

Respecting Sexuality

Core Activity

Completely in God's Love

1. For this activity you will need one piece of newsprint, a marker, and four pieces of wide masking tape that are 8 to 10 inches long.

2. Begin the activity by drawing a large circle on the sheet of newsprint. Inside the circle draw a large figure of a teenager. The drawing need not be perfect, but it cannot extend outside the circle at any point. Tell the group that the circle represents God's love.

3. Discuss the topics of lust, fornication, masturbation, and pornography as they are addressed on pages 326–327 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*. As you cover those topics, write them in sequence on separate pieces of masking tape and place the tape segments somewhere on the newsprint drawing of the teenager. Two restrictions apply to that task:

- Place each tape segment so that a major portion of it covers part of the teenager's figure.
- Do not stack one tape segment directly on top of another.

4. Invite the students to express any questions they have at this point. You might get challenging questions about masturbation, premarital sex, and pornography. Help the students answer their own questions by referring to the Sixth and the Ninth Commandments.

5. Ask the students to look at the newsprint drawing with tape on it. Ask questions such as these:

- Using the visual images of the young person in the center of the circle of God's love, how would you describe the way the sins of lust, fornication, masturbation, and pornography separate us or hide us from God's love?
- How do we reconcile our relationship with God?
- Would the figure look the same if I were to remove the pieces of tape? Why or why not?

6. Offer an explanation and exploration of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as it is addressed on pages 226–228 of the *CFH*. Be sure to include the following points in your own words:

- The Sacrament provides spiritual healing and reconciles us with God and with the Church, the Body of Christ. Our relationships with other Christians are restored through the Sacrament, although we may still need to seek forgiveness from those who were directly affected by our sin.

7. Conclude by explaining this statement:

- “The Church’s term for sexual integrity is *chastity*. Christ is the model for chastity, a virtue that requires integration of our sexuality with the whole person—body, mind, and spirit” (*CFH*, p. 325).

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

“Open Our Eyes”

Challenge your students to keep track of any images they come in contact with over the next week that portray disrespect for the gifts of sexuality and relationships. Ask them also to keep track of images of sexuality and relationships that are in line with Church teaching. At the end of the week, with your class, take a few moments to share how easy or difficult it was finding positive images compared with locating unhealthy images. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Additional Activities

Presenting and Respecting the Whole Person

1. Invite your students to reflect individually on what they believe is their most attractive quality. Assure them that you will not ask them to share their thoughts.

2. Ask the following questions, and allow time for your students to think about them:

- Why, do you believe, is that the most attractive thing about you?
- Has anyone ever affirmed that that quality is an attractive part of who you are?
- How would you feel if that quality were the only thing that people saw as attractive about you?
- How would you feel if that quality were the only part of you that people valued?

3. Invite the students to share their responses to the last two questions without naming their most attractive aspect.

4. Conduct a presentation on the material in chapter 29 of the *CFH*.

5. As a class discuss what the Church teachings you just presented reveal to us about valuing others and ourselves as whole persons. Address questions such as these:

- What is the result of seeing someone as only an object for our enjoyment?
- Why is it important to represent ourselves as whole persons?
- What message do we send when we dress or act like mere objects?

6. Ask your students to reflect on the following questions and to record their answers privately on paper. Assure them that they will not be asked to share their responses.

- What are a few examples of times when I viewed an individual as an object? [Suggest that they think about movies, television, and advertisements.]
- When have I represented myself as less than a whole person because of my actions or my clothing?
- What is one thing I can do to help myself not view other people as objects or possessions?
- How can I better represent myself as a whole person: body, mind, and spirit?

7. Challenge the students to be aware of how they look at others and present themselves.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

All Are Welcome at the Table

1. To prepare for this activity, you may wish to review *Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers*, issued by the Committee on Marriage and Family of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1997). The document is available at www.usccb.org.

2. Begin by asking the students to offer examples of discrimination they know about or have witnessed. Encourage them to think about not only the larger society but also their school. Possible examples are practicing segregation, practicing apartheid, ignoring a new student, and harassing a classmate who is perceived as different.

3. Divide the class into teams of three or four students, and have the teams discuss why someone or some group might discriminate against or ostracize someone else or some other group. Offer the following questions to guide their discussion:

- In the examples the class came up with earlier, why did the discrimination occur?
- Has there been a time when you were discriminated against or ostracized? If so, why were you treated that way?
- If an individual or a group is doing something that is contrary to your beliefs, is it all right to discriminate against them?
- If an individual or a group is doing something that is out of line with the teachings of the Church, is it all right to discriminate against them?

4. Gather the teams together, and invite them to share some of their insights.

5. Conduct a presentation on homosexuality, using the section about that topic on page 328 in the *CFH* and the document *Always Our Children*.

6. Invite the students to talk about what that information teaches us about the place in the Body of Christ for people with a homosexual orientation. Pose questions like these to guide the discussion:

- Is there a difference between opposing a sinful act and discriminating against a person who sins?
- What is our responsibility to people with a homosexual orientation?
- How can we make everyone feel they are a part of Christ's Body?

7. Close by praying for unity in the Body of Christ and that all will receive a welcome in the Church and find a loving home there.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Not Two but One

Have your students read the Catholic Wisdom article "The Theology of the Body," on page 321 of the *CFH*. Invite them to make a list of the many ways two people become one in a sacramental marriage. Ask them to write a brief answer to the question, "How else does that 'becoming one' show up in a couple's everyday life?" (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

Truth in Advertising

Challenge your students to rewrite advertisements to express what those ads are really promoting. Bring several advertisements from magazines to class, and have the young people work alone or in groups to provide truth in advertising. Have them present their rewritten ads to the class. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Morality* manual.)

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