

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. For more information go to: www.acbo.on.ca.

In Theme Three we will:

- meet the Brunelle family, who are expecting their third child.
- discover more about the development of babies before birth and especially about how the baby breathes and receives nourishment in the uterus.
- learn about the importance of respect and care for the body, which is a gift from God.

Working together at school and at home

- Ask your child to tell you about the Brunelle family. What was your child's favourite part of the story? What did he or she find especially interesting?
- Take this opportunity to talk to your child about how babies grow before they are born, and how all their needs are met inside the uterus.

Looking Ahead

The information included in Grade 2 is age appropriate: new terms include *amniotic sac*, *umbilical cord*, and *navel*; the terms *sperm* and *ovum*, which are described as tiny cells from the father and the mother, are also introduced, and a simple explanation of birth is provided. Next

year, additional information about prenatal life and birth will be presented. In Grade 4 the teacher gives a very simple explanation of sexual intercourse. This information 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: _____