

dimensions are either ignored or rejected. All students, to a greater or lesser extent, are exposed to and influenced by this distorted image of sexuality. Theme Three provides an opportunity for them to examine the messages they are receiving, and for teachers to begin speaking about the importance of modesty and chastity. As in the earlier grades, students are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the life-giving and loving dimensions of human sexuality, and, as they get older and enter the later grades, to grow in their personal commitment to chastity.

Overview of Topics

- **Topic 1: We Are Wonderfully Made** — The opening topic of Theme Three explores the marvel of the human body, and introduces the concept of *being* a body, as opposed to *having* a body. The major body systems are outlined in this topic, ending with a brief introduction to the human reproductive system.
- **Topic 2: The Body System That Gives Life** — Topic Two expands on the introduction to the reproductive system with a description of the organs of the adult female and male reproductive systems.
- **Topic 3: Human Fertility** — This topic builds on the previous one with an introduction to the concept of fertility, followed by an explanation of female fertility and male fertility. The topic ends with the ultimate expression of the gift of human fertility — new life and the experience of parenthood.
- **Topic 4: Puberty Begins** — Topic 4 introduces and explains the physical changes of puberty. It includes information about the specific changes that happen to males and females as the reproductive system begins to mature, as well as charts showing the range of age at which puberty begins, and the range of age within which the signs of sexual development occur.
- **Topic 5: Growing Up** — The final topic in Theme Three highlights some of the other changes young people experience after puberty, changes that affect the whole person, not just the body. Puberty marks the beginning of the long process of growing up and becoming men and women.

Topic 6: Growing Up Resilient — This additional topic in Theme Three describes some of the emotional and interpersonal stresses related to puberty and identifies strategies students can apply to manage stress, build resilience, and enhance their mental health and emotional well-being.

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Closing Note

As late childhood gives way to early adolescence, one of the important goals of Theme Three is to prepare students for a new time of discovery and questioning. It is also a time of reflection, and the issue of identity, which includes sexuality, assumes increasing importance, especially in later adolescence.