



The Body and Beyond

*Human Sexuality for Young People
from a Catholic Perspective*



Introduction

This guide is designed to help you facilitate your own version of the course “The Body and Beyond: Human Sexuality for Young People from a Catholic Perspective” in your local setting to support the parents, caregivers, and teachers of young people. Whether you are teaching in a parish, school, or another setting, we hope you will find this guide supports your efforts and makes it easier to effectively address important and sensitive topics. Thank you for your work meeting this important need within the Church.

What You Will Find in this Guide:

- Information about the course
- An implementation timeline
- Ideas for recruitment
- Logistical considerations
- Ideas for planning your sessions
- Lesson content including videos, resources and discussion questions for use in each of your sessions
- Publicity materials

Information About this Course

COURSE INTRODUCTION:

St. John Paul II wrote that “sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person—body, emotions and soul—and manifests its in-most meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love.” When considered in its fullness, human sexuality communicates both God’s love and plan for the human person. Given this, all young people then benefit from “Sex Ed.”

Unfortunately, many contemporary adults are unprepared to offer this important education to young people. “The Body and Beyond: Human Sexuality for Young People from a Catholic Perspective” was developed to address this challenge. The materials referenced in this manual are designed to be implemented in a way that enables teachers and ministers to support the parents in their communities. These parents are recognized by the Church as the “primary educators” of their children and yet, they are not entirely equipped for this responsibility. Ideally, teachers and ministers at the local level can organize educational experiences where groups of parents can come together and learn how to support their young people with education about human sexuality.

“The Body and Beyond” course begins by establishing a firm and necessary foundation in the Catholic Church’s teaching on human sexuality, with an emphasis on the idea that sexuality is not limited to biological functioning, but encompasses all aspects of our identities as men and women. The implications for understanding human sexuality in this way and the importance of providing it within this framework are deeply explored to establish a necessary foundation for the topics and methods parents would address in a comprehensive, systematic education. The course then focuses on sharing practical guidelines detailing how, when, and what to teach about topics in four categories that reflect those most often addressed within secular human sexuality curricula including: a) hygiene, b) biology/reproduction, c) relationships, and d) personal safety. Connections to faith and moral and ethical implications related to each of these categories are also addressed.

COURSE GOALS:

The goals of this course are to:

- generate wonder and appreciation for the beauty of God’s creation, especially the significance and meaning of human sexuality,
- educate course participants about the importance of comprehensive human sexuality education for young people and why it must be offered within a special approach reflecting a Catholic perspective and pedagogy,
- equip course participants with a recognition of what human sexuality education entails and provoke the consideration of how it might be appropriately addressed within their individual contexts,
- provide adults with practical support for when and how to talk about human sexuality topics, offer effective methods for listening to young people, and present strategies for partnering with other adults and young people for the purpose of mutual learning and growth, and
- foster a community of people concerned about young people who can share ideas and resources to support one another.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

From a Catholic perspective, human sexuality is understood as being more than biology and reproduction. When considered in its fullness, human sexuality communicates both God’s love and plan for the human person. All young people then benefit from “Sex Ed.” This course presents participants with useful information that equips them to provide education in human sexuality to young people. It offers an overview of the scope and sequence of a comprehensive human sexuality program (including, vocation, anatomy, reproduction, relationships, hygiene, and personal safety), suggests practical pedagogical approaches, and points out natural connections to the Catholic faith.

COURSE DESIGNER BIOGRAPHIES



Mary O'Callaghan, Ph.D., is a developmental psychologist and teaches as a Faculty Fellow in the Master of Autism Studies at Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, IN) and an adjunct instructor for the Mendoza College of Business (Notre Dame, IN). She is a Public Policy Fellow for the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture at the University of Notre Dame as well as a member of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability's Governance Board. Mary and her husband have 5 children, including her son Tommy, 15, who has Down syndrome and Autism.



Clare Kilbane, Ph.D. is a Professor of the Practice at the University of Notre Dame affiliated with the McGrath Institute for Church Life. She has a wide-range of expertise across a variety of educational areas. Clare has worked as a classroom teacher, teacher educator, curriculum developer, and media producer. Additionally, she has produced many books, articles, and other creative works. At the McGrath Institute, Clare educates theology teachers, leads research and development for its online theology program, and serves as the Learning Designer for much of its educational programming. She is also a wife and the mother of a 1st-year college student.



Michele Faehnle, RN. CSN. is a school nurse at St. Andrew School in Upper Arlington, Ohio. She is also an experienced speaker, radio host, and author. Her books include *Divine Mercy for Moms*, *The Friendship Project*, and *Our Friend Faustina*. Michele and her husband, Matthew, have four children and live in Columbus, Ohio.



Julia Sadusky, Psy.D. is a licensed psychologist practicing in Littleton, CO., where she offers individual, family, and couples therapy in addition to consultations for individuals and families around sexuality and gender. She also serves as a youth and ministry educator. She is a popular speaker and author. Her most recent book, *“Start Talking To Your Kids about Sex”* was released in November 2023.

Implementation Timeline

Here is a suggested plan of action for promoting, recruiting, facilitating, and reviewing the “Body and Beyond” course. Feel free to adapt as necessary.

4 Weeks Prior

- Determine what format (in-person, online, both) will work best for you, your community, and your participants. Zoom participation can be easier for participants who have young children or children who may not do well with unfamiliar people/babysitters. If providing an in-person offering, consider providing childcare support or offering it at a time when children may be at school or elsewhere.
 - Develop your plan for promoting the course and recruiting participants (see Ideas for Recruitment).
 - Explore the publicity materials
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3 Weeks Prior

- Finalize dates and times of the sessions for your course; add these to your community’s web calendar if available.
- Determine whether you will have a deadline for joining/signing up, or if your group will remain open to new participants throughout the course.
- Develop a communication plan; ask yourself:
 - What information will you need to share with participants throughout the course?
 - How often will you contact your participants? Once a week? Biweekly? Once at the beginning of the course and once at the end?
 - Will you follow up with your participants in the weeks or months following the course?

Note: Consider gauging their interest in future seasonal opportunities for learning, formation, and fellowship during the last session of the course.

- If necessary, reserve your meeting space.
- Begin promotion and recruitment using the publicity materials
 - If applicable, feature a write-up and/or advertisement in your parish bulletin or diocesan newspaper.

- Highlight the course during end-of-Mass announcements or school newsletters, including how to participate.
 - Add an image and announcement to your community's home page; include information about meeting dates/times, how to sign up (if applicable), and deadlines (if applicable).
 - Create social media posts for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
 - Begin planning your meeting sessions.
 - Determine audio-visual needs for in-person gatherings.
 - If necessary, assess technological possibilities for any online gatherings (recording, breakout groups, screen sharing, etc.), and begin familiarizing yourself with your chosen platform's capabilities if need be.
 - Consider whether you will utilize smaller discussion groups within your meetings, and whether these will be pre-determined based on sign-ups, or randomly generated during each session based on attendance.
 - Brainstorm possibilities for participants' personal and/or spiritual formation (e.g., write a prayer that you will say together each week; design a holy card that participants can print at home or set as the wallpaper for their mobile device; create a virtual space where participants can share prayer intentions; pair participants up as prayer partners, etc.).
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2 Weeks Prior

- Continue promotion and recruitment:
 - Encourage those who have already signed up to invite friends or family to do so as well.
 - If your parish has an electronic mailing list, create and send an email invitation providing an overview of the course and explaining how to sign up.
- Finalize your plans for individual meeting sessions.
- For in-person gatherings:
 - Prepare and test all audio-visual equipment.
 - Think through the space set-up and begin gathering any necessary additional materials (e.g., paper or notepads, writing utensils, etc.).
- For hybrid gatherings (in-person meeting with some online participants):
 - Follow the same recommendations for in-person gatherings.
 - Determine how you will accomplish a hybrid session (e.g., live-stream on Facebook or YouTube, or host a simultaneous online meeting via Zoom or other platform), and what technologies you will need to do so.

1 Week Prior

- Consider intensifying promotion during the last week before the course launch:
 - Include a special reminder at the end of each weekend Mass if possible.
 - Run a final reminder ad in the parish bulletin.
 - Repost announcements on social media.
 - Extend personal invitations to individual community members via email, text, or phone call.
- Contact your group members:
 - Include your meeting schedule (and session overview if desired).
 - Encourage members to continue inviting others to sign up, even friends or family members who may not be official members of your community!
 - Send out any materials you've prepared for participants' personal and/or spiritual formation (see above).
- For in-person gatherings (if applicable):
 - Make sure you have everything you need for your meeting space.
- For online gatherings (if applicable):
 - Set up your physical space well. Make sure the camera angle and lighting allow for optimal visibility, and that you are close enough to the microphone to be heard clearly.
 - Test the screen and audio sharing features on your chosen meeting platform.
 - If utilizing small groups, practice using the breakout room feature in your online platform to ensure that any transitions to and from small group discussion will be as seamless as possible.

Launch Week

- Contact your participants 2–3 days before your first session:
 - Include the date, time, and location (or URL for a virtual meeting).
 - Send out small group assignments if desired.
 - Provide participants with a general idea of what to expect from the session.

- Strange as it sounds, begin thinking now about how you wish to mark the conclusion of the course. For example, you may wish to create an opportunity for faith sharing at the final session, write a special prayer or reflection, or (if gathering in person) arrange for a blessing of the participants from your pastor. Once you've determined what your final session will look like, reserve any special spaces and reach out to any special guests you'd like to invite to participate. If you are planning a final blessing, be sure to touch base with the priest to make any necessary preparations.
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After the Course

- Follow up with your participants:
 - Thank them for participating in the course
 - Invite them to share their feedback
 - Announce any future opportunities for learning or formation

Ideas for Recruitment

As with any event, intentional encouragement and gently repeated invitations are essential tools in recruiting participants. Here are a few strategies to help you get started.

1. Take advantage of the publicity materials.

- At the end of this document, you'll find publicity materials, including a general promotional image that can be used in multiple contexts.

2. Utilize social media thoughtfully.

- If you wish to post to social media, be sure to include a brief description of what your participants can expect from the course (e.g., an overview of sex ed topics and strategies to use, opportunities to learn together, etc.).
- Use #mcgrathbab so that your group can track any posts you might create for the series, and consider creating an additional hashtag unique to your community so that your participants can share what they're learning and easily discover others' posts.

3. Create a video invitation.

- Consider recording a brief video of yourself sharing about the upcoming opportunity and inviting people in your community to participate. Send it out through your listserv or database, post it to social media, or upload it to your community's homepage.

4. Develop a multi-faceted recruitment strategy.

- Try to reach out to your community in a variety of ways. Don't assume that everyone reads the bulletin each week, or is active on social media. Call, text, or email people who you think might benefit from the course. Include an announcement about the series at the end of Mass for a weekend or two, and consider making yourself available to answer questions in the narthex or gathering space of the church after the weekend liturgies.

Logistical Considerations

In-Person Session:

- Set-up: room capacity, seating, tables, etc.
 - Audio-visual materials:
 - Laptop or mobile device
 - Projector and necessary power/connection cords
 - Screen and stand (if necessary)
 - Lectern and microphone (if necessary)
 - Be sure to test your technology in the actual space before the session. Walk through the space to make sure that anything projected on the screen is clearly visible from every seat, and make sure the lighting is at an optimal level. You will likely have to lower the lights to screen the video(s), and raise them for discussion or announcements, so make sure you can easily access switches and/or dimmers.
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Online Session:

- Technology:
 - Determine whether your community's preferred online meeting platform (Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Hangouts, etc.) has a limit to how many people can participate in a meeting.
 - Make sure your chosen platform has the following capabilities:
 - Screen sharing (with audio sharing)
 - Virtual breakout rooms for small group discussions
 - Chat feature for asking questions or sharing comments throughout the session
 - If you are uncomfortable with using an online meeting program, recruit someone from your community to either provide you with training beforehand or serve as your tech support throughout the series.
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Hybrid Session:

- In this scenario, you will basically have to account for all of the logistics named above for both an in-person session and an online session. Depending on your resources, you may have the capacity to simply live-stream the in-person session, rather than attempt to run an online meeting simultaneous to the in-person session; however, in that instance, you will need to ensure that online participants will also be able to view the videos well (either by positioning the camera a certain way relative to your projection screen, or by sending links beforehand so that online participants can simply view the videos on another tab in their own browser).
- If you cannot live-stream your in-person session to an online audience, you will need to run a simultaneous online meeting. This will require additional planning, technology, and perhaps additional personnel to provide assistance. You may be able to run the meeting and project the videos from the same laptop using the screen share feature; however, you will likely want to “mute” your projector when not viewing videos so that in-person participants don’t see the online meeting onscreen.
- It may be helpful to have an assistant who can help you manage the online participants while you implement the in-person gathering.

Planning Your Sessions

The recommended method for carrying out your program is with six, 60-minute weekly sessions that address the program content. This method offers participants time to process the material and build relationships with you and other participants over an extended period. However, this may not be ideal in all settings. It may be more appropriate to offer the content in an alternative manner, such as in a more intensive workshop, or retreat. Virtual sessions may have an appeal in some contexts.

The template provided below is designed for the 60-minute session model, but can be used flexibly to respond to your needs. Consider this template as a suggestion and feel free to exercise creativity as necessary.

Also, local facilitators are welcome to choose to implement a subset of the course materials, however, it is important to present the content on the Catholic anthropology regarding human sexuality as a foundation for understanding other content.

For clarification:

“Session” refers to a 60-minute meeting time with participants

“Unit” refers to a particular topic meant for one day’s worth of material (a single session), but contains several smaller videos

“Lecture” refers to each of the shorter teaching videos that are categorized by topic and unit

Session Template

Gathering and Welcome

- Approximately 3-5 minutes (with the likely exception that the first night will require a bit more time).
- Take a moment to gain everyone’s attention and offer an opening prayer.

Introduction

- 3 minutes
- In a few introductory comments, review the material or discussions from the last session and introduce the topic that you’ll be focusing on in your current session.
- You may also want to distribute any materials participants will need before they begin watching the unit videos.

Unit Content

- About 20 minutes, depending on the particular unit.
- Display the video(s) for tonight’s topic

Discussion

- 15-20 minutes
- Allow participants to unpack and process the material they’ve just watched through a variety of discussion strategies:

- “Pair and Share.” This is a great strategy for smaller groups. Participants talk with the person sitting next to them for a few minutes on one or more questions. From there, conversation can be opened up to the larger group if any pairs would like to share what they discussed. This strategy could be inserted between lessons or if a topic is particularly poignant given that it allows a more private exchange than small groups of 4-5.
- Small Groups. Typically 4-5 people in a small group is ideal because this allows enough time for each person to speak if they’d like to. Sometimes smaller groups provide less pressure than speaking with only one other person.
- Large Group. Holding conversation in the whole group is great for discussing big ideas and key take-aways. It also gives you more leeway as facilitator for interaction. Keep in mind that participants may require a bit more courage to speak up in front of a large group, especially on sensitive topics. It may make sense to “scale up” the conversation, beginning with pairs, then small groups, and later the whole group. After/throughout discussion is also a great space to allow time for additional questions.

Closing Remarks and/or Prayer

- About 5-10 minutes of closing comments to wrap up the session’s content and an optional closing prayer will help participants “check-out” and leave your session with a sense of closure.
- Be sure to offer any reminders for next week and thank everyone for attending.

Content

The videos for each unit are provided on an accompanying website at mcgrath.nd.edu/bodyandbeyond and categorized by session. Recommended resources for use during the session, suggested discussion questions, key takeaways and resources for further learning are presented in this manual and also on the accompanying website. Please note that these are presented as suggestions, and you should adapt this content as you see fit; this material is designed to be a jumping off point for your own creation of participant handouts, worksheets or session guides and follows closely what you have learned in The Body and Beyond STEP course.

PLEASE NOTE: The video links providing access to the lectures in this course are password protected and should only be accessed by the course facilitator who has been given the McGrath Institute's express permission (upon completion of the STEP course). Direct links to the video should not be shared directly with participants to view outside the real-time sessions led by the facilitator. For questions about these "terms of use," please feel free to contact Clare Kilbane ckilbane@nd.edu.

Session One

Suggested Goals for your First Meeting

Meet and Greet

Allow some time for everyone to get to know each other. This could simply be taking a minute or two for everyone (or maybe at each table) to introduce themselves. If it feels appropriate, participants may also want to offer some information about their child, relative, or person they care for with an intellectual or developmental disability so that both you and other participants have more insight into how to best support them throughout the program.

Take a “Pulse Check”

The goal here is to understand where participants are and where they’re coming from concerning sexual education from a Catholic perspective for their child/person they care for. What are their fears or concerns around this topic? What are their expectations and hopes for this program? How comfortable or uncomfortable are they talking about this topic amongst themselves and/or with their children or those they care for? Why have they decided to come to these sessions?

Share Ground Rules and Gauge Expectations

- Give participants a basic understanding of how you envision each session unfolding. You might explain that the group will be meeting once a week for about 60 minutes and each session will have a mix of content and dialogue (or otherwise!).
- Let participants know your role and how you will approach facilitation. Offer them a bit of your personal background/interest concerning the topic and your own set of hopes for the program.
- Offer some guiding principles for dialogue in small groups and/or asking questions. For example, are participants free to ask a question in the middle of a video where you’ll pause and address that, or would you prefer them to wait until the end of each lesson or even the entire unit? Do you have any suggestions or ground rules for when participants are talking amongst themselves in small groups? Would you like to address any kind of confidentiality concerns, etc.?
- Set the expectation for confidentiality. Share with participants that, especially given the sensitivity of the topics and situations that may be discussed, what is shared in discussion is confidential and

should not be repeated in other settings or shared with other people. Similarly, participants should keep in mind that they may want to “self-censor” or intentionally withhold information that is of a particularly personal nature and that may concern other people (e.g., their children or relatives).

Unit One:

Why Human Sexuality Education Matters & A Catholic Understanding of Human Sexuality

Learning Objectives:

- 1) To consider the importance of educational support about “sex ed” for young people from a Catholic perspective,
- 2) To explore key beliefs according to Catholic anthropology that have relevance to “sex ed” including that: we are created in the image of God, the body is both a sign and a gift, human beings are integrated, and our human sexuality educates us in love,
- 3) To understand the major topics that would be addressed through education in human sexuality.
- 4) To understand what the Church teaches about the significance of adults, especially parents, with regard to the imparting of information about human sexuality, and
- 5) To recognize some of the barriers adults face in discussing human sexuality topics with young people.

Unit One Lectures:

Lecture 1

Laying the Groundwork for a Catholic Understanding of Education in Human Sexuality

Lecture 2

Why develop new educational materials on human sexuality and a course for grown-ups?

Lecture 3

What are some of the barriers adults experience when talking about sex with young people? What are some tips to help them?

Lecture 4

What is human sexuality from a Catholic perspective? How does the Catholic Church think about it? Why does it matter?

Resources for Use During the Session:

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

God created mankind in his image;
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Discussion Questions

- What did you find most interesting about the lectures? Did anything surprise you? Did anything resonate for you and seem particularly relevant to your circumstances? Do you have any questions that would help you understand anything that was addressed better or more clearly?
- There are different ways the term “human sexuality” is understood in our culture. What are some of them? How do you understand it? What is the Catholic understanding of human sexuality as it is explained in the lectures?
- How do you think human sexuality pertains to your young person?
- How do you understand what it means to be made in “Imago Dei,” the image of God? What might this have to do with our anthropology and our human sexuality?
- What other questions do you have about what has been presented today or what has been discussed?

Key Takeaways:

- The educational support regarding “sex ed” for young people from a Catholic perspective is an important and pressing issue.

- Some key beliefs from Catholic anthropology that have relevance to sex ed include that: we are created in the image of God, the body is both a sign and a gift, human beings are integrated, and our human sexuality educates us in love.

Recommended Resources for Participants' Further Learning and Reading:

- [Educational Guidance in Human Love \(1983\)](#)
- [The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality \(1995\)](#)

Other Resources

[Second Vatican ecumenical council, Decl. On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis, 28 October 1965, 1. \(Proposes a Catholic approach to education including parents as “first teachers”\).](#)

Session Two

Unit Two: Caring About Young People = Caring About Quality Sex Ed

Learning Objectives:

- 1) To understand the benefit of “sex ed” for young people, especially that with a Catholic approach.
- 2) To appreciate how the expansive nature of Catholic anthropology guides human sexuality education, including not only what topics it should address and how but also who is most appropriate for providing it and how.
- 3) To acknowledge some of the problems associated with “outsourcing” “sex ed” to different kinds of schools.
- 4) To recognize why effective education in human sexuality involves a partnership between families and schools.
- 5) To understand the developmental stages of young people, how these relate to their physical development, and methods for listening to and conversing with them about important topics.
- 6) To understand the characteristics of a high-quality human sexuality education and some guidelines for providing it within a Catholic approach.

Unit Two Lectures:

Lecture 1

Parents as Primary Educators in Human Sexuality

Lecture 2

Why can't parents just rely on their children's school for this educational support?

Lecture 3

What are some of the barriers adults experience when talking about sex with young people? What are some tips to help them?

Lecture 4

Sex Ed: The Big Picture

Discussion Questions:

- What did you find most interesting about the lectures? Did anything surprise you? Did anything resonate for you and seem particularly relevant to your circumstances? Do you have any questions that would help you understand anything that was addressed better or more clearly?
- The Catholic Church considers parents “the primary educators of their children,” meaning they are not only the “first” teachers but also foremost in importance and significance for their children. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What topics in human sexuality education do you think are easiest to explain or do you feel most prepared to teach? What topics do you think will be the most challenging or do you feel the least prepared to teach?
- Share a moment when you were successful teaching a child or young adult. How do you know you were successful? What contributed to it being successful (e.g., methods, environment, relationship, etc.)?
- What other questions do you have about what has been presented today or what has been discussed?

Key Takeaways:

- Young people do benefit from sexuality education, especially in the context of a Catholic approach.
- The expansive nature of Catholic anthropology guides human sexuality education, including not only what topics it should address but also who is most appropriate for providing it and how.
- Several problems come about with “outsourcing” sex ed to schools or other education settings and there are several aspects of providing high-quality human sexuality education for young people through a Catholic perspective.

Recommended Resources:

- [Catholic Parents' Guide to Formation in Human Sexuality](#)

The following resources are completely optional and serve as examples of sexuality education materials currently in use in mainstream culture. These are provided for raising awareness, not as an endorsement.

- [National Teacher Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education](#)
- [National Sex Education Standards: Second Edition - SIECUS](#)
- [The SIECUS State Profiles - The State of Sex Ed](#)
- [The Standards - National Consensus for School Health Education](#)

Session Three

Unit Three: Taking Care of the Gift of our Bodies: Hygiene

Learning Objectives:

1. To know what the different topics are in the sex ed category of hygiene
2. To be introduced to different techniques for teaching about hygiene.
3. To explore some of the faith connections that exist related to teaching about hygiene.
4. To consider some of the ethical and moral implications within the area of hygiene and gain a Catholic framework for thinking through them.

Unit Three Lectures:

Lecture 1

What are the topics that fall under this category-hygiene? What are the factors to consider in how they are addressed? What makes this learning challenging?

Lecture 2

Faith Connections: How is hygiene related to spirituality and faith?

Hygiene: Q & A

Discussion Questions:

- What did you find most interesting about the lectures? Did anything surprise you? Did anything resonate for you and seem particularly relevant to your circumstances? Do you have any questions that would help you understand anything that was addressed better or more clearly?
- What makes learning about or practicing hygiene hard for a young person? With young people you might know in particular? What can you do to support them?
- What are some ways that you can make faith connections as you are promoting the learning and practice of hygiene with young people?
- A person's body is due certain reverence because God made it and it is where a person's soul resides. Note: Be sure to emphasize that the Catholic understanding of the human person is that the soul is not simply contained in the body as a separate part, but rather integrated within it. How would you explain this to a young person? What words and phrases would you use? What methods might you use to teach this to a young person? In what situations would it be appropriate to offer this educational commentary for a young person?
- What other questions do you have about what has been presented today or what has been discussed?

Key Takeaways:

- Hygiene covers several different topics and areas within sexual education.
- There are several faith connections that relate to teaching about hygiene (being composed as body and soul, God created us as made for relationship and this affects how we use and take care of our bodies, practicing virtue, etc).
- Learning about hygiene provides a foundation for building understandings about other aspects of human sexuality.
- Practicing hygiene routines allows a regular and repeated opportunity to reinforce ideas that are being learned about Catholic anthropology (e.g., that a human person is a integrated body/soul composite).

Recommended Resources:

- [Standards for Health Education | Healthy Schools | CDC](#)
- [BAM! Body and Mind | Healthy Schools | CDC](#)
- [Hygiene Learning Checklist](#)

Other resources that might be helpful to share

- Tattoos and piercings- What does the Church teach about tattoos? (it varies) some resources [1](#) [2](#)
- Cultural differences with physical features, grooming, and hygiene practices- shaving one's legs or arm pits, body odor dental care, facial hair, finger nails) (General hygiene resources: [1](#) [2](#))
- Respect for other people's appearance- normal physical anomalies (e.g., big ears, weight, height, proportions, etc.) [1](#) [2](#)
- Disability- How to help young people understand physical disabilities (e.g., physical disabilities, severe mental health issues, intellectual disability, etc.) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)
- Body odor- what do we teach young people about this and the range of acceptable levels in different contexts (cultures/ athletics/ etc.) [1](#)
- Wellness practices- sleep/drink/exercise/disease prevention. How do we talk about maintaining healthy weight [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#)
- Drugs and alcohol- How do we talk about this within a Catholic framework- perhaps emphasizing responsibility toward others- obligation to family to be safe, take care of body, etc. [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#).
- Modesty- If the body is good and a gift; why do we cover it up? Why does modesty look different for males and females? Explain that practical applications of modesty may vary within cultures or with age (young children vs teens) and setting/activity (e.g. sports and swimming vs school and church, but the principle remains the same. Let's develop some good principles that cut through the controversy! [1](#) [2](#)

Session Four

Unit Four: How God Created Us; Addressing Physiology and Reproduction within a life-long, Catholic framework

Learning Objectives:

1. To know what the different topics are in the sex ed category of anatomy and physiology with a focus on reproduction.
2. To be introduced to different techniques for teaching about anatomy and physiology with a focus on reproduction.
3. To explore some of the faith connections that exist related to teaching about anatomy and physiology with a focus on reproduction.
4. To consider some of the ethical and moral implications within the area of anatomy and physiology with a focus on reproduction and gain a Catholic framework for thinking through them.

Unit Four Lectures:

Lecture 1

What are the topics that fall under this category- the physical aspects of human sexuality? What are the factors to consider in how they are addressed? What makes this learning challenging?

Lecture 2

Faith Connections: What to emphasize about our faith as it relates to physiology and reproduction?

Anatomy & Physiology with a Reproductive Focus: Q & A

Resources for Use During the Session:

Catechism of the Catholic Church #2337: Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.

Discussion Questions:

- What did you find most interesting about the lectures? Did anything surprise you? Did anything resonate for you and seem particularly relevant to your circumstances? Do you have any questions that would help you understand anything that was addressed better or more clearly?
- What topics do you think are most important to teach a young person within the area of anatomy and physiology with a focus on reproduction? What challenges do you foresee in this? What questions do you have about reproduction for young people?
- What are some of the special implications related to reproduction that play out for young people? How can you and others support your young person through any challenges this may present?
- How might you explain that human biology, including the reality of biological sex, teaches us about complementarity and reciprocity to a young person? How do you feel about using a “purpose-first” pedagogy when explaining this?
- What other questions do you have about what has been presented today or what has been discussed?

Key Takeaways:

- Initial suggestions and guidelines for what content surrounding reproductive physiology and anatomy should be addressed, when and how, for young people.
- Using a “purpose-first pedagogy” when teaching anatomy and physiology from a Catholic perspective could serve as a useful technique for teaching young people.
- There are several faith connections that can be made concerning reproductive anatomy and physiology including an understanding of the virtue of chastity, understanding our bodies as a gift, complementarity between the sexes of male and female and relationality.

Recommended Resources for Further Learning:

- ["Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education"](#)
- [A Reader's Guide to 'The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality' | EWTN](#)
- ["How to Teach Your Child about Sex," 1956](#) *provided for historical reference
- [Familiaris Consortio \(November 22, 1981\) | John Paul II](#)
- [Pope Pius XII Speaks to Mothers](#)
- [Sex Education: The Vatican's Guidelines](#)

Session Five

Unit Five: God's Plan For Us: Relationships

Learning Objectives:

1. To know what the different topics are in the sex ed category of relationships.
2. To be introduced to different techniques for teaching about relationships.
3. To explore some of the faith connections that exist related to teaching about relationships.
4. To consider some of the ethical and moral implications within the area of relationships and gain a Catholic framework for thinking through them.

Unit Five Lectures:

Lecture 1

What are the topics that fall under this category- Relationships? What are the factors to consider in how they are addressed? What makes this learning challenging?

Lecture 2

Faith Connections: What to emphasize about our faith as it relates to relationships?

Personal Relationships: Q & A

Discussion Questions:

- What did you find most interesting about the lectures? Did anything surprise you? Did anything resonate for you and seem particularly relevant to your circumstances? Do you have any questions that would help you understand anything that was addressed better or more clearly?
- Why do young people need education about healthy relationships? Where are some of the places where they receive formal and information education about them? What challenges and benefits do they encounter in their quest for finding connection with others?
- Young people benefit from developing a relationship with Jesus Christ. What are some of the methods that you or people you know have found useful in helping a young person cultivate such a relationship?
- What does “self-gift” mean to you? How does vulnerability play a role in this? How can you encourage your young person to share themselves with others appropriately in varying types of relationships?
- Young people have challenges in discovering their adult vocations. If you could develop/request some resources or supportive programming to help them, what would it be?
- What would the mainstream culture say about why relationships are important? What would be distinct about how Catholics understand them and their significance? What might be special to how young people would experience relationships?
- What other questions do you have about what has been presented today or what has been discussed?

Resources for Use During the Session:

Matthew 22:37-39

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and all your strength.

Key takeaways:

- A healthy understanding of oneself is key to understanding others and developing healthy relationships.
- Understanding and communicating the various attributes of different types of relationships for young people is important to their learning to develop healthy relationships with God, self and others.
- All people are called to holiness and this is more fundamental to a vocational call to marriage or the priesthood.

Recommended Resources

- [Schmitz, M. \(3 August, 2023\) 3 Tips for Building Healthy Relationships](#)
- [Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Empowering God's Children and Young People](#)

Session Six

Unit Six: God's Care For Us: Ensuring Safety and Protection

Learning Objectives:

1. To know what the different topics are in the sex ed category of safety as it is connected to relationships.
2. To be introduced to different techniques for teaching about safety as it is connected to relationships.
3. To explore some of the faith connections that exist related to teaching about safety as it is connected to relationships.
4. To consider some of the ethical and moral implications within the area of safety as it is connected to relationships.

Unit Six Lectures:

Lecture 1

Faith Connections: What to emphasize about our faith as it relates to safety and protection?

Lecture 2

What are the topics that fall under this category- Personal Safety? What are the factors to consider in how they are addressed? What makes this learning challenging?

Personal Safety: Q & A

Discussion Questions:

- What did you find most interesting about the lectures? Did anything surprise you? Did anything resonate for you and seem particularly relevant to your circumstances? Do you have any questions that would help you understand anything that was addressed better or more clearly?
- What are some of the challenges all young people experience in connection to safety in relationships? What are some of the particular challenges a young person faces in this area?
- How can a young person's faith contribute to their experience of safety? How can you help a young person develop an understanding of how God's love offers them safety?
- Exploitation is more challenging for young people to understand and prevent. How might you explain some things to your young person or others that can help prevent them from experiencing different types of exploitation?
- What other questions do you have about what has been presented today or what has been discussed?

Key Takeaways:

- Education for protection of young people includes not only ensuring their own safety but also understanding how “appropriateness” is important for various types of relationships.
- Several safety recommendations and understanding warning signs of abuse can help prevent the exploitation of young people.
- Healthy/safety and freedom/independence are both important for young people, and effective education is necessary for both.

Recommended Resources:

Waterloo Catholic Faith Formation Resources on Protecting Children

[Protection of Children & Adolescents--Parent's Guide](#)

[What You Should Know About Protecting Your Child from Sexual Abuse](#)

Our Sunday Visitor Article [Seven Steps to Keeping your Child Safe from Abuse](#)

*If you are planning this as your last session, you may also want to provide an opportunity for concluding thoughts, overall takeaways for the entire program and provide a space for feedback from the group. Additionally, taking some time to think intentionally about how you'd like to conclude and/or how you'd like to provide opportunities for ongoing communication or community after your program has finished will likely prove beneficial.

PUBLICITY MATERIALS

THANK YOU!

We look forward to hearing about how this resource and what you've learned in the Body and Beyond STEP course might help you better facilitate quality programming for parents and those who care for young people on sexual education from a Catholic perspective. Thank you so much for all the work you do in your communities and may God bless it!