



OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Dear Parents,

A K-8 Theology of the Body curriculum was designed for the Lincoln Diocese by the Office of Religious Education in collaboration with many parents, teachers, and administrators. It was developed to help our K-8 Catholic School parents and teachers address the issues we face in an over-sexualized culture in a way that is age-appropriate and faithful to the truth and charity of Christ. Bishop Conley, in his letter promulgating this curriculum, states, "Our over-sexualized culture is in great need of the light of the Gospel, especially in the areas of marriage, family, and our very identity as men and women. Helping our students to understand themselves as God made them, and understand his plan for their lives, will help to transform our entire culture."

The following items give an overview of themes and structure of the content. We encourage you to view the full content, and resources, available on the diocesan website at: <http://www.lincolndiocese.org/curriculum-requirements/k-8-theology-of-the-body>. Though certain sensitive topics are included in this curriculum, especially those that are most openly present in our culture, it is by no means exhaustive and presupposes a level of education from you as the first educators of your children. Attached is also a list of valuable parent resources.

Schema of grades K-3 – four overarching themes build one upon the other:

1. *"In the Beginning when God Created..."* – focuses on the mystery of creation, the uniqueness of the human person created in God's image, and how our body reveals our spiritual soul.
2. *"God Created them Male and Female"* – considers the beauty of marriage, God's plan for the male sex and the female sex, and motherhood and fatherhood.
3. *"Jesus Restores Fallen Man"* – which reflects on the redemption that Jesus brings to our condition of brokenness especially as it relates to our senses, body, and human relationships. Special considerations include the use of media and keeping our bodies and souls safe.
4. *"Called to a Life of Virtue"* – looks at the meaning of Christian virtue and offers particular virtues to cultivate in light of creation, masculinity and femininity, and our broken condition.

Schema of grades 4-6 – Three overarching themes are taken from the "trptych" of John Paul II's TOB. The heading and introduction at the beginning of each of these grades highlights the common thread woven through each of the three sections. These three sections are:

1. *"Original man"* – considers the splendid condition of man and woman in the state of original holiness and focuses on original solitude, original unity, original nakedness, and original innocence.
2. *"Historical man"* – reflects on the sin and subsequent fallen condition of man and woman as well as the Redemption that Jesus offers to humanity. Special considerations in this section include the distortion and redemption of our hearts, love vs. use, the dangers of pornography and abuse, healing in family life, and the human relationships of child, spouse, parent, and friend.
3. *"Heavenly man"* – briefly considers celibacy for the kingdom, the eternal heavenly marriage between God and humanity, and the importance of our bodily resurrection.

Schema of grade 7 – In 7th grade there is the advantage of the textbook, *Love and Life: A Christian Sexual Morality Guide for Teens, (2nd Edition)*. This series includes a student text, a teacher's guide, and a parent's guide. The curriculum for this grade offers guidance on which chapters to cover. Also, there are important additional themes that have been added to and correspond with the chapters. Some of these themes are modesty, protection from pornography, gender issues, same-sex attraction, friendship, and the great good of marriage.

Schema of grade 8 – In 8th grade the curriculum, with a few important exceptions, is taken wholly from *Theology of the Body for Teens: Middle School Edition*, which includes a student text, student videos, a teacher's guide, and a parent's guide. In addition to the text, the curriculum outlines abuse prevention and gender issues.

In cooperation with you, may this curriculum help all our students recognize their dignity as beloved children of God.

In Christ,

Fr. Andrew Heaslip

Director, Office of Religious Education

PARENT RESOURCES

In addition to the K-8 Theology of the Body curriculum the Religious Education Office in conjunction with the Family Life Office recommends the following resources to further help parents in their role as primary educators. These resources are tried and true and have been utilized by a countless number of parents in our diocese and throughout the country. They can be an important aid for mothers and fathers to discuss with their children the more sensitive topics of human sexuality that are beyond the scope of this K-8 TOB curriculum.

Books:

- *The Story of Me* (ages 3-5) by Stan and Brenna Jones and *Before I Was Born* (ages 5-8) by Carolyn Nystrom. As part of the God's Design for Sex series, these two resources help parents introduce their young children to the wonder and gift of where they come from and how God created men and women as a complement to one another in forming a human family.
- *TOB for Tots* (3-volume set) by Monica Ashour. With simple language and engaging illustrations, **TOB for Tots** introduces children to the dignity of the whole human person. The three board books in the series are ideal for children ages 2 to 5. Each book includes a parent note at the end.
- *TOB for Kids* (3-volume set) by Monica Ashour. This beautifully illustrated 3-book series for 5 to 9 year olds helps children see the body as a gift from God to be treasured and treated as such.
- *Wonderfully Made Babies: A Catholic Perspective on How and Why God Makes Babies* (for ages 9 and up) by Ellen Giangjordano, with Dr. Lester Ruppertsberger. Through the use of beautiful illustrations and simple yet truthful and medically correct language, this book explains the majesty God designed into the full, free, faithful, and fruitful communion of spouses that allows man and woman to "image" the Trinity, who creates out of love, in order to share love.
- *Good Pictures, Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids* (for ages 4 to 12) by Kristen A. Jensen, MA. A comfortable, read-aloud story about a mom and dad who teach their child what pornography is, why it's dangerous, and how to reject it.
- *The Joyful Mysteries of Life* by Catherine and Bernard Scherrer. Written by Catholic parents for their own children, this book introduces the "facts of life" to pre-teens in a reverent and respectful manner by presenting the biological facts in the context of meditations on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary.
- *Theology of the Body for Teens Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life (Middle School Edition) Parent's Guide* by Monica Ashour. This book is published by Ascension Press and is designed as an essential parent component to accompany the 8th grade Theology of the Body textbook.
- *Love and Life, A Christian Sexual Morality Guide for Teens: Parent Guide* by Colleen Kelly Mast. This book is published by Ignatius Press and is designed as an essential parent component to accompany the 7th grade textbook.

Websites/Videos:

- *Covenant Eyes*: The Covenant Eyes Internet Filter is a parental control/accountability resource that looks at all websites visited in real time and rates them based on age-appropriateness. Parents can decide what is appropriate for their child at any age and program access accordingly. <http://www.lincolndiocese.org/internet-protection-pornography/covenant-eyes>
- *CMG Parent Video*: This site has helpful videos on how to set parental controls on a variety of devices (Xbox, Snapchat, etc.): https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_yOHD4pwtC8QW3Eb5DI0g
- *Further Resources*: For more parent resources please visit the Family Life Office website at: <http://www.lincolndiocese.org/internet-protection-pornography/tools-for-parents>