

Formation in Christian Chastity + Grade 5

Dear Parents

During the first four years, the formation program in chastity was presented almost exclusively by the parents. The teaching points that were provided to you accomplished this. As the young people reach the middle school years, there are some elements of formation that will be covered in the school or parish catechetical programs. However, the parents will give the intimate and very personal information. Since each child differs in their needs and personal rate of development, the information needed by one child is often very different from others. There are three things that we are providing for you at this time. One is an overview of the moral and spiritual formation topics that will be covered in your child's class. The second section deals with social aspects of development and chaste living, also classroom topics. The parents are encouraged to review these first two sections with their children, in addition to their classroom presentations. The third section is a summary of the key details of personal developmental information. You, as the parent, judge when and how much information on human development you want to provide for your child. This summary will be repeated each year for your reference. There are also additional references that may be helpful to you in making these presentations to your child. These are listed at the end of the section on human development.

God made us to know the truth.

I. Moral / Spiritual Component – How we know the truth.

- Jesus is the Truth
- He wants us to know Him and follow the Truth
- Knowing the truth helps us to choose what is good and to live joyful lives.
- God reveals His truth through Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the teaching office of the Church, i.e. the Pope and the Bishops in union with him (Magisterium).
- We can also know the truth about what is good and right through reason (our ability to think, understand, and judge).
- God gives each of us a conscience, which is His inner voice that inspires us to do good and avoid evil. (CCC 1795)
- A well-formed conscience, aided by grace, helps us to avoid the near occasions of sin, which are persons, places and things, which can easily lead to sin.
- We need to form our consciences correctly. We do this through listening to God's word, prayer, going to Mass and Confession, following the teachings of the Church, and obedience to our parents.

II. Social Component – How we live out the truth.

- Each person has inherent dignity. Every baptized person is an adopted son or daughter of God.
- Because of the dignity that God gave us, we are to respect others and ourselves in thought, word, and deed.

- The first and most important way in which we demonstrate respect for ourselves, and others, is by upholding the right to life.
- Every human being is a gift from God to be cherished from conception to natural death.
- We have a duty to care for the sick and the suffering. A sick or suffering person must never be killed in the name of compassion. To do so would be a grave violation of the 5th commandment. Again, all persons have the right to life from conception until natural death.
- We must pray for those who harm themselves or others through abortion, or euthanasia, or through the support of abortion and euthanasia.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of human life, pray for us.

III. Human Development and Maturity

As your child matures, it is your privilege and responsibility to communicate the truth and meaning of human sexuality to your child and to help him/her through the stages of development. The relationship and trust you establish now, will help your child to navigate his/her way from childhood, through adolescence, to adulthood in a virtuous and successful way.

Our bodies express the truth of who we are. God prepares boys and girls to eventually become fathers and mothers. One of the ways that this happens is the change that occurs in our bodies. As part of God's plan, boys and girls develop at different times. The fact that a boy or girl is developing somewhat more slowly or quickly than others their age is not necessarily a cause for alarm. You can explain to your child the changes that occur as he or she enters puberty. As you judge them ready, you can explain more fully the biological aspects of procreation in conjunction with the moral dimensions.

As parents, the love and support that you give your children during this time of transition from childhood through adolescence to adulthood will pay big dividends down the road. While making sure to give proper supervision, it will be important for parents to respect their child's increasing need for privacy.

People express their love physically, as well as emotionally and spiritually. The fullest physical expression of love takes place in the marriage of a man and a woman. The act of intercourse (the marital act) is the sacramental expression of love between a husband and wife, which is founded on the marriage covenant. This act is a sign of deep love and self-giving between husband and wife and is intended by God for two primary purposes: the generation of life (procreative end) and the deepening of the union between husband and wife (unitive end). Every marital act (act of intercourse between husband and wife) must be open to these two ends. In marriage, the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of their spiritual communion. This bond between a baptized man and a baptized woman is sanctified in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

An additional information sheet on some of the basic biological information, in non-technical language, is available to parents from the school or parish catechetical office.

For further information on these and other important questions and issues related to human growth and sexuality, we recommend the following resources:

Pontifical Council for the Family: *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* (1995)
Copyright © 1996 Pauline Books and Media, Boston, MA.

Aquilina, Mike – General Editor, *Talking to Youth About Sexuality: A Parents' Guide*;
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Additional Recommendations for Parents

For young people, friendships outside the home are very important. Parents should know who their child's friends are, and where they spend their time. Especially note if your child is "hanging around" with students who are several years older. This is always a red flag for parents. Media influences are very much a part of the cultural formation that young people receive. Monitor movies, books, and especially computer use. Computers with Internet access should be in a "public" area of the home under the watchful eye of parents. Children alone on the computer can be susceptible to the activity of strangers via chat rooms. We strongly discourage single dating for young people; that should be put off until late in the high school years. Mixed group activities are best for children in the middle school and early high school grades.

Safety Review – Safe Environment Plans

Parents will receive the safety information tips from the Center for Missing and Exploited Children. As children grow, it is helpful to review the information provided there and apply it to the new set of circumstances that children face in these pre-teen and early teenage years. Take the time to go over the information with your child and discuss the various items presented in the safety information sheet.