

Dear Family,

We are getting ready to begin Theme Three of *Fully Alive*, our family life program. Catholic schools recognize that parents or guardians are the first and most important teachers of their children. This is especially true in the areas that are introduced and explored in Family Life Education. 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.

Family Life Education, consistent with our faith, has been an integral part of the Religious Education program for many years. The goal is to present a Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage, and family, complementing your efforts as parents or guardians to teach your children at home. Family Life Education also incorporates content about human development and sexual health from the Ontario Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum. More detailed information on the specific HPE expectations addressed in this theme of *Fully Alive* can be found on the website of the Institute for Catholic Education (www.iceont.ca).

The *Fully Alive* program is supported and approved by the Catholic Bishops of Ontario. Additional information about *Fully Alive* is available to you on the Ontario Bishops' website (www.acbo.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 the early grades, this theme is presented through a continuing story. The message of this story is that we begin life as a result of the love our mothers and fathers shared. No matter what happens later, nothing can change that. It is part of God's plan that we grow and are sheltered in our mother's body before birth. After we are born, it is our family that loves and cares for us.

In Theme Three we will:

- meet Dominic and Sara, who fall in love and decide to marry.
- discover that husbands and wives may share their love by becoming parents.
- learn about the development of babies before birth and about the care and love they need after they are born.
- learn that God made boys and girls physically different.

Working together at school and at home

- Ask your child to tell you about Dominic and Sara. What was your child's favourite part of the story?
- Take this opportunity to talk to your child about how babies grow before they are born, and the special care they need after they are born.
- Tell your child about when he or she was welcomed into your family. Do you have an early picture of your child to lend to our classroom? We would love to see it.

Looking Ahead

In Grade 1 the amount of information given to children is age appropriate: the development of the baby in the mother's *uterus*; the introduction of the terms *penis* and *vagina* for the physical differences between boys and girls; and a brief explanation of breast feeding. In Grades 2 and 3, additional information about prenatal life is included. A very simple explanation of sexual intercourse is given in Grade 4 by the teacher, but is not included in the student book until Grade 5.

As parents and guardians, you are the primary teachers of your children in all areas of faith and morals, including sexuality. In keeping with the primacy of your role as parent or guardian, you retain the right to request your child be exempted from the program if you believe it is in your child's best interest and prefer to accept the responsibility of providing an education in sexuality at home.

If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact me, or to arrange to discuss them with our school principal.

Teacher: _____ Date: _____