

Formation in Christian Chastity + Grade 1

Dear Parents,

The Church states with confidence that parents are the primary educators of their children. This is most true when we speak of the religious education of your children. This teaching flows from the natural bond that exists between parent and child, and from the most basic teachings of our faith. You know your child best. While many parents seek the assistance of others to impart some of the systematic elements of education in faith, in Catholic schools or in parish religious education programs, you retain the primary duty to form your children in the faith. From you, your children will learn their first prayers, and with you they will first experience the worship of God. They also need to learn from you how to live responsibly in this world. This series is intended to assist parents in the formation of their children in the virtue of chastity.

Why Chastity?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) introduces the discussion of chastity by calling it a “vocation”. (See CCC #2337 ff) Chastity is the virtue whereby we regulate our use of sexual activity in accord with our state in life. We want to emphasize the good elements of the Christian life that are ours as followers of Jesus Christ. Every disciple observes chastity, though the manner of how it is observed varies according to our state in life. The married person, the priest or religious, and the young person all observe chastity, though in different ways. For example, a young person practices chastity by remaining pure in all of their relationships. A married couple observes a holy life in their exclusive commitment to each other. Priests and religious dedicate themselves exclusively to God. We want our children to grow up with a proper, healthy and holy understanding of themselves and their gift of human sexuality.

How will this program work?

This program is based on the premise that parents know their children, where they are in their own personal development, and can best judge when their child is ready for specific lessons or information. The natural innocence of young children may be protected in this way. During the first four grades, parents will be the teachers. For each year, we will provide a series of ideas and recommendations for you to review with your children. These will outline some of the basic concepts that are building blocks to understanding a chaste life and one that looks forward to a holy family life for their future. In later grades (5 to 8), we will assist parents with some classroom activity to support some of what they will be teaching at home.

What could parents teach to First Graders?

The basic theme is creation. It starts with simple concepts and moves to the creation of the human person, why we were created and finally the family of Jesus. A listing of the teaching points follows, and concludes with some ideas of how you might present these concepts.

God made all things good.

- God is our Creator and He made everything good.

- God made the world.
- God made all the animals.
- God made human beings in His image and likeness.
- As human beings, we can know things and we can freely choose based on what we know.
- God made us with a body, which we can see, and with a soul, which we cannot see.
- God made each of us to be His child and to be happy with Him forever in a love that never ends.
- We should love each other as Jesus loves us.
- God made every person as either a man or a woman.
- God's plan is that everyone has a mother and a father.
- God calls all men to be spiritual fathers and many to be physical fathers, too.
- God calls all women to be spiritual mothers and many to be physical mothers.
- There are four vocations (main states of life to which God calls people). They are: single, married, priesthood, and religious life.
- Jesus was born into a human family with Mary as His mother and St. Joseph as His foster-father and guardian.
- God the Father is Jesus' Father in heaven whom he loves, and He is our Father.
- Jesus loves His mother, Mary, and His foster-father, St. Joseph, and He wants us to love them, too.

Teaching Examples

- (1) As for the first several concepts of creation, perhaps a walk with your child outside to look at the world and speak to them of how God is the creator; how beautiful and complex this creation is.
- (2) Human persons are made of body and soul, and are created either male or female. We are also created for a reason, to know, love and serve God on earth and to be happy with him forever in heaven. Explain how vocation (calling) is our way of responding to what God asks us to do in life (how we will serve him). Speak of your own vocation as a parent.
- (3) Tell the story of Jesus' birth. Talk about Mary, Joseph, and how Jesus is special with His Father in heaven. Perhaps the children could draw a picture of Jesus' birth, surrounded by Mary, Joseph, and the stable animals.

Your Children's Safety

Parents will receive an information sheet containing tips for speaking with your children about their personal safety. In addition to this information, we strongly recommend that you consider a close monitoring of the computer use by your children.

- (1) Computers used by children should be in a common area of the house, under your immediate supervision.
- (2) Internet access should have filters to keep out unwanted and harmful materials.
- (3) Children should not be using "chat" rooms.
- (4) Children should protect their privacy and modesty both on the computer, as well as in other public settings (for example: when using restrooms or locker rooms).

