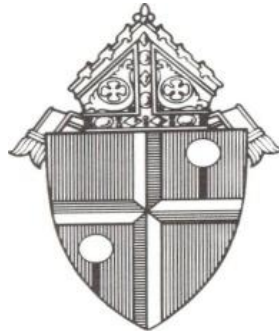


Chastity and Human Sexuality Education Within the Family

Basic Guidelines



Diocese of Honolulu
www.catholichawaii.org

PARENT: THE PRIMARY EDUCATOR

Catholic parents are entrusted, from the moment of their child's baptism, with the role of being the primary educators in matters of faith. The Magisterium of the Church has expressed itself clearly in relation to the whole educative process of children: "The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to find an adequate substitute. It is therefore the duty of parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and devotion to God and their fellow men which will promote an integrated, personal and social education of their children. The family is therefore the principal school of the social virtues which are necessary to every society."
(*Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 22)

An integrated, personal and social education includes helping your child to understand the true meaning of human sexuality. This requires you, the Catholic parent, to intentionally form the conscience of your child, knowing that the central aim of sex education in the public schools is to provide information, not moral formation in Christ. Thus, parents are encouraged to learn about the teachings of the Catholic Church in order to gain the confidence to pass on the truth about human sexuality to the child.

These basic guidelines are compiled from "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality", issued in 1995 by the Pontifical Council for the Family.

ONE: God calls all persons, single and married, to chaste living. "Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2337)

TWO: Love is a gift of God, nourished by and expressed in the encounter of man and woman. (The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, 3)

THREE: In what might be regarded as the domestic church, the parents by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. (26)

FOUR: Parents have the right and duty to be the first and principal educators of their children. (5)

- Church teaching is in agreement with psychology, educational science, and human experience that the family is the best place for sexual education. (50)
- Parents share their individual mission of education with other individuals or institutions, e.g. the Church and State. Others' assistance must always be subsidiary and subordinate to the parents. (23, 145)
- The assistance of others must be given first and foremost to parents rather than to their children. (145)

FIVE: Parents are in charge of their child's education in chastity and human sexuality.

- Sexual education, wherever it takes place, must always be carried out under the attentive guidance and control of parents. Those who do not give adequate formation in chastity or tolerate immoral or inadequate formation given by someone else are failing in their educational duty. (43,44)
- Parents have the right that their children not be obliged to attend courses on the subject of sexuality education not in harmony with their religious and moral convictions and should remove them if necessary. The removal of a child from a particular sexual education program must not become grounds for discrimination against their children, their parents, or anyone in their family. (117, 120)
- Parents who remove their children from such instruction have the duty to give them an adequate formation, appropriate to each child or young person's stage of development. (117)

SIX: Education in sexuality should be age-appropriate.

- Parents should provide information with great delicacy, but clearly and at the appropriate time, personalized for each child. (75)
- Human sexuality must be presented to children and young people according to their particular stage of development. (77)
- Education in sexuality must value the child's sense of modesty and privacy and protect the child's innocence by utilizing single sex classes and same sex educators. (67)
- Before adolescence, the immoral nature of abortion, surgical or chemical, can be gradually explained in terms of Catholic morality and reverence for human life. Sterilization and contraception should not be discussed before adolescence and then always in conformity with the teaching of the Catholic Church. (137)
- Chastity instruction must always be positive and prudent, clear and delicate. Erotic, graphic, or excessively detailed sexual information should not be given in sexual education. Explicit and premature sex education can never be justified in the name of a prevailing secularized culture. (126)

SEVEN: Education in sexuality should align with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

- All people are called to chastity. Education in chastity is education in love, relationships, feelings, and sensitivity. (54)
- Forming young people for chastity should become a preparation for responsible fatherhood and motherhood. (32)
- Parents should correct habits of genital activity in children that could become sinful and teach modesty as the child grows. (69)
- Instruction about the role, exercise, and dignity of married love must be given in the home. (94)
- The family must be understood as an inseparable part of the vocation to marriage. (32)
- The problem of AIDS must be countered by chastity, marriage, and family. Safe sex campaigns involving condoms must be avoided and rejected. (139)
- Christian parents will devote special attention and care if they see in any of their children the signs of God's call to the higher vocation of virginity or celibacy for the love of the Kingdom of heaven, preparing these children for the seminary or house of formation. (35)

EIGHT: Know what is essential to family life.

- The moral, spiritual, and health values of methods for the natural regulation of fertility must be emphasized, at the same time indicating the dangers and ethical failure of the artificial methods. (137)
- Femininity and masculinity are complementary gifts which are shared in an act of love as self-donation and acceptance. Willed by God, this sexual giving – the love of the marriage covenant – belongs exclusively in marriage. (10)
- The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive (love-giving) and the procreative (life-giving), cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the act itself. (32)
- Youth must learn the serious consequences of sexual activity outside of marriage, contraception, artificial procreation, and sterilization which separate the love and life-giving nature of the sexual act and are thus contrary to the truth of married love. (32)

NINE: Associate and take action with other parents.

- Parents are recommended to associate with other parents to support their educational role and to fight against damaging forms of sexual education. (114)

TEN: Read more.

These resources, while not an exhaustive list, will help you to discover the beauty of the teachings of the Church on human sexuality and develop the confidence to share these truths with your children:

- [The New American Bible, Revised Edition \[NABRE\]](#), 2011
- [The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd Edition](#), 2000
- [Theology of the Body](http://www.tobinstitute.org/) <http://www.tobinstitute.org/>
- [Evangelium Vitae](#) [The Gospel of Life], Pope John Paul II, 1995
- [The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality](#), The Pontifical Council on the Family, 1995
- [Familiaris Consortio](#) [The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World], Pope John Paul II, 1981
- [Persona Humana](#) [Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics], Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1975
- [Humanae Vitae](#) [On Human Life], Pope Paul VI, 1968

Human Sexuality Within the Family
Recommended Activity I:
Know and Discuss the School Curriculum

PRAY with your spouse, pastor, or a close friend. Call upon the Holy Spirit for wisdom, understanding, and strength.

KNOW what is being taught in the human sexuality curriculum for your child's grade level to gain a good understanding of what your child will learn. Ask yourself: What conversations will I need to have with my child about the human sexuality curriculum?

DISCUSS your values with your child in a loving and nurturing way. The following terms and definitions may be of help:

Chastity

Chastity is a virtue that helps us use our bodies to express love in purity and truthfulness. It requires learning to love others as God loves us. Thus, all persons, single and married, are called to chaste living.

Abstinence

Sexual abstinence is refraining from all intimate sexual activity until marriage.

Sex

The first meaning of sex is about our identity. It refers to being male or female, created in God's image and likeness. Sex also refers to acts of physical intimacy between a husband and wife who love each other so much that they commit to a permanent, total, and free union of love and openness to new life.

Human Sexuality Within the Family
Recommended Activity II:
Strengthen the "Domestic Church"

Your family is considered the "Domestic Church" which means that the children first learn about God from the family. The children also learn prayers, the difference between right and wrong and begin to understand and love the Mass from you, their parents.

To help you form a plan of action to build your family's relationship with God here are some suggestions from our bishops (United States Conference of Bishops).

- *PLACE a crucifix where the whole family can see it.*
(continued)
- *BLESS your children before they leave in the morning – a simple sign of the cross on their foreheads takes only a few seconds.*
- *PLAN a few meals together during the week – thank God for all His blessings before meals.*

- TALK about your loving relationship with God and allow your children to see you and your spouse pray together.
- PRAY with them before bedtime
- FOCUS on worshipping God in Mass as the most important family outing on Sunday.
- ENROLL your child in a religious education class at your parish.
- PARTICIPATE in activities at your parish.

Remember: Your children will follow what you do. If you pray, they will pray, if you go to Mass and receive Holy Communion regularly, so will they. Be a good role model for them.

Human Sexuality Within the Family Recommended Activity III Teach Proper Media Use

The family media agreement and other tip sheets are available in a variety of digital literacy and citizenship topics at: <https://www.common sense media.org>

DISCUSS ways our Catholic faith calls us to uphold high ethical standards.

DEVELOP a family media agreement using this template:

Family Media Agreement: K-5

I will ...

stay safe.

- I will not give out any private information, such as my full name, date of birth, address, or phone number, without my family's permission.
- I will keep my passwords private and only share them with my family.
- I will tell a trusted adult if anyone online makes me feel uncomfortable, sad, or unsafe. I will recognize that my safety is more important to my family than anything else.

think first.

- I will communicate kindly when I use the Internet or my cell phone. I will not tease, embarrass, or bully others.
- I know that the Internet is public, and I will respect myself and others when I'm using it.
- I will not pretend that I created something that's not actually my own work.

stay balanced.

- I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true.
- I will respect my family's decisions for what I'm allowed to watch, play with, or listen to, and when.
- I will continue to enjoy the other activities – and people – in my life.

In exchange, my family agrees to ...

- recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- talk with me about what worries them and why, before saying "no."
- talk to me about my interests and help me find stuff that's appropriate and fun.

X
 signed by me

X
 signed by my parent or caregiver

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Family Media Agreement: 6-8

I will ...

stay safe.

- I will not create accounts or give out any private information – such as my full name, date of birth, address, phone number, or photos – without my family's permission.
- I will not share my passwords with anyone other than my family. I will ask my family to help me with privacy settings if I want to set up devices, accounts, or profiles.
- If anyone makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable, or acts inappropriately toward me online, I'll stop talking to that person and will tell a friend or family member I trust about it.

think first.

- I will not bully, humiliate, or upset anyone online or with my phone – whether through sharing photos, videos, or screenshots, spreading rumors or gossip, or setting up fake profiles – and I will stand up to those who do.
- I know that whatever I share online or with my cell phone can spread fast and far. I will not post anything online that could harm my reputation.
- Whenever I use, reference, or share someone else's creative work online, I will give proper credit to the author or artist.

stay balanced.

- I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true. I will consider whether a source is credible.
- I will help my family set media time limits that make sense, and then I will follow them.
- I will be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens, and I will continue to enjoy the other activities – and people – in my life.

In exchange, my family agrees to ...

- recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- talk with me about what worries them and why, before saying "no."
- talk to me about my interests and embrace my work, including helping me find media that's appropriate and fun.

X
 signed by me

X
 signed by my parent or caregiver

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Family Media Agreement: 9-12

I will ...

stay safe.

- I know that there are scams online that I can avoid. Therefore, unless I am filling out a trusted form with my family's permission, I will not give out my private or financial information.
- I will read the privacy policies of any social network sites or apps that I want to use, and I will pay attention to the types of information these companies can collect about me.
- I know that I have choices in the kind of relationships I have online. I will stop talking to anyone who makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable, or acts inappropriately toward me.

think first.

- I will model kind behavior online. I will not bully, humiliate, or upset anyone online or with my phone – whether through sharing photos, videos, or screenshots, spreading rumors or gossip, or setting up fake profiles – and I will stand up to those who do.
- I know that the photos and videos I post, and everything that I write about myself and others online, can be saved and shared without my knowing. Therefore, I will not post anything online that I wouldn't want my family, teachers, college admissions officers, or future employers to see.
- When I use, reference, or share someone else's creative work online, I will give proper credit to the author or artist. I also know that I have a right to receive credit for any original work that I share online.

stay balanced.

- I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true. I will consider whether a source is credible. As an author, I will also contribute information thoughtfully and honestly.
- I will be open with my family about how I spend my time with media and show them that I use it responsibly.
- I will be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens, and I will continue to enjoy the other activities – and people – in my life.

In exchange, my family agrees to ...

- recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- talk with me about what worries them and why, before saying "no."
- talk to me about my interests and embrace my work, including helping me find media that's appropriate and fun.
- let me make some mistakes and help me learn from them.
- respect my privacy and talk to me if they have concerns.

X
 signed by me

X
 signed by my parent or caregiver

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