

*The glory of God is man and woman fully alive,
but life for them consists in seeing God revealed in God's Word.*
St. Irenaeus

Dear Families,

I would like to introduce our Family Life Education program, called *Fully Alive*. This program, which is for Grades 1–8, is the result of many years of discussion, consultation, and work by bishops, Catholic educators, Catholic school trustees, and parents. It has been approved by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario as consistent with Catholic teachings and appropriate for use in Catholic classrooms. It is intended to complement the efforts of parents or guardians to teach their children at home.

In Catholic schools, Family Life Education has been an integral part of the Religious Education program for many years. Family Life Education also incorporates content about human development and sexual health from the Ontario Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum. *Fully Alive*'s approach to human life, relationships, and sexuality is guided by our Catholic faith and by the wisdom accumulated through many years of Christian human experience.

Fully Alive is organized into five themes:

- **Theme One — Created and Loved by God:** The first theme provides the foundation of the program. We are created in the image of God, and God loves and sustains each one of us. This theme explores some of the ways in which each person is unique and irreplaceable, yet shares a common human nature with all others.
- **Theme Two — Living in Relationship:** Human beings are created to live in relationship with others. The bonds of family and friendship, which are explored in this theme, are central to our lives, and shape our identity and our development.
- **Theme Three — Created Sexual: Male and Female:** Sexuality is a fundamental dimension of our identity as children of God. In this theme, sexuality is presented as a gift from God that is intended for life and love.
Note: More detailed information on the specific HPE expectations addressed in *Fully Alive* can be found on the website of the Institute for Catholic Education (www.iceont.ca).
- **Theme Four — Growing in Commitment:** God's call to faithfulness is explored in this theme. Learning to be committed and trustworthy is a lifelong challenge that begins in childhood.
- **Theme Five — Living in the World:** Our relationships with others go beyond the circle of family and friends. In Theme Five, we examine what it means to participate in society, and to fulfill our responsibilities to care for and build God's world.

Before we begin each theme, I will send you a letter about the theme and the topics we will be discussing. Since parents or guardians are the primary teachers of their children in the area of sexuality, the family letter for Theme Three (Created Sexual: Male and Female) will provide you with details about the content in this year's program, as well as information about later years.

More detailed information about *Fully Alive* is available on the website of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO): www.acbo.on.ca. For each grade level, you will find:

- a summary of the main ideas in each of the topics within the themes.
- copies of stories that the teacher reads to the students in Grades 1–3
- information and suggestions for you and your child related to the topics

If you do not have access to the Internet, please let me know, and we will arrange to get a copy of the website material for you.

I look forward to working with you and your child during this school year. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I hope you will enjoy participating in *Fully Alive*.

Teacher _____