You are made for something special and important. How can you come to *know* what it is that God is calling you to?" That means also: "How can you know what kind of life will be best for you?"

Our answer to this question includes points like these: 1) God really calls us, but not by loud voices in the night. 2) He leads us gently to realize what He wishes us to be, and what the inner hopes of our own hearts are calling us to be. 3) God shows us our vocation gently by planting in our hearts an attraction for the kind of love He wishes us to have. 4) He helps us to encounter in this world people we like, whose own lives help us to see that this is the sort of life I want, and that the Lord calls me to. 5) Since coming to know what God calls us to is so important, we should pray for grace to grasp His calling rightly. His graces, in answer to our prayer, will help us find our way.

4. How can we know what God wants us to be?

This section helps to make the lesson more concrete. We can begin with pointing out that there is not any "best vocation" in general, for everybody. The best vocation for each person is the one that the Lord calls that person to live. People can be close friends to God, and immensely important to other people, in every vocation.

Point out also that we are not just called to a kind of vocation, but to a very specific vocation. People are not just called by God to be a father or mother, but a parent married to this person and having these children. All the details are important to God, and to our lives! People are not just called to marry, or live a single life, but to do this or that work which God fitted them to do, and which they will find rewarding and good.

Then, as time permits, attention can be given to different kinds of vocations. General questions can surround this: How does God let people know he is calling them to marriage, or to religious life, to priesthood, or to the single life?

Although time is limited, the largest space of the lesson is given to this section, and the students should be urged to read it over very carefully.

5. Vocation and chaste hearts

Efforts should be made to save time for this section — the general aim should be clear. Realization that we have a vocation in life, that we have important things to do, helps us to realize that there is a necessity to have charge of our own lives, and not to drift along in the ways of the world.

Chastity needs to be given clear and simple explanations by the teacher. Chastity is handling our sexuality, our love, or emotions and feelings (which need to be alive and strong for our lives to be effective) in intelligent and good ways.

One of the reasons why we have to think about sexuality, and how the Lord wishes us to live as boys and girls, as men and women, is this: We have important things to do, and precious good things to care about. Life is not just a party, though it should be happy and filled with much joy. But for that to be, we have to avoid the irresponsible ways of thinking about sex that the world presses upon us. We have to realize that sexuality is meant to serve homes and make the lives and growth of children secure; it is meant to give warmth and energy to responsible hearts that care about the reasons why God created sexuality. To drift into the mindless uses of sexuality causes much pain: pregnancy in very

young people, abortion, diseases, and an inability to learn that strong love lasts a whole lifetime, and makes life plans work well.

Every life that makes sense requires chastity. Certainly a married vocation requires self-possession and self-control. For the married persons, their children, and the strength of the home rely upon faithfulness and strength governing the life, love and emotions of the parents. And all the other kinds of vocations require chastity; they require the strength and freedom that chastity brings with it.

Tying things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student's sheet.

For further reference and background the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1-3; 542-543; 1601; 1604; 1694.

BEING RESPONSIBLE
for our own lives

CATECHIST'S NOTES

Grade 6 • Class 2

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This lesson seeks to help students understand the great gift of freedom, and to be able to tell the difference between "things happening to them" and "things they do." It is always important for young people to realize that life is not just something that *happens* to them (though many things happen beyond our control). Life is most of all something we *live*, and the free actions that we do. Many people want to be good, but get discouraged, forgetting that Christ is strong even when they are not, and he will help them to use their freedom well if they really want to take charge of their own lives, and not let the world dominate them.

Specific objectives

1. To help students realize that they are responsible for their own life and that *it is a good thing for them that they are*.
2. To help students see for themselves why the excuses we make for the bad things we do are often silly and irresponsible.
3. To help students realize that, even though it is often very sad when bad things happen to us, *doing bad things* is really much worse.
4. To help students see that in the turmoil of the world, where impure thoughts and attitudes and acts can seem often impossible to escape, their lives are in their own hands. They have the freedom to live good and responsible lives, and Christ will protect their freedom if they wish to guard it.
5. To help students realize, in a world that seems not to, what sin is. Doing things that are really bad not only offends God, but also makes us feel miserable and unhappy.

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

1. Life includes the ability to choose whether we want to make a good life for ourselves or not.
2. You are responsible for the free decisions which you make in life.
3. We are all called to guard our sexuality with chaste hearts and lives.
4. Deliberately doing immoral things is sinful.

Path through the lesson

Opening prayer

A suitable prayer could be the words from Psalm 8. The catechist could, after the Sign of the Cross, read these words (after telling the students that the prayer is aimed at helping us realize the importance of the great ideas we are about to study), and conclude by reciting the "Glory Be" with the students.

O LORD, our Lord,
How majestic is thy name in all the earth!
When I look at thy heavens, the work of they fingers,
the moon and the stars which thou hast established;
What is man that thou art mindful of him
and the son of man that thou dost care for him?
Yet thou has made him little less than God,
And dost crown him with glory and honor.
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.

After the prayer you could note the connection of the prayer with the class to come. God has created us to rule and govern all the things that he has made: that is why we are into so many things, even space travel. But among the greatest things we can rule is our own lives. God does give us power to be in charge of our own lives, if we wish, and to be responsible for the whole of our lives.

1. Life and freedom — You are really in charge of your own lives

There are important ideas in this section. The catechist should be well prepared to get things off to a good start, to help students feel that, though it often seems as though life runs on out of control, they are persons and their life is their own, and that in most important ways they can rule it.

Obviously, many things — good and bad — just *happen* to us. There is much about life that we cannot control.

But our life as a whole is not uncontrollable. Our life is much more *what we do* than *what happens to us*. Study carefully the examples for this given in the lesson and help the students see this clearly.

As Scripture says most truthfully: their lives *are* in their own hands. Even when things are not promising and full of problems, neither their freedom nor the Providence of God can be quite overcome.

DISCUSSION: When bad things happen

The point of this is to help students realize that, although they cannot change all that happens to them, what their lives will really be depends very much on what they *do* about what happens to them.

Have them go carefully through the "some think" — "others think" sections to get firm possession of this key idea.

2. You are responsible for your own life

Remind them of some things. One joy of getting older is that we are given more and more freedom. In fact, those who love us very much want us to learn how to be free, and be free without going in wrong directions. God Himself clearly wants us to be free!

But to be free does not mean to have a right to be bad! Learning to be free responsibly is learning to do things that are good and fair and right, out of our own hearts, our own decisions.

Now things happen to you, but your life does not. The kind of person you become does not happen to you. You decide that by the decisions you make every day, by the way you decide to live. That makes you become the kind of person you will be.

DISCUSSION: Talking about responsibility

- Important ideas — Help the students see for themselves WHY we sometimes blame people when things go wrong, and sometimes we do not. Can they see why it would be fair to blame people for some things, but not to blame them for other things?

- Special cases — Go through the three cases where people are making excuses that do not hold water. The last question present Christ as a fair and good critic. What they think Christ would say about this is also what they really think would be right. It is often good to present Christ gently as a fair and right-minded person passing honest judgment on what we do.

3. Sexuality and our lives

The point in this section is to show them that many areas of their lives can be influenced by sexuality — the movies we see, the way we talk with our friends about sex, the deeds we do when we are alone, or the way we act with friends — but are in our own power. It is true that the world tends to pressure people very much, and people who want to be good sometimes lose control. But what we *do* is in our own hands, and what happens to other people is in their own hands.

Think of the sad things that happen today because sexuality is misused. Sometimes people contract AIDS. Very young people become pregnant. People commit sins, and gradually lose their remembrance of Christ and their friendship with him. People are selfish and use other people, really do them harm, for the sake of their own pleasure.

Abortion is usually a result of sexual sins. People kill beautiful unborn babies that they called into being by acts that were not generous acts of love, open to life, but sinful acts. And then they end innocent lives that long to continue to be to save themselves trouble.

Do sinful acts that lead people to so much trouble just happen? Or do people deliberately commit sinful acts? This does not mean that we look down on people who commit sins and run into all kinds of trouble. We commit sins too. What this should help us realize is how important it is that we ourselves live

wisely. We should not be misled by a world that goes so often after instant pleasure that it refuses to realize how much people hurt themselves and others when they use important things like sex foolishly.

Do people indulge in impure acts, and keep their minds filled with impure thoughts, because they cannot help it? Not really. Our lives are in our own hands. When the world presses hard on us, we have many ways of getting control of our lives here too. Christ is our friends, and he gives us power and grace to be able to run our lives well, if we want to. We need to be good friends of his, and rely on his help, through Reconciliation and the Eucharist. He never fails his friends, and helps them always to be honest with themselves and others.

Students are reminded what Christ teaches about sexuality: that it is important, and needs to be treated well if homes are to be strong, and love is to be honest, and people are to have happy and generous lives. It is right, and it works. What the world often teaches about sexuality — that people can treat it as something trivial, a toy to play with, and ignore the important things sex is really about is wrong. And all around us are unhappy lives that make this clear.

4. The seriousness of sin

Sin is a strange word for people growing up in our world.

A major point to make here is this: Sin is not something that *happens* to us. It is something we *do*. We are responsible.

"Doing something bad" is much worse than "Having something bad happen to me." Help them see for themselves that, even something like "getting pneumonia" is not as bad as doing something seriously wrong, like "torturing a child to steal his money." Getting pneumonia does not make me become a bad person. Doing cruel and wicked things does make me a bad person. And it is worse to be bad than to have sickness or troubles. Can the students understand why?

Bring attention to the statement, "Some people say that sexual activity outside of marriage is OK." But some people also say that eating too much rich food will not make people get fat. Saying something is OK and will not hurt our lives does not help, if what we do really is something that hurts our lives.

Our lives are worth too much to hurt them by foolish misuses of sex. Sex itself is something God created, and it will serve well the lives of those who live in ways that Christ teaches us to be wise and good. He is not like some contemporary entertainers or advertisers who misuse sex, and misuse people, to make money and have their own way. Christ teaches really good ways, because he loves us.

Tying things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student's sheet.

For further reference and background the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; 310-311; 1730-1742; 1749-1756; 2270-2272; 2322-2323; 2353; 2380-81.

LIFE is worth living

CATECHIST'S NOTES

Grade 6 • Class 3

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This lesson has a very basic message. God made us to *live* and to live great lives! (See John 10:10.) He made us to live happily and well in this life we now have on earth, and so deserve to have an even better and richer life with Him and one another in eternal life. Our life now works best, and feels worth living, when we try earnestly to get things right and do things well. In special things, like sports and games, we see this clearly. Things go well when we put our whole heart into them. And this is even more true of the big things of life. Life is dear to us when we realize what it is about and try to live it well. Large things like love and sexuality will be blessings to us if we understand them for what they really are and follow the wise teaching of Christ.

Specific objectives

1. To help students see that all the things we do in life — like playing musical instruments, or taking part in sports — are much happier and dearer to us if we can do them well.
2. To help students understand that doing anything well — even cooking, or using a computer — can be important and rewarding. But it is much more important to live life well — to know what it is really about, and begin to live it with style and great hearts. Of course it is true that not all of us can be great athletes, or great mathematicians. But Christ promises that all can live a great life, with the help of God's grace, if they deeply want to, and come to Him for help.
3. To help students understand that some coaches and teachers — in sports and other skills — are better than others. In learning to live well, Christ is the best of all teachers. He is the Lord, and we are His disciples.
4. To help students understand the moral life as new life in the Spirit.
5. To see that love and sexuality are important parts of life. But they can be confusing, and sometimes they are badly taught. We need good teachers for such important things.
6. To understand that many people in today's world try to teach us what sexuality is all about. But Christ the Lord is the best teacher of these things because He created them. He also knows us best, and cares about what we say and do. The teachers who teach us His ways are very important.

Grade 6

Class 3

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

1. Christ teaches us that it is a joy to live our lives well.
2. Jesus is the best of all teachers of life.
3. Sexuality is good, as God wills it.

Path through the lesson

Opening prayer

> Lord Jesus Christ, teach us to be glad about our lives. You came in to this world to teach us about life, so that our lives would be rich and happy. You always teach the truth. You care about us, and want us to understand our lives, and know what will make our lives really work. Only You can give us courage, energy, and the power to lead lives that are worth living. You know us and will never abandon us. Keep us always faithful to Your teaching, and do not let us ever be separated from You. We ask this of Your great mercy. Amen.

Ask the students to pray the "Hail Mary" together.

1. Doing things well

Being happy about life — This lesson begins with a central point of Christianity that many forget today. Those who belong to Christ have a right and a duty to be filled with joy. Of course there will be moments when we can have reasons to be sad for a while, when we have done something wrong, or when those we love meet troubles. But we should never remain permanently in gloom and doom. We know the Lord is near, and the His providence will care for us. The spirit that rules our lives should be one of joy: "Rejoice in the Lord always!" (Philippians 4:4)

Our joy comes both from our trust in God and from living in the way He invites us to live.

Happiness of doing things well — There is a certain everyday happiness that comes from doing even small things well. The world celebrates people who do things well, even if they are not the most important things. We praise people who play sports very well, or who are magnificent musicians. Seeing people do any good thing well tends to make us happy. Even in less than world-class way this is true. We are happy with ourselves when we can do small things well: baking a cake, solving a problem, playing a video game.

Doing the best thing well — The best thing people can do is live their lives well. We might admire a great athlete, but if he appears selfish and mean, the pleasure in seeing his skill lessened. It is more important that a person live life well than to have a great talent. Of course, not everyone can become a great

scholar or a great athlete. But Christ promises that all of us can have a great life, if we want it very much and come to him for help. If we find someone who helps the suffering and the poor, who cares about children in trouble, and helps them; if we find someone with courage and kindness, spending his or her time generously — then we know we have found someone really great. (Point to examples of this happening in the world — for example, Mother Teresa.)

DISCUSSION: Doing it right

In this exercise, we are trying to help the students remember how good it is to do things well. *In the first several questions*, try to have them remember, and talk about, the things they can do and feel good about doing. It can be helpful to remind them how grateful we need to be to God for being able to do things well. *In the last question* we are approaching the more important point, developed in the next section. Have them think seriously: Have you heard of, or do you know personally, any people who have led really great lives? And with this question, ask them what they would really like their lives to be like, if they could shape it anyway they wanted. Help them see how much better it is to have a life in which we do great and good things.

2. How Christ helps us to live life as we like it

This material is for *reflection*. Ask the students: "If you were a great athlete and fabulously rich but were also selfish and mean, would that be a great life?" "If you were able to spend your life doing great things to help the suffering and the poor, and brought gladness to many lives that might have been bitter (but you were *not* very rich or famous), would that be a great life?" *Why or why not?*

Ask them to think about the characteristics of a worthwhile and meaningful life. "Do you think that the politicians who were successful, and have statues in Washington, all led really great lives? Do famous baseball players whose pictures are on collector's cards all lead great lives?"

Certainly some politicians led great lives, like King St. Louis IX. Some poets, musicians, and athletes were not only great at poetry, music, and sports, but also lived great lives. St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Teresa, and St. Sebastian are all great models. (It is good to know saints who were musicians, athletes, teachers, doctors, and great friends to young people — like St. John Bosco).

God created us to live great lives. He promises to help us if we want to do what is right. Is there anything more important than that? If our life turns out to be troubled because of wrong choices, how would we feel?

What does a person have to do to lead a great life? There are three main points:

A) "Coaches and teachers are important." We cannot do anything well, without the knowledge of how to do it. We learn from great teachers who follow the example of Christ, who is the *greatest teacher* of all.

B) "Life means learning to love." No one can become good at football or the guitar if they do not like those activities. And no one can learn to love people, and the good things that make life full if they make poor life decisions. We have to learn to love people, and to have that generosity, courage, and kindness that makes people love us. All of us have a vocation to become great persons.

C) "Christ is the best teacher of life." We need to model our lives on the one who came to show us how to live, Jesus Christ.

3. Learning love and sexuality well

Jesus did not teach people how to live by giving them all kinds of tough rules. He showed them by example how to make the right choices and how life was meant to be lived. He let them see how happy people can be if they learn to love and care about one another as God intended. He let them see how miserable we are when we are selfish and turned in on ourselves.

So, Jesus first showed us how a great and honest love could develop. Then he told us that our responsibilities come from a loving God, who wants us to love others. (Show them how Jesus says this plainly in the Gospel: e.g., in Matthew 22:36-40.) Have someone read the passage from 1 Corinthians 13 in the lesson. Ask: What would people like if they had honest love like that?

God and sexuality — Sexuality was made by God. Sometimes it is treated so badly that people strangely think it is a bad thing. But God made it as something important and precious, meant to go only with real love and serve the most important things in the world. Sexuality was made to tie closely together the lives of people who come to love each other with generous love in marriage. It was made to be a way of bringing children into this world out of the love and generosity of their parents, as well as out of the love and generosity of God.

Help the students realize the concepts this section of the lesson speaks of: Sexual activity was never meant to be something trivial, or to be engaged in outside the strong and committed love of marriage. Sex is not just a game for fun. When it is used just for fun it goes wrong and hurts people deeply. Sex was made for people to grow into gradually, first learning how to be great people who have honest and generous love. Sexual activity was made by God to go with marriage, a committed and sincere love that will last a whole lifetime.

Sexual acts that are not surrounded with committed love are bad ones, because they hurt people and abuse the important gift of sexuality. That is why the Lord teaches us in the Scriptures and in the Church that irresponsible sexual activity is always gravely wrong (i.e. pornography, masturbation, premarital sexual activity).

Television, movies, songs, magazines, websites — Much of the world around us treats sexuality very badly, and encourages young people to use it badly. This exploitation, first in lustful and impure thoughts and desires, and then in impure acts of many kinds, has led the world to much suffering.

In some cases it has led to AIDS and to other sexually transmitted diseases. It has led to pregnancies of very young people who are not able to take care of a baby. It has led to abortion, and other cruel and tragic consequences. It has disrupted home life very much, and has led people to despair. Learning God's kind of love and intelligent acceptance of God's gift of sexuality are necessary to make intelligent love flourish and get strong.

Tying things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student's sheet.

For further reference and background the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 457-460; 1716-2029; 2013-2014; 2331-2356; 2360-2363.

LEARNING how great love is

CATECHIST'S NOTES

Grade 6 • Class 4

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

General aim of the lesson

This lesson aims at helping the students to understand the central message of Christ: that genuine love is the most important of all things. All our duties flow from the most important duty of loving God and of loving one another with generous love. And all our hope flows from love. Only when we are willing to learn what true love is can we have happy homes, deep and lasting friendships, fairness to the weak and the poor, and greatness and joy.

Specific objectives

1. To explain why Christ is the best teacher of how great love is (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) and of how we learn to find honest love, in a world which so much wants honest love, but suffers because so many confuse real love with phony love.
2. To show that Jesus teaches us that generous love is necessary to save all the best things of the earth: homes and friendship, and every great and good thing our hearts long for.
3. To make it clear that generous love guards life in all the world. It guards the weak and helpless, the old and weary, and it guards all our hopes to be fair and good people. From people who love with true generosity, like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, we learn why abortion and euthanasia are so cruel.
4. To show how love gives people power to have pure hearts, and to be truthful and generous in their dealings with one another. All the Lord's teachings about chaste living are teachings about loving rightly.

These are the things we will talk about . . .

Outline of the lesson

Opening Prayer

1. Jesus shared with us the great commandment to love God and neighbor.
2. Generous love of other persons is the most basic kind of love.
3. We are called to a love which guards life and truth.
4. Real love guards life in all forms and at all stages. (Abortion and euthanasia destroy life.)
5. True and generous love is lived with a chaste heart.
6. God's grace gives us the power to love this way.

Grade 6

Class 4

Path through the lesson

Opening prayer

The catechist should remind the students that we should know many different prayers by heart. Then, when we are alone and quiet, we can more easily speak to God in the words of a prayer that our hearts know well. Some prayers which we should know by heart are: the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity (love), and the "Act of Contrition." Since today's class is about the greatness of love, it is good to begin by praying an "Act of Charity":

> O my God, I love You above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because You are all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of You. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

1. Christ is the best teacher of love

Love is the greatest of realities, but it is sometimes very difficult to talk about. The honest and strong love that all people, young and old, care so much about gets mixed up with other things.

In movies, stories, and songs, honest love is the thing that people really want. Everybody in the home wants to be sure that other people "really care about me," that "they will stick by me," that "they love me." School gets tough. We do not feel that the teachers like us or that others in our class care about us. Love is something that life always needs, just as plants need the sun and rain.

Even people who have unfortunately not found much faith in Jesus know that He was right in saying that, above all else, we must have honest love. For life never works unless we come to love one another and care about one another. Every commandment is based on love. We should not do bad things, not just because there are rules, but because if we love we will not want to hurt one another by such acts. Every duty we have, Jesus teaches, is based on the central duty of love: to love God and one another. All life becomes easier if we learn to love rightly. The Great Commandment is really the Golden Rule for a life of happiness.

DISCUSSION: Thoughts about love

It is good to use this section to make clear how broad and generous is the love Christ teaches. Each of the questions helps them see that love must not be small, limited to those to whom I cling most of help. Love cares about all.

2. Generous love leads to fulfillment and happiness

In a way, we may "love" movies, or hamburgers, or basketball, or money. But this is not the kind of love that makes people great and good, or that makes life glad. The love that Christ teaches is, above all, the love of God and the love of one another.

Various parts of this section may be stressed by the catechist. Many students do not know what "loving God" means. The catechist might show from

the example of St. Francis how love of God is so important for our happiness. When we know and remember that God deeply loves us, and is close to us, the whole world is much friendlier to us. To love God is to have the confidence that enables us to love others. Those who love God find the world a place in which we must give love. This makes those who love God much loved by others.

The example of love in our homes is useful also. Of course homes sometimes are not as loving as they ought to be. But everyone wants love at home, and we have to help people see that by giving love at home, we come to be loved more at home too.

We have to show that "loving" people is more than doing nice things for them, though it includes that. What poor people need even more than help is what love brings: the confidence that help will never be lacking, because there is really personal love. It is love that gives anyone confidence that things will go well.

Among other things, it is important to show, as the section seeks to do, that we really have been loved not only by God, but by many other people too. We would not have survived without the love of those who have helped us!

Friendship is a generous kind of love. The idea of friendship is a strong and encouraging idea. Here we help the students see the difference between generous love or real friendship, and being "pals" who do not really care a lot about each other.

REFLECTION: Gospel images

The Sermon on the Mount says much about the kind of love we should have, but we might stress Matthew 5:43-47. Young people often have a difficulty in believing that they should try to love those who do not love them and even hurt them. But the catechist should be able to show them why generous and forgiving love is so important, and why we all need to be loved even when we do not deserve it. The Good Samaritan story tells us that we need to love strangers as well as friends. We help students see this by reminding them how much we like it if, when we are in trouble and away from home, strangers are very good to us. Christ said He wants to be my friend! Help the students see how real is His desire to be the friend of each of them and how they can grow in His friendship.

3. Generous love guards life

It is true that we can have lots of pleasure and gladness. Bodily satisfactions, like the joy of eating good things, can be good. But they are not always intelligent and right things. It might taste good to eat lots of foods, even at times when that would make us sick. And it can seem good to have impure pleasures, even when we know they are really bad for us.

We often know how impure acts hurt us and people we want to like. They are sinful, and they lead people to do things that are bad for honest love and for strong homes and happy lives. While bodily pleasure sometimes urges us to do things we know are foolish, for passing pleasure, chaste love, which Christ gives to His friends, urges us to do what is really good and right, what will

not hurt others, what will make their lives richer and better. It learns to control slavery and to master mere pleasure, so that our lives can really be good.

4. Abortion and euthanasia destroy life

The catechist should stress to the students that "love" is a word which can be used loosely in terms of contemporary life. It seems an act of "love" to have extramarital sex, to take life so as to end suffering through euthanasia or assisted suicide, to ease the plight of a young, unmarried, pregnant woman through the "choice" of abortion.

Real life sees each person as created by God. God alone is the author and creator, the destiny and end of life.

5. Generous life leads to purity and chastity

The catechist's emphasis here is on the consistency of a chaste love as one which reflects real truth and generosity. Chastity seeks the ultimate good of oneself and of all others in one's life. It is a free expression of authentic life.

6. God's grace gives us the power to love purely

The catechist should emphasize that God is all-powerful, and that He shares that power with us through grace.

Typing things together

At the end of this lesson, it could be very useful to bring together the various parts of the lesson, as listed on the student's sheet.

For further reference and background, the catechist should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1655-1658; 1716-1724; 1822-1829; 1889; 2196-2231; 2270-2278; 2337-2350; 2360-2363; 2517-2527.

Section Three

STUDENT'S LESSONS
for Grade 6

Directions for Use

This section contains the blackline masters for each of the five lessons. Each lesson is numbered individually. The blackline master for each lesson can be removed from this notebook, copied, and returned to the notebook until the next use.

The lessons are:

CLASS 1: Vocation

CLASS 2: Being responsible for our own lives

CLASS 3: Life is worth living

CLASS 4: Learning how great love is

CLASS 5: Personal Safety

VOCATION

CLASS 1

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

Everyone coming into this world has a vocation. No one is unimportant to God or to the world. Each person has a mission, something God wants that person to do.

These are the things we will talk about in this first lesson:

- God's desire is to bring us to **salvation.**
- God **creates** each person for a specific vocation or mission.
- God calls people to life through one of several **vocations**.
- God has ways of **guiding** us to understand what He wants of us.
- **Every** vocation requires a chaste heart.

OUR LORD'S vocation

God made the world good. But we human beings sinned and all things went astray. The sin of our first parents, the original sin, was followed by countless sins of their descendants, the sins you and I commit.

Our sins are more serious than we imagine. They are deliberate offenses against God. To offend God deliberately is not a small or trivial matter. When we do something wrong, we may not realize how serious a thing we have done —but we have hurt God and wounded our friendship with Him.

When we choose to separate ourselves from God, we are choosing to separate ourselves from all the good things for which God made us. We can hardly realize how serious our offenses against God are. When we sin, we strike out against God Himself. *We are in trouble!* When we do **realize** what we have done, we hardly know what to do.

We were unable to make up for our sins, but God still loves us very much. To save from us the effects of our own sins, the Father invited His eternal Son to redeem us. The Son could make up for the sins committed. For He is the true Son of God. He is God just as the Father is God. He chose to take a human nature like ours, and live on earth to eventually suffer and die. Mary's child, Jesus, our Brother and our God, willingly died on the cross for our sins. Jesus made it possible for us to become friends with God once again. And so, we can become **God's friends** again, *if we choose to*.

Thus Jesus redeemed us, and called us again to life forever with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in heaven. Jesus' vocation was to be our redeemer.

Your vocation is IMPORTANT also

God creates no one thoughtlessly. He makes each person for a reason and gives each one a mission, a task in this world.

Our lives will be poor and wasted if we never come to realize our reason for living. We should live wisely to achieve what God intended.

Discussion: Thinking about vocation

- Have you ever thought about the fact that God made you for good reasons, that you have important things to do in this world?
- One of the many reasons abortion is so bad is this: God made all the tiny babies he created to accomplish good things for the world. But when people kill them even before they are born, they keep them from being able to do the important things God wished them to do for the world. Is it perhaps part of our vocation to help people realize the importance of every person in the world?
- Is vocation an important idea just for those who want to become priests and religious, or is the vocation of everyone in the world important?

God calls all people to a VOCATION

God calls many people to serve him in *marriage*. Others he calls to serve him in the *single* state. Some he calls to be become *priests*. Others he calls to be *religious*, either as priests, brothers, or sisters in the membership of a religious order.

God does not just call them in some vague way to marriage or to the religious life. He calls them in very special ways. He calls them to marry a **very special person** and to have the very children God wishes them to have. Through a family, parents and children grow in the happiness and love of God. God calls fathers and mothers to many special jobs in life, like being a salesman, a doctor, a policeman, fireman, teacher, astronaut, or any number of important professions.

God cares about all the big things and all the details in everyone's life, no matter what kind of life they are called to.

He has plans for your life. And one of the most important things you need to do, if you wish to be **happy** and see your life accomplish good things, is to determine what it is that God wants you *to be* and *to do*.

How can we KNOW what God wants us to be?

God has ways of guiding us to understand what He wants of us. We say rightly that God "calls" us to something. He does not, of course, call us by telephone or by loud noises in the night. There are quiet ways in which He lets people know what would be a good and happy way to live.

He plants in our hearts an attraction for certain kind of good life. He arranges, in His divine care of the world, for us to run into certain people just the right times. Then we begin to like the idea of doing this or that with our lives. If we want to be friends of God, and care about what our life might become, we also **pray**. We ask God that when we choose what we will become and do in life, we may choose wisely, and come to the kind of life that He intended. In prayer, God speaks to us in the quiet of our hearts. We have to take time each day to listen to Him and to hear His voice, realizing that He gives us the grace we need in order to do His will.

Various Vocations

Vocation to MARRIAGE

Most people are called to get married when they grow up, and to have families of their own. Even when we are young, we have some idea of how important a vocation that is! Every child knows how important his or her father and mother are.

It is not easy to be a good **parent!** Fathers and mothers must teach the whole world to their children. To be very good fathers and mothers, people must have many great traits.

Discussion question:

? Could you mention some of the important good traits parents need to have?

Surely parents have to love each other, and love their children. They have to know how to love unselfishly. They have to be faithful to fulfilling the needs of their **children** even when they do not feel like it. They have to work. They need to be friends of God, to help their children know the Lord well, too. We could all make a long list of the things our parents have done for us.

While being a parent is so important a vocation, they still have other things to do to fill their place in the world completely. They have other special jobs of many kinds. They are citizens and have duties in their neighborhood, city, and parish. Life is very good but also a challenge. In getting ready to live our vocations, we have much to learn and do!

Some people, from ordinary homes and parishes, are called to have *religious vocations*.

Vocation to be a PRIEST

Do you know the priests in your parish? Usually parish priests are diocesan priests. Their main task is to take care of their parish and all the people there. Theses men celebrate Mass for their people. They care for the Eucharist, baptize babies, and forgive the sins of all who come to Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They teach the ways of Christ to everyone. They preach the **Word of God** by word and example. Only a man, chosen by God, may be ordained a priest.

Priests help us all remain friends of Christ.

Their task is also to do everything that helps people work together in making faith grow in their lives, and to help us all remain friends of Christ.

RELIGIOUS brother or sister

Another religious vocation is to become a religious brother or sister. Since we all grow up in homes, the vocation of a religious is one that may seem strange at first. Religious and priests do not get married. Instead of marrying they experience a "call" to give their lives to Christ. They **commit** themselves to a life of *celibacy* for the sake of God and His kingdom.

Religious generally make leading people to Christ the center and focus of their activity. They give up the happiness that comes from having one's own spouse and children for another kind of happiness. Their calling is to help all kinds of people to live their lives more easily as friends of the Lord. They gladly do all of this for "the sake of the Kingdom."

They help people in the world to focus on what is the most important reality of life: our relationship with God.

People respond to a religious vocation usually in this way. First God puts in their hearts a longing to do the sorts of things religious do. They want to become teachers or pastoral ministers or care for the poor and the suffering. Then God leads them gradually to know people who do things like that. This makes them begin to realize how **good** such a life can be. They see how much good they could do for so many people, and they see how happy it would make them feel to have lives that are close to Christ by doing these things.

SINGLE vocation

It is also God who calls some people to a vocation as single people in the world.

There are many things that lead people to this vocation. Sometimes they realize that there is someone in the family, or among their friends who needs special help and **care**. They are willing to give a large portion of their life to take care of this person.

Some people begin doing important things in the world — as doctors, teachers, or scientists — and find that they have come to such an intense concern for what they are doing that they feel it would be better to give that job all of their attention. There are many reasons why some people, who are not attracted to religious life, wish to lead lives of great faith and generosity in a single state.

But these, and all people who care about planning their lives wisely, would be smart if at times they talked with good and thoughtful people about what they plan to do with their lives. Sometimes it is wise to **talk** with a parent or grandparent, with a teacher you know well, a priest or religious you admire, about what you think you would like to do with you life. This is one of the most important decisions you will ever make.

Their task would not be to tell you to become what they would like you to be. That would not be right! Their job would be to help you sift through your own thoughts and hopes, and help you see more clearly what you want — and what God is gently and quietly telling you to be. The point is: Your life will work best if you choose to become the person God intended you to be.

These decisions are not easy. We need the grace of God and the support of others to help us.

Vocation and chaste HEARTS

Every vocation requires a chaste heart. God calls all people to have a strong and honest love, and to live in ways that are generous and good. We never accomplish much that is good for ourselves, or for the world, without generous self-control. People who always do "whatever they feel like," even if this hurts others, do indeed hurt others very much. So they end up leading pretty sad lives.

Obviously, married people must have chaste hearts. They will be tempted at times to be unfaithful to each other. But without self-control the home may break up and children may not have the security of loving parents. Sexual love always requires **maturity** and self-discipline. If people are controlled by sexuality, rather then in control of their own feelings, they will not be able to make their lives strong and useful.

In turn, many people are called to single lives in the world, or to religious life, or priesthood. They cannot lead these lives well and accomplish the satisfying and happy things these lives accomplish without strong self-control, discipline, and the generosity that honest love means.

This is why we need to learn the right ways to think about our sexuality from Christ. He made you the boy or girl you are. For your life to be happy, and to accomplish the important things to which God calls you, you need to choose the self-discipline of pure and good hearts. Christ is always present to help you.

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. It is God's will to save each of us.
2. Each person is called to a vocation by God.
3. There are several different paths to choose in living our vocation.
4. God leads us to choose a vocation in life.
5. A chaste heart is the core of each vocation.

BEING RESPONSIBLE for our own lives

CLASS 2

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

In this lesson we will reflect upon your life as an adventure, gifted with freedom. Yet the free will God has given only to humans also comes with intelligence and responsibility. Our lives will be shaped well or poorly by the moral decisions we make. Through our free will we decide whether or not to choose good and to avoid evil. We are capable of choosing to guard our sexuality by the constant use of free will as taught by Jesus and His Church.

These are the things we will talk about in this second lesson:

- Life includes the ability to **choose** whether we want to make a good life for ourselves or not.
- You are **responsible** for the free decisions which you make in life.
- You are called to guard your sexuality with **chaste** hearts and lives.
- **Deliberately** doing immoral things is sinful.

Life and FREEDOM

Life is an adventure! It is full of freedom.

Each one of us must decide whether we want to make a good life for yourself or not.

God promises that each of us can have a life of which we can be proud. But we must be willing to pay the price of a great life (see Matthew 13:44). God promises to help you shape a wonderful life if you choose. But God created you with **free will**. Only you can decide what you will do. If you ask Him, God will give you the grace to make the right decisions.

We have little say over things that just happen. Will you win the lottery? Will you be hit by a truck? Good things and bad things happen to people. Because of our freedom, evil and suffering have entered our world.

But our life is not what just happens to us. Our life is something we do, something we live, and something we choose.

And Christ **promises** everyone: You can lead a good life if you choose. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

"Before a man are life and death, and whichever he chooses will be given to him" (Sirach 15:17). What do you think that this sentence means?

Discussion: When BAD things happen

? Do bad things sometimes happen to you, things you cannot help?

? Do good things sometimes happen to you, things that you did not really deserve?

? Which is more "my life": What happens to me, or what I actually do?

Some think: My life would be great if I won the lottery. My life would be great if only I were thinner, or had beautiful hair. My life would be complete if I could slam dunk the basketball. Do you think all this is very true?

Others think: My life is ruined because we had to move and leave good friends behind. My life is bitter because my health is not good, and I cannot do things I want to do. It is possible to live well, and even happily, when things go wrong?

You are RESPONSIBLE for your own life

Very small children have not yet really grown up into being able to be responsible for their own lives. They are not yet able to understand what is really **good**, and what is bad. So their parents, and others who love them, have to try to protect them as much as possible.

But as we get more mature, we become more and more the rulers of our own lives.

God wants us to be free! He wants us to live life well, not because we have to, but because we choose to do it. Whether we will live great and good lives or not is our responsibility.

"It was he [God] who created man in the beginning, and he left him in the power of his own inclination" (Sirach 15:14).

Things will happen to you, fortunes good and bad. But your life will not just happen. You shape your own life by the decisions you make: The **decisions** to do what is really good; decisions to care about more than just yourself; decisions to listen to God, and to seek to do what is really right; decisions to live as well as you can in the circumstances in which God puts you.

Discussion: Talking about RESPONSIBILITY

Important ideas

- People are not to be blamed if they cannot manage something very difficult. It is silly to blame a person who tries hard, and comes in second. But would we blame someone who lost a tournament for our school because he did not really practice and did not really try, and blew it for us? What is the difference between the two cases?

- Many people have to work hard to make things work for them. They build lives that people admire. "This fellow, this girl, really gives things his or her best." Is it worthwhile being like that?

Special cases

What would you say about people who say things like this:

"I couldn't help it. I didn't start it. The other girls were taking things from the store, so I had to go along with them. Do you expect me to be different from everyone else?"

"Ok, so I had a beer at the party. Everyone else was drinking too. Big deal!"

"It didn't amount to anything. Just some puffs on a joint. It sort of felt good and nobody got hurt."

What do you think Christ would say about excuses like that? Do you think Christ would agree with them?

Sexuality AND our lives

Some people say: "People who live in times like these are bound to be sexually active from the time they are very young."

"They will do that even if being sexually active causes a lot of harm, like AIDS, and other diseases, or abortion. People will do that even if the lack of self control makes them fail in their marriages and unable to have the generosity needed for real love."

Many will deliberately play with obscene thoughts, even though Jesus taught us that it is wrong (read Matthew 5:28). They will have premarital sex (sexual activity without the promises of committed marital love) and other activities that show a refusal to treat sexuality with the respect it deserves.

But is talk like that true? The fact is that millions of young people guard chaste hearts and lives. God promises to help everyone to be chaste. God cares so much about the goodness of love, the importance of the home, the **dignity** of little children and of life.

In the days of Christ, a pagan empire ruled most of the world. Pagan homes and lives were unhappy, partly because of their sexual sins. Adultery, premarital sex, and obscene forms of living caused great pain. These things took away the will to guard really precious things like honest love, children, and strong, faith-filled homes.

But the early Christians refused to live as the pagans. The believed Christ, who told them how wrong and hurtful all these things were. And as a result, their lives, and their homes, were so much **happier** than the pagans'. This is one of the reasons the pagan world decided to become Christian, because people saw that those who followed God's commandments were truly happy.

Advertisers, and people who make money on movies and TV, often feel that they can "hook" people by teasing them with sexual games. Even when we understand the importance of the gift of sexuality, we can still be severely tempted to misbehave sexually. We can decide that we do not care whether or not we hurt the people we love.

If we feel driven to enjoy sexual pleasure now, we cause pain in **important** areas of life.

We do not have to give in to temptation. We do not have to treat sex shabbily and foolishly. We can be intelligent about the important things of life, no matter what other people do. Some people in the world will tell you that you have no control over your thoughts and feelings. But they are *wrong*. You are not an animal. You can control your bodies and make the right **decisions**.

Lots of people overeat and under-exercise. Lots of people become couch potatoes, and are unhappy with their lives. But people can decide if they wish to have self-control. When we make bad decisions with our lives, we are not just unlucky. We are freely doing things badly on purpose. *We* are the ones who are hurting our own lives.

Faith teaches us about original sin, which makes us inclined to error and sin. We are, indeed often tempted to behave badly. We often feel like doing things that are irresponsible and sinful. But, we have the **freedom** to choose what is right and good if we wish to!

The SERIOUSNESS of sin

Catholic faith teaches us that deliberately doing immoral things is sinful. It is not just unfortunate; it is much worse than that.

It is unfortunate if you catch pneumonia; that is a natural evil. It is much worse if you torture a small child to get money. That is a deliberate moral choice, a deliberate evil, which we call sin.

Sexual activity, if not guarded by the generous promises of marriage, is sinful. It is not just acting "against the rules." The reason for **rules** is that doing such things hurts people, hurts lives, makes life much poorer and much more full of trails. We hurt others when we commit sexual sins and we hurt ourselves.

We also offend God seriously by sexual activity that is wrong, such as premarital sex, or deliberately filling our minds with obscene desires and feelings. We separate ourselves from the Lord when we sin, when we break the commandments or ignore the teachings of the Church. We lose interest in living God's way.

Chaste lives work and make people really happy.

Some people say that sexual activity outside of marriage is OK. (It is interesting that some people also say that eating too much will not make people gain weight.)

But they are very wrong. What the Lord teaches us about the sinfulness of irresponsible sexual activity is true. And its bitter truth becomes evident only too soon in the lives of those who refuse to believe the Lord, or to seek to live in the **good ways** he teaches.

Sinful sexual activity is activity that abuses sex, abuses ourselves and other people. People who have not learned from Christ may be deceived. Perhaps they do not realize how much harm is cased by sexual sins.

We can protect our lives, and make them happier, because we know the truth Christ teaches, and we can have the power to live in really good ways.

Your life is worth more than you can imagine. Sexuality blesses life if we respect it and treat it with the **reverence** Christ taught. Christ, the best of all teachers, urges us to be wise in our life choices.

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. We each have the ability to exercise our free will to create goodness in life or not.
2. You are responsible for choosing to do good or evil.
3. Chaste hearts and lives guard our sexuality.
4. To sin is to deliberately choose immoral thoughts and actions.

LIFE is worth living

CLASS 3

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

In this class we will talk about "doing things right." First we remember how much we like being able to do ordinary things right, like playing ball well. We think about how great it would be to be able to shape our whole lives well. Then we will talk about how Jesus can and does help us to do right with the most important things of life. Finally we will talk about understanding sexuality and facing it intelligently, and how Christ helps us to do that.

These are the things we will talk about in this third lesson:

- **Christ** teaches us that it is a joy to live our lives well.
- Jesus is the best of all **teachers** of life.
- Sexuality is a **good**, as God wills it.

Doing things WELL

Should we be happy about life? God made life to be happy. But some people are not very happy with it. Often they are people who have enough money and get their way a lot. Many good things seem to happen to them. But of course some bad things happen too, and they do not like the taste of life. On their expensive cars they will put bumper stickers saying things like "Life is a bummer."

Often these people really do not *think* very much about what life is about and for. They mostly aim at having fun, and doing what they feel like. They seem to have no intention to look for any **wisdom** about life. They live like people who have found no instructions or helps to living life well, and the things they do, do not really work.

Other people say "YES" to life. As they live it, they find it works, and they are glad about their lives. They are people who have found some way of understanding what life means and what it is for. They busy themselves with things they know are worth doing.

Christ is the great **Teacher** of life for all people. He teaches us:

- ❤ It is a joy to put heart into things, to do things well.
- ❤ It is a joy to live our lives well.
- ❤ We can live well, because He fills us with His grace!

We all like to be good at doing things. It is much more fun to play football or tennis or cards if we know how, and can do well. Playing a guitar is much more satisfying when we do it so well that everyone enjoys what we do. As we know, doing things well takes a great deal of practice and **hard work**. We have to work at these things over and over.

Jesus lived a great life on earth.

It would be fun to be a superstar. But we do not have to do spectacular things to do things well. Even doing little things like growing flowers well or raising a pet well or setting the VCR well can make us feel good.

Living our lives WELL

Clearly our lives are more important than games and skills at doing things. Some people get a good grip on the whole shape of their lives. We like it if people think we play basketball well. We like it more if they think we are living our lives well. We like it if they recognize that the big things in our life are in great shape; if they see we have learned to be generous, courageous, fair, and to lay hold of life with happiness and greatness of heart.

Jesus is the **teacher** specializing in showing people how to have the kind of life they most deeply want to have. When He was on this earth He lived a great life. He was generous and courageous. He was wise and strong and clearly happy. People who saw Him wished they could have lives as full and happy as His. So they asked Him: "Teach us how to live!"

Jesus tells us that the reason why He came into this world was to make it possible for us to have better and happier lives. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Discussion: Doing it RIGHT

List on the blackboard some of the kinds of things that you think you can do very well: drawing, playing basketball, using a computer, playing a guitar, cooking — or things like these.

- Is it fun to do things like this well? Why?
- How do people learn to do things like these very well?
- Did you do these things well when you first tried them?
- Once we have learned them well, are we glad we took time to learn?

Try to think of some people you know, or have heard of, who lived really great lives. What would you want your life to be like?

How Christ helps us to LIVE life as we like it

Many people do live great lives. And it is not just because they are rich or powerful. Many rich people have shabby lives, and many poor people have happy and great lives. People have great lives when they come to **understand** what life is all about, and work at living it well.

The saints led heroic and exemplary lives. That does not mean they lived "pious" lives. It means they lived lives in which they accomplished a lot and did things they knew were worthwhile. They put their hands on difficult things and found they could do much more than they imagined. They had the great joy of loving other people, and of being loved by them. They also had the joy of seeing how many great things there are to do, and of doing them.

Many people today lead great lives. That means more than being great at basketball or great with a computer. It means being **great** at being a person, great at caring and doing important things about the most important matters in the world.

Discussion

Who do you think would fit into the class of great people like that?

Coaches and teachers are important. No one becomes great either at special things, like football, or at giant things, like living life well, without a good coach. If we want to live a life we will be proud of, and happy about, we need a good teacher of life. Jesus is the best of all teachers of life.

Learning life means learning to love. Most people know and admit that learning about life is mostly about learning to love. It is about learning how to love the **good things** God has made accessible to us — life, friendship, truth, and doing things well, and loving our brothers and sisters on this earth gladly and wisely.

We all see that many people get mixed up about love. Sometimes they love the wrong things. Sometimes they forget how love cannot live without generosity, courage, and self-control.. Instead of the great kinds of love Christ teaches, they live in selfish and false kinds of love, love that is mostly "looking out for myself" and "doing whatever I feel like." But this is selfishness rather than honest **love**, and it never makes people happy.

Learning love AND sexuality well

Jesus is the great Teacher about what love is. His disciple, St. Paul, spoke of the greatness of the real love that Christ teaches and makes possible for us to have. (Read Corinthians 13.)

What would a person who had love like this be like? Can you think of any people you know whose lives seem deeply touched with this kind of love, the kind Christ teaches?

God made sexuality, and he made it to accompany **honest love**. It is God who made us male and female, and he knew that it was good for us to have sexuality. We are sexual persons.

Sometimes, of course, sexuality is badly used, as all the good things God made are sometimes used. Life is a beautiful gift of God. But people abuse it by killing, for example by abortion or by euthanasia. Truth is a great gift of God. But people abuse it by lying and false advertising and the violation of secrets.

Sexuality is good, and God made it to serve very great goods. He made it to go with mature love, love that is not selfish, but that wants and is able to give itself to one other person for a whole lifelong in marriage. He made sexuality for the love that can last a whole lifetime, that helps a man and woman to make their love, and their home, **stand firm** and last. God made sexuality to make personal love stronger and more generous, and to enable spouses who love each other to bring children into this world with great love and to care for them with generosity.

Sexuality is good, a very serious good. It is not a toy, not something to be played with. In a way, of course, it gives joy to all our lives. It is a good and happy thing to be loved in the way a mother loves us, and in the different way a father loves us. It is a joy to have both boys and girls in this world. Each is a different way of imaging God. There are wonderful traits both in boy-ness and girl-ness. Each boy or girl reveals only some of the wonderful goodness of being male or female. Life is made **interesting** and rich because God put the complexity of feelings and joys that go with human beings being male and female.

But some acts of sexuality, because they guard such important things as personal love and little children, are by no means things to be treated as toys. Some kinds of kisses and hugs are gracious signs of friendship. Some, however, are passionate, and stir up strong feelings, which can go rightly only with mature

kinds of love. These acts can be right and morally good only when they are surrounded with the promises and generosity of marriage. When people treat sexuality as the Lord teaches us to, they find it **rich** and always the source of blessings. When they use it badly, they find it disappoints them, and brings all kinds of trouble and pain into life.

Christ invites us while we are young to learn what He teaches us about love. And He wants us to let our minds and hearts learn to feel and think as He calls us, which will make our lives better.

Certainly it is important that while we are young we should not fill our imaginations and memories with images and words that make fun of what God made sexuality to be. Much on television, much in the movies, much in magazines today presents sexuality in ways that hurt young lives deeply. Can you think of some kinds of television shows young people should not watch? Can you **think** of the kinds of movies to avoid if you wish to learn the great sort of love that Christ teaches us?

This would not mean you cannot have fun. It does not mean you cannot enjoy life with one another. One should be glad that God made me a boy, or made me a girl. One ought to be glad that He made the wonderful reality of love, and the mysterious reality of sexuality. But we also should learn how to understand these gifts from the best teachers, from those who love me, and know Christ. These are the ones who teach us about life as it is meant to be lived.

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. The message of Jesus includes the joy of living well and of doing things well.
2. Jesus helps us to learn how to live life well.
3. Sexuality is good and God made it to serve great goods.

Write your notes down here!

LEARNING how great love is

CLASS 4

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

Jesus Christ teaches generous and honest love. Generous love is the highest form of love, whether between spouses, in families, or among friends. To love others is to wish the best for them in all things. Real love is precious and guards life in all of its forms. Real love would never practice abortion or euthanasia. True, thoughtful, and caring love is honest and chaste.

These are the things we will talk about in this fourth lesson:

- Jesus shared with us the great **commandment** to love God and neighbor.
- **Generous** love of other persons is the most basic kind of love.
- We are called to a love which guards life and **truth**.
- Real love guards **life** in all forms and at all stages.
- True and generous love is lived with a **chaste** heart.

Christ is the BEST teacher of love

Nothing is greater than generous and honest love, the kind of love that Christ taught us.

No one can have a happy life unless he or she has learned how to live in generous love. By the example of His own chaste life, Christ taught us to love this way because without love like this the world simply does not work well.

Unless we have found God, and learned to love Him, unless we have come to love one another on this earth, life becomes thin and hollow.

That is why Jesus said that the greatest **commandment** of all the commandments is:

- ❤ that we should love God with all our hearts and minds and strength;
- ❤ and that we should love one another as He has loved us.

In fact, Jesus said, *everything* we have to do to be happy, and to be good people, and to win heaven, is summarized in those two commandments. There is nothing we have to do but love rightly with honest hearts! (See Matthew 22:40.)

That is why St. Augustine once said: "Love, and do whatever you will." For if we love truthfully and well, we will want to do what is right. We will want to do what pleases God. We will be glad in leading **good lives.**

We will not understand how true and good our Catholic faith is if we do not understand this: how important love is! For what Christ the Lord teaches us above all is that we are to love generously. And the Lord does not just tell us to love. He gives us the grace and the desire to love with the generosity that makes life joyful.

Discussion: Thoughts about LOVE

- **?** Does Jesus say we should love good people, or even those who have done wicked things? Why?
- **?** Recall the story of "Beauty and the Beast." It reminds us that people often have to love *before* they feel worthy of being loved. Do you think this is true?
- **?** Should we love people because they are so good, or because God, who is so good, calls us to love them all?

Generous love leads to FULFILLMENT and happiness

The most basic kind of love is the generous love of persons.

First is the great joy of loving God as our Friend, with the gladness with which saints like Francis of Assisi loved God and saw His goodness everywhere.

Then there is the happiness of loving other people.

Homes are made happy by love. Children are made happy by being loved by their parents and the good things they do out of love. And parents are made happy by the love of their children, who give them greater **happiness** than anything else could.

Christ said: "This is my commandment — that you love one another." And really this is the one important thing: that we all honestly love one another.

Even to do good things for other people would not help much if we did not first love them. We ought to give food to the hungry and care for the sick.

But we ought not do this as if they were not worth much and we were the better for helping them. We do not do these things to make ourselves feel better. We ought to do good things because we really love others and they are really dear to us. This is life in the Holy Spirit; this is the life of grace, the kind of life Christ taught.

Generous love is not only great; it is the **happiest love** there is.

When others love us with generous love, our hearts are happier. When we love others with generous love, our hearts get greater. When we love generously and are loved generously, the whole world gets better.

It should fill us with wonder and joy that so many people love us with generous love.

Life is happiest when we have friends.

Only love has enabled us to survive! When we were very small, and could do nothing to help ourselves, there were people to love us. They fed us, and kept us warm, and got up nights when we were hungry or sick, and took good care of us. Even when they were tired, and things went wrong, they watched over us. They counted us as dear to themselves and did every kind of **good thing** for us.

We have been loved by God and by many others. And so we too owe love to those who need love.

FRIENDSHIP: a generous kind of love

Life is happiest when we have friends.

"You are my friends," Jesus said to his disciples, and He says that to us too. Do you know Christ well enough to say, "He is my friend'?

True friends are true to each other. If I am your friend, it means that I like you. And, more than that, it means that I find you very dear. If anything bad happens to you, I feel as bad as if it happened to me. If anything **good** happens to you, I feel as glad as if it happened to me.

If we are friends, we do not like each other simply to get "what's in it for me." *You* are the reason why I like you.

Friendship is generous. If we are friends, of course you can use my games. And I know you will give me things you have that I need. Friends make life larger, happier, and better.

Friends want each other to have what is truly good and to have lives that are both happy and pleasing to God. Friends never do any harmful thing to each other deliberately. **Friends** do not persuade friends to do evil and stupid things, but to live in ways that make life really glad.

Reflection: GOSPEL images

- ❤ What kind of love does Christ urge us to have in the Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7)
- ❤ What kind of love does he call us to in the parable of the Good Samaritan? (Luke 10:30ff)
- ❤ What kind of love does Christ have for us when he says: "You are my friends?" (John 15:14ff)

Generous love guards LIFE

Loving persons generously is more than just liking them. When we love someone, we want that person to have every kind of really good thing. We want him or her to be healthy, happy, and good. We want him or her to be a great person, the kind of person that everyone loves.

For God made all our hearts hungry for what is really good, and hungry to know the truth. God made us to love precious things like life and friendship. For when we **love** other people, we want them to be really happy and to have what is really good. So love for friends helps us to love what is really good.

The world is full of precious things that we should care about.

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8).

It is good to have hearts that love and hunger for good things. All our life we should pursue good things well, never hurting others, so that we can find precious things for ourselves.

Abortion and euthanasia destroy LIFE

Real love, loving each person as God wants us to, is precious. But dishonest love, phony love, is not precious.

Love of some kinds of things is dangerous, and can become wrong. To love money, or to love power, to love to be improtant, can lead to the greatest selfishness and cruelty. So the Lord urges us to have hearts that love people generously, not hearts that love money or power.

Real love guards life and sees it as ultimately **precious**, as more than just productive, useful, or convenient.

We are called to protect and to assist those whose lives are weak because of sickness or helplessness. When people in the world today seek to deliberately

end the lives of persons who are sick and dying, this is called *euthanasia*. To end the life of an unborn child in the womb is called *abortion*. Persons who commit either act are wrong. They forget that life is a gift which only God can give or take away.

Some other kinds of love are bad. Impure love of other people is bad. It is not real love at all. It is not finding others to be dear and wanting all things to go well for thm. It is not doing things that will make them happy. Instead, it is using them, even hurting them, to make ourselves happy.

Impure love is a selfish distortion of love. It does not honestly want what is good for other people. Rather, the person who loves un-chastely wants to do something that in fact hurts the other person. It hurts the other person in body and in soul.

Unchaste love is dishonest. It tells another: "I love you, and will always love you." But it does not really love. Rather, it wants to do something that hurts the other person deeply, so that some pleasure can be seized by using the other person badly. When each of the two persons is using the other badly for the sake of pleasure, this is far from honest and good love.

God made sex, and it is good. And falling in love can be very good. But falling in love is a serious thing. One needs to grow up to fall in love rightly. For romantic love inclines people to the kinds of affection that are meant for marriage, and **homes**, and love that lasts a lifetime and guards most important things.

Sex is not a mere toy. God made it for precious purposes. He made it to serve the enduring love of people who marry and promise generously to give all they have and all they are to each other. Sex is a happy reality, but not a trivial one. It was made to guard homes, to make the love of fathers and mothers last, and so to be strong defenses of the home. It was made so that new **young** life could be born into the world safely, and people could, with generous hearts, love the children that are born of their own generous love.

But treating sex as a toy is not love. It is rather a blow against love. It is a sin that weakens love and makes life much less happy and strong.

Generous love leads to purity and CHASTITY

True love is thoughtful and cares. It cares about everything that is really good, and certainly not just about selfishly getting pleasure for myself. Love is happy to put off pleasure for myself when being faithful to what is good requires that. And love happily enjoys good things when it is right to do so.

Chaste love is love that is honest and unmixed with dishonesty and selfishness. When a boy and girl fall in love, there are many happy ways in which chaste love can lead them also along good and happy paths.

But true love never does things that hurt others. It never leads others to sin or endangers them in any ways. It **cares** about what is really good, not just what happens for a moment to feel good.

Chaste love lasts. For it cares about good things that last. "Blessed, happy, are the pure in heart," our Lord said. And the experience of life makes us see how true this is.

Our hearts can be deceived by the unchaste images with which the world is filled. If we let our imaginations and hearts be filled with the lust that is part of the world's cruelty and dishonesty, we too can be led far from true love, and from the Lord. But if we seek to have **generous** and truthful love direct our lives, or lives get much better.

Discussion: Finding good teachers

These days sexuality is talked about wildly. It is a good thing that deserves respect. It is something so important for human life that when people speak of it foolishly or falsely they can do much harm. All kinds of people want to be "sexuality educators" for young people today. But we should have the best teachers for so sensitive and precious a thing.

- ✓ Who would be the best people for telling me what sexuality means and is?
- ✓ People who know me well and love me, or people who hardly know me at all?
- ✓ People who know what life is about, or people who are mixed up and unhappy about life?
- ✓ People who have the light of faith, and who have learned to live the kind of love Christ taught, or people who have strange visions of life, far from what the Lord teaches?
- ✓ Who are the best people to talk with about the concerns and questions we have about sexuality?
- ✓ In which of these examples of people am I like to learn about sexuality in the best ways?
- ✓ From my parents, or grandparents?
- ✓ From classmates?

- ✓ From those who teach Christ's ways to me?
- ✓ From rock stars and movie stars?
- ✓ From television?

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

1. Jesus taught us about love through the great commandment.
2. Generous love of others is the core of real love.
3. Love guards truth and life carefully.
4. Acts such as abortion, euthanasia, and extra-marital sex destroy life and love.
5. Chastity of heart reflects true and generous love.

Write your notes down here!

THE CATHOLIC Vision of Love

Diocese of Pittsburgh

Personal Safety Curriculum

Grade 6

Personal Safety
Grade 6

PRACTICING BOUNDARIES

Home, School, and Online Safety Guidelines for Children

LESSON OUTLINE:

- Introduction & Opening Prayer: 5 Minutes
- Teaching on Human Dignity and Communicating Boundaries: 10 – 15 Minutes
- Activity—Talking about Boundaries using Scenarios: 10 – 20 Minutes
  (This can be done by dividing the group and letting the students talk about each scenario, and then share with large group, or by facilitating discussion about each scenario with the entire group.)

- Wrap Up & Connection to Catholic Social Teaching and Dignity of Human Person: 7 – 10 Minutes
- Closing Prayer: 5 – 7 Minutes

LESSON BACKGROUND:
Human life is sacred: *"Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."56* (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2258, Notation 56 CDF, instruction, Donum vitae, intro. 5.)

1. All life has dignity: Morality is a call to recognize our dignity as men and women, created in the image of God and recipients of life in Christ. *"The Ten Commandments state what is required in the love of God and love of neighbor. The first three concern love of God, and the other seven love of neighbor" (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2067)*

"The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (article 1); it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude (article 2). It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment (article 3). By his deliberate actions (article 4), the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience (article 5). Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth (article 6). With the help of grace they grow in virtue (article 7), avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son1 to the mercy of our Father in heaven (article 8). In this way they attain to the perfection of charity."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 1700 and Part Three – Life in Christ: Section one- Man's Vocation Life in the Spirit, Chapter One The Dignity of the Human Person)

2. Charity is Christ-like: *"The Ten Commandments state what is required in the love of God and love of neighbor. The first three concern love of God and the other seven love of neighbor." "As charity comprises the two commandments to which the Lord related the whole Law and the prophets . . . so the Ten Commandments were themselves given on two tablets. Three were written on one tablet and seven on the other."*

(Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 2067, Notation 27 St. Augustine, Sermo 33, 2, 2: PL 38, 208.)

All glory and honor goes to God, and to His heirs: "Give honor to all, love the community, fear God, honor the king." (1 Peter 2:17)

"Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

3. God respects boundaries: God gave all humankind free will, the ability to choose for oneself the degree to which any relationship may progress, including a relationship with God. Man may choose a relationship with God, and is responsible for his actions and choices. God created the world, placed people (created in God's image) in it, gave them responsibilities, and set limits (tree of knowledge of good and evil), and allowed man to make choices. God held, and still holds men accountable for actions, heals broken relationships, yet does not seek to control choices. God is a respecter of boundaries and teaches us how to do the same. *(Genesis Chapter 1, John Chapter 3, Verse 16).*

4. We are responsible for our words: *"Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 21:23); "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29)*

What we say and how we say it makes a difference: *"Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, and do not leave room for the devil" (Ephesians 4:25-27); "A mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise pours out knowledge, but the mouth of fools spurts forth folly. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse one crushes the spirit" (Proverbs 15:1-4)*

OPENING PRAYER *(see Page 3- distribute **student handout**)*

Catechist

6th Grade

PRACTICING BOUNDARIES
OPENING PRAYER

LEADER: God loves us so much, as his sons and daughters, that He wants us all to be happy. When God made us, He wanted us to have a special friendship with each other. God made us in His image, which is SO good. Let's start our talk today about friendship and respect with a prayer paying special attention to the words from Scripture.

ALL: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

READER 1: Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created worthy. ***(Revelation 4:11)***

READER 2: God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. ***(Genesis 1:27)***

ALL: Jesus, help us to live today as children created in your image.

READER 3: Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. ***(1Corinthians 3:16-17)***

ALL: Jesus, help me to love myself and my neighbor today, as you have loved me.

LEADER: Jesus taught us how to pray to His Father, so let us together pray the Lord's Prayer.

ALL: Our Father, who art in Heaven….Amen.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Catechist Notes

Grade 6

DIGNITY AND BOUNDARIES

Teaching on Human Dignity and Communicating Boundaries 10-15 Minutes

Explanation/Lesson Content:

1. WHAT IS A BOUNDARY?
A visible or invisible separation between you and me, or something that shows us a border or limit.

Examples of boundaries:

- Call before you come to my house
- Don't write on my homework
- You can sit next to me but not on my lap

Healthy boundaries let us know who you are as an individual and tell us about your needs, feelings, and thoughts. They help you decide what you will and will not do. They show us how to respect you and treat you with dignity.

God created us to be social. We generally like having contact with others.

- Do you find that to be true?

We can establish boundaries to make our interactions smoother, more comfortable, and safe.

Boundaries also help us know ourselves better. If we get our self-worth from pleasing others— it's much harder to set boundaries.

You can't ignore a boundary without paying a price.

Examples:

- **Examples of VISIBLE Boundaries:** A fence in between your yard and your neighbor's yard…The fence helps us to know what we are responsible for and what is not ours. If we want to go to our neighbor's yard, we should ask permission first.

- **Examples of INVISIBLE Boundaries:** Hampton School District, Pine Richland School District—even though there is no visible line drawn between the two districts, we see some signs that remind us of where boundaries are.

- **Examples of VISIBLE Boundaries with People:** When your friend is in class across the hall, you do not have permission to talk to your friend or enter the classroom because of the door and the walls. Because you see these things, you know that you must ask for permission to enter the room and approach your friend.

- **Examples of INVISIBLE Boundaries with People:** The imaginary bubble around us! Although this boundary cannot be seen, we are aware of our comfort level when a stranger gets too close to our personal space, like in an elevator when everyone is packed together. When someone enters your invisible boundary by accident, you can say, "Excuse me" and try to back up or get away. When someone enters your invisible boundary on purpose, you can say "Step back! You're too close!" or "Help! No!", and run away.

- **Examples of Boundaries on the Internet or on your Cell Phone:** People who you don't know in real life shouldn't know certain things about you, like where you live, your last name, or what you look like. Phones should only be used to communicate with people that you know in the real world. You should never talk/text about sex with strangers. Sometimes people will bully other people online or on the phone. This isn't okay either.

2. GOD RESPECTS BOUNDARIES…Think about it:

How does God respect boundaries?

- God created the world, placed people (created in God's image) in it, gave them responsibilities, and set limits (tree of knowledge of good and evil), and allowed man to make choices.

- God gave all humankind free will, the ability to choose for oneself the degree to which any relationship may progress, including a relationship with God.

- Man may choose a relationship with God, and has responsibility for his actions and choices.

- God holds men accountable for their actions and heals broken relationships, yet does not seek to control choices.

- God respects boundaries and teaches us how to do the same.
  (Genesis Chapter 1, John Chapter 3, Verse 16).

- Even within our relationship with God, God continues to respect boundaries.

- Because God loves us so much, he will not force us to love him back, and he will not force us to open our hearts to his love.

- In the book of Revelation, God's words are powerful and true, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, (then) I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" (3:20).*

Imagine how patient and loving our God is to wait for us to invite him into our lives.

3. BOUNDARIES KEEP US SAFE:

<u>How do boundaries keep up safe?</u>

- Because boundaries are so special and define ownership, we should treat boundaries with care and respect.

Some ways to do this:

- When we want to enter someone's home, we knock on the door and wait to be admitted. (Example: We don't barge in our neighbor's home.)

- When we want to enter a conversation, we say "excuse me" and wait to be addressed. (Example: We don't interrupt Mom talking to her friend.)

- When we want to enter someone's personal space, and determine if it is appropriate and welcome. (ex. We don't hug strangers.)

- When we bump into someone on an elevator or in line by accident, we say excuse me and try very hard to prevent it from happening again.

Remember, only certain people, like our parents and doctors, are allowed to hug us without asking, touch our bodies, or ask personal questions about our private life.

- When someone crosses our physical boundaries, like hugging us without asking or touches our bodies, we should say "NO" and "Get Away".

- When someone speaks to us in a way that makes us feel uncomfortable, we should be able to tell our parents or another adult.

Because we were each made in the image and likeness of God, we deserve dignity and should not feel bad about protecting ourselves.

4. SAYING "NO"…BOUNDARIES ARE NOT PUNISHMENTS.

- Even in the beginning, God set boundaries for his children when he told Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree in the center of the Garden.

- Parents will set boundaries for their little children to keep them from getting hurt. What are some of those?

- How do you say no to someone who wants to eat your lunch, or sit in your chair, or take your homework?

- It helps to be very clear about what you want and why.

Boundaries are not punishments. You don't NEED to apologize for setting a boundary.

- How do you say no to someone who wants to cross another physical boundary with you?

If you don't have a good NO, you can't have a healthy YES…

5. LOVE RESPECTS BOUNDARIES

<u>What is the Catholic vision of loving?</u>

- The Catholic vision of love is not a feeling, it's a lifestyle.
  In fact, it's THE Lifestyle that Jesus taught to his disciples:

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 6:20-36

All: Glory to you, Lord.

And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.

But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic.

Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit (is) that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount.

But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as (also) your Father is merciful. The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

- The Catholic vision of loving like Christ loves, tells us that love is giving to others all the things that we would want them to give to us if we were in their situation, even if they can't pay us back—it's generous love.

- It's so generous that we are called to do all of these things especially if they can't pay us back. *"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" means that God gives us so much, even though we can't pay him back, so we should do the same for others.*

6. HOW DOES LOVE RESPECT BOUNDARIES?

- But these words of Christ can be confusing to us because they tell us to <u>love</u> our enemies, to <u>be kind</u> to those who hate us, and more shockingly…"to the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well!"

- God wants us to love our enemies, and pray for them, but God doesn't want us to let people hurt us for any reason. These words DO NOT mean that we have to let people hurt us—when a person harms you in any way it's good to tell someone you trust. A parent, teacher, or trusted adult can help you.

- It is Christ-like to pray for those who hurt us, but no one is allowed to hurt you on purpose….you are God's special creation, whom He loves very much.

"…the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us." Romans 5: 5

"Behold, I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

DISCUSSION GUIDE ACTIVITY

20 – 30 Minutes

Catechist/Facilitator Notes:

Talking with young people about boundaries is very important. This can be done in a couple of ways. One way to discuss this with young people is to divide them in small groups to discuss each scenario, and then bring the entire group together and have the young people explain their decisions.

Another way is to read each scenario to the class and help them discuss what to do. Some things to ask, or to keep in mind:

"I don't know…." While there are times that this response from a child means what they are saying, often they are ways to say, "I don't want to express my opinion around my peers," "I'm afraid to say what I really think, " or "I don't want to think about this very hard." Do not accept responses that avoid answering the question.

In those cases, consider responding with, "How about we all talk with a partner about this for a minute and then share with the group," "Oh, I bet if we all thought about it together we could figure it out," or "Well, tell me a reason that you like one in particular…."

"Why do you think that boy is crying?" Emotions are often difficult to discuss—for everyone. But young people really need to practice empathy with their peers. Remember to ask open ended questions to clarify and help explain. Another great question to ask in conversations about tough topics, "What do you mean by that?"

It's okay to say, **"This is complicated, so let's really talk about it…"** Young people should be able to practice talking about their feelings, reactions, and experiences. This is a great way to open the door for conversations with their parents.

Set boundaries for this kind of discussion with young people (example: One person talking at a time; write down ideas and pass them to the front; get together with your group and discuss, etc).

Some considerations from this activity: This is an important activity to help teach children about sexual predators, exploitation, and groomers. Groomers use information that they gather about the victim to make them feel safe and liked.

Some of the scenarios discussed in the activities in this section look at tactics that kids can watch out for (these are themes for which there are many variations, let the kids know what they are):

“Let’s go private.” (Inviting the child to leave the public chat room and create a private chat or move to instant-messaging or phone texting)

“Where’s your computer in the house?” (To see if parents might be around)

“What’s your favorite video game, television show, sports team?” (Questions like these tell the groomer more about their victims so that they know what gifts to offer – e.g., concert tickets; Webcam, software, video games)

“I know someone who can get you a modeling job. (Opens a doorway for inappropriate photos)

“You seem sad. Tell me what’s bothering you.” (This is sympathy leading to a false sense of trust)

“What’s your phone number?” (Asking for personal info of any kind – usually happens at a later stage, after the target’s feeling comfortable with the groomer)

“If you don’t… [do what I ask], I’ll… [Tell your parents OR share your photos in a photo blog / Webcam directory / file-sharing network].” (Intimidation – used as the groomer learns more and more about the target)

“I have never loved anyone as much as I love you.” (Playing on the emotions of the target, this sometimes will convince kids to do things that they normally wouldn’t even think of)

JESUS
THE WAY,
THE TRUTH,
THE LIFE.

Grade 6

THE CATHOLIC Vision of Love
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DISCUSSION GUIDE ACTIVITY

20 – 30 Minutes

1. <u>TALKING ABOUT UNDERSTOOD BOUNDARIES</u> — 5 minutes

(As a large group discussion or in small groups, with large group sharing at end, facilitated by Catechist/Adult)

What are some other places where we have boundaries, and what are they?

- **In Friendships**
- **In School**
- **With Media (including text messages and online)**
- **Other**

<u>Questions that may help with this:</u>

- **What is a healthy/reasonable expectation for the interaction?**
- **What is an unhealthy/unreasonable expectation for the interaction?**
- **What factors may influence this?**

2. <u>TALKING ABOUT SITUATIONAL EVALUATIONS</u> – 15 minutes

(Catechist presents each scenario to the large group, then students discuss in small groups for 60 seconds – distribute student handout <u>Is It O.K. When?...</u>)

IS IT O.K. WHEN?... The class decides Yes or No

IS IT O.K. WHEN?...

(YOU DECIDE)

- ➔ **Your neighbor, who is an adult, always invites you over without your parents, and sometimes lets you play video games that your parents wouldn't approve of. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Your teacher offers to help you after school with a science project. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A stranger stops by your house and asks you to help find their dog. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A friend from online asks you for your address and tells you that they love you even though you've never met them. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Someone from a gaming site online wants you to send them a picture of you in your bathing suit. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A visitor stops by the home of the family that you babysit for and asks you to go home because they will watch the kids. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A teacher always hugs you after everyone leaves that classroom. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Your friend's dad offers to drive you home without your friend and takes a very long way to your house. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A friend takes your cell phone into the bathroom and sends a text message to someone else with it. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Someone sends you a picture message on your cell phone of someone without their clothes on. Why or why not?**

3. **<u>WHO DO I TALK TO? (And why/how could they help?)</u> – 10 Minutes**
(distribute student handout)

(*Catechist/Adult presents each person to the large group, then students discuss in small groups for 60 seconds if they need to, although some of these should be pretty straightforward – distribute student handout, <u>Who Do I Talk To?</u>)*

Catechist Notes

WHO DO I TALK TO?

(And why or how could they help?)

Parent	Teacher	Trusted Adult (who's that?)
Priest	Doctor	Friend
Friend's Parent		Anyone else?

- **What if my friend tells me that he/she is in trouble?**

- **What if I know that my friend is doing something dangerous?**

- **What if I think that my friend is doing something dangerous?**

- **What if I think that someone is hurting my friend?**

Grade 6

WRAP UP and CONNECTION TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON – 5 – 10 Minutes

Saint Francis of Assisi

- Francis grew up in a wealthy family of merchants. He was good looking and popular. He had a lot of friends, and a lot of money.

- When Francis was a young man, it was popular in his culture and time to join in fights over petty things. Francis crossed a lot of boundaries that he regretted for the sake of popularity, greed, pride, and lust.

- Francis and some friends had been taken as prisoners and held captive. While in captivity, Francis developed a low fever, which led to a long illness. As Francis' health returned, he realized that he needed to make changes in his behavior, priorities, and life. Over time, Francis changed everything. He no longer wanted any of those things that he thought were so important and worth fighting over before.

- Francis grew to love the poor and the sick. He took great joy in nature. He even would talk and sing to birds and animals and the sun! Some people thought he was crazy, but really, Francis was just free from the selfishness that made him cross over boundaries and do mean things. If Francis could change, can't we?

"If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.
Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus…" (Philippians 2:1-5)

- Remember, everyone is special because they were created in the image of God.

- Boundaries help us to respect our bodies and our neighbors' bodies.

- Boundaries also help us to respect the emotions, thoughts, and feelings of ourselves and others too.

- Every person has dignity—whether they are from our school or our neighborhood, whether they are rich or poor, like us or different from us.

- Every person deserves respect, including us.

The Catholic Catechism starts its section on Catholic morality with St. Leo the Great's beautiful words:

> "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God." (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 1691)

- Because we are created in the image of God, we are very good, and we can always turn to God for help with respecting boundaries.

- When someone comes into our space or crosses our boundaries without permission, we have the right to say "NO" and tell our parents or a teacher about it. When we cross a boundary without permission, we should apologize and make sure to try not to do it again.

- God knows our heart, and will help us. He gave us the Ten Commandments so that we could see how to stay close to him and respect boundaries. He also gave us our friend and Savior, Jesus, to show us how to follow God and be holy.

<u>Ask the class to respond to the following questions:</u>

1. Why might Christians need boundaries in order to preserve and respect their dignity?

2. What are some examples of healthy boundaries that do this?

    - At Home
    - At School
    - With Friends
    - Online
    - With Strangers

3. What can we do when our boundaries are crossed?

<u>End the class with the closing prayer to Saint Francis</u>

Closing Prayer

Catechist

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Student
6th Grade

PRACTICING BOUNDARIES
OPENING PRAYER

LEADER: God loves us so much, as his sons and daughters, that He wants us all to be happy. When God made us, He wanted us to have a special friendship with each other. God made us in His image, which is SO good. Let's start our talk today about friendship and respect with a prayer paying special attention to the words from Scripture.

ALL: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

READER 1: Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created worthy. *(Revelation 4:11)*

READER 2: God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. *(Genesis 1:27)*

ALL: Jesus, help us to live today as children created in your image.

READER 3: Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. *(1Corinthians 3:16-17)*

ALL: Jesus, help me to love myself and my neighbor today, as you have loved me.

LEADER: Jesus taught us how to pray to His Father, so let us together pray the Lord's Prayer.

ALL: *Our Father, who art in Heaven….*Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Student Handout

IS IT O.K. WHEN?...

(YOU DECIDE)

- ➔ **Your neighbor, who is an adult, always invites you over without your parents, and sometimes lets you play video games that your parents wouldn't approve of. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Your teacher offers to help you after school with a science project. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A stranger stops by your house and asks you to help find their dog. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A friend from online asks you for your address and tells you that they love you even though you've never met them. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Someone from a gaming site online wants you to send them a picture of you in your bathing suit. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A visitor stops by the home of the family that you babysit for and asks you to go home because they will watch the kids. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A teacher always hugs you after everyone leaves that classroom. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Your friend's dad offers to drive you home without your friend and takes a very long way to your house. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **A friend takes your cell phone into the bathroom and sends a text message to someone else with it. Why or why not?**
- ➔ **Someone sends you a picture message on your cell phone of someone without their clothes on. Why or why not?**

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Student Handout

WHO DO I TALK TO?

(And why or how could they help?)

Parent	Teacher	Trusted Adult (who's that?)
Priest	Doctor	Friend
Friend's Parent		Anyone else?

- **What if my friend tells me that he/she is in trouble?**

- **What if I know that my friend is doing something dangerous?**

- **What if I think that my friend is doing something dangerous?**

- **What if I think that someone is hurting my friend?**

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Student

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.