

Grade 5, Theme Three

Family Letter

Dear Family,

We are ready to begin Theme Three of *Fully Alive*, our family life program. Because the partnership of home, church, and school is so important, this letter is written to let you know what we talk about in class, and to offer some ideas for your involvement. For more information, please go to www.occb.on.ca.

About Theme Three

Theme Three of *Fully Alive* is called “Created Sexual: Male and Female.” God made us male and female, and all of God’s creation is good. In earlier grades, this theme was presented through a continuing story, which emphasized God’s plan for new life as the result of the love of mothers and fathers. In later grades, the message is unchanged, but the approach is more direct. As students enter puberty, they need to know about the changes they will experience, and about the responsibilities of being created male and female and following God’s plan for them.

In Theme Three we will:

- explore the idea that we do not *have* bodies, we *are* bodies; God created us as body/spirit persons.
- consider the major systems of the body, and learn that the reproductive system has unique characteristics.
- learn about the adult female and male reproductive systems and about human fertility in adult women and men.
- discuss the physical changes of puberty, as well as some of the emotional and social changes

Looking Ahead

New terms in Grade 5 that are related to the female reproductive system and have not appeared previously in the student book are *vulva*, *cervix*, *ovaries*, and *fallopian tubes*. New terms related to the male reproductive system are *urethra*, *scrotum*, *testicles*, and *vas deferens*. The only new term related to female fertility is *menstruation*, and new terms related to male fertility are *semen*, *ejaculation*, and *erection*. Other new terms introduced in Grade 5 are *fertilization*, and *implantation*. In Grade 6, the students review what they have learned about the changes of puberty, and study the development of a new human life from conception and implantation through the three trimesters of pregnancy.

Working together at school and at home

- At school, the students will be completing several sheets about the adult reproductive systems, human fertility, and the changes of puberty, and will bring these sheets home. One section of these sheets asks the students to list any questions they still have about these topics. Be sure to ask your child about the questions he or she may have. Some children are not comfortable asking questions in front of other students, and prefer to ask at home. You will find detailed information about the topics in this theme in the Online Family Edition of *Fully Alive* (www.occb.on.ca).
- Girls need to know about changes of puberty and be prepared well in advance of the beginning of menstruation. Again, you will find helpful information in the Online Family Edition of *Fully Alive*. You should also be aware that girls who develop early often experience teasing by peers. It is difficult to be among the first people going through the changes of puberty, and equally difficult to be among the last. Understanding parents cannot take away these difficulties, but can help ease the situation by their tact and patience.
- At school, the students will be discussing modesty and the importance of respect for the gift of sexuality by the way they speak, dress, and act. Unfortunately, they are also exposed to many examples of disrespect for sexuality, especially in the media. When the opportunity comes up, such as watching together television programs and commercials, it's important to discuss this issue with your child, and emphasize the need for respect for oneself as a girl or boy, and for others.

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Theme Three Topics

In Grade 5, Theme Three is developed through five topics. The opening topic explores the marvel of the human body, reviews the major body systems, and introduces some of the unique characteristics of the human reproductive system. The next two topics present the female and male reproductive systems, explore the meaning of fertility, and provide a description of how this system functions. Topics 4 and 5 turn to the maturation of the reproductive system, which begins with puberty. The students learn about the physical changes that take place as the body matures, and also explore some of the other changes and challenges that are part of growing up and becoming mature men and women.

Talking to Children about Sexuality

Before children begin school, they often ask their parents about where babies come from

and about the differences between the bodies of boys and girls. These are natural questions and parents are the best people to answer them. No one else has such a special relationship with the child or knows the child as well as parents.

God made us male and female and his creation is good. We are made to be images of God's love and this includes our bodies. In marriage, one of the ways we express this love is through our bodies, in sexual intercourse. This special expression of love creates a deep bond between husband and wife. Through sexual intercourse, they can share in God's creation of new life and welcome new children into their families.

Sexuality, of course, is not just about bodies, male and female reproduction, or how babies are born. It is mainly about people, who are male and female. Parents teach their children a great deal about what it means to be men and women. It isn't something parents talk about, or at least not often, but something that they do and are. The way a person feels about herself as a woman and the way a person feels about himself as a man are communicated to children. When parents respect each other, and the work that each parent does, children are learning about sexuality. When children see parents co-operating, helping each other, speaking lovingly to each other, and touching each other affectionately, they are learning very important lessons about sexuality.

Most parents want to talk about sexuality with their children, but many find it difficult. They feel shy because of a natural sense of modesty and because they are somewhat unsure of what to say. It's important to realize that the exact words you use don't matter. What matters is letting children know that you are happy to answer their questions. By this age, some children are becoming more aware of sexuality, although their interest is still childlike. Before the changes of puberty begin, they need to talk about sexuality and to know that it is normal to be curious about the body, and the special relationship between men and women.

The physical changes of puberty are introduced and explained in the *Fully Alive* school program in Grades 5 and 6. Information about puberty is also included in this Online Family Edition for Grade 5 at the end of Topic 5 of this theme. If you have not yet talked to your child about the changes of puberty, you will find information and suggestions in this material that may be helpful. The way you approach this topic will depend to some extent on your child's development. It's good for all children to be aware

that their bodies will change in a special way as they approach adolescence, and that it is normal for these changes to begin at different times for different people. In general, girls begin to develop from one year to two years earlier than boys. If your child is showing signs of physical maturation, you will want to prepare her or him with more specific information.

Another important reason for talking to children about sexuality is the important responsibility parents have to protect their children from sexual abuse. All children need to know that, with a few exceptions (for example, if the doctor needs to examine them), no one is allowed to look at or touch the private parts of their bodies. They should also be told that they should not look at or touch the private parts of another person's body, even if that person asks or tells them to. They should say no and tell you right away. It's important to reassure children that if someone is touching them in a way that makes them uncomfortable, or acting in a way that worries or frightens them, they can always talk to you and you will know what to do.

In our society, it is very difficult to shield children, even when they are young, from explicit information about sexuality. Television, the internet, popular music, movies, and newspapers all contribute to the situation. Parents can, however, try to limit what children see and hear with clear rules for using the internet, and by carefully monitoring the media to which children are exposed.

Despite your best efforts, however, your children will be exposed to ideas about sexuality that are not Christian. They will also hear about topics such as abortion, pornography, or gay marriage, and will likely have questions about these issues. As children approach puberty, however, they are often more hesitant to ask their parents about topics they know are controversial. The reason for their hesitation could be a natural tendency to be more private as they develop; a concern that parents will be shocked or even angry if they ask about such issues; or because they are feeling awkward and unsure about how to raise the topic.

It's important for children to know that they can talk to their parents about whatever is on their mind, and that parents will try to answer their questions. Depending on the topic, you may want to give a brief answer, and say you will provide more information when he or she is a little older. And if your child asks a question that you

don't know the answer to, just say so. You can always ask someone else or look it up, and then provide an answer. Children don't need experts. They need parents who care and are willing to talk and listen.

Topic 1 — We Are Wonderfully Made

. . . your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. . .

I Corinthians 6:19

Summary

This topic helps the students appreciate how amazing the human body is. The teacher and students explore what it means to be a body/spirit person, review the major body systems that keep us alive, and learn about some of the unique characteristics of the reproductive system.

Main Ideas

- The human body is a remarkable creation. God created us as body/spirits.
- The major body systems that keep us alive are digestive, respiratory, skeletal, muscular, nervous, circulatory, and urinary.
- We have another major body system called the *reproductive system*. The purpose of this system is to create new life.

Family Participation

- This topic, and the ones that follow, give you the opportunity to talk to your child about sexuality and to answer any questions he or she may have.
- The most important idea in this topic is that we do not *have* bodies — we *are* bodies. At school, the students learned that although we often think of our bodies as something that we carry around the way a turtle carries its shell, in fact, we are our bodies, just as we are our spirits. In the past, some traditions have diminished the importance of the body, which led to thinking that our uniqueness as persons lay in our spirits (souls). But we are embodied spirits — we are created by God as body/spirit persons. The whole person is created sexual — male or female. We think, act, feel, love, and relate to each other as girls and boys, men and women. Sexuality is so much more than physical characteristics

and organs; it is a fundamental dimension of each person created in God's image.

- At the end of this theme you will find a list of words that have been introduced in Theme Three, beginning in Grade 1. This vocabulary list also includes any new terms that are introduced in Grade 5. The *Fully Alive* Teacher Guide includes this list, and teachers are given the option of duplicating it for the students. The students are not expected to memorize these terms, but to have some familiarity with them and their meaning. You may find it useful as a reference for yourself as you discuss this theme with your child.

Topic 2 — The Body System That Gives Life

One's personal sexuality is inevitably linked with one's ethical or moral values, which are not lifeless standards and rules, but practical expressions of God's plan.

OCCB, *Guidelines for Family Life Education, 1983*

Summary

This topic helps the students identify the major organs of the adult female and male reproductive systems. The students begin by reviewing the four unique characteristics of the reproductive system:

- The reproductive system does not begin to work until people reach puberty.
- The reproductive systems of males and females are quite different.
- The reproductive system cannot work alone, and requires both sexes.
- Other body systems keep us alive, but the reproductive system is for creating new life.

The focus of this topic is the differences between the adult female and male reproductive systems.

Main Ideas

- Most of the organs of a woman's reproductive system are inside her body. The part that can be seen is called the *vulva*. The other organs, which are inside her body, are the *vagina* (also called the birth canal), the *uterus*, the *cervix* (the opening at the bottom of the uterus), the *ovaries*, and the *fallopian tubes*.

- Most of the organs of a man's reproductive system are outside his body. These organs are the *penis*, the *urethra*, which is a narrow tube with an opening at the end of the penis, the *scrotum*, and, inside the scrotum, the *testicles*. There are tiny tubes inside the testicles that move the sperm cells along into storage areas. These tiny tubes lead to two large tubes called the *vas deferens*.
- The reproductive system is an important part of being created male and female. It is also a very private part of each person. Learning about this system sometimes makes people feel a little uncomfortable or embarrassed, because it is very personal. For this reason, we don't talk about the female and male body with just anyone, and are careful to speak respectfully.

Family Participation

- As children get older, they often find it more difficult to ask questions or talk about the physical aspects of sexuality. This is particularly true once they have begun to develop. If your child tells you about feeling shy or embarrassed by the topic of the male and female reproductive systems, you can reassure him or her that this is a natural feeling, and that you are always ready to listen and answer questions. Many parents have found that it is easier to communicate with children who are approaching or in early puberty when natural opportunities come up rather than sitting down to have a "big" talk. For example, a television program that involves a conflict about appropriate dress for 11-year-old girls; a complaint by a child that he or she is the smallest person in the class; a child's mention of gossip among girls about having boyfriends. All of these situations are opportunities to talk about growing up, which can lead to a discussion of sexuality.
- Parents are naturally protective of their children, and want their children to be young and innocent for as long as possible. For this reason, they are often upset when children raise what are considered adult subjects related to sexuality. After watching a news program or being part of a discussion in the schoolyard, a child asks a parent, "What is an abortion?" or "What does gay mean?" If the response is negative (e.g., Who told you about that? I don't want you talking about that. Where did you hear that word?) the child gets the message that certain topics are off limits. A better approach is to provide a simple answer, and to indicate that it's a complex subject that the child will learn more about when he or she is older.

Topic 3 — Human Fertility

*The values of human fertility are also the values of human sexuality. ...
If young people are able to see the connection between their sexuality and their fertility,
they will value both as they should, and even pride themselves on the maturing
sense of why God has made them male or female.*

Charles Norris and Jeanne Owen, *Know Your Body*

Summary

This topic builds on the previous one, and helps the students understand the gift of human fertility. The teacher and students explore the meaning of *fertility* (the power to give life) and of *procreate* (to reproduce or to give life). The teacher explains how the female and male reproductive systems work, and answers any questions the students have. Finally, the students reflect on the amazing capacity of a husband and wife to share the creative power of God, and give life to a new human being.

Main Ideas

- Females have a fertility cycle of about three to five weeks (about once a month) during which they are fertile for only a short period of time. The main events of this cycle are: the building a thick lining in the uterus, the release of an ovum (egg) into the fallopian tube, and the shedding of the lining (menstruation) if there is no new life conceived.
- Males are continuously fertile after their bodies have begun to produce sperm cells. This happens sometime after puberty.
- Sexual intercourse is a sign of the deep love between a husband and wife and has the potential to create new human life. This is a huge responsibility, for this new life, made in God's image, is a living person who needs the love and care of a mother and father.

Family Participation

- This topic on female and male fertility provides an opportunity to talk about the fact that our bodies are ready for parenthood long before we are fully mature as persons. A Christian view of sexuality always includes personal responsibility and moral standards. Well before children have to face decisions about sexual intimacy in their own lives, they need to hear the message that it is wrong to have sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

Sexual intercourse belongs only in a relationship of committed and faithful married love. It is a profoundly intimate and personal act that has the potential to create new life.

Topic 4 — Puberty Begins

In this world, things that are naturally to endure for a long time are the slowest in reaching maturity.

St. Vincent de Paul

Summary

This topic helps the students to understand and be prepared for the physical changes of puberty for both girls and boys. The teacher and students explore the different ages at which puberty begins, and the role of the pituitary gland, which controls the time at which puberty begins. The students learn about the many physical changes that take place for both males and females, and the range of ages at which these changes occur.

Main Ideas

- Puberty is the beginning of the life stage of adolescence, which is a time of many changes.
- Puberty begins when certain hormones are released by the pituitary gland and signal the ovaries in girls and the testicles in boys to begin making their own hormones. The hormones produced by the ovaries and testicles lead to the development of the physical characteristics of adult females and males.
- All people go through puberty, but on their own schedule. Some girls and boys begin to develop early; others develop much later.
- Once puberty has begun, it takes from four to five years for both males and females to complete its physical changes.

Family Participation

- The physical changes of puberty are presented for the first time in the Grade 5 *Fully Alive* school program, and are reviewed in Grade 6. It is an important topic for parents to talk about with their children. By age 10 or 11, a number of girls begin to show the first signs of puberty. Boys tend to develop somewhat later. Information about these changes is included at the end of this topic in the section, The Physical Changes Of Puberty. The

material in this section is for your use, and may give you some ideas about what you would like to say. There are also a number of books on puberty, both for parents and for children, that you may find helpful. You will want to be sure that these resources reflect your values.

- Information about preparing girls for menstruation is also included at the end of this topic in the section, Preparing Girls for Menstruation. Although the average age for first menstruation is 12, this event can occur at age 10 or 11, or, rarely, even earlier. It is essential for girls to understand what will happen and to be reassured that this event is a sign of their development and will not create a major disruption in the regular activities of their daily lives.
- As you are talking about growing up with your child, you may want to mention some of the physical changes that happen at puberty. You could explain that both boys and girls begin to grow quite quickly, and that their bodies begin to look more like those of adults. You might also mention that most girls and boys are quite sensitive about their bodies during this time of change. It takes time to get used to a new appearance. A certain amount of teasing is probably unavoidable, but it's important to let your child know that it can be very hurtful to people who are beginning to develop and are feeling self-conscious about their bodies.

The Physical Changes of Puberty

- Built into each person's body is a special "time-clock" for puberty. A gland inside the brain called the *pituitary gland* controls this biological clock. The pituitary gland releases chemical messengers called *hormones* into the bloodstream. Certain hormones carry messages from the pituitary gland to the ovaries in girls and the testicles in boys. These messages tell the ovaries and the testicles to produce their own hormones. Only then do the bodies of boys and girls begin to develop the physical characteristics of adult men and women.

Puberty: When Male Sexual Characteristics Develop

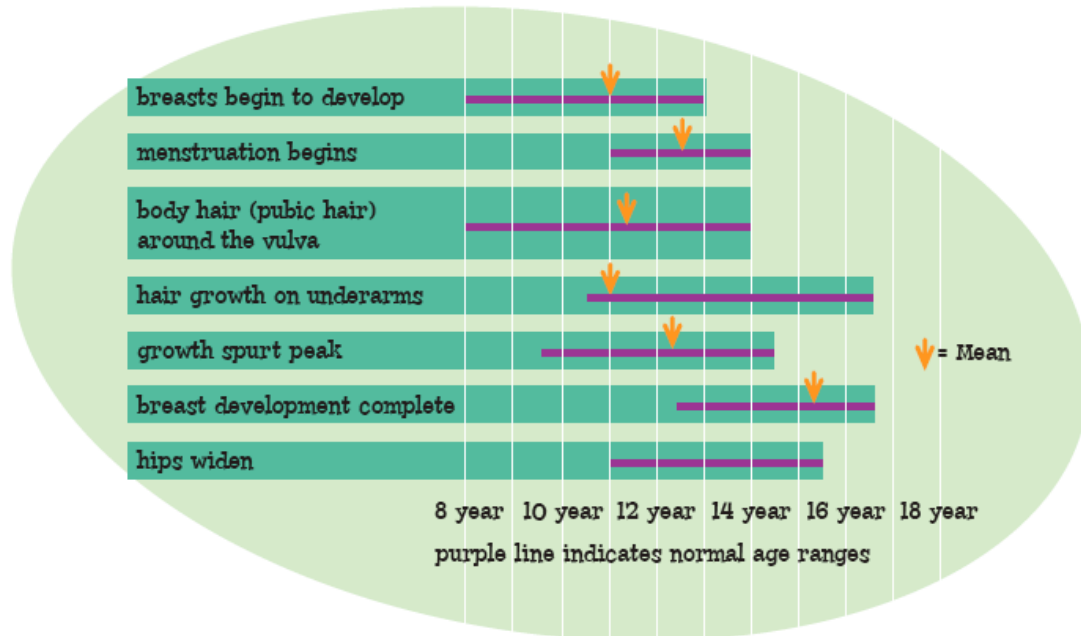


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- This chart shows the physical changes of puberty for boys, and the average age (mean age) at which the changes occur. As you can see there is a wide range of ages for each of these changes.
- Most boys show some signs of puberty by age 13 or 14. But it could be a few years earlier or a few years later. Once puberty has begun, it usually takes about 4 or 5 years for the body to complete the physical changes from boyhood to manhood. Even when males are fully grown, there are differences among them. Some men are taller and heavier than others. Some have thicker beards and more body hair than others.
- Sometime after a boy's appearance has begun to change, the testicles begin to produce sperm cells and special fluids that nourish and protect the sperm cells. The mixture of sperm and these fluids is called *semen*. There are special storage areas in the male body for the sperm cells, and at times these areas become too full. When this happens, the body expels semen through the penis. This process of clearing out extra sperm begins a number of years after puberty starts. It can happen so gradually that it may not be noticed, but sometimes it happens all at once, usually when the body is at rest. This is called a

nocturnal emission because the semen leaves the body while it is at rest during the night. This is a natural body process that is a sign of male fertility.

Puberty: When Female Sexual Characteristics Develop



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- This chart shows the physical changes of puberty for girls, and the average (mean) age at which these changes occur. As you can see there is a wide range of ages for each change.
- Most girls show some signs of puberty by age 11 or 12. But it could be a few years earlier or a few years later. Once puberty has begun, it usually takes 4 or 5 years for the body to complete the physical changes.
- These physical changes begin at different times. One girl may notice the earliest changes of puberty at age 9 or 10. Another girl may be 15 or 16 before her body begins to take on the appearance of a woman's body. Even when females are fully developed, there are differences among them. Some women are taller and heavier than others. Some have wider hips and larger breasts than others.
- Sometime after a girl's appearance begins to change, she menstruates for the first time. This happens to most girls when they are between eleven and thirteen years old, but it could be one or two years earlier or later. This first menstruation is an important sign that her body is maturing. Menstruation is often called a period, because it is something that

happens about once a month for a period of about three to seven days. When girls first menstruate, however, their cycles are not like those of adult women. Instead of a monthly cycle, it may be a number of months between their periods.

Preparing Girls for Menstruation

- Breast development generally precedes menstruation by one to two years as does the beginning of the growth spurt. Sometime before first menstruation, some girls notice a periodic discharge on their underwear. Since they may be concerned by this and think that something is wrong with them, it is important to reassure them that this is a normal part of development. It is something that all women experience, and so there is no need for them to be worried or embarrassed. This is normal and is caused by the hormones produced by the ovaries.
- As you explain menstruation it's a good idea to mention that when girls first begin to menstruate, their periods are often quite irregular. They may have their first period, and then not menstruate again for several months. For many girls it takes a number of years before a regular pattern of menstruating is established.
- Most often, girls' concerns about menstruation include whether it hurts, the amount of blood that is involved, and how quickly a period starts. You will want to reassure your daughter that there's no reason for menstruation to interfere with any of her activities. The amount of blood that is lost is actually quite small. Explain that periods normally start very slowly with a few drops of blood, which she will notice on her underwear, and that other people will not know that she has started menstruating. Sometimes girls are surprised or worried because the colour of the blood is brown. You might mention that this is what happens when blood is exposed to the air and dries.
- You need to explain that often there is mild discomfort at the beginning of a period, which is caused by contractions of the uterus, but this is not anything to worry about. Although a few girls have very painful menstrual cycles, it is not a good idea to mention this since it is the exception rather than the rule.
- Girls need information about caring for themselves during menstruation. At some point, you should explain how sanitary pads are worn. Many girls eventually use tampons, but generally not until a few years after they have started menstruating. They may have questions about tampons, however, and you could explain how they are used. Often,

mothers feel that girls who have just started menstruating are too young to use tampons, and the majority of younger girls are not anxious to use them. Girls who are involved in sports such as gymnastics and swimming, however, can find it embarrassing to wear pads, and may want to discuss using tampons with their mothers.

- Girls who are expecting their first period in the near future are often concerned that they will start when they are away from home. They may want to be prepared by carrying a mini-pad with them. They should also know that they can ask their teacher, the school nurse, or the secretary in the school office. All they have to say is, “I think I’ve just started my period, and I don’t have anything with me.”
- It’s extremely important to present menstruation as a normal, healthy process. Girls may have heard menstruation described as the “curse” or that they cannot bathe, wash their hair, or participate in sports while they have their period. They should be reassured that menstruation is not an illness, but a normal part of life, and that they can engage in all of their regular activities.

Topic 5 — Growing Up

*There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children.
One of these is roots; the other is wings.’*

Hodder Caner

Summary

This topic helps the students understand that puberty is not just a time of physical change, but also affects the whole person. The teacher and students consider some of the social and emotional changes that occur as people begin to grow up, like feeling self-conscious or wanting to fit in with friends. The students explore some of the reasons that times of change can be stressful, and reflect on how they can show their respect for the gift of sexuality as they grow up.

Main Ideas

- It is not just the body that develops during puberty. The whole person begins to develop. The changes of puberty affect the way people think and feel, and their relationships with family members and friends.

- It takes time and patience to complete the change from childhood to adulthood, and to become a fully mature person.
- One of the challenges of growing up is to become a person who respects the gift and the power of sexuality.

Family Participation

- You might ask your child how he or she feels about growing up. You could talk about the way privileges and responsibilities will change. Most children think more about the greater freedom they will have as they grow up than they do about responsibilities. If this subject comes up, it's a good opportunity to help your child begin to see that freedom and responsibilities are connected.
- It is also good for parents to reassure children that growing up is not something that happens overnight. Some children are not eager to grow up and can be alarmed by a lot of discussion of the changes of puberty and the life stage of adolescence. They need to know that they won't suddenly have to abandon their childhood.
- The onset of puberty, which marks the beginning of the early stage of adolescence, can be stressful. It takes time and patience for both children and parents to navigate the years from age 10 to age 15. It is normal for developing children to want more independence and privacy, become more involved in their friendships, feel self-conscious, wonder if they are normal, be somewhat moody, and test limits. They need adults in their lives, especially parents, but also other adults like teachers or coaches, to believe in them, listen to them, discipline them fairly, have clear expectations for them, give them more responsibilities, and encourage them to pursue their interests.
- As the occasion arises, it is good to help children understand that we grow up for a reason. We have something important to do with our lives. God has a plan for each one of us, and part of growing up is discovering what that plan is.

Fully Alive Theme Three Vocabulary

Amniotic fluid: the liquid inside the amniotic sac that cushions and protects the fetus.

Amniotic sac: a thin membrane filled with amniotic fluid; the new human life develops inside the amniotic sac.

Birth canal: the passageway from the uterus to the outside of the female body, which includes the vagina and cervix; the term is used most often during the birth of a baby.

Caesarian section: an operation in which the baby is delivered through an incision made in the abdomen and uterus of the mother; usually performed because the baby is too large for the birth canal, or in the wrong position for a safe delivery.

Cell: tiny structure of living creatures, both plant and animal. The adult human body is made up of billions of cells.

Cell division: the process by which one cell multiplies to two, from two to four, from four to eight, and so on.

Cervical mucus: secretions from the cervix (the neck of the uterus), which are stimulated by hormones in preparation for ovulation, and assist the sperm to survive and reach the ovum.

Cervix: part of the female reproductive system; the neck or narrow, lower part of the uterus, leading to the vagina.

Chromosome: a threadlike chemical structure that carries the genes, which determine the characteristics that are inherited from the parents; 23 pairs (46) chromosomes are found in the nucleus of each cell of the body with the exception of the sperm and ovum, which have only 23.

Conception: the time of fertilization when a new human life begins, which occurs when the sperm and the ovum join together and form a single new cell.

Contraction: the process by which a muscle tightens and becomes thicker and shorter; during the birth of a baby, the uterus regularly tightens and relaxes over a period of time in order to push the baby through the birth canal.

Cycle: a series of events that are continually repeated in the same order. The female reproductive cycle is sometimes described as a *menstrual cycle* or a *fertility cycle*, which refers to the building up of the lining in the uterus, the ripening of an ovum, ovulation, and menstruation if the ovum is not fertilized. In adult women a fertility cycle is completed every three to five weeks.

Ejaculation: a series of muscular contractions by which semen leaves the male body through the penis.

Erection: the condition of the penis when its soft tissues are filled with blood, causing it to become larger and firm.

Fallopian tube: part of the female reproductive system; two narrow tubes leading from the ovaries to the uterus, providing a passageway for the ova.

Female: the sex of a girl or woman.

Fertility: the physical ability or power to procreate, to give life.

Fertilization: conception; the uniting of the sperm and the ovum to form a single new cell.

Hormone: a chemical substance that is released by a gland in the body; hormones act as messengers to other organs in the body

Implantation: the attachment of the tiny zygote to the wall of the uterus; implantation occurs from five to seven days after conception, and is usually completed by twelve days.

Male: the sex of a boy or man.

Menstruation: the shedding of the lining of the uterus; a small amount of blood, mucus, and cells from the lining of the uterus leaves the female body through the vagina; in adult women menstruation occurs once every three to five weeks if the ovum has not been fertilized.

Navel: the mark on the body (in the centre of the abdomen) where the umbilical cord was attached; belly button.

Nocturnal emission: an ejaculation during sleep (sometimes called a “wet dream”); nocturnal emissions are the body’s way of making room for new sperm cells, and begin to happen to boys sometime after the testicles have begun to produce sperm cells.

Organ: a part of the body that has a specific task, for example, the heart or the lungs.

Ova: the female reproductive cells produced by the ovaries; mature egg cells.

Ovaries: part of the female reproductive system; two small almond-shaped organs inside the abdomen on either side of the uterus; the ovaries ripen the egg cells and produce the female hormones.

Ovum: a female reproductive cell; a single mature egg cell.

Penis: part of the male reproductive system; a tube-shaped organ made of soft tissues that can fill with blood; at the end of the penis is the tiny opening of the urethra.

Period: a menstrual period, the time during which menstruation occurs, usually lasting from two to seven days.

Pituitary gland: an organ that releases hormones into the bloodstream: located inside the skull at the base of the brain; the pituitary is sometimes called the master gland of the body, and is responsible for the beginning of puberty.

Placenta: a large flat organ that develops during pregnancy and is attached to the wall of the uterus; the fetus is attached to the placenta by the umbilical cord and receives nourishment and oxygen and eliminates wastes through the placenta.

Procreation: the creation of a new human life; parents co-operate with God in creating a new life.

Puberty: the period of time during which the bodies of males and females develop and become fertile.

Reproductive system: the system of the body that allows people to have children (to procreate); the reproductive systems of males and females differ, and begin to mature at puberty.

Scrotum: part of the male reproductive system; the sac of skin behind the penis that holds the testicles outside the body.

Semen: the mixture of sperm cells and fluids that is ejaculated from the penis.

Sexual: having to do with sex or gender; being either male or female.

Sexual intercourse: an act that is intended to be a sign of the deep and committed love existing between a husband and wife, and may result in the beginning of a new human

life; during sexual intercourse the husband's penis fits inside the wife's vagina; at the time of ejaculation millions of sperm cells are released into the vagina and may travel into the uterus and fallopian tubes.

Sexuality: the maleness or femaleness of the whole person, body and spirit.

Sperm: the male reproductive cells produced by the testicles.

Testicles: part of the male reproductive system; two oval organs that are held outside the body inside the scrotum; the testicles produce sperm cells and the hormone testosterone.

Umbilical cord: the rope of tissue that connects the fetus to the placenta through which the fetus receives oxygen and nourishment and eliminates wastes.

Urethra: a narrow tube through which urine passes out of the body from the bladder; the urethra is part of the male reproductive system since it is also the passageway through which semen is ejaculated.

Uterus: part of the female reproductive system; a hollow muscular organ inside the lower abdomen; the uterus is shaped like an upside-down pear and is the place where a new human life grows during pregnancy.

Vagina: part of the female reproductive system; the vagina is a muscular passageway that leads from the cervix (the bottom of the uterus) to the outside of the body. Together, the cervix and vagina are sometimes called the birth canal.

Vas deferens: part of the male reproductive system; two tubes that lead from tiny tubes inside the testicles, and move the sperm cells along inside the man's body.

Vulva: the term used for the external organs of the female reproductive system (the parts that cover the opening to the vagina).