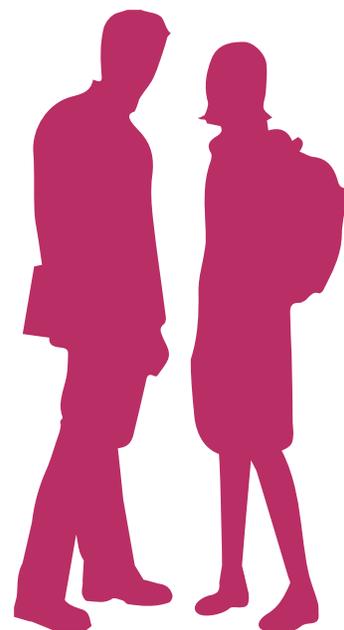




The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12

Health and Physical Education, 2015

Supplementary Resources to Support Catholic Teachers



The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12, Health and Physical Education, 2015,
Supplementary Resources to Support Catholic Teachers

2016, Institute for Catholic Education.

Thank you to the many educators from across the province who provided input and reviewed this document.

Overview

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the development of curriculum policy documents and in 2003, the Ministry established an ongoing cycle of curriculum review. A review is not the development of a completely new curriculum, but it is intended to ensure that curriculum remains current and relevant and is developmentally appropriate from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in all subjects. The curriculum review process is a research-based and evidence-informed process that begins with third party research and benchmarking of the Ontario curriculum against curricula from across Canada and around the world. Teams of experts from across the province analyse the current curriculum against the desired state for the revised curriculum. All information gathered from experts, focus groups, consultation, and research is synthesized and directions for revision are identified.¹ A number of subject disciplines enter the review process each year and Health and Physical Education was reviewed and updated in 2015.

The Health and Physical Education review process was informed by Health Canada's "determinants of health" (that is factors and conditions that can have a significant influence on a person's health): income and social status, social support networks, education and literacy, employment and working conditions, physical and social environments, biology and genetic endowment, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, availability and quality of health services, gender, culture, and other factors.² Other recent models describe and group the factors differently and include additional factors, such as stress, food, insecurity, care in early life, and Aboriginal status. (HPE p. 12)

Together these factors affect an individual's overall state of physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual well-being. They influence not only whether a person stays healthy or becomes ill but also the extent to which a person possesses the physical, social, and personal resources needed to identify and achieve personal aspirations, satisfy needs, and cope with the environment. These factors have an impact on student learning as a whole, and are strongly connected to learning in health and physical education. Although students have varying degrees of control over these factors, it is important to be aware of them as contributing factors in student performance. It is also important to recognize the value of personal strategies that can be learned and practised to foster well-being in the face of stressful and challenging life circumstances. (HPE p. 12)

Initially, much of the discussion about the Health and Physical Education (2015) curriculum was narrowly focused around issues of human sexuality, and how such issues would be taught within the context of the classroom. There is such diversity in our contemporary society that it should come as no surprise that citizens hold a variety of perspectives about human sexuality, and about what might appropriately be discussed within the home, or the school, at any particular age.

Commencing in February 2015, Catholic educators initiated a review of the revised Health and Physical Education (HPE) 2015 Curriculum, exploring and mapping the alignment of the HPE curriculum with the Family Life Education Curriculum (FLE) 2012, approved by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario and taught in Ontario Catholic schools, and the Catholic Graduate Expectations. The work confirms that the HPE curriculum can be implemented in a manner that is respectful of, and consistent with the perspective and mandate of Catholic schools.

¹ <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/curriculumreview/process.html>

² www.publichealth.gc.ca

In Ontario Catholic schools, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values acquired in the Family Life Education program complement those instilled by families, and reflect a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family. Catholic elementary schools will address the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations of the HPE curriculum through the *Fully Alive* program, and the Family Life curriculum that has been endorsed by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO). In secondary schools Family Life is taught in Health and Physical Education classes, presenting the distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family. In secondary schools only one course in Health and Physical Education (HPE) is required for the Ontario Secondary School Graduation Diploma. In Catholic secondary schools students take one course each year in Religious Education and Family Life Education is also part of that curriculum each year. At the request of the ACBO, and on behalf of the partners in Catholic education, the Institute for Catholic Education undertook the task of identifying areas where supplementary support materials were required to assist teachers, schools and boards in addressing the revised HPE curriculum, and assembled a team of educators to develop the materials necessary to augment the existing Family Life program offered in Catholic schools, and to support the Health and Physical Education (HPE) 2015 Curriculum.

The resources and supplementary materials have been developed to align with Catholic teaching. Within our Catholic schools, it is appropriate that topics related to human sexuality, gender identity, and gender expression, and initiatives that build understanding and respect for difference, be discussed against a clear moral background. Properly understood, difference is something to be recognized in a society that honours diversity, multiculturalism, human rights, and human responsibilities. Respecting difference does not mean insisting that another person share our views. Being respectful, tolerant, accepting and inclusive of another person does not mean accepting that what he or she says is correct or in accordance with the Church's teaching. Respecting difference helps to build a truly Catholic culture in our schools and to be truly Catholic is to respect diversity. Charity and openness must always be shown in discussions where different viewpoints may arise.

The Catholic faith has a particular viewpoint about the whole human person and the person in relation to others in the community. Catholic schools are committed to providing educational opportunities within the context of a faith community that recognizes that each individual is made in the image and likeness of God, affirms the essential dignity, value and rights of the human person, and models the gospel values of faith, hope and love to each student entrusted to their care. The holistic view of the human person and the understanding of what constitutes the 'common good' might sometimes be at variance with some of the assumptions and perspectives held by contemporary culture in a secular society, but Catholic schools have both the opportunity and the obligation to introduce the truth of our faith tradition into this important societal conversation. In this work, Catholic schools not only can meet appropriate expectations as a publicly funded school system, but also create model communities that affirm a deep sense of personal dignity for all students, and are Catholic in the fullest sense of the word.

These resources are offered to support the work of Catholic school boards and Catholic schools in implementing the revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum (2015) as complementary to the Family Life program in Catholic schools.

Understanding the Nature of these Resources:

Family Life Education has been a part of Ontario Catholic schools since 1978, when the bishops of Ontario published the "Guidelines for Family Life Education" to affirm Catholic parents in the important

role of raising their children according to the faith. The resource series, *Fully Alive*, was initially developed and approved for use in Catholic elementary schools in the 1980s, and has been revised and updated several times in the intervening years. Information about the *Fully Alive* program, its history and approach, can be found at: www.acbo.on.ca.

The Elementary School *Fully Alive* program presents a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family life and is designed to encourage students to become the people God wants them to be – to be fully alive. In addition to classroom materials and student texts and resources, the *Fully Alive* program consists of extensive grade-specific resources for teachers, designed to build an educator’s understanding of the curriculum, Church teaching, and to guide their instructional practice in the classroom. These materials are used consistently as part of the Religious Education and Family Life Education program in Catholic schools across the province. Additional resources commissioned by the bishops of Ontario and developed by the Institute for Catholic Education to support the implementation of the revised HPE curriculum expectations (2015), have been developed to supplement these existing teacher resources.

At the secondary level, the bishops of Ontario have identified Family Life Education as a required curriculum strand comprising approximately twenty percent of the Religious Education curriculum. Classroom instruction in Family Life Education provides opportunities for the holistic formation of students according to a Christian vision of personhood, relationship, and sexuality, and encourages the integration of Gospel values into the whole pattern of human life. The Family Life strand of the Religious Education program draws upon the disciplines of theology, life sciences and the social sciences. Within the context of a comprehensive exploration of what it means to be a human person, moral theology, biology and developmental psychology are especially significant.

In Ontario Catholic secondary schools, the relationship between learning and believing is fundamental. We focus not only on student knowledge and skills, but also on values and actions. As a publicly funded Catholic school system in Ontario, we teach the curriculum established by the Ministry of Education. Across all subject areas, and in particular Health and Physical Education, the curriculum is adapted so it is taught through the lens of faith.

In the HPE curriculum, students learn more about:	In the HPE curriculum, students in Catholic schools learn more about:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themselves and others, their identity, peer, family and romantic relationships, personal safety and decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themselves and others, created in the image of God to live in relationship; caring for the self and others in recognition of God’s gift of life; moral decision-making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delaying sexual activity, preventing sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s gift of sexuality for life and happiness; sexually transmitted infections; pregnancy prevention, including abstinence and the virtue of chastity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors that influence decisions such as peers, media, curiosity, and access to information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional factors that influence decisions such as prayer and reflection, family, Church and tradition

In the HPE curriculum, students learn more about:	In the HPE curriculum, students in Catholic schools learn more about:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sources of support and information related to sexual health such as public health services, community health agencies, reliable and accurate websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional sources of support including family, trusted adults and the parish community

These resources have been developed primarily to support teachers in addressing **specific learning expectations** within the context of Healthy Active Living Education (HALE) courses, Grades 9-12. Catholic teachers are charged with the responsibility to understand the teaching and mission of the Church, to convey and explain these teachings to students, and to support and encourage students to live their faith. These materials are intended to support teachers in their work by providing supplemental materials to augment their understanding of the faith perspective on each of the topics addressed in the specific learning expectations of the Grade 9 and Grade 10 HPE curriculum.

The primary responsibility to develop instructional materials and lessons for students rests with the classroom teachers. The HPE curriculum provides suggestions and identifies additional resources that teachers might access. The supplementary material presented here does not replace, but **augments** the resources available elsewhere, assisting the teachers to present the HPE curriculum through the lens of faith.

Additionally, the specific learning expectations of the Human Development and Sexual Health component of the HPE curriculum are addressed as part of the Religious Education and Family Life curriculum that students study in each of their four years in secondary schools. The Religious Education policy document *Ontario Catholic Secondary Curriculum Policy Document: Religious Education (2006)* is being updated and is expected to be available in the Fall of 2016. While most of these HPE expectations are already supported and addressed in the Religious Education/Family Life Education curriculum, the updated Religious Education curriculum will support and address all of the HPE expectations across Grades 9-12.

Some additional information about the *Fully Alive* program, as well as electronic parent resources, are available on the website of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (www.acbo.on.ca) as well as the ICE website (www.iceont.ca).

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Introduction

This resource was developed to support Catholic teachers with the Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12, Health and Physical Education, 2015. Some of the expectations from the revised curriculum cover material traditionally thought of as “family life” curriculum. These expectations are found in the third strand, Strand C: Healthy Living, under the topic of *human development and sexual health*. This topic is covered in both the Health and Physical Education courses, and in Religious Education courses.

The Family Life expectations that deal explicitly with sexuality are found in the Grade 9 and Grade 10 Health and Physical Education curriculum. This resource supports only those expectations that deal with sexuality in Grades 9 and 10. Students in Catholic secondary schools discuss family life expectations within the Religious Education curriculum in Grades 11 and 12.

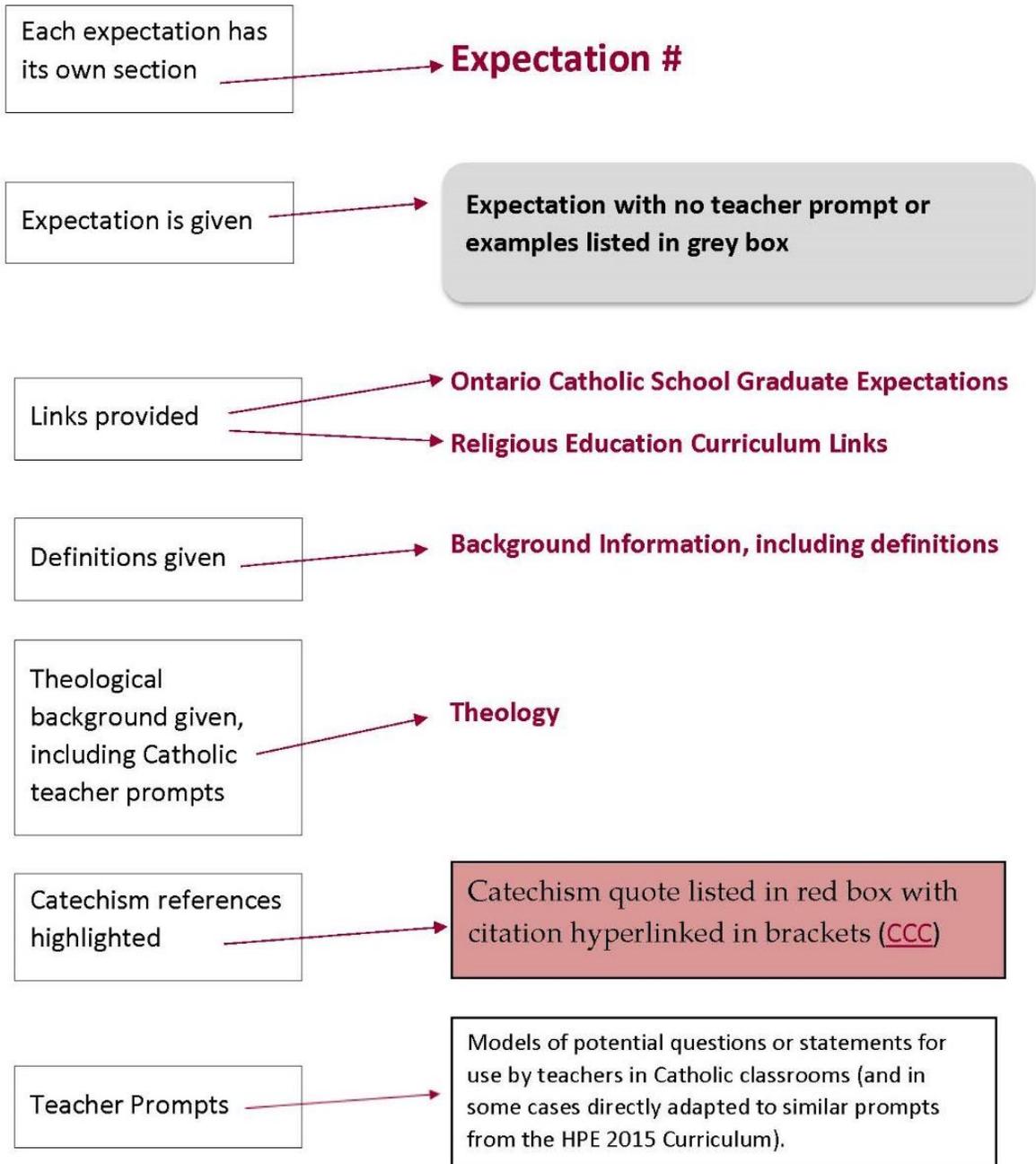
The resource is organized by expectation. Each expectation has links given to the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, and the Ontario Religious Education Curriculum policy document.

Each expectation has background information for the teacher, including definitions. The Theology material was written to give teachers a framework to assist with teaching the material. Teacher prompts for the Catholic classroom were developed to anchor the theology material, and as it might be reflected in the Health and Physical (HPE) 2015 Curriculum. References to the Catechism of the Catholic Church are provided, and are hyperlinked for further study.

References are given to provide further supports. No one textbook is recommended. Teachers can use other resources as appropriate, adapting material to address the required curriculum through the lens of faith.

Format

Each section of the document has the same layout. Some of the features are shown below:



Overview of Curriculum

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12, Health and Physical Education, 2015

Strand C: Healthy Living

Healthy Living Learning Summary for Grade 9: Key Topics			
Topic	C1. Understanding Health Concepts	C2. Making Healthy Choices	C3. Making Connections for Healthy Living
Human Development and Sexual Health	C1.4 Preventing pregnancy and STIs C1.5 Factors affecting gender identity and sexual orientation; supports [PS]	C2.2 Relationships – skills and strategies [PS, IS] C2.3 Thinking ahead about sexual health, consent, personal limits [PS, CT]	

C1.4 describe the relative effectiveness of various methods of preventing unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS and identify sources of information and support

C1.5 demonstrate an understanding of factors that can influence a person’s understanding of their gender identity and sexual orientation, and identify sources of support for all students [PS]

C2.2 demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships and intimate relationships [PS, IS]

C2.3 apply their knowledge of sexual health and safety, including a strong understanding of the concept of consent and sexual limits, and their decision-making skills to think in advance about their sexual health and sexuality [PS, CT]

Healthy Living Learning Summary for Grade 10: Key Topics			
Topic	C1. Understanding Health Concepts	C2. Making Healthy Choices	C3. Making Connections for Healthy Living
Human Development and Sexual Health		C2.5 Decision making, communication, healthy sexuality [PS, IS, CT]	C3.4 Misconceptions relating to sexuality [CT] C3.5 Relationships – effects on self and others [PS, IS, CT]

C2.5 describe factors that influence sexual decision making and demonstrate an understanding of how to use decision-making and communication skills effectively to support choices related to responsible and healthy sexuality [PS, IS, CT]

C3.4 describe some common misconceptions about sexuality in our culture, and explain how these may cause harm to people and how they can be responded to critically and fairly [CT]

C3.5 explain how being in an exclusive relationship with another person affects them and their relations with others [PS, IS, CT]

Grade 9 Resources

Expectation C1.4

C1.4 describe the relative effectiveness of various methods of preventing unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, and identify sources of information and support

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

- CGE1i** integrates faith with life.
- CGE3c** thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems.
- CGE3d** makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
- CGE4g** examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
- CGE6b** recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- CGE7a** acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.
- CGE7d** promotes the sacredness of life.

Religious Education Curriculum Links

- CM1.04** understand that there are morally acceptable and morally unacceptable ways to express any emotion;
- FL1.09** analyse sexual decision-making in relation to the meaning of chastity (CCC 2337-2359);
- FL1.10** demonstrate a respect for the human body, in light of the sacredness of human life created by God;
- FL1.13** describe symptoms, treatments and prevention of major sexually-transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, and their effect on human fertility and life.

Background Information

Definitions

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) - Infections passed from one infected person to another person during sexual contact. Common examples include genital warts (HPV), Chlamydia, Syphilis, and Gonorrhea.

HIV - Human immunodeficiency virus; the virus that causes AIDS. (Source: AIDS: A Catholic Educational Approach to HIV)

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome; AIDS is a condition that is caused by infection with a virus called HIV. HIV damages the immune system and eventually cripples the body's ability to fight disease. AIDS is the end stage of HIV infection. (Source: AIDS: A Catholic Educational Approach to HIV)

Abortifacients: Certain forms of birth control that prevent the fertilized embryo from implanting in the uterus such that miscarriage/spontaneous abortion results (in early term).

Natural Family Planning - A way of managing fertility without the use of chemicals or devices; a method of identifying the symptoms that indicated the women's fertile period and refraining from intercourse during this time if a husband and wife do not want to conceive a child.

Theological Considerations

Human Sexuality

Our sexuality (maleness and femaleness) is one of God's gifts of creation and involves the whole person: body and spirit. Sexuality is not something that we have, but something that we are. We can't separate our sexuality from who we are as a person. As all species, we must procreate or die. It is part of God's loving plan, his intentional design, which fastens the procreative to the unitive (the reproduction necessary for our survival to the bond that creates a family) and wraps it all up with pleasure. The Church understands that pleasure and those connections that we so yearn for as good: **sexual attraction** reminds us that we are called to live lives of love; that we are to donate our very selves for others. **Sexual intimacy** (growth of bonded, committed, covenantal relationships such that there exists the closeness, acceptance and trust between two people) – the full realization and expression of that attraction –

discloses even more about who we are and how we are to live in relationship. Pope John Paul II spoke of the spousal meaning of the body. He meant that the body itself, made male and female, both teaches us that we were made to love and gives us an image of God. “God is Love”: we’ve heard it a million times, but what does it mean? Love cannot exist without an object; there is no love in isolation. Thus to say that “God is love” is to simultaneously say that God is in relationship. And God is. Our God is a Triune God – one God, three persons. As the Catechism teaches:

“God himself is an eternal exchange of love” (CCC 221)

To say that we are made in the image and likeness of God, then, is to say that we are made to be in relationship, in a relationship that is a lasting exchange of love. That is what our sexuality is for. It enables us to give ourselves, body and soul, completely to another and to give completely means to give forever as spouses.

Pre-Marital Sex

When we have this wonderful and clear sense of God’s plan for us in mind, it makes it easier to understand that when people engage in sexual intercourse or other sexual activities outside of a mature, loving, married relationship, they act outside of God’s plan for and reject the meaning of sexual expression between spouses, and in doing so open themselves to potential consequences that can harm themselves and others.

First, because sex is an intimate, bonding experience, the breakup of a sexually intimate relationship (especially repeated breakups) weakens our psychological and emotional, even biological mechanisms of attachment, making it far more difficult to persevere in the commitments of marriage. Additionally, impacting our freedom with life altering implications, sexual intercourse with someone who has had multiple partners is always a risky endeavour since the possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is increased. While condoms and other contraceptive methods are effective in significantly reducing the risks of unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections, the only way to completely prevent the risk of unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection is not to engage in sexual activity. STIs may cause long-lasting, even permanent, health complications that can impact our fertility and our ability to engage in a committed, sexual relationship with our future spouse. Sexual relationships outside of marriage may end in unplanned pregnancy. As most teens and young adults are not ready to take on the responsibility of raising a child, this is a potential outcome that must be given serious consideration.

Because it is not desirable that any of God’s children should have to cope with these difficult circumstances, the Church rightfully counsels that sexual intimacy is the domain of married

couples who have given themselves freely and unreservedly to each other. It is not that God wants to limit our freedom. In fact the opposite is true, we are called to a life of authentic freedom. To be free, however, is somewhat different than having free will. We do have the capacity to choose between good and evil, but it is only in choosing the good that we become truly free. To choose evil leads to a loss of freedom as we become trapped in the consequences of our choice. What are the consequences of pre-marital sex? However, we are not authentically free; when we are worried about the consequences of our choices: *“What if I am pregnant?”*, *“I know that he’s not right for me, but I just can’t seem to break up with him?”* *“What if she is pregnant?”* *“I know I am not ready to be responsible for a child.”* These are not the concerns of someone who is free; rather, they are the domain of one who has become trapped in a world of worry, and deceit. God knows that we are truly free when we make choices that free us from these concerns.

When we freely choose to cooperate with God’s plan, including God’s plan for sexuality, we increase our happiness and the happiness of the community, since happiness comes from choosing what is good. That being said, we should also recognize that we are sinners and when we fail and sin in the area of sexuality, God can bring healing through others, especially through the priest in the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation/Confession).

Chastity

Chastity helps us achieve true freedom by schooling us in self-mastery, enabling us to choose the good rather than be ruled by our passions. Chastity calls us to treat our bodies and the bodies of others with the respect and dignity they deserve as temples of the Holy Spirit. We are all called to live chastely whatever state of life we may be in. A husband and wife practice the virtue of chastity through loving sexual intimacy but also through many other expressions of love and service in their relationship. Single people, priests, and those called to religious life are also called to the total gift of self; they give themselves to God in anticipation of the final heavenly union that we are all called to. They practice chastity by expressing love in ways other than a sexual expression (e.g., intimate friendship; loving service to the community). Sexual activity is truly human only when it expresses love which is fully committed and open to life and it can only do that within marriage.

Chastity in marriage does not mean no sexual activity. It means fidelity to one’s spouse and respect for the spousal meaning of the body.

“All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has ‘put on Christ’, the model for all chastity. All Christ’s faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life.” (CCC 2348)

Science of Sex

Couples release bonding hormones when they are sexually intimate. Women release oxytocin and men release vasopressin. The danger of premarital sex is the possibility of bonding to the wrong person for an indefinite period of time, increasing the risk of unwanted pregnancies and STIs. Medical science and research document that hormones and physiological chemistry affect males and females differently, but for each, adolescence is an age when the brain is still under construction, and the part of the brain that assesses risk and consequence is still being formed, leaving adolescents vulnerable to poor decision making.

Contraception and the Ethical Regulation of Fertility

In human nature, the primary purpose and meaning of sexual intercourse is twofold: uniting a husband and wife in a deep loving bond (unitive), and being open to new life according to God's design (procreative); therefore anything that prevents that purpose and meaning is against natural law (which is God's law). The pleasure and intimacy that a married couple derive from sexual activity is an additional blessing from God but it does not alter the natural purpose and meaning of sexual intercourse nor can it be separated from it.

Through intercourse a man and a woman are meant to fully and unreservedly share themselves with one another. The use of contraceptives unnaturally prevents this full and complete sharing. While reliable natural family planning techniques can help married couples plan/time the welcoming of children into the world (e.g., the sympto-thermal method) and deepen the marital bond of a couple, birth control (e.g., condoms, oral contraceptive pills, etc.) amount to human manipulation of God's wisdom in God's natural design for sexual expression between spouses, for the sake of perceived convenience, etc. ([CCC 2366](#))

The power to create a new human life with God is an important part of what spouses share with each other. In *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI foresaw that the ability to prevent pregnancy through artificial means and new technologies would devalue women and increase promiscuous behaviour. When people are freed from the worry of an unintended pregnancy they may no longer be as concerned about all the life altering consequences of their actions.

Today, our fertility is viewed by many, not as a gift given to us by God but as an inconvenience or an impediment to be controlled until it is needed. Instead of seeing the ability to create life as a cooperative function of the combined procreative capacity of husband and wife with God, many view it as a woman's issue or problem. In order to deal with this so called "problem" of fertility, many women use a variety of birth control methods which have known side effects that may jeopardize their health and can impact their ability to conceive when they are ready to start a family.

Drawing on Prior Learning

Managing Fertility

It might be helpful preparation for teachers to familiarize themselves with the *Fully Alive* program, most especially from grades 6, 7 and 8, and to encourage students to draw upon their prior learning as part of the discussion of these topics. Brief excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Teacher Resource Guides are incorporated throughout this resource to provide examples, context and understanding of prior learning for students who attended Catholic elementary schools.

The Fully Alive Student Text addresses methods of managing fertility – pages 99-100.

- *What is a “natural” family planning method? (a way of managing fertility without the use of chemicals or devices; a method of identifying the symptoms that indicate the woman’s fertile period and refraining from intercourse during this time)*
- *What might be the advantages of natural family planning? (it demonstrates the couple’s respect and appreciation of the gift of fertility; it allows a married couple to make decisions together as they manage their fertility and plan their family; it requires co-operation and communication between husband and wife, which deepens their intimacy; it allows couples to live in harmony with their life-giving powers)*
- *What is a barrier method of contraception? (one that prevents the sperm and ovum from coming together)*
- *What is a chemical method of contraception? (one that prevents conception by suppressing the fertility cycle of the woman)*
- *You probably hear a lot of conflicting messages about contraception in popular culture. For example, you might hear that if you use condoms and other forms of contraception consistently you will be 100% protected against STIs and unintended pregnancy. However, the reality is that the way to completely prevent unwanted pregnancy and infection is not to engage in sexual activity. You have been learning that God’s plan for the gift of sexuality is that it remain in the context of marriage. You are also learning that there is no completely safe way to step outside of God’s plan. It is designed to keep us safe and happy. Choosing a different way may put us at risk for physical, social, and emotional harm*
- *You might ask them: When you hear or see all these confusing messages about sexuality and sexual health in the media, who can you go to for support to help*

you find the best answer that will also point you in the direction you need to follow God's plan for you? (a trusted adult such as a parent or teacher; your parish priest; a Catholic health care practitioner)

Excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 8

Consistent Ethic of Life

The Church's position on artificial contraception is also impacted by the fact that some forms of birth control are abortifacients. Certain forms of birth control prevent the fertilized embryo from implanting in the uterus, which results in an early term miscarriage or spontaneous abortion. These are known as abortifacients. These can include "the morning after pill", but also can be a potential action of birth control pills, and intra-uterine devices.

As Catholics, we believe that every human life is sacred and holds value regardless of size, time, place, or circumstance. Reason tells us that every human embryo is a human person with a spiritual soul infused by God, and could be nothing else but a human person. Therefore we must honour and protect every life from the moment of conception to the time of natural death. So, the fact that a human embryo is at the earliest stage of life and lives inside a womb where it is dependent on another, does not make it any less valuable or dignified (having all essential human qualities -- free will, conscience, etc. which are not "added" later to the human person). The Catechism tells us that:

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.
(CCC 2270)

Natural Family Planning

Natural family planning is considered morally acceptable not merely because it is "natural" (as opposed to "artificial"). It is morally acceptable because as a method of understanding and responding to our fertility and the task of parenting, it aligns with the meaning and the good that God has imprinted into these realities. Pope John Paul II elaborates this point quite beautifully in the third chapter of part two of *Theology of the Body*.

For many couples, natural family planning is used to achieve pregnancy. The various methods all encourage self-knowledge and an understanding of how our bodies work.

The Catholic Church recognizes that married couples may wish to plan their family so that they can adequately provide and care for their children. The Catechism states that for

“just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood.” (CCC 2368)

In order to support these families, the Church has worked with scientists to better understand human fertility and that knowledge has been used to develop reliable, natural means (e.g., the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning) which cooperate with the function of the human body, the way God created it, to help couples to avoid a pregnancy that would cause an undue burden upon them. There is great diversity of modern forms and the advantages of each. For example, the Creighton Model of NFP is a rigorously studied and precise model that has unlocked an entire world of gynaecological treatment options for women (i.e. NaPro Technology). In other words, as the Creighton model came to be medically standardized, the clinicians and researchers realized that a whole host of women’s health issues could be treated at their root cause using the information the body itself was giving to the woman.

The Marquette Model of NFP incorporates self-observation of biomarkers with a small device that tests urinary hormone levels. Together, this offers the husband and wife a solid and reliable picture of their fertility at any given moment.

“These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them, and favor the education of an authentic freedom.” (CCC 2237)

Teacher Prompts for the Catholic Classroom

“How does authentic freedom differ from the way that our culture typically understands freedom?”

“What is the difference between chaste love and lustful love? What are the ends of each?”

“How can we speak of premarital sex, pornography, and contraception as lies?”

“What are some of the negative consequences of premarital sex?”

“How can sexuality be expressed in a manner that is healthy and respectful of self, others, and God?”

“How can a good understanding of chastity influence decision making in romantic relationships?”

“What are some powerful ways of expressing love and intimacy without sexual activity?”

“What are some ways of avoiding situations when temptations to premarital sexual activity can occur?”

“How can conversation with God be a help when facing difficult situations regarding sexuality?”

“What reliable supports exist in the Catholic community and larger community to help people make good decisions regarding sexual expression, and to help people heal if they make poor decisions regarding sexual expression?”

Resources

BC Centre for Disease Control. *Types of STIs Chart*.

http://smartsexresource.com/sites/default/files/Smartsex_SUPERCHART_2014_v2.png

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ottawa: Publications Service, 1997.

Humanae Vitae. Paul VI. 1968. http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

Institute for Catholic Education. *AIDS: A Catholic Educational Approach to HIV, Ontario Catholic Schools, 2nd edition, Teacher’s Manual*. 1999

Medical Video on STIs – signs and symptoms
http://pediatrics.about.com/od/stds/a/309_std_stats.htm

McQueen, Moira. *HIV/AIDS and Catholic Teaching on Sexual Ethics*. Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute. November 2010. http://www.ccbi-utoronto.ca/documents/bioethic_matters/2010/BMVol8number5_HIVAIDS_SexualEthics.pdf

Natural Family Planning Methods:

Billings Method: <http://billings.life/>

Creighton Model: <http://www.creightonmodel.com/>

Couple to Couple League: <http://ccli.org/>

Marquette Model: <http://nfp.marquette.edu>

Serena Canada: <http://serena.ca/en/canada/>

Murphy, Patricia. Catholic Marriage: An Intimate Community of Life and Love. Toronto: Novalis, 2011.

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC). *Sexuality and U.*
www.sexualityandu.ca (*disclaimer: can be used for research, but there is a great deal of material on this site that reinforces precisely the beliefs and activities so contrary to the meaning of human love and the dignity of the person and sexuality*)

The Chastity Project <http://chastityproject.com/> *** Excellent resource*

West, Christopher. The Contraception Question Pamphlet. Ascension Press.
<http://ascensionpress.com/products/the-contraception-question-pamphlet>

Expectation C1.5

C1.5 demonstrate an understanding of factors that can influence a person's understanding of their gender identity and sexual orientation, and identify sources of support for all students [PS, CT]

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

- CGE1d** develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good.
- CGE1i** integrates faith with life.
- CGE3d** makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
- CGE4g** examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
- CGE6b** recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- CGE7a** acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.
- CGE7d** promotes the sacredness of life.

Religious Education Curriculum Links

- PF1.01** demonstrate an understanding of how Jesus affirms the dignity of every person;
- PF1.10** evaluate how to live in and challenge society based on the model of Jesus;
- CM1.01** know that each person has been created with the freedom to shape his or her own relationships;
- FL1.05** recognize and compare the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships (e.g., bullying);
- FL1.09** analyse sexual decision-making in relation to the meaning of chastity (CCC 2337-2359);

- FL1.10** demonstrate a respect for the human body, in light of the sacredness of human life created by God;
- FL1.11** recognize authentic authority as worthy of honour and respect;

Background Information

To understand gender identity and gender expression from a Catholic perspective starts with an awareness and appreciation of a Catholic understanding of the human person. A Catholic understanding of the person permeates all aspects of a Catholic education, and for students who attended Catholic elementary schools direct discussion of this perspective is an important part of the Family Life curriculum and the Fully Alive program. Discussion of the issues of gender identity and gender expression would have been explicitly addressed in grades 7 and 8. Each of these topics is also addressed within the Family Life strand of the Religious Education curriculum, grades 9-12.

Drawing on Prior Learning

Gender Identity

It might be helpful preparation for teachers to familiarize themselves with the *Fully Alive* program, most especially from grades 6, 7 and 8, and to encourage students to draw upon their prior learning as part of the discussion of these topics. Brief excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Teacher Resource Guides are incorporated throughout this resource to provide examples, context and understanding of prior learning for students who attended Catholic elementary schools.

- *How would you define a human person? (Catholic teaching: a human person is made in the image and likeness of God and because of this has a special dignity. Humans are unified in body, mind, and spirit, and it is always the whole person — body and soul together — that reveals our fundamental identity as the image of God. We do not value one part of the person over another.)*
- *What does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God? What characteristics do we share with God? (Catholic teaching: to be made in the image and likeness of God means that all human persons have free will, the ability to use their reason (intelligence), the ability to enter into relationships of love, and the ability to co-create with God through the loving union of a man and*

woman in marriage. It means that God's actions, choices, and love become the model and guide for our own happiness and flourishing. Only God fully reveals us to ourselves. Being in the image of God means that we also cooperate with God in shaping ourselves in this image.)

- *What are the characteristics of the special dignity we possess because we are made in the image and likeness of God? (Catholic teaching: Human beings are different from any other living being in the world because they are capable of knowing and loving God. The dignity we possess is given by God. We are born with it. It is not given to us by other humans and it cannot be taken away by other humans. All humans have equal dignity regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, contributions to society, and so on. All humans are equally loved and cherished by God. No one has to earn their dignity or the love of God.)*
- *In the exercise we just did, we explored the Christian understanding of what it means to be a human person. Within this definition, we also realize that all humans are a unique self. What do we mean when we refer to the unique self? (A variety of characteristics combine to form the self, that is, they combine to make us who we are as individual persons.)*

Excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 8

As we continue to deepen our understanding of the human person, love, and sexuality in God's plan, it is important to understand some of the terminology commonly used in our culture to describe the experience of those navigating questions of sexual identity. Teachers must be familiar with the definitions for these terms provided within Ministry of Education documents, which are consistent with those adopted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. It is equally important that teachers have an understanding of these terms from a Catholic perspective.

Terminology

Gender: refers to certain emotional dispositions or traits characteristic of femininity or masculinity. (Source: National Catholic Bioethics Centre)

Gender: term that refers to the characteristics of men and women that are socially constructed. Refers to certain emotional dispositions or traits characteristic of femininity or masculinity. (Source: Ontario Human Rights Commission)

Drawing on Prior Learning

Not everyone understands sex and gender in the same way. (Our biological sex refers to the body parts, external genitals, internal reproductive organs, hormones, chromosomes with which we were genetically born. For example, the penis is a male sexual organ while the vagina is a female sexual organ. Sex is a part of the self. Gender refers to the attitudes, feelings and behaviours that are generally associated with a person's biological sex. Gender is also a part of the self. The Catholic Church teaches that God made us male and female – a distinction that refers both to our gender and our sex. Our Church teaches that the person is a unified whole in body, mind and spirit so our sex and our gender are unified.)

While the Catholic Church teaches that sex and gender are biologically determined, and cannot be separated, some people define and understand these two terms differently.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission, for example, makes a distinction between the term sex, which is defined as the category of male and female, based on characteristics biologically determined, and gender, which is defined as a term that refers to the characteristics of men and women that are socially constructed. Those people who believe that gender is socially constructed, and is separate and distinct from sexual identity also may understand gender not as binary (male and female) but as something more fluid, non-binary, and as an element of identity that may be changed.

These two perspectives are very different. There is such diversity in our society that it is not surprising that people hold a variety of perspectives and beliefs on many issues, including sexuality, and people sometimes express contradictory opinions. While understanding or defining sex and gender as separate and distinct terms is not consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church, and does not reflect a Catholic understanding of the human person and the nature of human sexuality, it is a perspective that is recognized in law and should be acknowledged and respected, just as we expect our beliefs as Catholics to be acknowledged and respected, even by those who do not necessarily share our beliefs.

Properly understood, difference is something to be recognized in a society that values diversity, multiculturalism and human rights. Respecting difference does not mean

insisting that another person share our views. Being tolerant and inclusive of another person does not mean accepting that what he or she says is correct or in accordance with the Church's teaching. Charity must always be shown in discussions where different viewpoints may arise. To be truly Catholic is to respect diversity.

Excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 8

Gender Expression: The manner in which individuals express their gender identity to others (i.e. how you choose to dress, wear your hair, talk, use mannerisms, etc.).

It is influenced by biology and culture. Scientists have studied the differences between the male and female brain, and note that hormones in the brain play a role in 'feminizing' or 'masculinizing' our brains, influencing our behaviour, and conclude that some gender expression is biologically determined. Gender expression and gender roles are also something that may be influenced by the society in which one lives.

Gender Role: The way males and females are expected to behave in a particular society. Gender expression and gender roles are something that may be influenced by the society in which one lives. Society and culture may determine how people express themselves. It is not related to our biological make up. What is considered to represent "males" and "femaleness" may change from country to country and generation to generation, i.e. in some countries women wear robes, and in others men wear them.

Gender Identity: A person's sense of self, with respect to being male or female. As this term is commonly used in today's culture, it refers to how one experiences or thinks of oneself as being male or female. Gender refers to certain emotional dispositions or traits characteristic of femininity or masculinity (<http://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/information-topic/sex-and-gender-identity/>)

In a Catholic vision of the human person, gender identity is rooted in our creation as a union of body and soul in the image of God.

Drawing on Prior Learning

We need to understand the terms gender identity and gender expression.

What does gender identity refer to? (Catholic Teaching: Gender identity is a person's sense of self with respect to being male or female.)

What is gender expression? (Catholic Teaching: Gender expression refers to how you communicate your gender to the rest of the world; for example, how you choose to dress, wear your hair, talk, use mannerisms, etc. Gender expression is also part of the self.)

What is a gender role? (The way society expects each gender to behave.)

Gender expression and gender roles are something that may be influenced by the society in which one lives. What do we mean by that? (Society and culture may determine how people express themselves. It is not related to our biological make up. What is considered to represent “maleness” and “femaleness” may change from country to country and from generation to generation. For example, in some countries women wear robes, and in other countries men wear them.)

Gender expression may also be influenced by biology. Researchers have studied the male brain and the female brain. In very general terms, the male brain seems to be inclined or predisposed toward arranging, analysing, and figuring out how systems work. In general, the female brain seems to be inclined or predisposed toward empathizing. [See text box in Grade 7 Student Book, Fully Alive, pg. 74.]

Gender expression therefore, may create stereotypes. What is a stereotype? (A stereotype is a general belief about a group of people that may reduce human persons to a single aspect of their identity. They are often untrue and may be harmful because they may lead to unfair judgement, prejudice, and discrimination. They may block our ability to see someone as the unique and dignified individual that they are.)

What are some examples of stereotypes about gender roles and gender expression that exist in society? (girls like pink and boys like blue; girls play with dolls and boys play with trucks, etc.)

God calls us to respect the dignity of the whole person, made in the image and likeness of God in both ourselves and others. We must be careful not to stereotype, judge, and attach labels to others. Attaching a label to the person implies that everything about them comes down to that one thing. People are much more than just their gender identity, sexual orientation, gender expression, or biological sex. It is the

full range of characteristics that every unique self has that makes up a person's identity.

We accept and celebrate our whole person in body, mind, and spirit when we know, accept, and celebrate all the pieces of our identity; when we know that we have a special dignity; and when we understand that we are each created in God's image, and are unique and deeply loved and cherished by God. We understand that we are part of God's plan and that God created us and has a purpose for us.

We recognize that everyone has strengths and abilities and everyone has weaknesses and challenges. We don't stereotype, judge, label, bully, or reduce human persons to one single aspect of their identity. We see beyond appearance to the inner person and we see all their characteristics, not just one. We respect the whole person in body, mind, and spirit.

Excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 8

Sex: The category of male or female, based on characteristics that are biologically determined (external genitals, internal reproductive organs, hormones, chromosomes with which one is genetically born). (Source: The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9-12 - Health and Physical Education 2015 Glossary)

Sexual Identity: Catholic teaching considers this "a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman", such that as God's human creation, we are gifted with a body that has a sexual identity. Sexual identity refers to the property of being male or female. It refers to the specific sex of the human person. Being male (or female) is an essential property of who we are as persons. Thus, being male (or female) is essential to what we are.
(<http://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/information-topic/sex-and-gender-identity/>)

Sexual Orientation: The phrase used to describe the sex to whom one is sexually attracted. Sexual orientation is another part of the self. Gender identity is not related to sexual orientation.

Transgender: A person whose gender identity, outward appearance, gender expression, and/or anatomy are not consistent with conventional definitions or expectations of male or female.

Transgender is an umbrella term used to capture the various ways in which a person may experience and express their gender identity differently from the biological and/or social dimensions of their sex, e.g. a person may experience an internal sense of their gender identity that differs from the sexual identity expressed in their body.

Drawing on Prior Learning

What does the term transgender refer to? (A transgender person is a person whose gender identity, outward appearance, gender expression, and/or anatomy are not consistent with conventional definitions or expectations of male or female.)

If someone identifies as transgender does that mean they are attracted to the same sex? (Many people make the mistake of assuming a person who identifies as transgender also identifies as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual). That is not the case. Sexual orientation is the phrase used to describe the sex to whom one is sexually attracted. Individuals may experience attraction to the same sex, or to the opposite sex. Sexual orientation is another part of the self. Gender identity is not related to sexual orientation.)

Excerpts from the *Fully Alive Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 8*

Two Spirited: A term used by First Nations people to refer to a person having both the feminine and masculine spirits. It includes sexual or gender identity, sexual orientation social roles and a broad range of identities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

Theological Considerations

Dignity of All Human Persons

Each one of us is created in the image and likeness of God. Through our baptism, we are God's children, called to live a life of holiness. Our worth is immeasurable and at our core is a human dignity that cannot be taken away because it is given to us by God. As Catholics we hold that every human being is precious and valuable and cannot be replaced. In St. Paul's letter to the Romans, we are reminded that nothing can separate us from God's love (*Romans 8: 35-39*). This is no less true for our brothers and sisters in Christ who experience same sex attraction or gender identity confusion. The Church has stated that, "It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech and action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, action, and law." (CDF, 1986 see ACBO 2004, p.48)

Chastity

All the faithful are called to live a life of chastity. Chastity calls us to treat our bodies and the bodies of others with the respect and dignity they deserve as temples of the Holy Spirit.

“Chastity is a virtue that allows us to do what is right, good, and truly loving in the areas of relationship and sexuality.”

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/upload/catechetical-formation-in-chaste-living.pdf>

To be chaste means to be true to one’s own human dignity and to maintain integrity in all our relationships. For those who are single, or priests, or Religious it means abstaining from all sexual activity. For married couples, conjugal love is faithful, exclusive, and open to life by God’s design, which is a blessing to the couple and, through them, to the Church and to the world ([CCC 2337](#)).

Same Sex Attraction

The Church’s official teaching is that a same-sex attraction or orientation cannot itself be morally sinful, since it is not something that is sought out or freely chosen. The Catechism notes that:

“Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained.” ([CCC 2357](#))

Created in the image and likeness of God, every person possesses an intrinsic dignity which must always be respected. The Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms that persons with homosexual inclinations “must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity.”

Scripture and Tradition teach that sexual relations between persons of the same sex are not in accord with God’s original intention expressed in the plan of creation. For this reason, the Church has consistently taught that homosexual acts can never be approved.

In her teaching, however, the Church never condemns persons with same-sex attraction. She carefully distinguishes between an individual’s inclinations or feelings – some of which are transitory and/or situational and others which are deep-seated or permanent – and one’s actions. Inclinations to homosexual acts in no way diminish the full human dignity or intrinsic worth of the person.

*Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same Sex Attraction,
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops*

The terms “gay” and “lesbian” are not used in the Church’s official documents or teachings to define people, not because the experience of same sex attraction is disputed, or denied, but

because they do not “describe persons with the fullness and richness that the Church recognizes and respects in every man and woman” (CCCB, 2011). While our sexuality is an important part of who we are it is not the sum total of our existence, but is a single aspect of our being. Caution must be applied to avoid “reductive reasoning” which leads to stereotyping. While the church may not routinely use the terms ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’ in formal statements or publications, recognize that individuals may choose to use such language to self-identify (LGBTQ) and teachers are encouraged to use language with sensitivity in the classroom. A first and important practical step in leading classroom discussion is to listen. It is important to hear the person’s experience and thoughts in their own words.

For more background information on Church teaching you may find it helpful to consult the following sources, all found on the website of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (www.acbo.on.ca):

“The Human Person, Love and Sexuality: A Resource for Teachers” (2015)

“Church Teaching on Sexual Morality” (2003)

“Chastity and Homosexuality – An Excerpt from the Catechism of the Catholic Church”

Gender Identity

The Catholic Church teaches that the body and soul are so united that one's gender identity is rooted in one's biological identity as male and female. In Catholic teaching, one's sexual identity is considered “a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman”. Jesus states in the Gospel of St. Matthew 19:4, “Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning, made them male and female...for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” As God’s human creation, we are gifted with a body that has a sexual identity.

It is the conviction of the Catholic Church that genetically, anatomically and chromosomally, the body reveals the divine plan, and that humans are “obliged to regard [their bodies] as good and to hold [them] in honour since God has created [them]”.

Therefore, to attempt ‘gender transitioning’ (a process that may involve sex reassignment therapy, including hormone replacement therapy and sex reassignment surgery) is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. While sex reassignment surgeries and/or hormone replacement therapies attempt to alter the outward physical appearance of people who may be experiencing gender dysphoria, it cannot change their sexual identity. It is the conviction of the Catholic Church that the fact that we are male or female is not merely a function of our hormone levels or our genitalia but is a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman.

The concept of gender can be seen as the way in which we express our sexual identity. This expression exists somewhere along a continuum between masculinity and femininity.

(<http://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/information-topic/sex-and-gender-identity/>)

People who experience a discrepancy between their sexual identity and their gender expression are to be loved and supported as valuable and beloved children of God. In our schools, students at all grade levels may need support and guidance with respect to gender identity and expression. Instances of gender transitioning may be presented at all levels in elementary and secondary schools. In law, requests for accommodation must be addressed appropriately by the school. As individuals we must always recognize and respect the inherent dignity of all persons, and so we are called to respond to such requests for accommodation with sensitivity, respect, mercy, and compassion. As Catholic educators, teachers should not suggest or recommend any kind of gender transitioning actions such as hormone therapy or sex reassignment surgery. Teachers are professional educators, not counsellors or physicians, and it is important to work within appropriate professional boundaries.

“Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity*. Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.” (CCC 2333)

Everyone has inherent human dignity, created in the image and likeness of God. With reference to same-sex attraction the Catechism notes that:

They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided (CCC 2358)

Gender Dysphoria: Gender identity issues are complex, delicate and highly personal. Some medical practitioners use the term gender dysphoria to describe the experience of distress associated with the lack of alignment between one’s psychological and emotional experience of gender identity and one’s biological sex that may be experienced by persons presenting themselves as members of the opposite sex. The use of the term and the medicalization of identity is somewhat controversial. When used as a diagnosis in clinical psychology, gender dysphoria refers not to the experience of gender nonconformity but to the distress and discontent experienced by these individuals.

Gender dysphoria is manifested in a variety of ways, including strong desires to be treated as the other gender or a strong conviction that one has feelings and reactions typical of the other gender. Individuals may also experience gender-questioning; that is, persons “may be questioning or exploring their gender identity, and their gender identity may not align with their sex assigned at birth”. Some may also exhibit gender non-conforming behaviours, which is “an umbrella term to describe people whose gender expression or gender identity differs from gender norms associated with their assigned birth sex”. Not all children that gender-question or exhibit gender non-conforming behaviours will attempt gender transition in their adolescence or adulthood. There is a significant drop in the experience of gender dysphoria when kids go through their hormonal surge at puberty.

Teacher Prompts for the Catholic Classroom

“Knowing that everyone deserves to have their God-given human dignity respected, how can we give an informed Christian response to incidences of discrimination related to sexuality?”

“What impact might our words and actions have on those who are struggling to accept and respect themselves, especially regarding their sexual identity?”

“What reliable supports exist in the Catholic community and the larger community that can help a person address sexual identity struggles they may be experiencing (e.g., Courage and EnCourage; Catholic Family Services)?”

“How might people with questions about their sexual orientation benefit from a deepening prayer life in community and ongoing conversation with Jesus?”

"What does the dominant cultural narrative present as options for someone dealing with homosexual attraction?"

“What impacts a person’s sense of self and how can a Catholic Community provide support?”

Resources

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Ottawa: Publications Service, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994.

Desire of the Everlasting Hills. A movie about 3 individuals with same-sex attraction and their decision to live a life of chastity. <https://everlastinghills.org/movie/>

Education Commission of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Pastoral Guidelines to Assist Students of Same-Sex Orientation*. 2004.

Episcopal Commission for Doctrine of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB). *Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction*. 2011.
http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/ministry-ssa_en.pdf

Grossman, Miriam, M.D. An American child and adolescent psychiatrist who is an activist about sexual health matters. <http://www.miriamgrossmanmd.com/>

Minto CL et al. The effect of clitoral surgery on clinical outcome in individuals who have intersex conditions with ambiguous genitalia: a cross sectional study. *Lancet*, 2003, 361(9365):1252.

National Catholic Bioethics Center. *FAQ on Gender Identity Disorder and "Sex Change" Operations*. <http://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/information-topic/sex-and-gender-identity/>

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. 1986.
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html

Yarhouse, Mark. *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*. InterVarsity Press, 2015.

An important Christian resource in the area of gender is the clinical psychologist Dr. Mark Yarhouse. An excerpt and overview of the book is available [here](#) and [here](#). Watch the video of a February 2015 talk he gave to Calvin College in Michigan (<https://vimeo.com/119354294>). It is well done, presented with professional competence and with humility and wise pastoral insights and counsel for addressing gender dysphoria. See also Dr. Yarhouse's Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity. Yarhouse has also written extensively on same-sex attraction: <http://www.sexualidentityinstitute.org/>

For a complementary perspective on the question of gender, focusing more on the specific question of gender re-assignment surgery, see the video by plastic surgeon Dr. Patrick Lappert <http://couragerc.org/resource/clergy-day-2014-part-7-deacon-lappert/>

Expectation C2.2

C2.2 demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships and intimate relationships [PS, IS]

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

- CGE1d** develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good.
- CGE1i** integrates faith with life.
- CGE3d** makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
- CGE4g** examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
- CGE6b** recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- CGE7a** acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.
- CGE7d** promotes the sacredness of life.

Religious Education Curriculum Links

- PF1.06** describe how faith in Jesus Christ challenges his disciples to love and respect others;
- PF1.11** summarize how followers of Jesus are called to love self and others;
- CM1.01** know that each person has been created with the freedom to shape his or her own relationships;
- CM1.04** understand that there are morally acceptable and morally unacceptable ways to express any emotion;
- FL1.04** recognize the importance of a healthy positive acceptance of self, with strengths and weakness;

- FL1.05** recognize and compare the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships (e.g., bullying);
- FL1.10** demonstrate a respect for the human body, in light of the sacredness of human life created by God;

Background Information

Definitions

Chastity: is a virtue - a power or strength - that we develop with the help of God's grace. Chastity calls us to treat our bodies and the bodies of others with the respect and dignity they deserve as temples of the Holy Spirit. Chastity is not, in its mature and flourishing form, merely about controlling or containing desires, but about bringing them into harmony with the plan God has for our good. Chastity is the moral virtue that gradually forms and harmonizes all the elements of human sexuality so that they direct and drive a person toward true and full love and joy. If love is ultimately a gift of oneself, chastity wins for a person mastery over the many dimensions of the self precisely so that we are truly able to give the gift of ourselves. Without mastery over oneself, without a true self-possession, one cannot fully give of oneself. This is the work of the virtue of chastity. It brings the person interior freedom, peace, and integrity as all of the person's powers are gradually harmonized with the work of love according to the image of God.

Intimacy: is the degree of closeness in a relationship. Very intimate relationships require time and lived experience to grow, to develop, attain self-confidence, and trust. There are different depths in which people know, trust, support and commit to each other.

Drawing on Prior Learning

Relationship Skills

It might be helpful preparation for teachers to familiarize themselves with the Fully Alive program, most especially from grades 6, 7 and 8, and to encourage students to draw upon their prior learning as part of the discussion of these topics. Brief excerpts from the Fully Alive Teacher Resource Guides are incorporated throughout this resource to provide examples, context and understanding of prior learning for students who attended Catholic elementary schools.

Note to the Teacher:

The capacity for real intimacy begins to develop during adolescence but is dependent on another aspect of maturity – a sense of identity. People cannot fully share themselves in an intimate relationship until they have a self to share. During adolescence this sense of self is shifting and often fragile. For this reason, relationships are a central concern for adolescents. They want to have close bonds with others but their sense of who they are is developing, and the effect of this growth can be seen in their relationships with family members and with friends.

- If you have a superficial relationship with a person, how does this relationship affect you? Have you ever had this experience? What happened? How did you feel?*
- Can you think of some examples of in-between relationships in your life? Why would you describe them as in-between rather than superficial or intimate?*
- Why do intimate relationships give us confidence to be ourselves? (we don't have to pretend; we can be ourselves; we can talk honestly and say what we really mean; we have confidence to give or withhold consent for shared decisions; we feel accepted and appreciated; we feel at ease)*
- Why is it a privilege to know another person intimately? (when someone shares feelings and thoughts with another person, it is a gift the person is offering; it is an honour to know that another person trusts you and is open with you)*
- Why are relationships we do not choose for ourselves important in our lives? (we learn how to relate to many different people; we learn to be more tolerant and cooperative; we are challenged to develop aspects of ourselves that we might ignore if our relationships were limited to people we choose)*
- Can you be friends with anyone you want? Why? Why not? (You might point out that friendship has to be freely chosen by both people.)*
- Why are intimate relationships difficult at times? (the more we care about another person, the more upset we are if things go badly; we can feel pressured or obligated to do things for/with this person because we care about them, forgetting that intimacy is about being and not doing; intimate relationships affect us deeply)*
- Why is it important to listen to and respect each other when you are in an intimate relationship? (to build trust; to show respect for the other person's decisions; to communicate openly and honestly with each other; to honour the dignity of the other person)*

- *How does selfishness get in the way of relationships? (sometimes we think more about ourselves than others; we might put someone down to make ourselves feel better; we might try to make others do what we want by pressuring them or coercing them instead of listening to what they want, think, or feel; we fail to listen for a person's consent)*
- *Can you overcome selfishness on your own? Why? Why not? (we need God's love and guidance; we need other people to believe in us)*
- *How would you describe a supportive relationship? (you accept each other, including each other's faults; you encourage each other; you want the best for each other; you are ready to forgive each other; you talk openly and honestly with each other; you listen and respect each other's decisions, including seeking the other's consent for decisions)*

Excerpts from the Fully Alive Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 7

Theological Considerations

Message Of The Holy Father John Paul II To The Youth Of The World On The Occasion Of The XIX World Youth Day 2004

For love is not merely a feeling; it is an act of will that consists of preferring, in a constant manner, the good of others to the good of oneself. Jesus speaks to us in the wonderful language of the gift of self and of love so great as to give our own life for it. Is that an easy thing? You know very well that it is not! It is not easy to forget our self, but if we do, it draws us away from possessive and narcissistic love and opens us up to the joy of a love that is self-giving. This Eucharistic school of freedom and charity teaches us to overcome superficial emotions in order to be rooted firmly in what is true and good; it frees us from self-attachment in order to open ourselves to others. It teaches us to make the transition from an *affective* love to an *effective* love. For love is not merely a feeling; it is an act of will that consists of preferring, in a constant manner, the good of others to the good of oneself: "Greater love has no man than this that a man lays down his life for his friends" (*Jn 15:13*). http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/youth/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20040301_xix-world-youth-day.html

Love

Pope John Paul II's book, *Love and Responsibility*, (written before he became Pope), notes that "love is always a mutual relationship between persons", and is based on "particular attitudes toward the good, adopted by each of them individually and by both jointly".

"People generally believe that love can be reduced largely to a question of the genuineness of feelings," but "love in the full sense of the word is a virtue, not just an emotion, and still less a mere excitement of the senses." *Love and Responsibility*

He outlines three facets of love: as attraction, as desire, as goodwill.

- *"attraction is of the essence of love and in some sense is indeed love, although love is not merely attraction"*
- *"Love as desire cannot be reduced to desire itself.... It is felt as a longing for some good for its own sake....love is therefore apprehended as a longing for the person, and not as mere sensual desire. Desire goes together with this longing, but is...overshadowed by it"*
- *"Love is the fullest realization of the possibilities inherent in man.... The person finds in love the greatest possible fullness of being, of objective existence.... A genuine love is one in which the true essence of love is realized--a love which is directed to a genuine...good in the true way" (May, 2007)*

We are Social Beings

Catholics believe in the triune God who is communal and social, since there are three persons in the one Godhead who relate to each other in love. Made in God's image (imago Dei), when we live together in love, we experience joy and we most closely resemble and imitate the Holy Trinity ... precisely what God intended in creating us.

God calls us through the Church to

"not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves ... but gather instead to seek the common good together" ([CCC 1905](#))

As St. Paul taught, "in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (*Romans 12:5*)

In addition to valuable skills and strategies that can be gained through wisdom and research derived from the social sciences and humanities, it is important to remember that the grace God gives us through the prayer and sacramental life of the Church enables us to enter and maintain healthy social relationships, which are primarily spiritual, and which find fulfillment in

seeking the common good of all persons. As St. Paul taught the people in Corinth, “to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

We benefit from knowing that love means choosing the good for a person. Our reason helps us to know the difference between an “apparent good” and what is actually good for a person. When we choose what is actually good for a person, we love that person.

It is through Jesus Christ that humans are revealed to themselves. “For this reason, love for God and neighbour is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbour: ‘If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.... Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law’ (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20).” Gaudium et Spes, 24 (Pope Paul VI, 1965)

John Paul II beautifully elaborates these core ideas in his catechesis on human love in the divine plan (i.e. Theology of the Body). He speaks extensively about the gift nature of the human person, and how this is imprinted by God into his very body-soul creation as a reflection of the image of God (who is himself total self-giving and life-giving love).

Human Dignity

Each of us is created in the image and likeness of God with an inherent worth and value that cannot be taken away. Nothing that we do and nothing that is done to us can take away this dignity since it is freely given to us by God. We are called to see the human dignity in each person regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, contributions to society, race, creed, colour, socio-economic status, life choices, etc. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that with the help of God’s grace people grow in virtue, avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son to the mercy of our Father in heaven. In this way they attain to the “perfection of charity”, learning the meaning and practice of love ([CCC 1700](#)).

Are abstinence & chastity the same?

From REAP, Catholic Youth Apostolate, Archdiocese of Saint Louis

Aren’t they about the same thing? No way! Both are great words to learn but very different.

Abstinence simply means saying “NO.” It means avoiding certain things, whether that is meat on Friday, chocolate before dinner, or sex before marriage. Abstinence says, “Don’t do it!” — for a variety of different reasons, in regard to many different issues.

Abstinence is a great habit to learn. Those that encourage abstinence are doing so because they believe there is a spiritual, eternal, or even delayed reward in withholding oneself from a particular action at the present. There is an extremely valuable discipline learned through not immediately acting on one's desires. It keeps humans from acting like animals.

Abstinence is also encouraged so that one learns "delayed gratification"—saving something now makes it more valuable in the future. A child can learn such habit at a young age. For example, there are ten cookies on the counter. Mom encourages the child to only have one or two now, because later, there will be more to enjoy. If the child "abstains" from eating all the cookies immediately, the child is learning the value of delayed gratification.

Viewing abstinence as such, you can see why many people choose to use this term when encouraging young people to save sex for marriage. "Abstinence" has become more commonly known simply as the act of waiting for marriage. A good habit to learn—but is abstinence the best way to understand God's plan for marriage and the gift of our sexuality? I think not. In fact, many people tune out when they hear "abstinence" because it means, in essence "say no to sex." The term also doesn't help us to understand what are appropriate boundaries, short of the act of intercourse. Technically, one could be very promiscuous, involved in many sexual behaviors, and still remain abstinent. Abstinence has certain limitations. (Gallagher, n.d.)

Chastity is a virtue—not a habit. Chastity is freedom from sexual impurities, not necessarily freedom from sexual activity. Chastity requires mature integration of the human need and capacity for intimacy, its expression within relationships and the experience of sexual feelings. We know that God created sex, and everything God created is very good. Within the boundaries of chastity, one can be sexually active. Chastity is the virtue of understanding and respecting sex to such a great degree that one keeps it in the appropriate time and place (marriage). Every man, woman, and child in the world can be living chastity—priests, religious brothers and sisters, single people, married couples, and teenagers. It's a lifestyle choice. It means that you understand the power of sex enough to keep it in marriage.

Source: REAP, a Catholic Youth Retreat Ministry of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis (Gallagher, n.d.)

Relationship and Disagreement

A Catholic notion of human dignity has a profound effect on how we are called to relate with each other. It means that when we do not agree with someone, we must still interact with

them in a manner that respects their dignity. We have to try to see the value and good in their position, even if we may not agree with them, even if reason shows that another's views are faulty. If we want to have a relationship with another person, we must act in a way that respects and affirms their human dignity. We must consider their wants and needs as well as our own. We must love that person, choosing what is good for that person (*Ephesians 4:17-5:2*).

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.” (*1 Corinthians 13.4-8*)

Teacher Prompts for the Catholic Classroom

“What is true love?”

“Is love at first sight possible?”

“Can the value of love be determined by the intensity of emotion?”

“What skills and strategies help us to develop a healthy, loving, committed relationship that evolves over time?”

“Describe the implications our emotions might have on our thoughts, actions and words. How do these, in turn, affect our relationships with others?”

“As we relate to others, should our emotions govern our reason, or should our reason govern our emotions? What problems can arise from being “ruled” by one’s emotions and feelings? What issues arise when we discount or suppress our emotions in favour of reason?”

“How can working through disagreements strengthen a relationship, especially when God is included in the conversation (i.e., praying during the disagreement)?”

Resources

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Be With Me*. 1997.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ottawa: Publications Service, 1997.

King, Jason E. *Dating - A Practical Catholic Guide*. (Which can be downloaded from the Knights of Columbus at: <http://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/cis/cis311.pdf>)

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Gallagher, H. (n.d.). *Are Abstinence and Chastity the same?* Retrieved September 1, 2015, from Catholic Youth Apostolate - Archdiocese of St. Louis: <http://www.reapteam.org/abstinence-vs-chastity>

May, W. (2007, September 21). *Karol Wojtyla's Love and Responsibility: A Summary*. Retrieved September 2015, from Christendom Awake Website: <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/may/summaryofl&r.htm>

Pope Paul VI. (1965, December 7). *Gaudium e Spes*. Retrieved September 1, 2015, from Vatican: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

Expectation C2.3

C2.3 apply their knowledge of sexual health and safety, including a strong understanding of the concept of consent and sexual limits, and their decision-making skills to think in advance about their sexual health and sexuality [PS, CT]

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

- CGE1d** develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good.
- CGE1i** integrates faith with life.
- CGE3d** makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
- CGE4g** examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
- CGE6b** recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- CGE7a** acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.
- CGE7d** promotes the sacredness of life.

Religious Education Curriculum Links

- CM1.01** know that each person has been created with the freedom to shape his or her own relationships;
- CM1.04** understand that there are morally acceptable and morally unacceptable ways to express any emotion;
- CM1.05** explore the Christian concept of love, *agape*, as distinct from popular notions of love;
- FL1.05** recognize and compare the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships (e.g., bullying);

- FL1.09** analyse sexual decision-making in relation to the meaning of chastity (CCC 2337-2359);
- FL1.10** demonstrate a respect for the human body, in light of the sacredness of human life created by God;
- FL1.11** recognize authentic authority as worthy of honour and respect;

Background Information

Definitions

Consent: To agree to do or allow something; to give permission for something to happen or be done. (Oxford Dictionary, 2015)

A voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity. In other words, it means communicating yes on your own terms. Consent needs to be ongoing throughout sexual activity. (adapted from <http://www.consented.ca/consent/what-is-consent/>)

Consent is about communication and respect. Consent is about knowing and respecting your own boundaries and those of others, and about having the skills to avoid or leave a situation that feels uncomfortable and respecting when others want to do the same.

Consent and the Law:

The principles of consent that apply to *assault* also apply to *sexual assault*. A clear YES, freely given, is the only way someone can give their consent. Saying nothing, being unclear in words your body language, or saying no at any time is NOT consent. An individual must freely consent to the act, and must understand the nature of the act being consented to. The courts have applied the definition of consent to mean that a person cannot consent to having serious bodily harm done to himself or herself (*R. v. Jobidon* [1991] S.C.C.).

Consent means *the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question*.

No consent is obtained when:

- The agreement is expressed by the words or conduct of another person other than the victim (complainant)
- The complainant is incapable of consenting to the activity
- The accused (by abusing a position of trust, power or authority) induces the complainant to engage in the act

- The complainant expresses by words or conduct a lack of agreement to engage in the act or
- The complainant, having consented to engage in the sexual activity, expresses (by words or conduct) a lack of agreement to continue to engage in the activity

Communication and Consent:

- We must be clear with others about our ideas and feelings
- We need to listen attentively to what others are saying to us.
- We need to interpret body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions correctly.
- We need to respect signals of agreement or disagreement.
- We need to negotiate with others in a respectful manner.
- We need to determine consent or lack of consent:
 - a clear “yes”, freely given, is a signal of consent;
 - a response of “no” or an uncertain response or silence needs to be understood as no consent.

Legal Age:

A person who is under the age of sixteen cannot consent to sexual activity with another person who is five or more years older than them. A person who is under the age of fourteen years cannot consent to sexual activity with another person who is two or more years older than them. In any case, a person in authority cannot use consent as a defence of having sexual activity with a person under the age of sixteen.

Source: Edmonton Police Services

<http://www.edmontonpolice.ca/CommunityPolicing/PersonalPropertyCrimes/SexualAssault/WhatisSexualAssault.aspx>

Sexuality: A term that encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors.

Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. (CCC 2332)

The tradition of the Church has understood the sixth commandment as encompassing the whole of human sexuality. (CCC 2336)

Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament. (CCC 2360)

Sexual Health: A state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected, and fulfilled. Sexual health is influenced by a complex web of factors ranging from sexual behaviours, attitudes, and societal factors to biological risk and genetic predispositions.

Drawing on Prior Learning

Consent

It might be helpful preparation for teachers to familiarize themselves with the *Fully Alive* program, most especially from grades 6, 7 and 8, and to encourage students to draw upon their prior learning as part of the discussion of these topics. Brief excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Teacher Resource Guides are incorporated throughout this resource to provide examples, context and understanding of prior learning for students who attended Catholic elementary schools.

Note to the Teacher:

Students need to recognize that sexuality affects all aspects of the human person because the human person is the union of body and soul. God created humans as rational beings who can initiate and control their own actions. Popular culture, however, often presents freedom to make decisions as an individual right, thereby

sheltering it from the discernments of moral reasoning. Students need to recognize that human freedom attains its perfection when it is directed towards God. In fact, freedom is the gift given to us precisely so that we might truly participate in our ongoing creation. As St. Gregory of Nyssa says, "...we become in a certain way our own parents. We create ourselves by the choices we make. Our choices and actions don't just bring about consequences outside of us, they form in us profound and lasting spiritual traits, for good or ill." (see Veritatis Splendor, no. 71).

As students become aware that they make decisions about how they will use their gift of sexuality, they require assistance to understand that only by using it with the dignity and purpose God intended are they able to wholly flourish as human persons, develop relationships which are in true communion with one another, and fully answer their true vocation to love. Throughout this Theme, the moral decision-making model "See, Judge, Act, Evaluate" will be suggested as a structure for students to use to guide them in the moral decision-making process. The students learned and practised the model in Grades 6 and 7. A template and review of the model is provided in Appendix F for teacher reference.

Excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 8

Theological Considerations

Moral Decision Making (Object/Circumstances/Intention)

Morality is a system of right conduct based on fundamental beliefs and obligations to follow certain codes, norms, customs and habits of behaviour. (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005)

Ethics is a discipline that deals with the nature of the good, the nature of the human person, and criteria that we use for making right judgements. (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005)

Free Will: is a gift from God whereby God allow us to use our intelligence to know and choose the good. We shape our lives through free will. All human persons have free will. Freedom is the gift given to us that we might participate in our own ongoing interior creations, that we might freely cooperate in completing the image of God in us.

Freedom is what makes us moral beings. When we act deliberately, our free acts can be morally evaluated. They are either good or evil, and we can know by God's gift of reason and faith if free acts are good or evil. There are three parts to our free acts, all of which must be good, if the act is to be good:

- the *object chosen* (what we actually do/choose must be good)
- the *circumstances* of the action (the where/when/how of the situation must be good)
- the *intention* (why we do something must be good)

If any of the three is not good, the entire act is not good. The object, circumstances, and intention pay attention to all the dimensions of an act that a person (the who) makes: the what, where, when, how, and why of the act. It might be helpful to think of this like a chain with 3 links. If all of the links are good then the entire chain is good. If any of the links are bad, then the entire chain is affected.

Since evil is a lack of something that should be present in God's design, if any part of a free moral act lacks goodness, the act is evil. As well, if everything is present that should be present, the act is good. For example, a student who is motivated to do well on a test (good intent) and chooses to study hard (good object) by reviewing notes (good circumstances) has done a good act. While a student who wants to do well on a test (good intent) and chooses to cheat (evil object) is doing evil despite their good intentions and regardless of circumstance; an athlete who is motivated to succeed in their sport (good intent) and chooses to train (good object) by committing daily to workouts (good circumstances) has done a good act. While an athlete who wants to do well in a sport and be a contributor to their team (good intent) and chooses to cheat by using performance enhancing drugs (evil object) is doing evil despite their good intentions and regardless of circumstance.

Drawing on Prior Learning

Moral Decision-Making

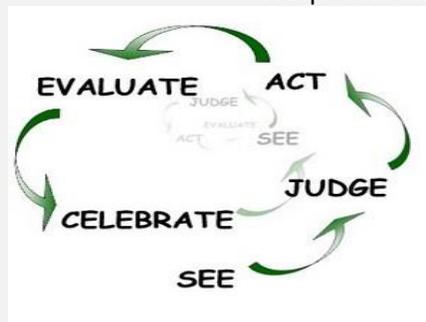
*Students will learn the **See, Judge, Act, Evaluate Decision-Making Process**. Because humans possess the gift of free will, we grow in commitment and responsibility through the decisions we make. Students need guidance with making decisions that promote their flourishing and well-being as the image of God, that are countercultural (not predetermined by the culture they live in), and that promote a loving, caring, life-giving society. Students will explore how each decision contributes to their*

development as an individual and as a member within a society. The emphasis in this topic is on the students' responsibility to grow in awareness and understanding, and to see themselves as agents for change. We give of ourselves to others – just as Jesus taught.

As teachers, we need to provide opportunities for our students to apply the decision-making process to situations by offering lessons or values from Scripture and key principles from the Church's tradition, including social teachings. The goal is to enrich our students' understanding of what it means to be a person of commitment who acts on behalf of justice, equality, and the common good of all.

The See, Judge, Act, Evaluate Decision-Making Process

Adapted from Fr. (later Cardinal) Joseph Cardijn



The Four Steps:

- 1. Seeing:** Identifying and naming what is happening that is causing concern.
 - What are the people in this situation doing, feeling, and saying?
- 2. Judging:** Analyzing the situation and making an informed judgment about it.
 - Options and possible outcomes
 - Prayer and discernment
 - Consulting Scripture, Tradition, and Natural Law
 - Obtaining advice from support team (family/parents, trusted adult, priest)
 - Reflecting on past experiences
- 3. Acting:** Knowing the reason for your decision and always doing the loving thing.
What action needs to be taken:
 - to change the situation?
 - to address the root causes?
- 4. Evaluating:** How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your action?

We evaluate the decision using the following three principles:

1. Never do evil even for the sake of accomplishing something good.
2. Treat others with the same love and respect with which we would like to be treated.
3. Everything we do should reflect Jesus' own love and the loving guidance He offers us through His Church.

The person who draws upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit to make a well-reasoned moral decision will experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit. This is cause to celebrate!

Excerpts from the *Fully Alive* Family Life Program, Teacher's Guide, Grade 8

See the last page of this document for a version of the See, Judge, Act, Evaluate Decision-Making Process that is suitable for copying.

Good moral decision making involves accurately identifying the goodness of the object, circumstance, and intention before doing an act, and then doing the good act.

When it comes to defining authentic freedom it is the freedom to choose God's will and experience fulfillment. It is the inner peace and joy that come with doing God's will perfectly. Your writer mentions the stress of an unwanted pregnancy. Choosing according to God's will leads to emotional freedom. Authentic freedom is emotional freedom. One can always check the fruits of their action to help judge if it is true freedom.

We use the gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever we are faced with a moral dilemma. The outcome should be an experience of the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits reveal to us that we have chosen correctly. For example, a wise child will not gossip. The resulting emotion should be peace, a fruit of the Spirit. These kinds of examples will show the difference between gifts and fruits and how we should apply them to all decisions.

For Further Study:

Catholic News Agency, *A Primer on Catholic Morals*:

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/apologetics/catholic-doctrines-and-practices/a-primer-on-catholic-morals/>

Chastity, Freedom and Consent

God wants us to freely choose chastity, which is good for us and the community. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church maintains

“the more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just.” (CCC 1733).

“Chastity is a virtue that allows us to do what is right, good, and truly loving in the areas of relationship and sexuality.” (<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/upload/catechetical-formation-in-chaste-living.pdf>)

To be chaste means to be true to one’s own human dignity and to maintain integrity in all our relationships. For those who are single, for priests, and for Religious, it means abstaining from all sexual activity. For married couples conjugal love is faithful, exclusive, and open to life as God designed, which is a blessing to the couple and, through them, to the Church and to the world.

God respects every person’s free will to make decisions.

“By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God” (CCC 1731).

If God respects every person’s free will, so must we. Within marriage, spouses make a “free human act” by giving themselves to each other in an intimate sexual union. If a person does not consent to an intimate sexual union, a violation of their free will has occurred, which is a serious sin. (CCC 2356). It is more than that - it is a violation of the person him- or herself, and a person is never an object that can be used. Mutual self-giving - the gift nature that is utterly central to human life and relationships - must always be free because love is always free, and the only appropriate attitude toward another human being is love (properly understood, of course). It must always be remembered that we are created in the image of God and possess an inherent dignity. Actions that do not recognize the bodily and spiritual aspects of sexuality as inseparable are instances of objectification and are always to be avoided. Human beings are called to honour each other and their Creator, which necessarily involves respecting each other’s free will, with love and justice.

God desires our fulfillment. We were created in the image of God, male and female. This image was wounded as a result of original sin. God’s grace and love can heal us so that we can become the best versions of ourselves. This includes our sexuality. Our sexuality is a gift and when used in the right context can be very fruitful, emotionally and physically. We are all called to holiness and to be fruitful. There is no hierarchy of states of life. We can use our desires to lead to our fulfillment and to the fulfillment of others.

Teacher Prompts for the Catholic Classroom

“What rules or strategies can you use to ensure that you have a healthy body, especially since your body is a ‘temple of the Holy Spirit?’” (1 Corinthians 6:19)

“How can sexuality be expressed in a manner that is healthy and respectful of self, others, and God?”

“How can people come to know Jesus’ thinking regarding how to make good moral decisions?”

“How does the Church help people to make good moral decisions?”

“Why is it important to respect the free will of other people?”

“If people use their free will improperly in choosing actions that are not good, how should a community respond in justice, while respecting that person’s free will?”

“Why do we have freedom to begin with?”

“What is the purpose of our being able to choose certain actions and reject others?”

“What happens to us when we make these choices?”

“How do we know if anything is right or wrong, good or bad, helpful or harmful?”

“How are a healthy eating plan, a physical activity or fitness plan, moral decision making and thinking ahead about sexual health connected when we respect God’s desire for our fulfillment?”

Resources

Ben & Barbara. *Six Tips for Sexual Purity, Outside Da Box videos*. www.outsidedabox.com

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ottawa: Publications Service, 1997.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). *The Fourth R Program*.
<https://youthrelationships.org/health>

Institute for Catholic Education. *AIDS: A Catholic Educational Approach to HIV, Ontario Catholic Schools, 2nd edition, Teacher's Manual*. 1999

Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA). *Grade 9-10 Support Documents, (Grade 9, module 1, p.88 and Module 3, p.42)*

Works Cited

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2005). *In Search of the Good*. (M. R. Greco, Ed.)
Ottawa: Concacan Inc.

Grade 10 Resources

Expectation C2.5

C2.5 describe factors that influence sexual decision making and demonstrate an understanding of how to use decision-making and communication skills effectively to support choices related to responsible and healthy sexuality [PS, IS, CT]

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

- CGE2a** listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values.
- CGE3d** makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
- CGE4a** demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others.
- CGE4g** examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
- CGE6b** recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- CGE7a** acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.
- CGE7d** promotes the sacredness of life.

Religious Education Curriculum Links

- FL1.04** explore the issue of sexual attraction and sexual decision-making in the light of chastity and the consequences of pre-marital sexual activity (CCC 2337-2359);
- FL1.07** articulate the qualities which are essential to the building of healthy relationships, with a particular focus on the positive impact of intimacy and mutuality;
- FL1.09** define and discuss the importance of sexuality and sexual attraction as gifts from God;
- FL1.12** describe how sexual decision-making is guided by the virtue of chastity, with a particular focus on identifying the physical, emotional, social and spiritual consequences of pre-marital sexual activity;

Background Information

Definitions

Chastity: is a virtue - a power or strength - that we develop with the help of God's grace. Chastity calls us to treat our bodies and the bodies of others with the respect and dignity they deserve as temples of the Holy Spirit. Chastity is not, in its mature and flourishing form, merely about controlling or containing desires, but about bringing them into harmony with the plan God has for our good. Chastity is the moral virtue that gradually forms and harmonizes all the elements of human sexuality so that they direct and drive a person toward true and full love and joy. If love is ultimately a gift of oneself, chastity wins for a person mastery over the many dimensions of the self precisely so that we are truly able to give the gift of ourselves. Without mastery over oneself, without a true self-possession, one cannot fully give of oneself. This is the work of the virtue of chastity. It brings the person interior freedom, peace, and integrity as all of the person's powers are gradually harmonized with the work of love according to the image of God.

Intimacy: is the degree of closeness in a relationship. Very intimate relationships require time and lived experience to grow, to develop, attain self-confidence, and trust. There are different depths in which people know, trust, support and commit to each other.

Pre-marital sexual activity: sexual activity that takes place before a couple are sacramentally married.

Theological Considerations

Moral Decision Making

Free will is a gift from God allowing us to use our intelligence to know and choose the good. We shape our lives through free will and freedom is the gift given to us that we might participate in our own ongoing interior creation, that we might freely cooperate in completing the image of God in us. The decision making model, "See, Judge, Act, and Evaluate", helps us make moral decisions in a way that follows God's plan.

The Deposit of Faith consists of revealed truths handed on from Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Deposit of Faith is sealed and complete. These truths were transmitted through written and unwritten traditions, Scripture and Tradition, completing our understanding of Jesus' teaching.

Tradition has been defined as the “living memory of the Church” (Yves Congar). This living memory is handed on through these pillars of our faith:

- Scripture
- Creeds
- Councils/Magisterial Teaching
- Liturgy
- Liturgical Art

When Catholics seek to determine whether a certain action is right or wrong they often refer to “natural law”. Natural law is not written in any book of laws. It is a ‘law’ written within us in our capacity to reason. The Catholic tradition turns not only to the Bible to find norms and principles for human moral action. It also turns to human nature and what we may learn about human nature through reason. **Natural law is the original moral sense that enables people to discern by reason what is good and what is evil, what is true and what is false.**

So when it comes to sources for our Church’s moral teaching, we consult:

- Scripture
- Tradition (literally meaning a handing on)
- Natural Law

One can use the gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever faced with a moral dilemma. The outcome should be an experience of the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits reveal to us that we have chosen correctly. For example, a wise child will not gossip. The resulting emotion should be peace, a fruit of the Spirit. These kinds of examples will show the difference between gifts and fruits and how we should apply them to all decisions.

(Object/Circumstances/Intention) - the modern tendency to avoid considering the “Object”

Freedom is what makes us moral beings. When we act deliberately, our free acts can be morally evaluated. They are either good or evil, and we can know by God’s gift of reason if free acts are good or evil. There are three parts to our free acts, all of which must be good, if the act is to be good:

- the *object chosen* (what we actually do/choose must be good)
- the *circumstances* of the action (the where/when/how of the situation must be good)
- the *intention* (why we do something must be good)

If any of the three is not good, the entire act is not good. The object, circumstances, and intention pay attention to all the dimensions of an act that a person (the who) makes: the what, where, when, how, and why of the act.

Since evil is a lack of something that should be present in God's design, if any part of a free moral act lacks goodness, the act is evil. As well, if everything is present that should be present, the act is good. Good moral decision making involves accurately identifying the goodness of the object, circumstance, and intention before doing an act, and then doing the good act.

There exists the concept of intrinsic evil - choices of actions that in and of themselves cannot possibly lead us toward goodness/God and can only and always do harm - whether that harm is immediately apparent or not.

However, in contemporary culture, there seems to be two tendencies, and the church counsels that they cannot be approved:

- 1) to avoid looking at the object of an act (what is actually chosen/done) by emphasizing intention; it sounds like this: "as long as you want to do what's good, then whatever you choose is fine." For example, a student who wants to get into a great program in university takes an online course to enhance her grade point average. She asks her older brother to write her assignments because it is going to help her achieve her goal.

- 2) to avoid looking at the object of an act (what is actually chosen/done) by emphasizing circumstances; it sounds like this: "right or wrong depends on the situation". For example, a 19 year old goes out with a few friends and has a couple of drinks. He plans to walk to his friend's house and sleep over. However, he gets a text from his mom that she needs the car to get to work in the morning. He does not want to have to get up early to drive home and he only lives 2 kilometers from his friend's house. He figures it is okay to drive home even though he has been drinking.

The Church continues to find new ways, in the New Evangelization, of sharing with contemporary culture how God desires that object, circumstances, and intention must all be good in free human acts to fulfill God's will and therefore to bring happiness to the community. The Church also recognizes and supports the good that already exists in contemporary culture.

Sexual expression in marriage that bonds a husband and wife and is open to new life by God's design (the purpose of sexual intimacy) is completely good in object, circumstances, and intention.

“Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them” (CCC 1786)

How is the good determined?

In keeping with the social nature of man, the good of each individual is necessarily related to the common good, which in turn can be defined only in reference to the human person: *Do not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together.* (CCC 1905)

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church points out, the common good is to be understood as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." (CCC 1906)

The common good has three elements

- *respect for the person*
- *social well-being and development*
- *peace*, that is, the stability and security of a just order

The common good is always oriented towards the progress of persons: "The order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around."³⁰ This order is founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love. (CCC 1912)

Teacher Prompts for the Catholic Classroom

“Knowing that God wants us to choose actions that are good by object, circumstances, and intention, what is not quite right with this statement: ‘right or wrong depends on the situation’?”

“Knowing that God wants us to choose actions that are good by object, circumstances, and intention, what is not quite right with this statement: ‘as long as you want to do what’s good, then whatever you choose is fine’?”

“What are some reliable ways of coming to know what God wants for us, when we are faced with difficult moral decisions?”

“How does the media portray relationships in a biased or stereotypical way? How can we encourage more realistic portrayals of these relationships in media?”

“As a Catholic, what moral decisions and factors are to be considered when deciding whether or not to be sexually intimate with another?”

Resources

Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights www.sexualhealthandrights.ca

(Caution: this site may provide certain kinds of information, but in no way is it informed by a Catholic vision of the human person, love, and sexuality.)

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Be With Me*. Ottawa: Publications Service, 1997.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ottawa: Publications Service, 1997.

Centre for Suicide Prevention www.suicideinfo.ca

Koch, Carl. *Creating a Christian Lifestyle*. Winona: Saint Mary's Press. 1996.

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Turning Points - Readings in Family Life Education*. 1997.

Expectation C3.4

C3.4 describe some common misconceptions about sexuality in our culture, and explain how these may cause harm to people and how they can be responded to critically and fairly [CT]

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

- CGE1d** develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good;
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- CGE3d** makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience;
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- CGE6b** recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended;
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Human Sexuality: Our sexuality (maleness and femaleness) is one of God's gifts of creation and involves the whole person: body and spirit. Sexuality is not something that we have, but something that we are. We can't separate our sexuality from who we are as a person. As all species, we must procreate or die. It is part of God's loving plan, his intentional design, which fastens the procreative to the unitive (the reproduction necessary for our survival to the bond that creates a family) and wraps it all up with pleasure. The Church understands that pleasure and those connections that we so yearn for as good: **sexual attraction** reminds us that we are called to live lives of love; that we are to donate our very selves for others. **Sexual intimacy** (growth of bonded, committed, covenantal relationships such that there exists the closeness, acceptance and trust between two people) – the full realization and expression of that attraction – discloses even more about who we are and how we are to live in relationship.

Sexual assault: is an act of violence that takes away a person's right to make decisions about their own body. (source: University of Toronto)

Sexual Exploitation: occurs when someone engages in sexual activity without the other person's clear consent. Forcing another to engage in sexual activity without their consent is a crime. Consent that has been given initially can be withdrawn at any time, and the sexual activity must then stop. Being forced to say "yes" is not true consent.

Theological Considerations

Happiness

God desires our fulfillment. We have been created in the image of God, male and female (Genesis 1:26-28). Although this image was wounded as a result of original sin (the turning away from God's love by the first human beings, which has affected all of us), God's grace and love can heal us so that we can become the best versions of ourselves today! We are all called to holiness by God at every moment of the day, and to be fruitful in different ways. This includes our sexuality.

Our sexuality is a gift from God and, when used in the way God intended, can be very fruitful and life-giving - emotionally, physically, etc., and most incredibly the gift can include the creation of new human beings! With respect to intimacy and sexuality, many people are called to be fruitful through their sexuality within marriage, with the welcoming of children into the world (Mark 10:6-9).

Since there is no hierarchy of states of life (marriage is as valuable in God's eyes as priesthood, etc.) we can appreciate how priests, single people, and people living the religious life (e.g., nuns and brothers) can be as fruitful as married people in the community, but in ways that don't involve sexual intimacy. These vocations outside of marriage involve giving of energy, time, and talents in the service of people, for the well-being of all in the community, especially the most vulnerable people – giving the fruit of joy and peace in society!

We can use our natural and good desires to lead to our fulfillment and to the fulfillment of others. We are most fulfilled when we know what is true and do what is good. This is a beautiful experience for all of us! For example, when we know the truth about the meaning of sexual expression in marriage and practice chastity (using our sexuality the way God intended), our happiness and the happiness of those around us is enlarged.

Sometimes in modern culture, we may be influenced to think (especially through suggestions from some modern media) that we may use our bodies sexually however we choose, so long as there is "consent" between persons. However, this isn't real freedom; real freedom is of course

connected to acting in harmony with God's design. The Catholic faith values consent, of course, as an expression of the dignity of the person as the one who freely gives the gift of self in loving relationship. However, "consent" alone is not enough to ensure that a sexual expression or act is consistent with God's purpose/meaning. God has consistently reserved sexual expression for consenting spouses of the opposite sex within marriage, which fulfills God's plan for human sexual expression and leads to the happiness of the family and the community.

In modern culture, recreational sex is encouraged at times, and can be shown to be contrary to God's plan for sexuality, particularly as God's plan relates to dating, engagement, and marriage. We can primarily know God's plan by understanding that God has reserved sexual intimacy for a man and a woman who are married (CCC 1601).

Students may wonder: "How do we know with certainty that God has a design/purpose/meaning for human sexual expression within marriage that leads to our happiness?"

Misconceptions of Sexuality

So much was promised by the sexual revolution and its throwing off of the constraints of morality, and yet a simple look around our world reveals a very different picture - broken families, hurting young people, unhappiness, etc. Some of these misconceptions include:

- A radical separation of the body from the "real" interior person, and the resulting reduction of the meaning and moral guidance imprinted in the body-soul unity of the person (i.e. "dualism").
- A resulting sense of our uninhibited ability to use our bodies however we choose, so long as there is "consent." In a dualist mindset, consent becomes the principal value to be protected. The person can do what he/she wants with the body so long as there is consent. The Catholic faith values consent, of course, as an expression of the dignity of the person as the one who freely gives the gift of self in relationship, and it sets it within a fuller and beautiful picture of the person and love.
- Emotional fulfillment as the pinnacle of human fulfillment (and sex as an important dimension of emotional fulfillment).
- Emotions and sincerity are always reliable guides to happiness.

- Marriage as primarily about the emotional fulfillment of consenting adults, and its separation from an objective connection to the child and the rights and dignity of new human life.

Deeper Philosophical/Theological Insight about the Meaning/Purpose of Sexuality: Four Causes of all Natural Beings

Secondary students may be unaware that sexuality has a purpose/meaning that can be known by reason, and that a Catholic understanding of sexuality includes understanding sexuality through the lens of ‘the four causes’. Let’s have a look at how ‘the four causes’ relate to intimacy and sexuality:

We can know with our reason that every single thing and every act has four causes for its existence, which may need a careful and simplified explanation (*Aristotle Physics Book 2, Chapter 3*):

Material Cause: the stuff something is made of

Formal Cause: not including the material, what makes something different than another thing (e.g., a wooden chair is different than a wooden table, because of a different form)

Agent Cause: what or who made something exist

Final Cause (telos): the purpose of something

For example, in the case of a wooden chair, there are four causes that made the chair exist, and if any of these causes are missing ... there is no chair:

Material Cause: wood

Formal Cause: “chairness”, which makes the chair different than a wooden table

Agent Cause: chairmaker; and God (since God made the wood, etc.)

Final Cause/Purpose: to sit on (which is in the mind of the chairmaker before making the chair)

It’s important for students to know that everything has a purpose/meaning that God has designed! We can examine any act or being in nature using the lens of the four causes, which can help us more fully understand what something is about ... including expressions of human sexuality.

For example, let’s take a practical teen example – a date. A date between a young man and a young woman is something that is commonly seen and experienced in society, and because it’s real, it has four causes that make it exist:

Material Cause: male and female

Formal Cause: “datingness”, which makes dating different than only a friendship as it provides the opportunity to develop a closeness in a relationship that requires time, trust, self-confidence.

Agent Cause: male and female; and God (since God made the male and female)

Final Cause/Purpose: to spend quality time to build a relationship with a person of the opposite sex, with the possibility of future discernment of a vocation to marriage (marriage being reserved by God for one man and one woman).

Why does this matter? Why might this be important to know? Consider that people may erroneously think that dating has no God-designed purpose, or that they decide what the purpose of dating is. This could be harmful for people, if for example, somebody decides they want to date as many people as possible during their secondary or post-secondary school years ... just to have fun, not considering that emotional and spiritual connections are being made during dating.

It is helpful to remember that God is the original designer of dating, intimacy, etc. – so it is helpful for us to try to know what God’s purpose is for dating, so that we can act in ways that are in harmony with God’s purposes – for our happiness. God’s purposes far exceed “just having fun by dating as many people as possible”.

As a second example, consider marriage:

Marriages occur in society and are natural, with these four causes that make marriage exist:

Material Cause: husband and wife

Formal Cause: “marriageness”, which makes marriage different than only a friendship, or a dating relationship

Agent Cause: husband and wife; and God

Final Cause/Purpose: to freely form a bond of love in a permanent commitment, open to new life through sexual intimacy by God’s design, and God’s plan for family life

If people are unaware that sacramental marriage has a purpose/meaning that comes from God, they may think that divorce, remarriage, etc. are not problematic options. However, we can know by reason and faith that God does have a plan for marriage, as the Church teaches (CCC 1602-1666), and that there is great harm brought into society by the breakdown of families.

As well, sexual intimacy occurs in marriage, and therefore this expression of love also has four causes that make this kind of love exist:

Material Cause: the material bodies of husband and wife giving themselves to each other in sexual intimacy

Formal Cause: “sexual intimateness”, which makes sexual intimacy different from other expressions of love that married couples share (e.g., hugging)

Agent Cause: husband and wife; and God

Final Cause/Purpose: to unite the husband and wife more deeply (unitive purpose); to be open to new life by God’s design (procreative purpose)

Modern culture seems to sometimes deny that beings and actions have purposes ... and that everything acts toward a goal that God has designed. However in denying this reality, the human happiness within modern culture is diminished.

For example, there seems to be a tendency in modern culture to not know or even to deny that sexual intimacy has a known twofold purpose/meaning within marriage between a husband and wife:

- 1) to unite the spouses more deeply (unitive purpose)
- 2) to be open to new life by God’s design (procreative purpose)

In contemporary culture we may hear these kinds of expressions that point to not knowing or denying the known purpose of sexual expression in marriage:

- “the purpose of sexual expression is decided by each individual, depending on their values”
- “what’s true about sex for you is true for you; what’s true about sex for me is true for me”

These expressions are known as relativism, in which people mistakenly claim to have their own private truth, separate from God’s absolute truth. Several modern popes have cautioned us about the dangers of relativism, which leads to a lack of God’s truth and therefore a lack of love and happiness. They have helped us know that love means to choose what is good for others and self, and that we need to know what is good in order to choose it (love). We need to know God’s purposes for expressions of intimacy found in dating, marriage, etc., so that we can choose those expressions out of love for God and each other.

The Church continues to find new ways of sharing with contemporary culture how God desires that people come to know and respect the true, twofold purpose of sexual expression within marriage between spouses, for the good and happiness of the community, while recognizing and supporting the good that already exists in contemporary culture. At times, the Church’s teaching is “countercultural”, but that is good when the Church is helping society come to know God’s will and God’s plans for loving (choosing the good for) other persons.

"By reason of their state in life and of their order, [Christian spouses] have their own special gifts in the People of God."¹⁴⁷ This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children." (CCC 1641)

Teacher Prompts for the Catholic Classroom

"How does the Church's teaching on the dignity of all persons influence our attitude towards sexuality?"

"Why is knowing the God-intended purpose of sexual intimacy important for teenagers in modern culture?"

"What reliable supports exist for teenagers in coming to understand their identity, including their sexual identity?"

"Are emotions and sincerity always reliable guides to happiness?"

"Considering the Church's teaching and God's plans for loving other persons, what are some ways in which we can reduce homophobia, and support those who are questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation?"

"How does modern culture sometimes promote pleasures of the body at the expense of goodness for the soul?"

"If people make mistakes or sin in the area of sexuality, what should they know about God's love and about good supports that the Church and the community offers them (e.g., the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation/Confession))?"

"By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God" (CCC 1731).

Resources

Archdiocese of Saint Louis. REAP – Catholic Youth Apostolate. <http://www.reapteam.org/>

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Ottawa: Publications Service, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994.

Mireau, Father Michael (“Father Catfish”). www.FatherCatfish.com

University of Toronto. Myths of Sexual Assault

www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc/myths-of-assault

(Caution: this site may be a source of information for teachers to draw upon, but is not informed by a Catholic vision of the human person, love, and sexuality.)

Expectation C3.5

C3.5 explain how being in an exclusive relationship with another person affects them and their relations with others [PS, IS, CT]

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- CGE7a** acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions;
- CGE7d** promotes the sacredness of life;

Religious Education Curriculum Links

- FL1.03** describe the ways in which human growth is distorted by relationships that involve exploitative, harassing or abusive behaviours;
- FL1.04** explore the issue of sexual attraction and sexual decision-making in the light of chastity and the consequences of pre-marital sexual activity (CCC 2337-2359);
- FL1.07** articulate the qualities which are essential to the building of healthy relationships, with a particular focus on the positive impact of intimacy and mutuality;
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- FL1.12** describe how sexual decision-making is guided by the virtue of chastity, with a particular focus on identifying the physical, emotional, social and spiritual consequences of pre-marital sexual activity;

Background Information

Facts

- One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.
<http://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/dating-violence-statistics/>
- In a Liz Claiborne Survey released in March 2006, half (50%) of the 1,004 teens ages 13 to 18 surveyed reported they've been in a dating relationship and nearly a third (32%) said they've been in a serious relationship. This same survey found that:
 - One in four teens (24%) reported feeling pressure to date; and 14% said they would do almost anything to keep a boyfriend or girlfriend.
 - In the same survey, 20% of teenagers who have been in a serious relationship report being hit, slapped or pushed by a partner.
 - A significant number of teens (14%) said they have been threatened with physical harm—either to them or self-inflicted by their partner—to avoid a breakup.
 - One out of 10 of these teens has been threatened with the spread of rumors by their partner as a means of control.
 - 7% said someone in a relationship has either threatened to kill them or commit suicide in an attempt to stay together.
http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts_stats.php?factsec=11
- “According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 22% of all teens have been victims of an abusive dating relationship”.

Teen Girls and Sexual Violence: The Canadian Facts

<http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/page-535883>

Here are some Canadian statistics about how sexual violence affects teens and young women.

- Being young and female is a risk factor of sexual assault. 86% of sexual offences reported to the police in the year 2004 were committed against females (Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006, Statistics Canada)
- A recent Ontario report from CAMH found that the rates of sexual harassment in schools are significant, with 36% of boys and 46% of girls in Grade 9 reporting that

“someone made [unwanted] sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks at me”. By Grade 11 this rate had declined significantly for boys, but remained consistent at 46% for girls (Safe Schools Action Report on Gender-based Violence, Homophobia, Sexual Harassment & Inappropriate Sexual Behavior in Schools 2008, p. 6)

- A recent Ontario report found that almost one in three girls in Grade 9 stated that “someone brushed up against me in a sexual way” or “someone touched, grabbed, or pinched me in a sexual way” (Safe Schools Action Report on Gender-based Violence, Homophobia, Sexual Harassment & Inappropriate Sexual Behavior in Schools 2008, p. 6)
- Young women under 25 show the highest rates of sexual assault and criminal harassment (Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006, Statistics Canada)
- 54% of Canadian girls under the age of 16 have experienced some form of unwanted sexual attention. 24% have experience rape or coercive sex and 17% have experienced incest (Holmes & Silver, 1992; Russell, 1996)
- Youth under 18 represented 22% of the Canadian population in 2004 but made up 58% of victims of sexual offences. For males, being under 12 years old heightens their vulnerability to sexual offences (Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006, Statistics Canada)
- 27% of Grade 11 female students in a Centre for Addiction and Mental Health survey admitted being pressured to do something sexual against their will. 15% of respondents reported having oral sex just to avoid having intercourse (Wolfe and Chiodo, CAMH, 2008, p. 3.)

Theological Considerations

Teaching Sexual Morality in Catholic Schools

The virtue of chastity is at the root of sexual morality. This virtue calls all persons, married and unmarried, to respect God's intention for human sexuality and so to honour God in our quest for human fulfillment and happiness.

Chastity is a positive orientation to life. It is to be taught as a discipline of the heart, the eye, of language and all the senses, which frees us to embrace important human goods. Teaching chastity begins from a spiritual intuition that helps us to grasp the obligation inherent in the fact that our body belongs to God. On this point it is St. Paul who reminds us that: "The body is meant...for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (1 Corinthians 6:13).

In Christian marriage, a man and a woman live out what Saint John Paul II has called "the nuptial meaning of the body". As the Holy Father puts it, "The communion of persons means existing in a mutual 'for', in a relationship of mutual gift." Man and woman, in their complementarity, are a manifestation of the creation of humanity "in the image and likeness of God." Marriage is, in the solid tradition of the Church, the only proper context for sexual relationships and is the way of chastity for married people. It is here alone that the two-fold meaning of sexual intercourse, the unitive and procreative, finds its proper order.

Sexual activity is truly meaningful only when it embodies and expresses marital love, love that is both fully committed and open to life, and it cannot do that outside of marriage for anyone, heterosexual or homosexual. This means that sexual activity which is outside marriage cannot be condoned, and is taught by the Church to be immoral.

Students in our Catholic schools are still growing up, and marriage is not an imminent prospect. They are called to develop true friendships, marked by genuine love and affection, with members of both sexes. This involves learning to communicate about important things, developing their own gifts and learning to cherish the gifts of others, and engaging in a wide variety of wholesome activities together. This time should also be devoted to discerning the future unfolding of personal vocation.

Sexual activity between unmarried people can undermine such friendships and block vocational discernment. One reason is that sexual activity inevitably tends to become the focus of the relationship, and other activities, despite their great worth, tend to be valued less.

Sexual desire is not in itself sinful. It can, depending on the choices a person makes, be an occasion of growth in virtue or an occasion of sin.

Students need to be taught that their present choices determine their character. If they co-operate with God in making choices, they will be capable of receiving the fulfillment that God wants for them, not only here but hereafter.

(Excerpt from "Church Teaching on Sexual Morality" from the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario)

The virtue of chastity blossoms in *friendship*. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends, who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality. Chastity is expressed notably in *friendship with one's neighbor*. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion. (CCC 2347)

Teacher Prompts for the Catholic Classroom

“How does the virtue of chastity call us to live our lives?”

“What is the Church’s understanding of the sacrament of marriage?”

“What does friendship mean to students in Catholic schools?”

“As members of a Catholic community, what advice would you give, and what supports would you reference, to a friend whose relationship has ended?”

“If people make mistakes or sin what should they know about God’s love and about good supports that the Church and the community offers them?” (e.g. the Sacrament of Reconciliation; pastoral counselling through their local parish and/or Chaplaincy Leader at school; Catholic Family Services)

Resources

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ottawa: Publications Service, 1997.

Ending a Relationship (The Catholic University of America)
<http://studentwellness.cua.edu/Endingrelationships.cfm>

Evert, Jason. *If You Really Loved Me: 100 Questions on Dating, Relationships and Sexual Purity*. St. Anthony Messenger Press; Revised edition, 2009.

Gallagher, Heather and Vlahutin, Peter. *A Case for Chastity; The Way to Real Love and True Freedom for Catholic Teens*. Ligouri, Ligouri Publications, 2003.

King, Jason E. *Dating - A Practical Catholic Guide*. Knights of Columbus.
<http://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/cis/cis311.pdf>

Temertzoglou, Ted. *Healthy Active Living - Keep Fit, Stay Healthy, Have Fun*. (Text and Grade 10 Student Handbook.) Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc., 2007.

Young and Catholic.Net. *Breaking up...with a Friend*.
<http://youngandcatholic.net/2012/04/breaking-up-with-a-friend/>

APPENDIX

Theology of the Body

- Created with original justice and freedom
- Goodness of creation, created male and female
- Image is wounded due to sin
- God's grace and love, and our cooperation can heal our nature and this will spill over into our actions and how we order our desires
- Marriage and other states of life call for a total gift of self
- The body has a spousal meaning: Christ is married to the Church - we are married to another and, if we are single or a member of a religious order or priesthood, married to the Body of Christ. We are made to be a gift to the other.
- The persons of the Trinity model the kind of love we are called to experience in our relationships: Perfect love expressed and received - a total giving of self and rejoicing in the other. God wants us to know that He loves us just as much as He loves His Son, Jesus Christ. We are called to participate in that great love. The Holy Spirit is the power of God's love in our lives.

Catholic Marriage: An Intimate Community of Life and Love

“Sex outside marriage tries to ‘say’ two contradictory things at the same time: on the one hand, I give my entire physical self to you; on the other hand, I have not made a total (exclusive and irrevocable) gift of myself to you.” (p. 46)

Authored by Dr. Patricia Murphy, the book, *Catholic Marriage: An Intimate Community of Life and Love* (Novalis 2011), offers guidance and advice. In an interview with the Catholic Register, Dr. Murphy explains Catholic teaching.

The Catholic Register: How do the Church's teaching on family and children reflect God's plan for marriage?

Patricia Murphy: We are created out of love and for love, to give and receive love. This means that we will find true human fulfillment and happiness only in making a total gift of self to others. And in doing this, we imitate Christ who made the ultimate gift of Himself.

Our vocation to love — to make a complete gift of self — is even inscribed in our bodies. Women and men possess the same human dignity and vocation to love, and yet they are obviously different in key ways too: our being created as female and male (as equal and complementary) underscores the fact that we are created for relationship — to be a gift to the other.

When they marry, a woman and man make a complete, exclusive and permanent gift of self to each other. And because spouses complement each other physically and in other important ways, they are uniquely capable of co-operating with the Creator in the transmission of His gift of human life. This is why the Church often describes marriage as an “intimate community of life and love.” Marriage exists for the good of the spouses and for children.

Of course, married love also serves life in countless other ways, including reaching out to those in need or who are marginalized by society, providing genuine hospitality to family and friends, adopting children, supporting those who are sick or cognitively impaired in any way, etc.

The Church takes marriage seriously and all her members share in the joy of every wedding feast, as Christ did at Cana. When two Christians marry validly, their marriage is a sacrament: it is a symbol of — and actually participates in — Christ’s own divine love for His Church. In a sacramental marriage, a couple’s genuine human love is not denied or destroyed; but it is healed and transformed from within because it is now also infused with Christ’s own love.

While every life and marriage will have its disappointments and heartaches, the Church teaches that when spouses anchor their life in Christ and draw on the grace of the sacrament, unconditional love really can be the final word. This is pretty great news indeed, especially for a world so desperately in need of true “happy endings.”

The Catholic Register: How is marriage a “school of love”?

Patricia Murphy: Again, it is the vocation of each of us to learn to love as Christ loves. Of course, this is easier said than done for creatures like us. Even after baptism, we continue to experience the pull of selfish desires in our daily choices. So the moral life is really a matter of commitment to love. It is a matter of developing the right kind of habits, of virtues. Our everyday choices matter so much because they continue to shape us into certain kinds of people: we can become people with bigger and more generous hearts and a greater capacity to give of self — or not.

In creating their own unique “community of life and love” spouses have countless opportunities to ask, “Who am I becoming?” Am I growing — little by little — in my capacity to give of self and love unconditionally? (Translation: am I learning “to get over myself”?) So it is not surprising that marriage has been called a little “school of love.”

The Catholic Register: How can engaged Catholic couples prepare for their upcoming marriage?

Patricia Murphy: One of the most important things engaged Catholic couples can do is to commit to deepening their understanding of the Church’s teaching on marriage and family. If they do this, they will certainly have much to talk and think about. Many couples today say they have never heard the Church’s teaching presented in its fullness and in all its beauty and intelligibility.

And at its heart, the Church’s teaching on marriage and family is an invitation to all couples to begin their own unique journey in service of life and love. It is an invitation to a genuine and life-long adventure.

Also, it can be a great idea to start a conversation with a couple who have been married a long time. Love is not an abstraction or just a nice sentiment. It has to be lived in the messiness of everyday life. So, why not ask a couple who have been in their own “school of love” for decades to share some of the most important lessons they have learned about life and love?

<http://www.catholicregister.org/arts/item/5832-a-marriage-guide-for-a-‘wedding-crazy’-world>

Theology of the Body Resources

John Paul II’s Teachings on the Meaning of the Human Body, Love, and Sexuality in the Divine Plan

Butler, Brian; Evert, Jason; Maclver, Colin; Maclver, Aimee. *Theology of the Body for Teens: Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life*. Ascension Press, 2011.

Excellent resource for connecting John Paul II’s teachings to high school students.

West, Christopher. *Theology of the Body for Beginners*. Revised ed. Ascension Press, 2009.

An excellent basic introduction to the main themes of the Theology of the Body.

Ascension Press publishes a number of excellent faith-study programs on prayer,

reading the Scriptures, Church history, and marriage. In Canada, Ascension Press resources are available through Sunrise Marian Distribution.

West, Christopher. A Crash Course in the Theology of the Body

In addition to Christopher West's Theology of the Body resources available through Ascension Press, he has also made this introductory set of talks available free for download. This is a great place to start.

<http://www.giftfoundationdownloads.com/nakedwithoutshame.html>

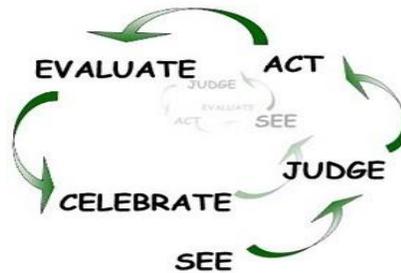
West, Christopher. A Bold, Biblical Response to the Sexual Revolution

<http://thetheologyofthebody.com/download/category/19>

This introductory talk is free to download.

The See, Judge, Act, Evaluate Decision-Making Process

Adapted from Fr. (later Cardinal) Joseph Cardijn



The Four Steps:

5. **Seeing:** Identifying and naming what is happening that is causing concern.
 - What are the people in this situation doing, feeling, and saying?
6. **Judging:** Analyzing the situation and making an informed judgment about it.
 - Options and possible outcomes
 - Prayer and discernment
 - Consulting Scripture, Tradition, and Natural Law
 - Obtaining advice from support team (family/parents, trusted adult, priest)
 - Reflecting on past experiences
7. **Acting:** Knowing the reason for your decision and always doing the loving thing.

What action needs to be taken:

 - to change the situation?
 - to address the root causes?
8. **Evaluating:** How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your action?

We evaluate the decision using the following three principles:

 4. Never do evil even for the sake of accomplishing something good.
 5. Treat others with the same love and respect with which we would like to be treated.
 6. Everything we do should reflect Jesus' own love and the loving guidance He offers us through His Church.

The person who draws upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit to make a well-reasoned moral decision will experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit. This is cause to celebrate!