



# Teaching the Way of Love

Parenting With the Heart of Christ

For parents whose  
children are  
approaching puberty.

*Parents should provide this information with great delicacy, but clearly and at the appropriate time. ... delaying the first information for too long is imprudent, because every human person has natural curiosity in this regard and, sooner or later, everyone begins to ask themselves questions, especially in cultures where too much can be seen, even in public.*

*Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality #75*



The majority of parents today don't know how to approach the subject of sexual intercourse with their children. Much of the anxiety comes from the fact that they were never taught what the Church actually teaches about sexual love. Instead of getting a full understanding of God's plan for love and life, today's parents were taught the names of body parts and some physiological information about how the body parts function. Rarely, were parents given information about how God intended new life to come into being.

There is another reason why parents today shy away from discussions about sexual activity. Most parents never talked with their own parents about sexual intercourse which means they have no idea what to do or how to begin. Instead of learning about the most intimate details of human love within the home, most parents learned about sexual activity in a health class with all of their classmates. Because this setting was not conducive to respectful learning, most parents remember very little about what was actually taught.

The final reason why discussions about sexual activity are so difficult is the reality that many parents committed sexual sins in their own life. They think that it is hypocritical to expect a higher standard of their children. Guilt and embarrassment about what they did as young adults make them wonder if they have any right to guide their children to what God intends.

While these are legitimate concerns that need to be addressed, they are NOT legitimate reasons to avoid conversations about sexual activity with one's children. Parents must challenge themselves to move beyond emotions and face the reality that it is in their

children's best interests to provide the first explanation of the intimate details of sexual love.

Young people deserve to learn God's plan for sexuality and how it is to be properly expressed in their lives. Parents who desire the best for their children will follow the guidelines set by the Catholic Church regarding the right approach and the right time to teach the truth about physical sexual expression. The Church requests that all information about sexual activity be shared positively and prudently within the context of married love. It asks parents to consider the maturity of the child and tailor all instruction accordingly. Finally, the Church directs parents to actively witness to the power of chastity.

What is interesting is that secular research agrees with what the Catholic Church requests. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recommends that parents be the first to talk with their children about sexual love. They encourage parents to share what their religion teaches about sexual activity because it leaves a lasting impression on a youth. Finally, HHS asks parents to provide their children with more than just "the facts" about the sexual act. They strongly recommend that parents provide their expectations and values as they discuss the details of sexuality.

Both secular research and Church teaching agree that parents are the chosen ones to first share the truth about love and life. This reality cannot be stressed enough. The world today is filled with people who are ready to lie to our children about sex and what it really means. Children should be confident that they can get the truth from their parents. Let's take a closer look at how parents can prepare themselves for this obligation.

**F**rom the DVD (WATCH THE CLIP THAT CORRESPONDS WITH THIS SEGMENT.)

Your conversations about sexual love have the \_\_\_\_\_ impact on how your children will respect sexual love in their life.

The ability to speak truthfully and \_\_\_\_\_ about sexual intercourse happens when you understand God's plan for sexual love.

Sexual love is a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of spouses within marriage.

Sexual love is the \_\_\_\_\_ sign of marriage.

Sexual love has two purposes, unitive and \_\_\_\_\_.

Know when the time is right to share God's plan with your children:

They show an \_\_\_\_\_ in their growing body

They pay more attention to \_\_\_\_\_ interactions

They show \_\_\_\_\_ about their changing body.

Use a \_\_\_\_\_ and clear approach in your discussion.

## **C**ontinue the Discussion

**Read and reflect on the following questions and examples.**

1. How old were you when you first learned about sexual intercourse? Who shared the information with you and what were the circumstances around that exchange?
2. Did your original explanation about the sexual act provide you with a cultural attitude or a Godly attitude towards sexuality? Explain.
3. Why is it important to frame all conversations about sexual intercourse in Christian morality?
4. What are the benefits to your child and your family to set the expectation that sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage?
5. How would society change if all parents taught their children to wait until marriage to engage in sexual activity?

# Make a Plan

Sharing the intimate details of sexual love requires preparation. In order to assist you with this privilege and great responsibility, we encourage you to complete the following worksheet that is similar to the one you used in the **Necessary Conversations** segment.

As you complete this worksheet, we ask you to be mindful of the three purposes of your education. The first purpose is to provide an understanding of the nature and importance of sexuality as a divine gift. The second purpose is to foster an appreciation of chastity that makes it possible for your son or daughter to guide their sexuality in the service of love. The final purpose is to lead your child to a respect for the teachings of the Catholic Church on sexual love.

Situation: What is my concern?

What tells you they're ready for this talk? Where in the stair-step approach will your discussion fall?

Preparing to Speak Up

Timing \_\_\_\_\_

Setting \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember to:**

- **Keep it Simple**
- **Remove Distractions**
- **Be Respectful and calm**
- **Listen and Observe**
- **Stay Focused on Main Points**

**Main Teachings of the Catholic Church to include in your discussion.**

- God gave a husband and wife a very special way to show love. It is called the sexual act.
- The sexual act has two purposes: it bonds the spouses to one another (increases their love for one another) and it can create new life. Both of these purposes are good. Therefore the sexual act between spouses is also good.
- The spouses engage in the sexual act in private.
- For the sexual act to reflect the goodness that God intends it must be:
  - between the spouses - never outside of marriage
  - chosen by both spouses - never forced
  - open to both purposes, love and life
  - completed with the husband ejaculating into the wife's vagina.

Go to [www.twl4parents.com](http://www.twl4parents.com) for help.

Main Points: (Write out your talking points.)

Keeping your main points in mind helps you to stay on topic - no tangents allowed!

Be sure to review these before your conversation!

What I Heard

After your conversation, write down what you heard your child say.

What I Observed

- Personal
- Social
- Emotional
- Spiritual

What non-verbal communication did you notice in your child as you talked?

Follow-Up (within 48 hours if possible)

What are they thinking now?

What did they misunderstand?

What do I need to add?

Remember that conversations about sexuality are ongoing - not a single talk. After you follow up with your child about your conversation, take some notes to help you continue the discussion

**Restate your love.**

# One Flesh Union Worksheet

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