

Formation in Christian Chastity + Grade 6

Dear Parents

During the first four years, the formation program in chastity was presented almost exclusively by you, 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 love and be loved.

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

- As the image of God, man is created for love.
- The highest way we show love is to help people to get to heaven.
- Jesus' death on the Cross- shows us the meaning of self-giving love.
- Jesus' death on the Cross, shows us that love involves sacrifice.
- All of us are called to sacrificial, self-giving love.
- Love is never selfish (1 Corinthians 13)
- Chastity is the spiritual power (virtue), which frees love from selfishness and aggression.
- Chastity gives inner peace. "This purity of mind and body helps develop true self-respect and at the same time makes one capable of respecting others, because it makes one see in them persons to reverence." -*TMHS #17*
- In the family, chastity helps build an atmosphere of love, virtue, and respect for God's gifts.
- Chastity helps us discover what our own vocation is – be it marriage, the priesthood, religious life, or single life.

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

- God loves us and made us to love Him and others.
- God wants us to form friendships, which are gifts precious to each of us.

- A true friend wants what is best for our body and soul.
- True friends do not use each other for pleasure, prestige, or selfish gain.
- We show friendship by treating others with respect, kindness, loyalty, and compassion.
- We must not gossip. Gossiping violates the 8th commandment.
- Bullying, teasing, and making fun of others is wrong.
- We show respect for God, others, and ourselves by dressing and acting modestly.
- Modesty involves keeping private things private.
- We must dress so as to adequately cover the private parts of our bodies, and we must not dress so as to arouse sexual curiosity in another person.
- St. Maria Goretti, patroness of children, pray for us! St. Dominic Savio, patron of young men, 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 with 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, along with 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. Also be conscious of the adults that spend time with your children. Do they meet with your approval, and is the time and circumstances of their involvement appropriate? Media influences are very much parts of the cultural formation young people receive. Monitor movies, books, and especially computer use. Computers should be in a "public" area of the home under the watchful eye of parents. Children alone can be susceptible to the activity of strangers via chat rooms. Mixed group activities are best for young people in the middle grades; we strongly discourage single dating until much later in the high school years.