



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

Office of the Archbishop

1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

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September 8, 2008

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

God's love is such an important reality. Yet in our busyness we sometimes lose sight of what love really is.

The same can be said for marital love and God's beautiful gift of our human sexuality. When these gifts are used well, they are a great blessing. If love and sexuality become misunderstood and misused, this misuse can contribute to great heartache and other forms of very real human suffering.

This document, *Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis*, will help us undertake a cradle-to-grave effort to help women and men in southern and central Indiana live out the great virtue of chastity. The Office of Catholic Education, in collaboration with various archdiocesan departments, will orchestrate this effort involving parents, teachers, publishers and all who share responsibility for teaching and learning our Catholic Faith.

May these guidelines be a springboard for excellent instruction, authentic catechesis and a chastity education initiative that is both appropriate and effective by God's grace. Grateful for all of God's beautiful gifts, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Daniel M. Buechlein

Most Reverend Daniel M. Buechlein O.S.B.
Archbishop of Indianapolis

DMB/mh



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Office of Catholic Education

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September 1, 2008

Dear Catholic Educators:

Educating the whole person is a hallmark of our Church's teaching ministry—a ministry carried out in parish catechetical programs, schools and youth ministry efforts throughout southern and central Indiana. God's beautiful gift of our human sexuality is an integral part of our personhood and an important part of a collaborative effort between parents, teachers and all those involved with Catholic education and faith formation.

An effective chastity education effort requires clear guidelines so that all will know their role in this undertaking and receive the help needed to fulfill these roles appropriately. *Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis* provides the direction needed in order for this undertaking to bear the truly good fruit of helping people live chastely—of helping people have healthy, happy and holy lives.

In the course of time these guidelines will drive chastity education efforts in every parish and school throughout the Archdiocese. From womb to tomb, education in love and human sexuality remains a priceless piece of the treasure that is our proclamation of God's Good News in our schools, youth ministry and parish catechetical programs.

Any questions about chastity education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis should be referred to the Office of Catholic Education. Meanwhile the staff of this office will work with parish and school leaders to implement these guidelines fully.

I am so grateful for the efforts of Catholic educators and the love you make known every day to those in your care. May these guidelines further direct your efforts for the good of God's people and, as always, for His glory.

God bless,

Annette "Mickey" Lentz
Executive Director, Office of Catholic Education

Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

“The body, in fact, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It [the body] was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God, and thus to be a sign of it.”

~ Pope John Paul II, Feb 20, 1980

Introduction

The Catholic Church recognizes its obligation to foster in all persons an understanding of their sexuality as a God-given expression of the human personality. This document has been revised to respond to the expressed need of pastoral leaders to provide direction and guidance in life-long human sexuality and chastity education within parish and school faith formation programs in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.



The objective of these guidelines is to ensure that Catholic Church teaching as it relates to human sexuality is interwoven within our parish and schools' faith formation programs and curricula. It is important to help parish communities grow in knowledge and understanding of our Church's teaching on sexuality and what it means to be created in the likeness and image of God. Through the revision of these guidelines, pastors, principals and parish administrators of faith formation will be required to integrate the Church's teaching on chastity and human sexuality into all aspects of education and faith formation.

The local Ordinary is entrusted with the responsibility of teaching the faith to God's people in his local Church. In his role as our "chief catechist" Archbishop Buechlein has been integral in leading the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in providing authentic catechesis in sexuality and chastity education. Archbishop Buechlein has served as Chair of the USCCB Committee on Catechesis, and had a lead role in development of the Conformity List which reviewed and approved sexuality resources. Pastors, principals and administrators validate and complement the Archbishop's leadership in carrying out the work of the USCCB Office of Catechesis.

In the spring of 2007, a committee of 13 individuals representing the diversity within our archdiocesan ministries, reviewed resources for sexuality education listed under the Supplemental resources section on the USCCB Conformity List. Based on their recommendations, the Executive Director of the Office of Catholic Education and the Director of Catechesis requires each school and parish faith formation program to implement either the *Family Life* K-8 series by Benziger or the *Growing in Love* K-8 series by Harcourt as their primary resource on sexuality education.

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, oversight of life-long sexuality and chastity education will be orchestrated by the Office of Catholic Education in collaboration with various other departments and agencies as well as the parishes and schools.



Three areas must be well-defined if chastity education is to be a positive and effective approach to authentic love and sexuality education for all God's people. Chastity and sexuality education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will address:

1. *Student Lessons* – content must be accurate, authentic and appropriate as defined in this document;
2. *Catechist Formation* – teachers must know what their role is as well as what it is not including how to defer students' questions to their parents when appropriate, and;
3. *Parental Communication* – parents must be apprised of their role in chastity education and then helped in every practical way to fulfill this role.

In 2008, the USCCB promulgated the document titled *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living: Guidelines for Curriculum and Publication Design*. While these guidelines were designed to support publishers in carrying out the work of authentic education in love and sexuality, they can also provide direction and support for the faith formation of God's people. In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the implementation of this document in conjunction with the *Archdiocesan Guidelines*, will provide specific instructions for carrying out the ministry of chastity education in southern and central Indiana.

It is important that the brief USCCB document mentioned above be read for the back ground and context of our Archdiocesan chastity education effort. May all catechetical leaders - especially parents as primary educators of their children – share the beautiful truth about sexuality in accordance with the procedures outlined below so that families may enjoy the blessings of chastity and of all virtues as modeled by our Savior Jesus Christ.

At this time please read the USCCB's document titled *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living: Guidelines for Curriculum and Publication Design* (This document is attached as an Appendix to *Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis*).

God's gift of sexuality is a blessing to be appreciated. Like all powerful realities, though, misunderstanding and misuse of this beautiful gift results in many difficult consequences. When one's conscience is not well-formed, errors in judgments can be made. As people of faith, our responsibility is to be able to articulate the teachings of our faith to ensure that the conscience of those we serve are well-formed and that God's laws are "written on the heart."

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis catechesis related to God's gift of sexuality proceeds according to a plan overseen by our Office of Catholic Education. This womb-to-tomb strategy focuses on clear content, well-trained teachers and suitable involvement by parents and other adults.

Chastity education when done appropriately is a natural part of overall catechesis. Any questions about the procedures below should be directed to the Office of Catholic Education.

Procedure to Implement the Archdiocesan Guidelines

“What is the procedure for implementing chastity education in our Archdiocese?”

Student Lessons:

To ensure that content is accurate, authentic and appropriate the following will be required of our parish and school communities.

- **Textbooks** for sexuality education from Kindergarten through eighth grade are to be selected from the list available at www.usccb.org/catechism/document/Currentlist.pdf. (Chastity education books appear under Supplemental Materials.) Each school and parish faith formation program is required to implement either the *Family Life series* by Benziger or the *Growing in Love series* by Harcourt minimally in grades 5 through 8 no later than the 2009-2010 school year. All schools and faith formation programs will implement the above resources in grades K through 8 by the year 2011-2012. Both the Benziger and Harcourt resources have a strong parent component and therefore provide an opportunity to catechize parents as well. 
- **Catechetical textbooks** for sexuality education in grades nine through twelve are not currently listed on the USCCB Conformity List. Until such a time as resources of this sort are added to the Conformity List under Supplemental Materials, the Office of Catholic Education will be responsible to review and approve resources for sexuality education. These approved resources will be listed on the Office of Catholic Education Website.
- **Implementation**
It is the responsibility of pastors, principals and parish administrators/directors to ensure that schools and parish faith formation programs integrate teachings about the virtue of chastity into all disciplines of education.
- **Ancillary resources**
Resources such as videos, books, and the like for sexuality education are not listed on the USCCB Conformity List. The Office of Catholic Education will review and approve such ancillary resources for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. A list of approved ancillary resources will be available on Office of Catholic Education Website. Should you have questions, please contact the Coordinator of Adolescent Growth Programs in the Office of Catholic Education.
- **Beliefs of the Church**
It is important that the beliefs of our Church be lived out in the faith community. Linking faith and morality in our day-to-day life is a powerful witness to Christians who are striving to live out the gospel message. It is clear that as educators and catechists, we can only support programs that are in compliance with teachings of the Catholic Church. It is important to note organizations or public health agencies whose mission statement and/or philosophy is not in compliance with the Church teaching cannot be invited into our schools or parish programs to teach issues addressed in the Chaste Living document. If you have questions about outside agencies/organizations, please contact the Coordinator of Adolescent Growth Programs in the Office of Catholic Education.

- **A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Human Sexuality (APTK)**

Since 1994, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has empowered thousands of teens to proactive leadership in the church by promoting the message of sexual purity through a program titled A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Human Sexuality (APTK). This ministry allows youth to share in the responsibility to promote the dignity of the human person and to promote the teachings of our Church through a program that links faith and morality. From its inception, APTK was designed to complement and supplement chastity and sexuality education in the archdiocese not to replace them. It is an effective program that merits presence in our schools and faith formation programs. Research supports the findings that this peer mentoring approach in schools and parish programs serves to enhance the more traditional style of educating teens and younger adolescents in sexuality and chastity education.



Catechist Formation

To understand the roles and responsibilities, training is essential.

- **Role of the Pastor**

As the chief catechist of the parish, the pastor or parish life coordinator sees to it that excellent catechesis – including chastity education – is readily accessible to the faithful in his parish. Familiarity with these guidelines and a basic awareness of when chastity-related lessons may be taught in the parish will help pastors offer prayerful support and teaching opportunities through homilies and other involvement.

- **Role of the Catechist**

Teachers and catechists have reported they often feel inadequate to deal with the questions posed by their students. For example, if a teacher is asked to respond to a question about cohabitation, that may not in and of itself be difficult to answer, but responding according to Church teaching and in a way that is compassionate while not compromising Church teachings can be challenging. Catechists and teachers need to be confident that when they teach in accord with the teachings of the Catholic faith and its traditions, they will be supported by the administration and by the archdiocese.

- ***“What am I supposed to teach regarding God’s gift of sexuality?”***

This most basic of questions has a definite answer rooted in Sacred Scripture and the teaching of our Catholic Church. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has done a great service by delineating the basic content of chastity education in its document *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living: Guidelines for Curriculum and Publication Design*.

- **Training Required**

Catechists who are to teach lessons addressing sexuality must complete the Chastity Education In-service Training conducted by the Office of Catholic Education.

- Training for catechists who are to teach lessons directed at children in kindergarten through eighth grade will center around lessons contained in either the Benziger or the Harcourt series. While these lessons are contained in approved resources listed on the USCCB Conformity List, they must be taught by specifically-trained catechists who understand how their role complements that of the parents, and, these catechists need be well-versed in techniques for handling chastity-related questions that young people may raise in group settings.
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- Training provided for individuals who are catechists and/or instructors teaching high school age teens and young adults will be more in depth to counteract the cultural messages students receive. Catechesis on the sixth and ninth commandments will provide instruction on the gift of human sexuality and its inherent goodness and beauty; and, the proper place of the gift is in the context of a free, faithful, fruitful and life-long marriage.

Principals and catechetical leaders should contact the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education (www.archindy.org/oce) for time and locations of Chastity Education In-service Training.

- **Teach the Faith Clearly**

Training for the catechist must prepare the individual to teach the Faith clearly, compellingly and pastorally. The USCCB Chaste Living document identifies some special issues of concern related to the catechesis of sexuality. These issues include pornography and reproductive technology which must be well-understood by catechists. (It is important to state that unless a person accepts the truth and beauty of Catholic teaching in the area of sexuality and chastity they must not attempt to teach these lessons).

- **Sensitive Issues**

Special issues of concern come full circle in the received teaching of the Church which lovingly guides her sons and daughters away from behaviors such as masturbation, homosexual activity, pornography, contraception and adultery. Catechist formation includes tips on handling questions related to these sensitive issues.

Parental Communication

To be effective, parents must be apprised of their role in chastity education and then assisted in every practical way to fulfill this role.

- **The Role of Parents and Guardians**

Our Church consistently upholds parents as the primary educators of their children. Because each child's development is entirely unique, it is the parent who is best suited to share detailed information about sexuality with her or his child – gradually unfolding these details and following up in the natural context of family life. Only those persons who know each child best, have the child's best interest most closely at heart and are readily available for follow-up discussions are suited to share detailed anatomical and physiological information with a younger child.

- **Annual Parent Meeting**

An annual parent meeting is a key part of the chastity education effort in each elementary parish program and/or school. At this meeting parents are made aware of their irreplaceable role in this area of catechesis and are offered practical assistance in fulfilling this role including booklets, websites, etc., that will be of great help. A sample agenda for this Sexuality Catechesis Parent Meeting appears in the appendix, and help in conducting these meetings is available by contacting the Office of Catholic Education.



- ***“What role do parents, pastors and others share in chastity education?”***

A key to effective catechesis regarding sexuality is each person knowing his or her role in the effort. When teachers, pastors, parents and others know what their role is or is not, then the Body of Christ works together well, preparing young people especially for a lifetime of chastity.

The Received Teaching of the Church Regarding Chaste Living

This part of the USCCB *Chaste Living* Guide consists of doctrinal statements supported by Scripture and Sacred Tradition. All doctrinal content is now reflected in our archdiocesan curriculum guidelines. It is the policy and practice of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to support the Received Teachings of the Catholic Church.

The main thrusts of our Archdiocesan chastity education strategy, then, focus upon:

- continuing to identify suitable textbooks and other resources;
- ensuring that catechist formation includes specific instruction on chastity education techniques; and,
- communicating with parents so that they both know their role in the effort and are helped in practical ways to fulfill this responsibility (Adult faith formation in general is part of the work of the Office of Catholic Education and includes chastity-related catechesis).

Among the teachings of our Church is the fact that living a chaste lifestyle is indeed a life-long journey. Temptations take many forms throughout one’s life and so it is good to emphasize the following:

- **There are moral absolutes.**

Some behaviors simply should not be pursued. Our God-given reason intuitively understands this, and His revealed truth affirms it. Given the powerful gift that sexuality is, it shouldn’t surprise us that some moral absolutes pertain to the area of chastity.

There are concrete acts that it is always wrong to choose, because their choice entails a disorder of the will, (i.e., a moral evil). One may not do evil so that good may result from it. CCC, 1761

- **Moral ends do not justify immoral means.**

The second part of this quote indicates that both our goal and our method of pursuing the goal must be appropriate. Showing love, for example, is a good goal. Using an unchaste act as an attempt to show love, though, is morally unjustifiable as well as ineffective.

- **While there is no higher authority than the conscience, the conscience must be formed faithfully.**

Only an informed conscience is reliable for moral decision-making. When the conscience is formed in light of what God reveals to us out of love for our own good, we will desire a chaste life although at times this life may be a struggle.

A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. Everyone must avail himself of the means to form his conscience. CCC, 1798

Approved Resources for Sexuality Catechesis

The *Ad Hoc* Committee to Oversee the Use of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, maintains a list of textbooks that conform doctrinally to the Catechism. Chastity education resources are included on this list, and only those resources found on this continually-updated listing may be used to teach lessons that directly address sexuality.

The Office of Catholic Education also recommends various websites, recorded media and speakers on a webpage that is continually updated (www.archindy.org/oce/chastity). All questions regarding the suitability of supplemental resources, speakers, etc. should be addressed to this office.



In summary:

The process for conducting catechesis on sexuality in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is as follows:

All three aspects of effective chastity education – catechist formation, approved books and resources and parental communication – must be present in the parish catechetical plan.

1. **Catechists** who are to teach lessons addressing sexuality – lessons directed at children in kindergarten through eighth grade – must complete the chastity education in-service conducted by the Office of Catholic Education.
2. **Textbooks** to be used for chastity education in Kindergarten through Eighth grade are to be selected from the list available at: www.usccb.org/catechism/document/Currentlist.pdf. (Chastity education books appear under Supplemental Materials.)

Textbooks or catechetical resources to be used in grades nine through twelve must be approved by the Office of Catholic Education and will be listed on Office of Catholic Education Website.

3. **Parents** of children in Kindergarten through Eighth grade are to be invited to an annual meeting that highlights and celebrates the chastity education effort. Any parent whose oldest child is entering kindergarten up to eighth grade and who does not attend the meeting is to be informed about the effort and its available resources through an alternate means. This parent meeting is to be an annual parish, cluster or deanery event.

Simple accountability procedures will be implemented to track the progress of this undertaking and to offer additional help in parish programs and schools as needed. May God bless all Catholic educators who strive to help young people prepare for a lifetime of chastity.

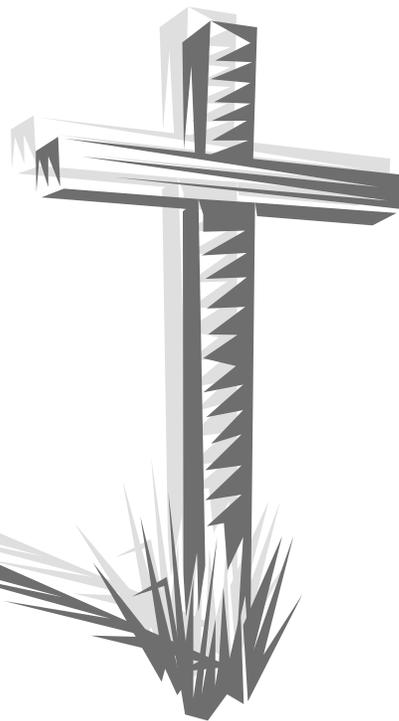
Only by following God's loving plan regarding marriage and family life will the domestic Church – our families – be the instruments of evangelization that our Father intends, drawing women and men by the Spirit's power into relationship with Jesus and a fuller participation in His Holy, Catholic Church for earthly goodness and everlasting life.

Appendix A:

Catechetical Formation on Chaste Living:
Guidelines for Curriculum Development and Publication
United States Catholic Conference of Bishops

Sample Documents are attached.:

- Sample letter to parents
- Sample bulletin announcement
- Sample agenda for parent meeting



Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Parent Meeting Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Introductory Explanation of the Archdiocesan Guidelines
3. Goals for Chastity and Human Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis
 - a. To provide direction and guidance for life-long education in chastity and human sexuality .
 - b. To ensure Catholic Church teaching as it relates to chastity is interwoven within parish and school programs.
4. Remarks by Parish Leaders
5. Resources approved for content and methodology by USCCB
6. Critical Role of Parents in Education of their children
 - a. Parental witness/educational role
 - b. Parent/Student Handbook
7. Importance of Training in Chastity/Sexuality Education
 - a. Foundational Principals – for a Life of Faith
 - b. Intimate connection to faith development
8. Questions, Comments and Discussion
9. Closing Prayer

Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Sample Bulletin Announcement

The Church has good news to proclaim about the family and about human love and sexuality. This good news is important for our children to learn as they are bombarded with many mixed messages from contemporary culture, media and a variety of powerful voices. Catholic sexuality education helps one to understand that sexuality is a gift from God, a precious dimension of human life that requires reverence and care. It sets forth the call to chastity and recognizes the critical importance of the family and particularly parents in the education of their children in human sexuality. Unless the family inculcates the right attitudes, unless the root values and beliefs of the faith are established in the early years of childhood development in the home, other forms of Christian education can scarcely be effective.

In helping parents with this critically important responsibility, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is implementing revisions to the guidelines for chastity and sexuality education in our schools and faith formation programs. Our school and parish faith formation program will be implementing Benziger *Family Life* series to provide catechesis on sexuality for children in grades 5-8. This series has been approved by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops for both content and methodology.

The role and responsibility of parents in the education of their children regarding faith and sexuality is critical.

All parents of students enrolled in grades 5-8 in both the school and parish faith formation program are invited to a Parent Meeting to be held on _____ at _____ from _____ PM to _____ PM. The pastor, principal and director of religious education will be present to discuss the program, outline the curriculum materials, explain the parent's role and answer any questions or concerns you may have. Your presence at this meeting is very important as your witness is critical in the education of your children. Everyone in the parish will be hearing more about teaching of our faith in the days and months to come.

Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Sample Parent Letter

Dear Parents:

The Catholic Church recognizes its obligation to foster in all persons an understanding of their sexuality as a God-given expression of the human personality. The Second Vatican Council called for our children to have a “positive and prudent sexuality education.” This kind of education requires the concept of sexuality be understood as a precious gift from God that affects all dimensions of our life. The gift of human sexuality requires reverence and a deep understanding of the dignity of every human person. Chastity and human sexuality education is best realized in the context of faith family.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* addresses human sexuality within the context of education in sexual morality. This arrangement now supersedes the development of a separate segment on education in human sexuality apart from moral teaching. The teachings of our faith and the commitment of our church to life issues should be integrated into an understanding of moral life and its relationship to various other life issues. Catholic schools and parish faith formation programs have a responsibility to provide life-long catechesis on chastity and human sexuality. It is especially important that we assist parents in forming families with a greater understanding of chaste living and its relationship to living a moral life.

Parents have a right to expect the Church to support them in their role as the first and primary educators of their children in the area of chastity and sexuality education. This assistance or support will not replace the role of parents but serve to fortify and enable parents to perform this task well.

Although many parents discuss and model Christian values, children and adolescents are being brainwashed by television, movies and music that promote a distorted view of human sexuality at an earlier age than at any time in our society’s history. Often in our culture today, society and the mass media depersonalize sex and reduce that act to something commonplace with a distorted view of freedom. The mass media portrays sex as lacking in basic human values of life, human love and family. It becomes challenging for parent to provide direction and guidance for their children in life-long human sexuality and chastity education.

In helping parents with this immensely important responsibility, our parish will be implementing the Benziger *Family Life* (or Harcourt *Growing in Love*) series in grades 5-8 (or K-8) this school year. This resource has been approved by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) for both content and methodology in chastity and sexuality education. You will be provided a parent handbook; your child will receive a student handbook. Education in human sexuality demands that our children know the “facts of life” but most importantly it is crucial that our children be given a faith-filled and morally right context out of which to make sense of all the issues connected with human sexuality. We are committed to helping families connect the spiritual and moral dimension of human love and to respect the beauty and dignity of each person.

There are many things that parents can do to promote the Church's teaching on chastity and human sexuality:

1. Discuss sexuality at home. Do your children know the basic facts of life? Do they know that sexuality is a gift from God? Do they know what sex is for in the divine plan of human life? Do they understand that sexual love is both very good and wonderful but come with great responsibility and the need for self-possession and self-discipline?
2. Monitor the media (TV, movies, magazines, music, video games, the internet to mention a few) to be sure these things are reflective of the values of faith. Your children and teens are learning and being formed by the media in ways that are quite contrary to the teachings of Christ and the values that lead to happy and satisfied lives.
3. Help your children to experience the goodness of modesty in dress, in speech, in attitude and action, in respecting their own bodies and in respecting themselves and others.
4. Grow in your own understanding of what the faith teaches and put into practice those convictions in your own lives. Children need to see that good people think and feel in ways that the faith teaches. Your example is critical in helping your children know not only WHAT the Church teaches, but WHY it is taught.
5. Help your children realize the foolishness and danger of casual sex and trivializing the importance of chastity and sexuality. Expose the dangers and lack of reality in what society tells us is "safe sex." Explain that this casual attitude to sex can only lead to problems and carries with it many dangers. You can help your children and teens realize and believe that chastity makes sense, and that it is possible for them to live the way Christ wants us to live.
6. Pray together with your children at home, attend Mass regularly as a family and encourage regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Faith must be alive in the home if young people are to find insight and courage to care about what the Church teaches concerning sexuality.

These are but a few suggestions to keep in mind. We would ask that you take seriously your role in passing on the teachings of our faith to your children regarding human sexuality. If there are any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call upon us. Working together, we can empower our children to make morally right decisions and to embrace a chaste life-style.

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to this important area of your child's education and understanding of the faith.

Sincerely in Christ,