

Sexuality:

Overview:

The social lives of teenagers are, in many ways, quite different from those of previous generations; new experiences and opportunities, positive as well as negative, surrounding them. Relationships often seem more complex and tangled. Serious decisions and their consequences confront teens earlier than ever. It seems difficult for adults in today's world to understand what it means to be a teenager in today's world.

This course endeavors to encourage the students to celebrate their sexuality as a gift from God, to learn how to respect themselves and one another as persons of God, and how to understand the different kinds of Love.

Things to remember when talking with teens about sexuality:

1. Honor your child's opinions, learning, and experiences.
2. Listen actively to them; make eye contact to show your interest.
3. Remember that no matter how embarrassing this topic may be, parents and guardians – not catechists and youth ministers-are responsible for establishing family rules and value. We attempt to provide support and training on Church teachings.
4. Make your responses and inquires real; teenagers are very good at sensing false interest.

In many ways, dating hasn't changed all that much over the years. Teen still experience the excitement of infatuation and the disappointment of relationships that just don't work out. The roller-coaster ride of falling in "love" (with all its awkwardness and exhilaration) is still running. Young people continue to hang out with their friends and sort things out with their parents.

What is love? It's common sense to expect that a 14 year-old and a 40 year-old would have difference answers to that question. Be careful not to give the impression that because they are young they are somehow incomplete or inadequate (for example- calling a feeling 'puppy love' will seem an insult, even if it is obvious to you it is simply an infatuation).

The objectification of beauty in our society sometimes reduces sexual activity to acts of selfish pleasure, unconnected to intimacy, love, or commitment. Your child may never have heard the real Catholic perspective in media – that the purpose of sex is to express love, create children out of that love, and deepen the commitment, all within the framework of marriage.

Sexuality: Likeness to God

Week 1:

Objectives for that week: By the end of this lesson, the teens should know and be able to:

- Explain the difference between sex and sexuality
- Talk about how stereotyping can damage our friendships
- Talk about authentic love

Questions to ask:

- What seem to be the biggest social pressures teenagers face today?
- How do stereotypes prevent us from truly knowing a person?
- What dating rules do you both consider appropriate for a middle schooler?
- What is the difference between sex and sexuality?

Faith Activity:

- Read Colossians 3:15-17. What did this passage say to you? How does this ask us to show respect to other people?
- Make up a list of 'dating rules' - what is acceptable and unacceptable. Write them together and explain your reasoning behind certain rules.
- Watch 'A Walk to Remember' as a family. Point out particular scenes you liked and what you thought the message was.

Sexuality: Love, Unselfish & True

Week 2:

Objectives for that week: By the end of this lesson, the teens should know and be able to:

- Abstinence is not a 'no' to sexual activity. It is a 'yes' to one's future and to one's future spouse
- Sexuality is a God-given gift that needs to be cherished.
- We are, each and every one of us, created in image and likeness of God.

Questions to ask:

- What is love? What is infatuation? How are they similar? Different?
- What does the Bible say about love?
- What is the meaning of love?
- How are we called to act when faced with pressure?
- What do the American Bishops say to teenagers on this subject?

Faith Activity:

- Each of you find 2-3 songs you think accurately describe what you think love is. Compare the lyrics and talk about what you like and don't like from each others' songs.
- Read 1 Cor. 13:4-8. Where have you commonly heard this read? In what ways can you name loves in your life that bear out these statements?
- Write down 3-5 people you love. Why do you love them? How is your love different for them?

Sexuality: Loving and Life Giving

Week 3:

Objectives for that week: By the end of this lesson, the teens should know and be able to:

- Explain what Jesus meant by 'having life to the fullest'
- Define 'chastity', 'abstinence', and why they are important
- Explain the Catholic community's view of sexuality
- Give a list of reasons to abstain from pre-marital sex and ways to respond to sexual pressure

Questions to ask:

- What did Jesus mean by 'having life to the fullest'?
- Why should the term 'safe sex' be mistrusted?
- What is true love, as opposed to selfish love?
- Why is objectification not beautiful or right?

Faith Activity:

- Read in the CCC (Catechism of the Catholic Doctrine) #1832, 2337-2356. Discuss your findings as a family
- Go over the dating rules you created earlier. Talk about potential situations they could find themselves in and how to deal with it in a Catholic way.
- Visit: www.chastity.com or encourage your student to attend one of the Pure Love Club (PLC) meetings here at SJB. Talk to them about what support they were able to find and how that will encourage their behavior.

Sexuality: Commitment

Week 4:

Objectives for that week: By the end of this lesson, the teens should know and be able to:

- Discuss the importance viewing marriage as a long-term commitment.
- Talk about what makes a strong marriage, and realize it takes a lot of work from everyone involved.
- Define what a vocation is and what different vocations are.

Questions to ask:

- What are some examples of vocations?
- What is the difference between a job and a vocation?
- What does commitment mean?
- How do we make firm decisions about commitment?
- What is LISTEN?

Faith Activity:

- Look through the book they received for class and talk about the different pages. Do they have a favorite?
- Read the following Scripture passages together:
 - Song of Solomon 2:8-10, 14, 16, 8:6-7
 - Tobit 7:9-15
 - Matthew 5:1-12
 - Romans 8:31-35, 37-39
 - Colossians 3:12-17