

Dear Family,

It's time for the second theme 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.

About Theme Two

Theme Two of *Fully Alive* is called “Living in Relationship.” God created us to live in relationship with others and to respond to each other with love. Living in relationship begins in the family, the setting in which people first learn about love. As children grow up, friendship becomes more and more important to them. In this theme we will be exploring both important relationships — family and friends. For more information, please go to www.acbo.on.ca.

In Theme Two we will

- explore three aspects of relationships: intimacy, choice, and quality.
- discuss the importance of communication in our relationships with family members and friends.
- examine the experience of living in a family from the perspective of family structure, the birth order of children, and challenges that are part of being a family.
- explore the relationship of friendship, including what we learn from our friendships, the qualities of healthy relationships, and the challenges that are part of all relationships.

Working together at school and at home

- Ask your child to tell you about the virtue of kindness, which is highlighted in Theme Two. At school we will explore the meaning of kindness as the virtue that reveals an attitude of care and concern for others. This attitude includes both those we know and those we do not know, because we recognize that we are all people whom God created and loves.
- In class, we will be considering three guidelines for good communication: listening to each other, avoiding unnecessary conflict, and saying what we mean in a tactful and respectful way. Ask your child about these guidelines and how they could be used in your family.
- We will be examining family structure as one of the characteristics that makes each person's experience of growing up in a family unique. The family structures considered are extended families (one including relatives other than parents and their children); nuclear families (parents and children); single-parent families; blended families (one that includes children from a previous marriage from one or both of the parents); and foster families (one in which a person or married couple provides care for one or more children whose own family is unable to look after them). You may want to discuss this topic with your child.
- We will be exploring some everyday family challenges, especially two that are related to the changes in children as they grow up. Being moody and wanting more privacy are normal behaviours during early adolescence. It takes patience from both young people and parents or guardians to handle this challenge. Ask your child about what he or she learned about dealing with moods and the need for more privacy.
- We will also be discussing some more serious challenges for families: unemployment, immigration, divorce, remarriage, and death. Please talk to your child about these challenges, especially if one of them has had an impact on your family.

- As most parents and guardians discover, friendship becomes very important during early adolescence. We will be examining the qualities of healthy relationships with friends (respect, loyalty, personal interest) and the harm caused by exploitive friendships.
- Most young people have some minor difficulties with friendship during early adolescence. More serious difficulties can occur, however, such as bullying and peer pressure. Try to find an opportunity to talk to your child about these issues, especially if you suspect that he or she is having problems with friends.

Teacher: _____ Date: _____