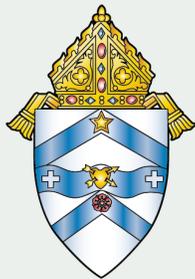


Diocese
of Austin

Developmental
Guidelines for
Chaste Living
Topics

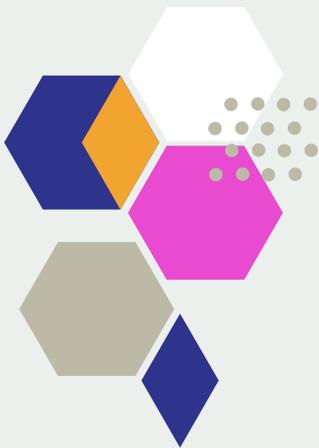


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Developmental Guidelines for Chaste Living Topics

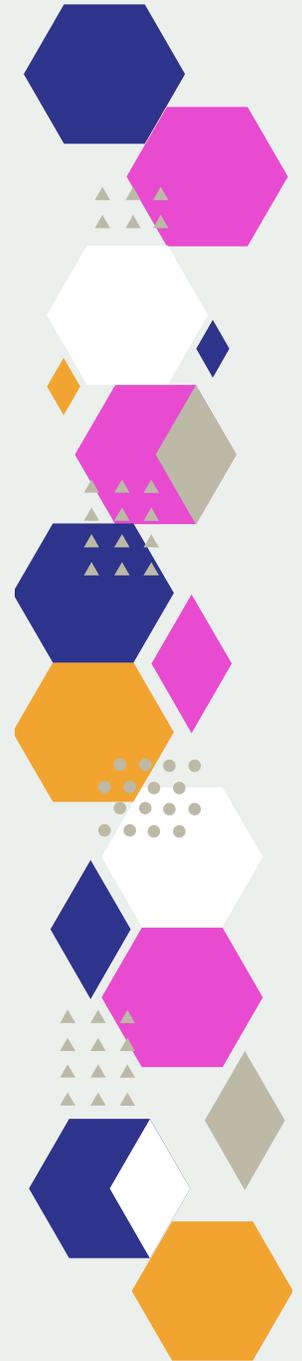


At various ages, children have questions about human sexuality, specifically those that have to do with biological and reproductive content. Some children ask questions, and some do not. Appropriate responses to these questions often induces anxiety in parents and other adults because they either do not feel comfortable answering the questions with the "right" responses or because they fear their responses may influence their children to act in a certain way. Many of these fears can be alleviated when schools and parishes assist parents with educational guidance, which emphasizes age-appropriate Christian formation.

Ideally, parents should be the first to introduce biological and reproductive materials to their children. The ideal time is the fourth or fifth grade or when the child is 9 to 11 years old, or when parents feel it is appropriate to share the information. Teachers in the sixth and eighth grades should work collaboratively with parents to determine how and when they should review and reinforce more physiological and reproductive information. Parents should ensure this is always within the Catholic moral context.

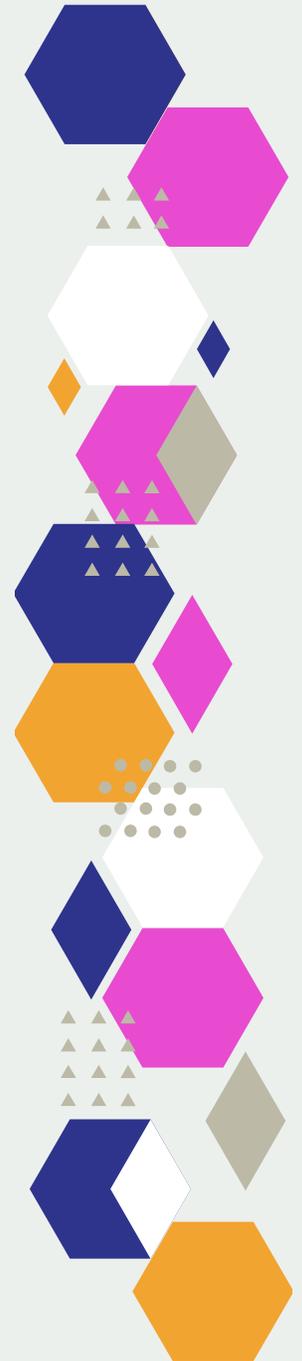
Early Childhood age [Ages: birth to 5 years]

- Tell and convey to children they are loved, valued, cherished and prized.
- Provide examples of how God loves people as his adopted sons and daughters, and how people love God, especially communicated through family love.
- Help children develop a personal relationship with God through prayer.
- Emphasize the wonder of life, and how love creates and helps life to grow.
- Give children proper names for body parts, including their genitals.
- Address natural curiosity by helping children understand elimination and knowledge of sexual parts.
- Instruct children to care and respect their own bodies with good hygiene, eating habits and exercise.
- Accept children's actions that are natural.
- Correct inappropriate behavior.
- Moderate and supervise television, electronic devices and print materials.
- Seek guidance for developmentally appropriate behavior. Use discretion and gentle redirection with children's own sexual behavior.
- Encourage children to accept themselves as whole persons with their strengths and limitations.
- Respect children verbally, physically and emotionally.
- Offer parental warmth and affection.
- Spend significant time with each child.
- Provide a variety of supportive relationships with loving married and single adults.
- Develop the foundation for moral decision-making by allowing children to make simple choices.
- Provide gentle, ongoing, and morally good guidance.
- Foster open lines of communication with children.
- Help children learn the consequences of their actions.
- Provide a balance between structured and free play.
- Offer a variety of play and interaction opportunities.



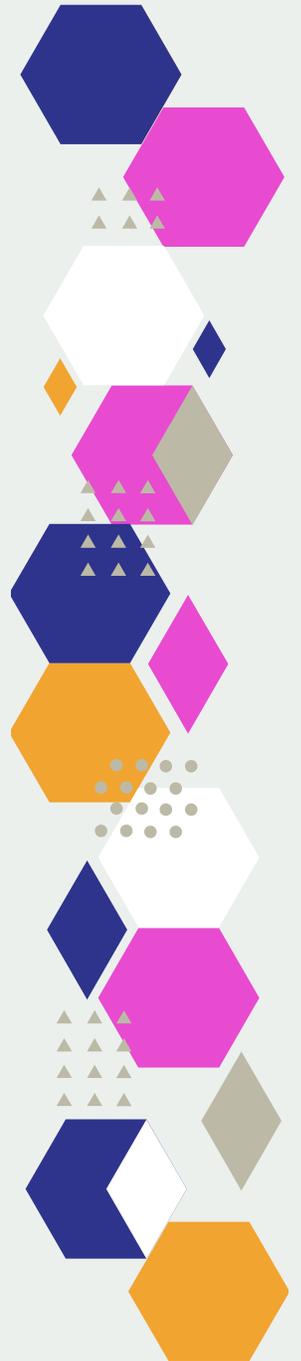
Early Childhood age [Ages: birth to 5 years] Continued

- Demonstrate appreciation of equality and mutuality of men and women.
- Accept children without stereotyped role and gender expectations.
- Be attentive to the emotional needs of each child and recognize and support those needs.



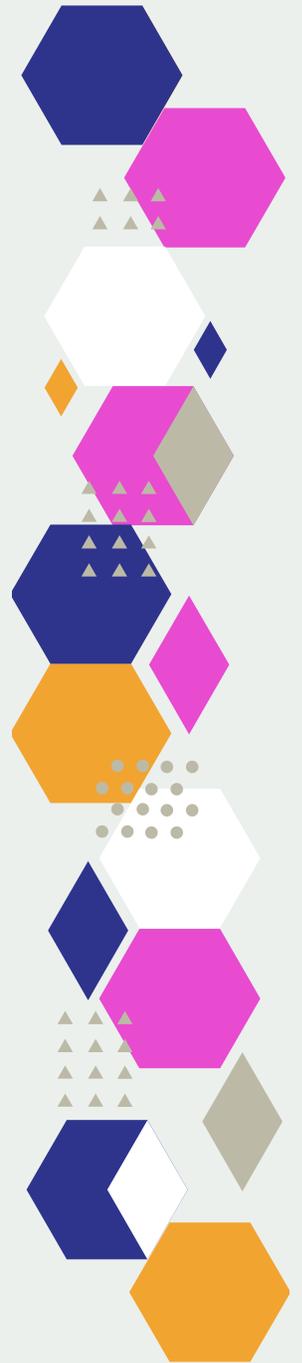
Childhood [Ages: 6-8]

- Provide opportunities for families to learn, pray and socialize.
- Affirm faithful and trusting relationships, especially among parents and family members.
- Invite good adult role models to share time and gifts with children.
- Engage in planning, implementing, and evaluating sexuality programs with your parish.
- Learn and practice effective communication with your child.
- Create intergenerational experiences that reinforce loving beliefs and practices.
- Help children to understand their developing bodies and basic physiological processes.
- Promote good health care habits.
- Help children understand the importance of modesty, self-discipline, and the need for privacy.
- Guide children in relating to persons of the same and opposite sex.
- Teach honest communication skills that involve listening, sharing, forgiving and trusting.
- Affirm the equality and unique differences of men and women.
- Address relationship barriers, such as cultural stereotyping.
- Help children to recognize how they are loved and able to love.
- Assist children with genuine and appropriate expressions of love and affection.
- Teach children how to accept and love others different from themselves.
- Foster experiences of personal and sacramental reconciliation in their everyday life.
- Help children understand their growing relationship with God.
- Prepare children for the Eucharist and how to live eucharistically.
- Familiarize children with Scripture and its application to their lives.
- Use resources and materials to discuss plant and animal reproduction with your children. Also, use materials to address pregnancy and the beginning of life. (Angel in the Waters (book); holyheroes.com; spiritual adoption through Holy Heroes)
- Emphasize the awe, wonder, and sacredness of life, and the responsibility to care for it.



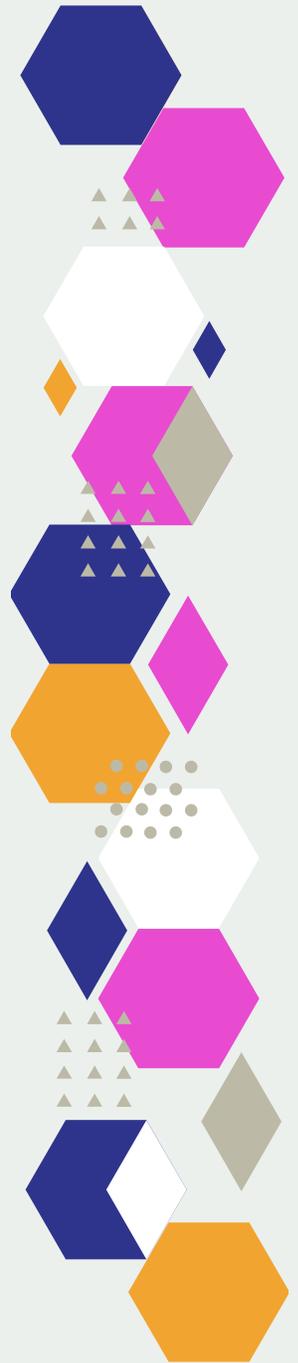
Younger Adolescents [Ages: 9-14]

- Teach younger adolescents respect for their bodies.
- Help adolescents appreciate the different rates of growth including physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual.
- Reaffirm the value of personal modesty.
- Offer reassurance that sexual attraction is natural and normal.
- Instruct adolescents on proper hygiene and health care.
- Encourage development of good nutritional habits and regular exercise routines.
- Inform adolescents of health hazards that smoking and vaping presents, as well as the effects of alcohol and drug abuse.
- Provide a basic understanding of the biological processes of the body appropriate to their age of development.
- Teach the basic facts of human fertility and reproduction within the context of Christian marriage.
- Promote the virtue of chastity as it relates to bodily integrity, self-respect, and respect for others.
- Reassure their capacity to love and to be loved.
- Invite good adult role models to share their time and gifts with children.
- Assist adolescents in communicating with parents and trusted adults.
- Instruct adolescents in appropriate physical and emotional expressions of love and affection.
- Explain that Christian marriage is the context in which love is expressed fully by means of sexual intercourse.
- Explain the Church's teaching about sex outside marriage.
- Encourage adolescents in becoming familiar with Jesus as their personal model of maturity, friendship, and relational skills.
- Uphold the lives of the saints as well as other adult role models for inspiration and imitation.
- Share the Church's teachings regarding Theology of the Body with adolescents. Give them the tools to respond to the pressures regarding pornography, abusive language, the exploitation of sex and sexuality in movies, television, online and social media activity, advertising, music, videos and magazines.



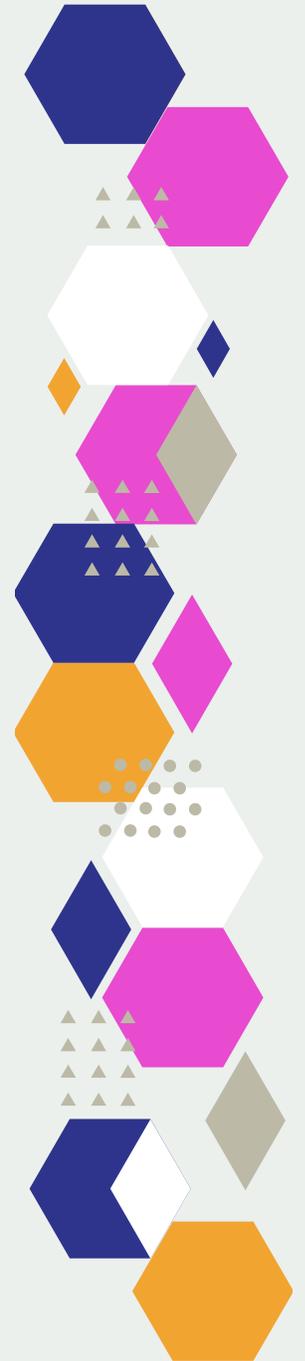
Younger Adolescents [Ages: 9-14] Continued

- Instruct on the Church's teaching on masturbation and offer pastoral responses.
- Explain the nature and effects of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Provide a simple explanation on the Church's teaching regarding heterosexuality and homosexuality.
- Guide adolescents in the art of moral decision making in concrete applications.
- Assist in developing a personal and social sense of responsibility concerning consequences and their actions.
- Encourage the preparation and reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- Offer adolescents opportunities and outlets for expressing their creativity and newfound energy levels i.e.sports, drama, hobbies, and music



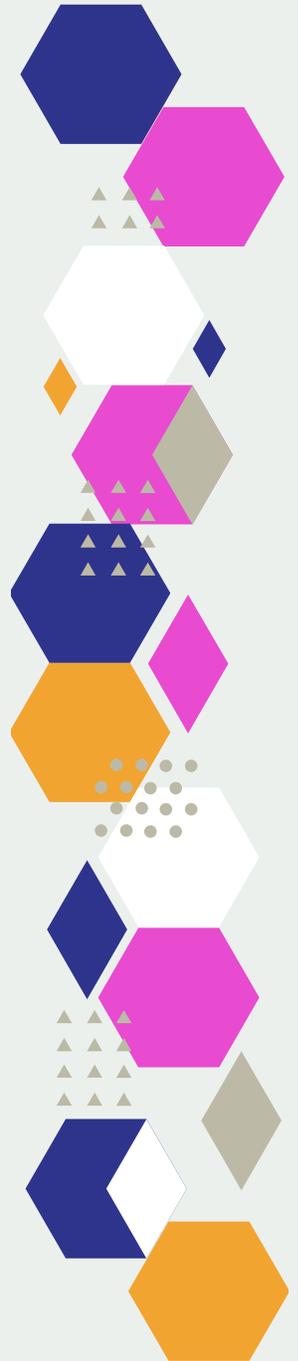
Older Adolescents [Ages: 15-18]

- Help older adolescents appreciate the wonder and awe of their bodies, especially their fertility, and the responsibility that accompanies the gifts.
- Encourage them to identify Jesus as the model for relational maturity and friendship.
- Teach adolescents the value and skills for respecting their own bodies and those of others.
- Continue to encourage good personal hygiene and nutritional habits.
- Continue discussions regarding the harmful effects of smoking and vaping, drugs and alcohol.
- Explain how the Christian views sexuality at the service of love.
- Teach friendship-building and conflict resolution skills.
- Examine the nature and effects of sin as it affects their sense of self and relationship with others.
- Teach God's forgiveness and mercy.
- Encourage regular reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- Promote the values and skills in living the virtues of chastity and modesty.
- Teach appropriate expressions of affection and love related to their state of life.
- Foster a healthy sense of equality and mutuality between the sexes.
- Provide real options for avoiding temptations and practicing the virtue of purity.
- Assist youth with forming their consciences and encouraging Gospel and Church-based moral decision making.
- Model healthy same- and opposite-sex relationships.
- Provide a course in marriage preparation for the discernment of Christian lifestyles.
- Discuss the Church's teachings on the meaning of Christian vocations—marriage, religious life and single life. Discuss the Church's teachings on the specifics of marriage, divorce, annulment and remarriage.
- Instruct them on responsible parenthood.
- Instruct them on Church teaching on the use of contraception, non-marital sex and masturbation.



Older Adolescents [Ages: 15-18] Continued

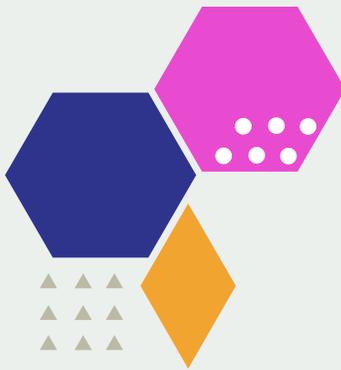
- Teach how the media exploits sex.
- Provide a simple explanation of the Church's teaching on In Vitro Fertilization and other reproductive technology.
- Provide a Catholic perspective about heterosexuality, homosexuality and gender identity.
- Inform teens about the value and dignity of the human person. Discuss life issues: death penalty, abortion, euthanasia, racism, etc. that go against the sacredness of human life "from womb to tomb."
- Instruct on the source, nature, and effects of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Utilize resources such as *Theology of the Body for Beginners* by Christopher West, and *Love and Responsibility* by Karol Wojtyła, to help inform children and yourself about the sacredness of life and human sexuality.



Adulthood

- Provide knowledge of changing relationships in the developmental stages of adulthood.
- Provide opportunities for developing good communication skills, essential for healthy relationships.
- Explore vocations: single, married, and vowed religious life, in light of fidelity to chastity, commitment, and growth in intimacy with persons of the same and opposite sex.
- Provide opportunities and resources for Catholic guidance in moral decision making.
- Provide times and opportunities for reflection, prayer, discussion, and the sacraments.
- Foster Christian community-building and worship experiences.
- Foster an appreciation of moral issues in responsible parenthood and human reproduction..
- Encourage parents in their roles and responsibilities as moral educators as well as how to promote a positive environment for teaching human sexuality.
- Provide educational opportunities to parents to enhance their parenting skills and ability to contribute wisely to the sexuality education of their children.
- Seek proper understanding of the meanings of sexual dysfunction, sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Offer adults at every stage of development opportunity to live faithfully and responsibly the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of life.
- Develop skills to use the Internet to respond to sexual content which dehumanizes the dignity of the person e.g. monitoring sexual content, sexual predators, and setting up parental control software.





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