

FORMING AND INFORMING  
ESSENTIAL CONVERSATIONS:

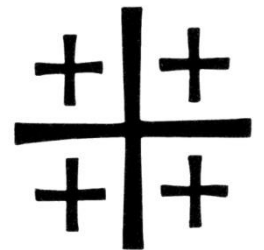
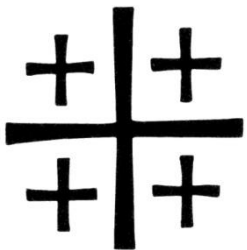
HUMAN SEXUALITY, LOVE AND CHASTITY

# OPENING PRAYER



Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.  
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

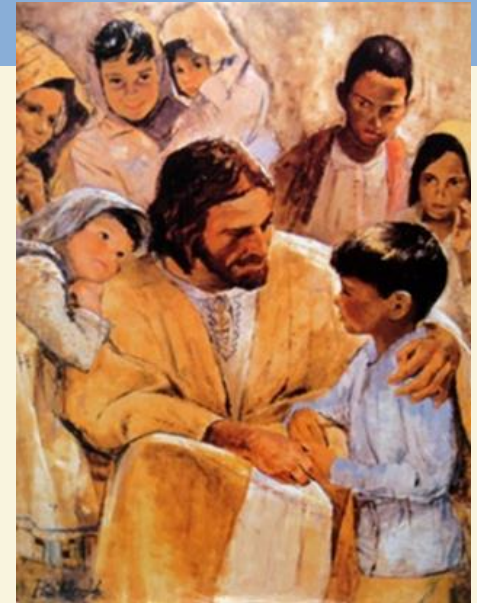
O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit  
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,  
grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise  
and ever enjoy His consolations,  
Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.



# HOW CAN WE HELP OUR CHILDREN EMBRACE JESUS' TEACHING ON LOVE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY?

## Goals:

- Help equip parents to have conversations with their children about puberty, human reproduction, and the call to chastity.
- Discuss the contemporary context: cultural challenges, the Church's vision, and the essential role of parents.
- Provide resources to support these parent-child conversations.



*The Rite of Baptism describes parents as  
“the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith.”*

# CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

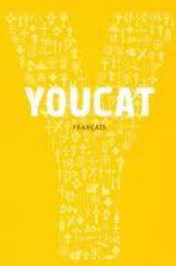


Brainstorm and discuss with a neighbor or two,  
then share with the group...

- How did your parents talk with you about puberty and human sexuality when you were a child? What did you appreciate and/or what do you wish had been different?
- What are some contemporary challenges that make this conversation difficult today?

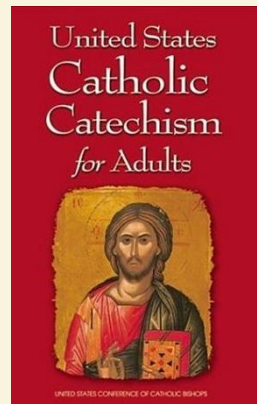


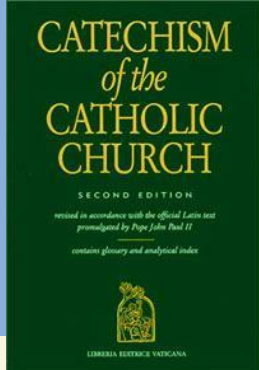




# ENGAGING IN THE CONVERSATIONS

- Consider this invitation to overcome awkwardness, to engage in and/or continue conversations with your pre-teens and teens: [Jason Evert](#).
- Propose **Chastity** as the virtue which helps young people:
  - grow in maturity, individuality and self-respect
  - develop better friendships
  - make better choices about life
  - strengthen their character
- Explore ongoing faith formation and (re)consider Church teachings (*YOUCAT*; *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults*).





# CHURCH TEACHINGS ON HUMAN SEXUALITY & CHASTITY

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992): [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)
- *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, Pontifical Council for the Family (1997): [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)
- *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living* (2006): [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)
- *Diocese of Joliet Family Life Guideline* (2012): [www.dioceseofjoliet.org](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org)



*These documents acknowledge:*

**(A) *the primary role of parents in instructing children on the “physiology” and morality of human sexuality.***

**(B) *the essential role of the Church in teaching the truth and meaning of human sexuality.***



# BISHOP CONLON'S VISION AND DIRECTION

Regarding human sexuality, parents are not just the primary educators, but they are ***the* educators**.



## (A ) Parents

- Are responsible for discussing human anatomy and reproduction with their children, plus principles of Christian morality.
- Discuss human sexuality within the proper context and environment—that is, in the home.

## (B) The Parish

- Helps parents fulfill this responsibility by handing on the moral teaching of the Church.
- Teaches the truth about God's revelation and so addresses Christian morality.



# CULTURAL COUNTER-CATECHESIS: WHOSE MESSAGE REPLACES PARENTAL SILENCE?

## Mass Media as the “Sexual Super Peer”

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

The AAP's report about the influence of TV, music, movies, and magazines:

- Early exposure to sexual content doubled the risk of teen pregnancy
- A child with a TV in his or her bedroom is more likely to have sexual activity as an early teen.
- Adolescents exposed to sexual content in TV, music lyrics, movies and other media are nearly twice as likely to have sex at an earlier age.





# CHASTITY: THE FORGOTTEN VIRTUE

The Christian vision of life and love has been shattered, and a different set of moral standards has emerged.



The Rule of Consent: Whatever people do with their bodies is their business

The Rule of “Love”: Strong emotion attachment elevates sex from “casual” to “licit”

Counter-Examples to the Ideal of Celibacy and Marriage:

The Infidelity of Public  
Defenders of Marriage

The Church’s Sexual Abuse Scandal



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*“A renewed Christianity should be oriented toward sanctity and beauty.” (R. Douthat)*

# SEX IN A SECULAR, OR WORLDLY, VIEW

- Love is reduced to mere feelings.
- Sex is reduced to a merely physical activity.
- Pornography fills the worldwide web.



- Former “high school issues”  
have become “middle school issues.”

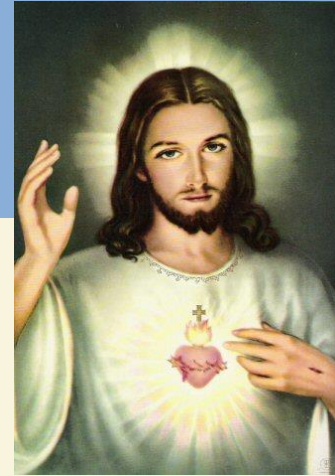


- Efforts to redefine marriage have confused people about God’s plan for expressing human sexuality.

# THE GIFT OF HUMAN SEXUALITY & THE CALL TO CHASTITY



- Sexuality is part of God's beautiful plan for human beings.



- Married love reflects Christ's total gift of self.

- Husband and wife share the privilege of co-creating new human life with God.



- God's grace protects the sacred bond between husband and wife.

**“Chastity includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery* which is a training in human freedom” (CCC, n. 2339).**



# DIOCESAN FAMILY LIFE GUIDELINE: FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

\*Understanding of the human body and sexuality as a gift.

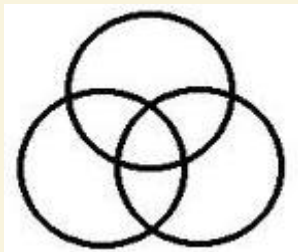


\*Cultivation of virtues and practice of prayer.

\*Respect for one's own body and for others' bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.

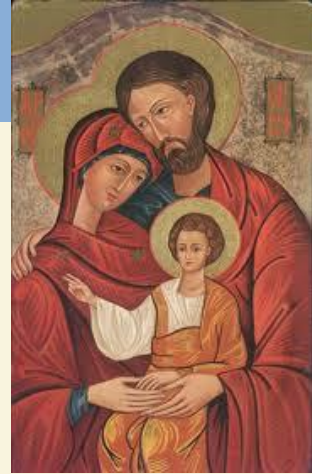


\* Understanding that marriage between one man and one woman is part of God's plan for humanity and consists of a mutual gift, which images the inner life of the Trinity.



# POTENTIAL THEMES AND “TALKING POINTS”: 4<sup>TH</sup>/5<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS

- God's a plan for every man and woman: the call to holiness, for most involving the vocation to marriage and family.
- Hormones as God's mechanism for helping the body change.
- Changes in the body, along with recommendations for healthy practices in self-care.
- Changing social relationships and possible peer pressure to become sexually active.
- Sexual awareness and decision-making in light of God's plan.





# POTENTIAL THEMES AND “TALKING POINTS”: 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS



- God's lifelong plan for the union of one man and one woman in marriage, revealed in the nature of men and women.
- The responsibility of married couples to help create and care for new human life.
- Reproductive anatomies and sexual intercourse: the body's language for saying "I'm married to you."
- Development of the human person from conception to birth.



# BRAINSTORMING BEST-PRACTICES

Discuss with a couple of neighbors,  
and then share with the group:



What advice do you have about Where, When, and How  
to start conversations with your child about puberty,  
intercourse and human reproduction?

# SEVEN WAYS TO "TALK THE TALK": FROM *BEYOND THE BIRDS AND THE BEES* (POPCAK, 2011)

**R**ealize what your child needs to know and when.

**E**licit your child's thoughts, attitudes and feelings.

**S**peak the truth.

**P**resent a positive, Christian attitude toward sex.

**E**xpect to talk about your own struggles when—  
and to the degree—it is appropriate.

**C**ontrol your temper and the temptation to lecture.

**T**each your child what the gift of the body is for.



# RESPONDING TO TOUGH QUESTIONS

FROM PARENT GUIDE TO HUMAN SEXUALITY, ARCHDIOCESE OF N.Y.



\*Start with: “What makes you ask?...”



1. Pornography:  
“What are those people doing?”

1. Videos sometimes show inappropriate or even sinful pictures; being naked is not bad, but it's not meant to be in a video.

2. Premarital Sex:  
“How can she have a baby if she's not married?”

2. Pregnancy can happen when two unmarried people have sex; God intends for babies to be born to moms and dads who are married; every baby is a gift from God.

3. Masturbation:  
“On TV they said it's OK and actually healthy...?”



3. Not everything they say on TV is true; they said that because they like sexual feelings, but God put those feelings in the body for husbands and wives as they share their love.

4. Family Differences:  
“Why does he/she have two moms or two dads?”

4. God loves all people and we don't judge anyone; He knows children grow up best in a family with a married mom and dad; people sometimes get confused about what marriage is and so there's something missing.

# ADDRESSING SAME-SEX ATTRACTIONS

- Distinguishing between same-sex attractions and “gay lifestyles”
- Offering a path to authentic happiness
  - *“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God”* (Mt 5:8).
  - Jason Evert’s reflections on [“Homosexuality and the Catholic Church”](#)





# THE GOSPEL REVELATION ABOUT HOLINESS, CHASTITY AND PURITY

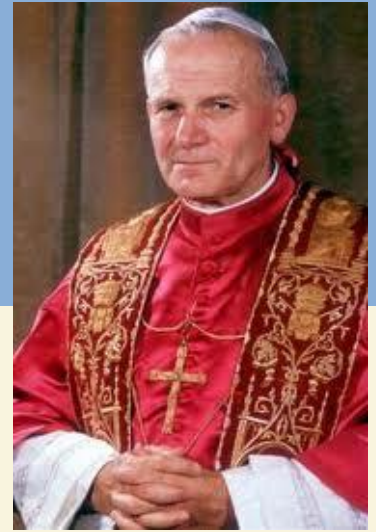
- Chastity is the virtue that helps us love ourselves and others rightly through our bodies.
- Everyone is called to practice chastity—single people, priests, religious brothers and sisters, and married couples; chastity takes different forms depending on one's state in life.

*(Theology of the Body for Middle School, p. 59)*

- Re-proposing the beauty of married love: [Made for Each Other](#) & [Made for Life](#)

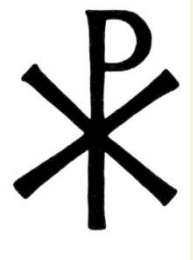


# INTRODUCING A THEOLOGY OF THE BODY



**A new conceptual framework for explaining the “Why” behind “What” the Church teaches:**

- Man and woman were made to love and to be loved; they make God’s love visible, seeing in each other the goodness of God.
- In the beginning, man and woman were in union with God and perfect harmony with one another; Original Sin clouded the purity of vision and invited lust and manipulation.
- Jesus Christ redeemed us from sin, offering the graces necessary to restore sexual purity; thus, chastity is possible, livable and good.
- Christ reveals fully human love as: **Free, Total, Faithful, and Fruitful.**
- The human body “speaks” this language of fully human love.



# TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



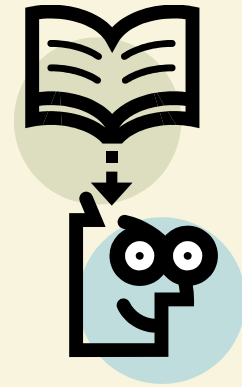
- Review when local public school districts have scheduled their health units on puberty and human reproduction.
- Discuss a concrete time frame for beginning and/or continuing these essential conversations about human sexuality, love and chastity.



# SUPPORT & RESOURCES



1. Discussion Materials: *Parent Guide to Human Sexuality*  
(Archdiocese of New York)
2. Local Parent-Child Discussion Starters:  
\*\*Coleen Mast's Workshops ([sexrespect.com](http://sexrespect.com))
3. Theology of the Body for Middle School: [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com)
4. Websites and Online Resources:  
\*\*[mycatholicfaithdelivered.com](http://mycatholicfaithdelivered.com)  
\*\*[chastity.com](http://chastity.com); [thetheologyofthebody.com](http://thetheologyofthebody.com)  
\*\*[marriageuniqueforareason.org](http://marriageuniqueforareason.org)
5. Books:  
\**Beyond the Birds and the Bees* (Popcak)  
\**Finding your Soulmate without Losing your Soul* (Evert)



# REVIEW OF ISSUES



## Public School Perspectives

- Focus on physical health, but not questions of the human heart
- Emphasis on abstinence: Saying “No” due to risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases
- A “secular” discussion avoiding reference to moral questions
- The possible suggestion that love and marriage are not necessarily connected, or that sexuality is not necessarily linked to procreation

## Home and Parish Vision

- Focus on both physical and spiritual health: union of body and soul
- Emphasis on abstinence in the context of chastity: Saying a deeper “Yes” to God’s plan, to a future spouse, to the fullness of love
- A “sacred” discussion highlighting God’s revealed plan for sexuality within marriage
- The essential link between sex and procreation and the call of married couples to cooperate with God in bringing new life into the world



# THE *MEMORARE*



Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection,  
implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.  
Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my mother;  
to you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.  
O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions,  
but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.