

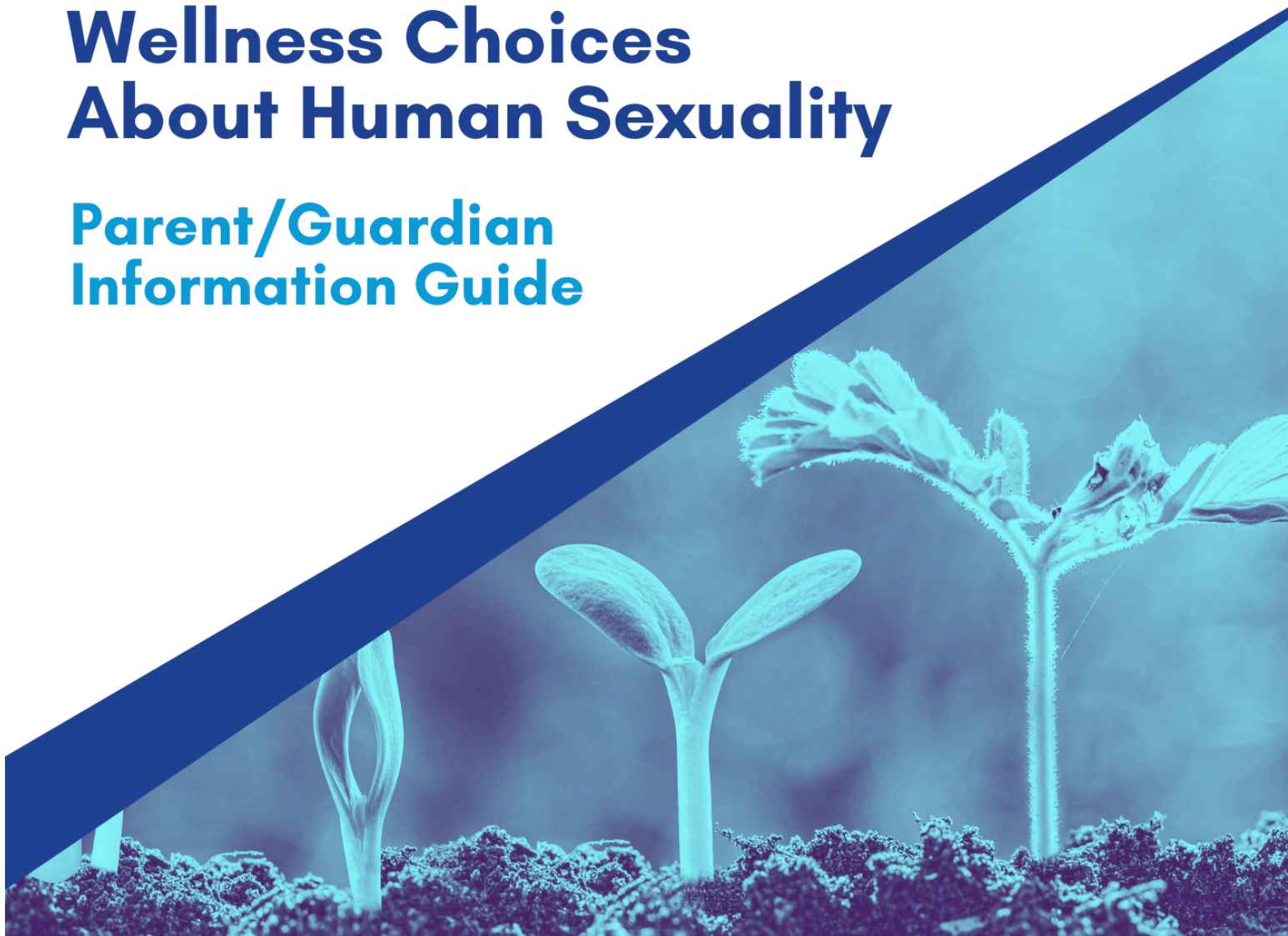


FORT McMURRAY
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Grade 8 Health/Religion

Wellness Choices About Human Sexuality

Parent/Guardian
Information Guide



Introduction

In accordance with Fort McMurray Catholic School's Administrative Procedure 206 - Family Life & Human Sexuality Education, this document provides parents and guardians with information related to the curriculum, topics, content, and instructional methods that will be used when their children learn about human sexuality. Human sexuality is part of the Alberta Grade 7-9 Wellness curriculum and is taught through a Catholic worldview as part of our school jurisdiction's Health & Religion Program.

About the Instructional Resources

A team of Fort McMurray Catholic School educators consisting of division leaders, school leaders, religion and curriculum consultants, and classroom teachers developed this set of resources that will be used by all teachers when instructing the outcomes for which opt-in/opt-out consent is required, as per legislation from the government of Alberta. These resources, which are highlighted in this information guide, include teacher-directed instruction and student-led activities. External guest speakers or service providers will not be utilized during the instruction of these outcomes.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to review this guide in its entirety to support an informed decision-making process for opt-in or opt-out consent.

The Catholic Understanding of the Human Person¹

The Catholic Church teaches that each person has been created by God in His image and likeness and therefore has an inherent and inviolable human dignity (CCC 1700). Scripture tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and it is ultimately from this understanding of God that the Church's vision of the human person becomes clear: every single human being, without exception, has immeasurable value. Human beings are called to love as God loves. Love and the expression of love are at the heart of the very meaning of human life and the Christian faith.

God greatly desires happiness for His people and has placed this longing in our hearts; nothing apart from drawing closer to God, the one who created us, can fully satisfy this desire (CCC 1718-1719). This longing also speaks to our need for human relationships. As love unifies the persons of the Trinity, we are called to image this love in and through our earthly relationships. Love is the central element of Jesus' Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-31) which commands us to "love the Lord your God" as well as to "love your neighbour as yourself". No human is exempt from this need for loving relationships. All humans find true happiness "in seeking and loving what is true and good" (CCC 1704).

The human being is an embodied being, created as a union of body and soul (CCC 362-365). Our body is not just the "shell" of our "real" interior self. Rather, our body is an essential part of who we are, and it plays an essential role in how we live out the love that God has given us. The discussion of the design, purpose and development of our bodies needs to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect.

An inherent purpose of the body is to reflect the love of God. Our sexual drive is a gift from God, and any discussion regarding sexuality needs to be approached from a positive stance: sexuality is a mystery to be lived, rather a problem to be solved, or a source of temptation to be overcome. Teachers need to focus on a positive, life-giving approach to decisions around sex, and thus its appropriate placement in marriage, rather than solely focusing on the negative consequences. While these consequences are important and must be taught, only focusing on them is a reduction approach to an essential topic and would miss important life lessons.

The image of God is not simply something already in us, it is also something that we must become. God is still creating us, and we are called to cooperate with his vision. Our life is a work that has been entrusted to us. Our free will allows us to make choices, choices that will either lead us away or lead us toward completing the image of God in us. Each person is called to use the

talents, abilities, and passions that they have been given by God to discover and live out the purpose and plans that God has for them (CCC 1730-1731).

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. Catholics believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

¹ The document *The Human Person, Love, and Sexuality: A Resource for Catholic Educators* released by the Education Commission of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario was an essential source for this summary.

The Use of a Question Box

An anonymous question box will be available in the classroom during the instruction of this curricular segment. This practice ensures that questions from students are addressed and allows teachers time to consider which questions to answer and how to respond. Teachers will use their professional judgment to discern which questions are relevant to the curricular outcomes and, thus, should be addressed with the whole class. The question box will be optional, submissions will not be read aloud in class, and confidentiality will be maintained.

LESSON OUTLINES

LESSON #1: Change & Development

Alberta Education Curriculum Outcome

W-8.3: Recognize and accept that individuals experience different rates of physical, emotional, sexual and social development.

Lesson Components

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
Everything you created is good.
We have received life from your hands.
We have been created in your image,
With the power to love and care for each other
And to share in your creation.
We thank you for this gift.
Help us to cherish all that you have created.
Help us to show gratitude for the gift of sexuality by the way we live.
Amen.

Review of Class Etiquette

- Be kind and supportive.
- Questions are welcome, but we might not be able to answer them all.
- Show respect for the body as a creation of God by using correct terms for body parts.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Respect personal boundaries and physical space.
- Be mindful of personal questions and oversharing.
- Be respectful at all times.

A Quick Note for Students

Biologically Correct Terms

- Official agreed-upon definition.
- Reduces confusion and misunderstandings.
- Helps us respect the dignity of God's creation.

Slang

- May be used when someone feels uncomfortable or unsure of the correct term.
- Meanings can change over time or in different places.
- Using slang is not respectful.

Review of Question Box Process

Learning about reproduction and sexuality may leave you curious about things that you may not be comfortable asking out loud.

Message to Students:

At the end of each lesson, each student will be given a slip of paper to place in the box.

- You may choose to write a question on the slip.
- If you don't have a question, you'll put the blank slip in the box.
- Do not put your name on the slip.

The teacher will review all questions before the next class but may not be able to answer them all.

If your question does not get answered, you are encouraged to discuss it with your parent or guardian.

Catholic Worldview on Puberty

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

- From a Catholic perspective, a study of puberty starts with viewing it as integral to God's design for human flourishing.
- This sets the foundation for growing as discerning persons oriented toward love, marriage, and eternal life.
- A study of human development allows us to marvel at the complexity of God's creations.
- In the Catholic understanding, every person is created in the image and likeness of God and develops uniquely, with full dignity at every stage of life.
- Physical, emotional, sexual, and social growth occurs according to God's design and does not follow a uniform timeline.
- Puberty and developing maturity are part of becoming capable of loving and self-giving relationships, not a signal to engage in sexual activity.
- Chastity encourages respect for one's own pace and the pace of others, while Catholic social teaching calls us to patience, respect, and care in how we treat one another.

So Your Body Is Changing

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

What is Puberty?

- Adolescence is a transition period between childhood and adulthood, also known as puberty.
- By "transition", we mean a period of change between one stage of life and another.
- By the time you enter Grade Eight, this transition has already begun, even if you can't necessarily see it.

You're Changing!

- This is a time of rapid growth and development when our bodies change toward an adult body. Each individual experiences the changes of puberty at a unique rate.
- It doesn't matter if someone hits it early or later; you're you and shouldn't be compared to others.
- Differences in development are normal, and no one's worth is determined by how quickly they grow, what they look like, or how they compare to others.

When Do These Changes Happen?

- Anywhere between 8 and 17.
- Most people begin between the ages of 10 and 14.
- When you start makes no difference to how you develop.
- No age is better than any other one.
- Sometimes changes happen in a few years.
- For others, changes may take longer.

A Note on Relationships

- These changes affect how you interact with various people in your life - your parents, friends, siblings, teacher, and classmates.
- The important thing to remember is that being respectful to yourself and others during this time will go a long way to helping you to cope with this transition.

Types of Changes

Mode of Instruction: Teacher-facilitated Discussion & Activities

Directions for Students:

For each of the types of changes covered, write a short definition and a few examples of that change.

Physical Changes:

- These are changes to our bodies, both seen and unseen.
- *Discussion Prompts:*
 - What are some changes that happen during puberty?
 - Do they happen just to males, females, or both?
- Changes for both males and females:
 - Voice changes
 - Acne
 - Hair and skin get oily
 - Start making sex hormones
 - Increase in body hair
 - Grow taller
 - Pubic hair grows on genitals
 - Sweat glands develop
 - Breasts grow (noted as occurring for both)
 - Sexual feelings/desires
- Changes specific to males:
 - Erection
 - Voice Deepens
 - Grow facial hair
 - Ejaculation
 - Shoulders grow wider
 - Testicles and penis grow bigger
 - Sperm production begins
 - Nocturnal Emissions
- Changes specific to females:
 - Breasts develop
 - Ovulation begins
 - Vaginal Discharge
 - Menstruation begins
 - Hips widen
- *Check for Understanding*
 - Students complete a Venn Diagram (males, both, females) to show their understanding of the different physical changes that take place during puberty

Mental Changes

- These are changes to our brains. During adolescence, the brain is not fully developed. Some parts become reorganized.
- During these changes, you may have an increase in risky behaviours, but also the beginning of skills such as thinking logically.

Emotional Changes

- Adolescents sometimes feel their emotions to a greater extent compared to those in adulthood or childhood.
- This is because adolescent brains change.

Social Changes

- These are changes within your social life, including with your family.
- Teens wish to be more independent and attach more importance to activities with their friends.

Psychological Changes

- This is dealing with how you think about yourselves and the world.
- Many feel anxious and have stronger insecurities as they develop their own identity.

Examples of Mental, Emotional, Social, and Psychological Changes

- Concerned about future
- Concerned with appearance
- Want more independence
- Sexual Feelings
- Mood Swings
- Sometimes feel lonely/confused
- Feelings of wanting to fit in

Rates of Change

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

- Females generally begin adolescence about two years earlier than males. We often notice this because females grow taller much earlier than males.
- Regardless of biological sex, some individuals will grow and change faster than others.

Impacts of Change

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

Catholic Worldview

- The Catholic Church teaches that the body is a precious gift from God, entrusted to us as stewards, requiring reasonable care that integrates physical, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions.
- Life and physical health are gifts from God that demand responsible stewardship.
- It is our responsibility to take good care of ourselves in every way.

Sleep

- Most teens need 8.5-9 hours of sleep at night; however, teens often stay up late. This is because teen bodies produce melatonin much later in the day than children or adults.
- Tips: set a regular bedtime, avoid stimulants, exercise regularly, relax your mind before bed, create the right sleeping environment

Nutritional Needs

- Your growing body needs support! Teens need to eat additional calories, protein, calcium, and iron, but avoid foods high in fats, salt, and sugar.
- Tips: gain calories through healthy foods, gain calcium from dairy products (reducing risk of osteoporosis), and iron-rich foods such as beef and leafy greens prevent anemia and help muscles cells obtain oxygen for energy.

Social Needs

- Teens are choosier about who to hang out with because as they grow, they fulfill their needs for understanding, support, and guidance from both friends and family.
- Tips: Think about what makes a good friend. Do you hang out with people because they are good friends, or because they are there?

Emotional Needs

- Because your bodies and minds are both changing, you don't always recognize yourselves and may feel overwhelmed with various pressures.
- Tips: take breaks from social media, find spaces where you can be honest and expressive, maintain routines to give yourself a sense of consistency

Closing Prayer

Lord,

You have made each of us in your own image and likeness and have called each of us to love as you love.

Help us to love and respect each other as persons made with dignity.

Help us to see, understand and learn about the gifts of life, love, and human sexuality as you made them and apply them to the way we live.

Amen.

LESSON #2: Relationships & Abuse

Alberta Education Curriculum Outcome

W-8.7: Determine the signs, methods and consequences of various types of abuse; e.g., neglect, physical, emotional, sexual abuse

Lesson Components

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
Everything you created is good.
We have received life from your hands.
We have been created in your image,
With the power to love and care for each other
And to share in your creation.
We thank you for this gift.
Help us to cherish all that you have created.
Help us to show gratitude for the gift of sexuality by the way we live.
Amen.

Review of Class Etiquette

- Be kind and supportive.
- Questions are welcome, but we might not be able to answer them all.
- Show respect for the body as a creation of God by using correct terms for body parts.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Respect personal boundaries and physical space.
- Be mindful of personal questions and oversharing.
- Be respectful at all times.

Review of Question Box Process

Learning about reproduction and sexuality may leave you curious about things that you may not be comfortable asking out loud.

Message to Students:

At the end of each lesson, each student will be given a slip of paper to place in the box.

- You may choose to write a question on the slip.
- If you don't have a question, you'll put the blank slip in the box.
- Do not put your name on the slip.

The teacher will review all questions before the next class but may not be able to answer them all.

If your question does not get answered, you are encouraged to discuss it with your parent or guardian.

Scripture Reflection

Mode of Instruction: Teacher-facilitated Discussion

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made"

Psalm 139:13

Catholic Worldview on Dignity & Relationships

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

- As children of God, each of you possesses inherent dignity that must be respected in every relationship; with peers, family, those in authority, and with partners.
- Inherent dignity: The fundamental, undeniable worth of every human being. It is not earned, and it can not be taken away.
- Just as we are called to take care of our bodies, it is important that we foster positive relationships with each other and also recognize when our relationships are not healthy.

Abuse

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

Child Abuse

- According to the law, a person is a child until the age of eighteen.
- Unfortunately, child abuse, which is the physical, psychological, or emotional mistreatment of a child, happens all across Canada, in all economic classes, and all ethnic groups.

Types of Abuse

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher & Graphic Organizer

As the teacher instructs about the four categories of abuse, students will complete a graphic organizer.

Neglect

- This is the failure to provide a child with the necessities of life, including:
 - Adequate food
 - Clothing
 - Shelter
 - Health care
- The consequences can be malnutrition, physical health issues, low self-worth, anxiety, and developmental delays.
- The Church teaches that communities and parents have a responsibility to provide vigilant care.

Physical

- This is the intentional, severe, and observable injury to a child. It includes actions such as:
 - Hitting
 - Choking
 - Pushing
- The consequences are severe: immediate injuries, long-term damage like brain trauma, or chronic pain, fear-based behaviours, trust issues, and increased risk of depression or PTSD.
- Catholic teaching emphasizes that our bodies are sacred, they're God's creation and deserve respect.

Psychological or Emotional

- This is the severe and observable harm to a child's mental or emotional functioning caused by things such as:
 - Rejection
 - Not being affectionate
 - Exposure to or threat of violence
 - Humiliation or criticism
 - Controlling contact with others
 - Drug or alcohol abuse
- The consequences include: a damaged self-image, mental health disorders like disordered eating or self-harm, difficulty forming healthy relationships, and lifelong emotional scars.
- The Church calls for communities that are mindful of emotional needs and foster healing through connection and hope.

Sexual

- This is the involvement of children in sexual activities which they do not fully comprehend or give consent to. This includes:
 - Exposure to or inclusion in explicit materials
 - Sexual contact
 - Voyeurism
- The consequences are devastating: physical injuries, STIs, unintended pregnancy, PTSD, guilt, substance abuse, and spiritual wounds.
- The Catholic worldview holds that every human person is created in the image of God, and the body is sacred and deserving of absolute dignity and respect. Sexual abuse is a grave sin and injustice because it violates the holiness of the person, betrays trust, and wounds what God intended to be a gift of love, safety, and life.

Coping Mechanisms and Signs of Abuse

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

- It is important to understand that the following coping mechanisms and signs may be caused by things other than abuse and we should not jump to conclusions.
- However, we do need to recognize these signs in order to help each other in the event that abuse is occurring.
- Those abused may cope by...
 - Hiding feelings
 - Keeping it a secret
 - Withdrawing
 - Reacting with anger or aggression
 - Using drugs or alcohol
 - Running away
 - Attempting suicide
- Children and adults who are abused may:
 - Hint at or talk directly about abuse
 - Be left alone often as a young child
 - Be aggressive, angry, hostile, withdrawn, or afraid
 - Have unattended medical problems
 - Have difficulties concentrating
 - Have unexplained bruises or welts, perhaps in the shape of an object, scars in regular patterns, cuts and scrapes, fractures, sprains, joint dislocations, or head injuries
 - Have bald spots, human bite marks, unexplained burns (which may be in the shape of cigarettes or other objects)
 - Be underweight or dehydrated
 - Have poor hygiene (not bathed, teeth not brushed, etc.)
 - Lack clean or weather-appropriate clothing
 - Have stomach aches, headaches
 - Have psychological complaints
 - Show unusual knowledge of sexual matters or act out sexually
- When to tell:
 - It is never too late to tell someone. You can disclose when you are ready
 - Abuse is never okay and needs to be reported
 - There are people who can help.
- Who to tell:
 - A parent, teacher, guidance counsellor, coach, or another trusted adult
 - If you feel you are in immediate danger, call 911.
- What will happen:
 - The person you tell should listen to you and believe you and want to help you the right way.
- What can you say to support your friend:
 - It's not your fault
 - I believe you
 - I'm sorry this happened to you

- I'm glad that you told me
- I can help you get help

Advice Letters

Mode of Instruction: Independent Student Activity

Directions for Students:

- You write an advice blog and have received a message from someone calling themselves "Worried Friend".
- You can come up with your own situation or use the following example:
 - Hi,
I'm really worried about my friend. Lately, they've seemed different. Their partner often tells them what to wear, who they can talk to, and even checks their messages without asking. Sometimes their partner shouts at them or makes them feel guilty about things that aren't their fault.

My friend says they love their partner and that it's "just how relationships are," but I can tell they seem nervous and upset a lot of the time. I don't know if this is normal or if something is wrong. I want to help them but I don't know what to do.

—Worried Friend

- Your response must:
 - Explain the type of abuse in the letter.
 - Express an understanding of the feelings experienced by the letter writer.
 - Describe the actions the letter writer can take to address the abuse and help their friend.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

You have made each of us in your own image and likeness and have called each of us to love as you love.

Help us to love and respect each other as persons made with dignity.

Help us to see, understand and learn about the gifts of life, love, and human sexuality as you made them and apply them to the way we live.

Amen.

LESSON #3: Responsibilities & Consequences of Sexual Relationships

Alberta Education Curriculum Outcome

W-8.12: Identify and describe the responsibilities and consequences associated with involvement in a sexual relationship

Lesson Components

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
Everything you created is good.
We have received life from your hands.
We have been created in your image,
With the power to love and care for each other
And to share in your creation.
We thank you for this gift.
Help us to cherish all that you have created.
Help us to show gratitude for the gift of sexuality by the way we live.
Amen.

Review of Class Etiquette

- Be kind and supportive.
- Questions are welcome, but we might not be able to answer them all.
- Show respect for the body as a creation of God by using correct terms for body parts.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Respect personal boundaries and physical space.
- Be mindful of personal questions and oversharing.
- Be respectful at all times.

Review of Question Box Process

Learning about reproduction and sexuality may leave you curious about things that you may not be comfortable asking out loud.

Message to Students:

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- You may choose to write a question on the slip.
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- Do not put your name on the slip.

The teacher will review all questions before the next class but may not be able to answer them all. If your question does not get answered, you are encouraged to discuss it with your parent or guardian.

Healthy Relationships & Responsibilities

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

Consider this—what is involved in a healthy relationship? We often want our relationships to be peaceful and make us happy. It can be difficult, however, to make good choices in our relationships.

When making decisions about sexual activity, we need to consider respect for self and respect for others. We need to value ourselves and others, and have the confidence to handle difficult situations. To make informed decisions, we need to be aware of our responsibilities and the potential consequences of our actions.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities are the duties, tasks, or obligations you are expected to handle, making you accountable for them; they are things you "have to" or "need to" do. These responsibilities are often shared.

God's Plan

From a Catholic perspective, sexual relationships are a profound gift from God, designed for marriage between one man and one woman. They unite spouses in love and can bring new life. The key responsibilities include total self-giving, lifelong fidelity, and openness to children.

Responsibilities in Sexual Relationships

There are several responsibilities that people in sexual relationships have:

- Receive consent from partners and respect laws
- Clear communication between partners about sexual history, testing, and treatment
- Seeking protection against spreading STBBIs (Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections), which may include assistance from health professionals
- Taking responsibility for consequences, including pregnancy

Consent

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

What is Consent?

- Consent means getting permission to do something.
- Consent is voluntary, affirmative, freely given and part of an ongoing conversation about mutual agreement to do something.
- Sexual activity includes kissing, sexual touching, and sexual intercourse. You have the right to decide to have sex or not.
- Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLWS4-kU>

Legalities of Consent

- The age of consent in Canada is 16. That means that you are legally unable to give consent to sexual activity in most situations.
- Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault. Silence is NOT consent.
- According to Canadian law, the age of consent is 16. This is the legal age when a person can make a decision to have sex. There are "close in age" exceptions to this law.
 - 14 and 15 year olds may consent to sex if the partner is less than 5 years older.
 - 12 and 13 year olds may consent to sex if the partner is less than 2 years older.
- Consent cannot be given by anyone under 18 if the: other person is in a position of authority (e.g., teacher, coach, or employer) or sexual activity is exploitative (e.g., pornography, prostitution, or trading sex for safety)
- Children younger than 12 cannot consent to any type of sexual activity. Having sex with a child younger than 12 is against the law and is sexual abuse.

Consequences

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

What are Consequences?

- A consequence is simply the result or outcome of an action, decision, or event, which can be good (a reward) or bad (a negative effect).
- It's what happens after something else, like feeling happy after helping someone or feeling cold after refusing a coat.
- When considering consequences, look into the following:
 - physical consequences—effects on the body and health

- emotional & spiritual consequences—effects on feelings, faith, and mental well-being
- social consequences—effects on relationships and social contexts
- ethical consequences—respecting boundaries and mutual decision-making
- legal consequences—outcomes when a law is broken
- There are several negative consequences of sexual relationships for teenagers. Here are a select few:
 - Risk of STBBIs
 - Possibility of unintended pregnancy, which can change a person’s life and responsibilities
 - Reputation or privacy issues, especially if personal information or images are shared without consent

God’s Plan

- In the Catholic worldview, the consequences of a sexual relationship aren’t just about what happens to you, but about the deep responsibility you have for another person’s soul. Because sex is a "total gift," the biggest consequence is permanent bonding; the Church teaches that sex creates a spiritual and emotional tie so strong that it is only meant to exist within the safety of a lifelong marriage. Another major consequence is the gift of new life. Since every act must be open to children, a couple accepts the responsibility of becoming parents and raising a family together. Choosing to have a sexual relationship outside of this plan is seen as a "broken promise" because the body is acting like it’s a total, permanent gift, even when the lifelong commitment isn’t there yet.

Consequences Scenarios

Mode of Instruction: Partner Activity

Directions for Students

We are going to work in pairs and explore some scenarios together.

For each of the scenarios, we will determine different actions that the individuals can take and explore the short and long term consequences of those actions.

Example Scenario

Two Grade 9 students have recently started dating. One begins sending suggestive/sexual messages. The recipient feels uncomfortable and awkward replying but the other argues it’s just a bit of fun.

Scenario #1

Two Grade 8 students have been dating for a few months. One person starts saying things like: “If you really cared about me, you’d be more physical with me.” The other person feels uncomfortable but also doesn’t want to lose the relationship.

Scenario #2

A couple shares private messages and photos with each other because they trust one another. Later, after an argument, one person considers showing the messages to friends.

Scenario #3

Two students think sexual activity is “not a big deal” because they are young and assume nothing serious will happen.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

You have made each of us in your own image and likeness and have called each of us to love as you love.

Help us to love and respect each other as persons made with dignity.

Help us to see, understand and learn about the gifts of life, love, and human sexuality as you made them and apply them to the way we live.

Amen.

LESSON #4: Sexually Transmitted & Blood-Borne Infections

Alberta Education Curriculum Outcome

W-8.13: Describe symptoms, effects, treatments, prevention for common sexually transmitted diseases; i.e., chlamydia, HPV, herpes, gonorrhea, Hepatitis B/C, HIV

Lesson Components

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
Everything you created is good.
We have received life from your hands.
We have been created in your image,
With the power to love and care for each other
And to share in your creation.
We thank you for this gift.
Help us to cherish all that you have created.
Help us to show gratitude for the gift of sexuality by the way we live.
Amen.

Review of Class Etiquette

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STBBI Overview

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

- STBBIs are sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. It is more accurate to use this term because some infections referred to as STIs are also spread through blood, not just sexual contact.
- Among Canadians 15-19 years old, Albertans have higher STBBI rates than the national average.
- One of the primary defenses against STBBIs is awareness.
- Many STBBIs are asymptomatic and often the only way to detect an infection is through screening.
- In Alberta, anyone younger than 18 can go to a medical clinic without a parent's permission if they are a mature minor. A mature minor means you fully understand:
 - the care or treatment being offered
 - the consequences of the care or treatment
 - the consequences of not having the care or treatment
- Depending on what is being tested for, an STBBI test may be one or more of the following:
 - Urine sample
 - Swab of the throat, anus, or genitals
 - Blood test
 - Physical exam

Catholic Worldview

- The Church teaches that the best prevention for STBBIs is chastity: complete abstinence from sexual activity before marriage and fidelity (sexual exclusivity) within marriage.
- This approach honours God's plan, protects health, and fosters true joy in relationships. We are called to be stewards of the gift of the physical/spiritual personhood of ourselves and others.

Types of STBBIs: Symptoms, Effects, and Treatments

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher & Graphic Organizer

For each STBBI, students will enter key points into a graphic organizer as the teacher provides instruction.

Chlamydia

- The most common STI in Alberta
- Greatest number of infections found in people 15-24 years old
- Can affect the cervix, urethra, rectum, throat, and eye
- Spread through unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex
- Many infected individuals have no symptoms
- Symptoms that do occur show up two to six weeks after initial exposure
- Female symptoms:
 - Vaginal discharge
 - Painful urination
 - Lower abdominal pain
 - Vaginal bleeding after intercourse or between menstrual periods
 - Pain during intercourse
 - Eye or rectal infection (rarely)
- Male symptoms:
 - Clear, watery or milky urethral discharge
 - Itchy urethra
 - Painful urination
 - Testicular pain
 - Eye or rectal infection (rarely)
- Treatment: antibiotics

Gonorrhoea

- Second most common STI
- Often occurs with chlamydia
- Can affect the cervix, urethra, rectum, throat, and eye
- Spread through unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex

- Other risks such as infertility or pelvic inflammatory disease (among others) can occur.
- Women are most often asymptomatic. Those that do exhibit symptoms may experience:
 - Increased vaginal discharge
 - Painful urination
 - Lower abdominal pain
 - Vaginal bleeding after intercourse or between menstrual periods
 - Pain during intercourse
 - Rectal pain, discharge or itching
- Most men develop symptoms within two to seven days of infection:
 - Thick, yellowish-green discharge from penis
 - Painful urination
 - Testicular pain or swelling
 - Rectal pain, discharge or itching
- Treatment: antibiotics, injected and oral

Syphilis

- May imitate other infections
- Infectious for a year after exposure and symptoms appear in stages
- Can affect nearly everything in your body, including your brain
- Spread through unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex, or contact through syphilis sores
- Treated through antibiotics, but damage may be irreversible if not detected early.

Genital Herpes

- Two types of viruses: type 1 (regular cold sores) and type 2 (genital herpes)
- Both cause cold sores and sores on genitals
- Spread through skin-to-skin contact and sex, even when people don't have sores
- Symptoms emerge 2-21 days after initial infection
- Condoms do not eliminate risk of transmission
- Symptoms range from mild to severe
 - Small blister-like sores can develop
 - People may feel unwell
 - Females - burning in vaginal area and change in discharge
 - Males - burning when urinating a clear discharge
- There is no cure. It can be treated to manage symptoms only.

Hepatitis B

- Hepatitis B is a blood-borne infection that affects the liver
- Vaccination is available for Hepatitis B
- Can be transmitted by exchanging body fluids; the exception is saliva unless it is visibly contaminated with blood; can also spread through toothbrushes or razors
- Some people develop chronic Hepatitis B and carry the virus all their lives
- In up to 50% of people, there are no outward signs of infection
- Up to eight weeks after exposure, some people experience:
 - Tiredness
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Decreased appetite
 - Rashes
 - Joint pain
 - Yellowing of eyes and skin (rare)
- Treatment: Antiviral medications

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

- HIV is a blood-borne infection that affects a person's immune system, robbing the body of the ability to fight infections and illnesses

- Left untreated, it can weaken the immune system over months to years until Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) develops. AIDS is a fatal condition.
- Can be transmitted when infected genital fluids (e.g., semen) cross into the bloodstream of a partner.
- Can also spread by using a sharp object such as a needle or razor that's been contaminated with the blood of an infected individual.
- HIV cannot pass through healthy, unbroken skin
- In Canada, 27% of people with HIV don't know they have it and risk transmitting the virus to others
- There is no cure for HIV, but there is treatment that makes the virus intransmissible.
- In Canada, it is one's legal duty to inform partners before having any kind of sex that poses a risk of transmitting HIV.
- Symptoms and detection:
 - Two to four weeks after exposure, some infected individuals may experience mild flu-like symptoms that last a few weeks then disappear.
 - For most people, symptoms don't emerge until years after exposure. Once the immune system is weakened, the following may develop:
 - Frequent fever or sweats
 - Joint or muscle pain
 - Persistent skin rashes
 - Swollen glands
 - Sore throat
 - Fatigue or lack of energy
 - Headaches
 - Rapid, unexplained weight loss
 - Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
 - A blood test to check for HIV antibodies is the only way to detect HIV infection. It may take up to three months for an infection to be detectable. Anyone at high risk who tests negative initially should retest three months later for certainty.

HPV - Human Papillomavirus

- Viral infection that can cause warts and cancer
- Over 100 types
- Vaccination can prevent certain types
- Often clear within 2-3 years
- Transmitted through direct sexual contact, including activity causing friction
- Condoms do not fully protect against HPV
- Symptoms include warts for some people, but can also include itchiness, discomfort during intercourse, or bleeding with intercourse
- The urethra or vaginal opening may also be obstructed
- Warts can be removed with liquid nitrogen
- Other treatments include prescription creams or liquids

Pubic Lice

- This is an infestation of parasitic insects.
- Transmission can occur during intimate sexual and non-sexual contact
- Pubic lice can live in bedding, towels, and clothes of infected individuals for a few days
- On the host, pubic lice can be found in pubic hair, but also chest, armpit, and facial hair, including eyebrows and eyelashes
- Lice bite their host to feed on blood
- Treatment: lice-killing lotion

Scabies

- This is an infestation of parasitic mites that burrow into your skin and lay eggs.
- Transmission can occur during close contact, sexual or non-sexual contact
- Mites can live in bedding, towels, and clothes of infected individuals for a few days
- Symptoms include itchiness and rash
- Treatment: specialized cream or lotion

Trichomoniasis

- Trich is caused by a parasite called Trichomonas vaginalis. Trich can be an infection of the vagina and of the urethra.
- Spread through unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex
- Up to 70% of infected people have no symptoms
- Symptoms include itchiness, painful urination, and unusual discharge from the vagina or penis.
- Treatment: antibiotics

Final Comment

- The only way to protect yourself against 100% of sexually transmitted infections is abstinence.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

You have made each of us in your own image and likeness and have called each of us to love as you love.

Help us to love and respect each other as persons made with dignity.

Help us to see, understand and learn about the gifts of life, love, and human sexuality as you made them and apply them to the way we live.

Amen.

LESSON #5: Contraceptives

Alberta Education Curriculum Outcome

W-8.14: Identify and describe basic types of contraceptives; i.e., abstinence, condom, foam, birth control pills.

Lesson Components

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
Everything you created is good.
We have received life from your hands.
We have been created in your image,
With the power to love and care for each other
And to share in your creation.
We thank you for this gift.
Help us to cherish all that you have created.
Help us to show gratitude for the gift of sexuality by the way we live.
Amen.

Review of Class Etiquette

- Be kind and supportive.
- Questions are welcome, but we might not be able to answer them all.
- Show respect for the body as a creation of God by using correct terms for body parts.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Respect personal boundaries and physical space.
- Be mindful of personal questions and oversharing.
- Be respectful at all times.

Review of Question Box Process

Learning about reproduction and sexuality may leave you curious about things that you may not be comfortable asking out loud.

Message to Students:

At the end of each lesson, each student will be given a slip of paper to place in the box.

- You may choose to write a question on the slip.
- If you don't have a question, you'll put the blank slip in the box.
- Do not put your name on the slip.

The teacher will review all questions before the next class but may not be able to answer them all.

If your question does not get answered, you are encouraged to discuss it with your parent or guardian.

Contraceptives Introduction

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

What Are Contraceptives?

- There are various things you can use to try to prevent a pregnancy. These are called contraceptives or birth control.
- Unprotected sex has an 85% chance of pregnancy within one year.

What is the Catholic Worldview on Contraceptives?

- The Catholic Church teaches that using contraceptives is always wrong, even in marriage.

- According to the Church, God designed sex to be a total gift which has two parts; it is unitive (it bonds the two people in love) and procreative (is it open to creating life). Because your fertility is a natural part of who you are, using contraception means you are intentionally blocking the "procreative" (baby-making) part of the act. The Church teaches that you cannot separate the bonding part of sex from the life-giving part without breaking God's design. By saying "no" to the possibility of a baby, the couple isn't giving themselves 100% to each other, which turns a sacred, selfless act into something more about personal pleasure than total love.

Abstinence & Chastity

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher

- Abstinence
 - Abstinence is refraining from indulging in certain activities such as not eating meat on Fridays during Lent, not consuming alcohol when you are the designated driver, or choosing to fast as a form of prayer.
 - Abstinence also includes not engaging in sexual activity before marriage.
 - Abstinence means not engaging in sexual activity for a period of time or until marriage. It's a behaviour; choosing not to have sex. Someone can practice abstinence for religious, moral, health, or personal reasons. It focuses on what you are not doing.
- Chastity
 - Chastity, on the other hand, is for everyone. It is an important virtue in all stages of life and in all vocations. A chaste person has "consciously accepted their sexuality and integrated it well into their personality" (Youcat 404).
 - It is a virtue that requires leaning into God's grace to grow in self-mastery so that the language of our bodies communicates authentic love that is free, total, faithful, and fruitful.
 - Chastity is a virtue; a way of living that integrates sexuality with love, respect, and self-control. Everyone is called to live chastely (married, single, religious, young, old). It doesn't mean "no sex" for everyone, it means using the gift of sexuality according to one's state of life:
 - Married people: express sexuality faithfully within marriage.
 - Single people: refrain from sexual activity.
 - Religious/priests: remain celibate.
 - Chastity focuses on who you are becoming, not just what you avoid. It is about love, respect, and living sexuality in a way that reflects God's design.
 - <https://www.youtubeeducation.com/watch?v=1bc6zBwUHHA>
- Summary
 - Promoting abstinence and chastity has both advantages and challenges. On the positive side, abstinence is the only method that guarantees protection against sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies, and both practices can strengthen emotional and spiritual well-being by encouraging thoughtful decision-making and self-control.
 - However, there are practical challenges: social pressures, cultural norms, and peer influence can make it difficult for individuals to adhere consistently. Additionally, without comprehensive understanding, individuals might struggle with guilt or confusion about natural sexual feelings.

Types of Contraceptives and Pros/Cons

Mode of Instruction: Direct Instruction from the Teacher & Graphic Organizer

Hormone Method

- Taken by a female, hormone methods release synthetic estrogen and/or progesterone, preventing eggs from being released.
- Available as a pill, patch, injection, or implant
- Requires discipline to be used; for example, the pill should be taken at the exact same time every day in order to be effective
- Failure rate: average is 9%
- Pros of the Birth Control Pill
 - Lower risk of certain cancers

- Lighter menstrual flow
- Cons of the Birth Control Pill
 - Doesn't protect against STBBIs
 - Can forget to take them
 - Higher risk of blood clots / strokes.
- Pros of the Contraceptive Injection
 - One injection lasts 12 weeks
 - Can lower risk of certain cancers
 - Can decrease cramps
- Cons of the Contraceptive Injection
 - Doesn't protect against STBBIs
 - Several side effects
 - May thin your bones

Barrier Method

- Generally, this method prevents sperm from reaching eggs by a physical barrier or killing the sperm
- Proper use of a condom can help prevent pregnancy or STBBIs, but any genital contact even before intercourse could lead to pregnancy because sperm is present in penile fluids before ejaculation
- Average failure rate is 2% when used correctly.
- Barriers include condoms, vaginal condoms, contraceptive sponges, and more
- Pros of Condoms
 - Condoms used with other forms of birth control give the best protection from pregnancy
 - Helps protect against STBBIs
- Cons of Condoms
 - May break or be left inside
 - May be allergic to latex condoms

Implant Device

- These are implanted in the arm or uterus to prevent pregnancy
- These do not protect against STBBIs
- *Intrauterine Device*
 - There are two types of IUDs: copper and hormonal
 - Copper - 99.1% effective
 - Can help prevent pregnancy for 3-10 years
 - Hormonal - 99.8% effective
 - Can help prevent pregnancy for up to 5 years
- *Contraceptive Arm Implant*
 - About the size of a matchstick
 - Protects from pregnancy for up to five years

Catholic Worldview: Natural Family Planning

- In the Catholic worldview, Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the Church's approved method for married couples to responsibly space or limit children when needed, without ever blocking God's design for marital love. It honors the inseparable unitive (love-bonding) and procreative (open to life) meanings of sex, as taught in *Humanae Vitae*.
- Also called Fertility-Awareness-Based (FAB)
- A person identifies the most likely time to get pregnant and abstains from intercourse during that time.
- Average failure rate is about 24% (1 in 4)
- Pros of FAB
 - No added hormones
 - Does nothing artificial
 - Respects Catholic belief in responsible parenthood
- Cons of FAB
 - Have to keep very close track of cycle
 - Doesn't protect against STBBIs

Final Note

- The only way to ensure a 100% prevention of pregnancy is abstinence.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

You have made each of us in your own image and likeness and have called each of us to love as you love.

Help us to love and respect each other as persons made with dignity.

Help us to see, understand and learn about the gifts of life, love, and human sexuality as you made them and apply them to the way we live.

Amen.