

THE VOCATION OF LOVE  
A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

**Respect for Love  
(Teacher Guide)**

BY LINDA THAYER

*Nihil Obstat:* Reverend Thomas W. Buckley, S.T.D., S.S.L.  
*Imprimatur:* Seán Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M., Cap.  
Archbishop of Boston  
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# RESPECT FOR LOVE

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing to teach The Vocation of Love. It is our hope that these materials will be useful to you in communicating to young people the sanctity of sexual love in marriage and a profound respect for human life, especially life at its most vulnerable.

Why another program on sexuality for teens? Why another approach? The answer is threefold. First, it is in response to a secular, media-driven culture, and certain public school curricula that have attempted to take a “values neutral” approach with respect to sexuality issues: premarital sex, extramarital sex, homosexual behavior, abortion and contraception. In doing so, they have actually attempted the impossible. Human sexuality involves relationship, and it is the means by which new life is brought into the world. Therefore, it is inherently and inescapably bound up with ethics and values. What the “values neutral” approach has accomplished has also been quite the opposite: approval of *all forms* of sexual behavior - if nothing is wrong, everything must be right - with the exception of disease transmission and forced sex (even the “values neutral” approach cannot escape the application of at least a minimum of right and wrong.) This approach has typically confused passing judgment on a person (to be avoided), with the objective evaluation of behavior in the light of meaning, values and reason (a must).

Second, in response to the current culture, some programs have adopted a “fear-based” strategy: fear of disease, fear of pregnancy, and fear of consequences. While it is certainly true that we owe our young people an accurate and realistic warning regarding the risk of diseases and other consequences of sex outside of God’s plan, as Christians, fear cannot be our primary motivation with respect to what we teach our young with regard to human sexuality.

Finally, the basis for our understanding and teaching of human sexuality, and the love that should exist

between a man and a woman, should always be the vision of God’s wisdom and love in creating us male and female, and the example of Christ’s love proclaimed in the Gospel. If we hope that young people will abstain until marriage, if we hope they will have a respect for human life, particularly life in its earliest stages, we must begin with the vision and values that will engage, motivate and inspire them to strive to live and love as Christ himself, in all their relationships, but especially with those to whom they are called for intimate and family love.

We hope to provide you with the tools needed to proclaim this vision and promote those values to the young people that you serve. This curriculum is designed to be used primarily in parish religious education programs or as a supplemental text in Catholic schools. It is intended for use with grades 8, 9 or 10, prior to Confirmation. Respect for Love introduces the topic of sexuality and can be used in conjunction with the companion book Respect for Life.

May God bless you in your efforts to help provide young people with motivation and the means to live their Vocation of Love.

## PASTORAL CONCERNS

Like Jesus, it is essential to speak the truth, but also to act out of compassion and love. The issues presented in this curriculum are sensitive and challenging. We may have made mistakes ourselves in struggling to live the ways of God. Some students may live in homes in which parents are divorced; some students may already be sexually experienced; others may have a family member struggling with a homosexual orientation; still others may know someone who has had an abortion.

At the start of each session, point out that your purpose is simply to make known God’s plan with respect to sexuality and marriage, and to offer them the means to live it. God is always ready to forgive and

heal those who have made mistakes; the Church offers counseling, support and Reconciliation for those who are in need.

Give students an opportunity to ask questions anonymously as time allows. Pass out index cards; have students either write their questions or “no questions” so that everyone is writing, then fold the cards in half, and pass them in at the end of each session. Answer them in the next session.

Be sure to remind students that teachers are *required* to report any information involving the life, safety and health of students and others. This includes information both written and spoken received in confidence. Teachers are also required to read any work they may assign to their students. For additional assistance regarding procedures for reporting, visit the website “Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children at <http://www.bostoncatholic.org/Offices-And-Services/Office-Detail.aspx?id=13570&pid=460>

## RESPECT FOR LOVE – PROCEDURES

**Time:** approximately two 1½ hour sessions

**Materials:** copy of the Rite of Marriage (see Appendix A, p.7), index cards, song lyrics - see [www.azlyrics.com](http://www.azlyrics.com) (optional); picture of an unborn child (see p. 9)

**Purpose:** to introduce students to God’s plan with respect to sexual love

### Objectives:

1. students will learn to be selective when seeking information about sexual issues
2. students will understand the motives and negative effects of media messages with respect to sexuality
3. students will identify four aspects of God’s plan for sexual love: Sacred, Life-giving, Intimate love, Commitment
4. students will be able to distinguish between uncommitted and committed sexual relationships (marriage)
5. students will appreciate God’s wisdom in having us wait for sex until marriage by examining consequences of pre-marital sex
6. students will distinguish between the different meanings of the phrase “I love you”
7. students will become familiar with a few of the myths of “safe sex”
8. students will become aware of the forms of sexual pressure, and become familiar with strategies to cope with them
9. students will reflect on the meaning and wisdom of God’s plan for sexual love

### First Session:

- A. Be sure to remember the pastoral concerns, and set a non-judgmental tone. Remind students to respect one another in their discussions of various issues. Read the quotes on p.1 of the student text and open with prayer. Read and discuss the “Introduction.”
- B. Tell the students that they have just won \$1500 to spend on a 4-day vacation in Disneyworld. Brainstorm with them how they would plan for the trip: air fare, meals, hotel, admission, souvenirs, tips, etc. Ask whom they would consult. Then read and discuss “Decision-Making” and “Finding Good Information.” (Refer to the picture of the 16-week unborn child in connection with Denise’s story.)
- C. Ask the students if they have ever seen an ad on TV for something, then bought it, only to find out that the item was not as good as they were led to believe – or, relate a story of when this has happened to you. Then explain that much of what they see in the media with respect to sex is also very unrealistic. Ask them to name a few shows that they watch. Briefly discuss whether they really think these programs are true to life. Read and discuss “Media Messages.” Stress media motives.

- D. Ask the students if they really know who the one true expert is when it come to sex. Give them a hint: they are in a religion class. Read and discuss “The One True Expert.” Explain that you are going to look at the creation stories in the first two chapters of Genesis to examine what they mean.
- E. Read and discuss “Idea #1: Sacred”, “Idea #2: Life-Giving”, “Idea #3: Intimate Love” and “Idea #4: Commitment.” Write these four ideas on the board and leave them there for the remainder of the presentation. (For “Idea #2: Life-Giving”, you may consider other more recent movies, or TV shows for discussion; for “Idea #3: Intimate Love”, if students challenge the fairness of life-long abstinence for those with a homosexual orientation, point out the Church’s teaching that all single people are meant to abstain.)
- F. Read and discuss “Which Way to Go?” as far as the wedding vows on p.8, student text. Then either conduct a “mock wedding” with volunteer bride and groom (Appendix A, The Rite of Marriage), or show a video of a wedding ceremony, or simply read the vows. Remind students to respect any volunteers. Ask them to imagine their own wedding day and listen to the words they will say to someone on that day. Then read the remainder of this section.
- G. Distribute index cards for questions and close with the Vocation of Love Prayer (p. 16, student text).
- C. Read and discuss “But We Love Each Other...” List the 3 meanings of “I love you” on the board. Explain also, that, unfortunately, some people are dishonest when they talk about love. Discuss the meaning of “selfish sex.” Optional: Distribute or display the lyrics to some songs or poetry that illustrate the three kinds of “I love you.” Have the students identify each kind of “I love you” that is expressed.
- D. Conduct the Lesson “AIDS and the Condom Question.” (See Appendix B.) Then read and discuss “We’ll Use Protection...”
- E. Read and discuss “Sexual Pressure” and “To Be or Not to Be: Decision Time.” Elaborate on non-sexual ways to show you care, and the importance of dressing appropriately. Read “What Will You Say?” and the suggested responses. Emphasize and illustrate body language and tone that is assertive: no hand-wringing, mumbling, staring at the floor, etc.
- F. Read the “Reflection” together. Or the teacher reads the “Because...” and the students read “May I...” and “Let me...”

### Second Session:

- A. Be sure to remember the pastoral concerns, and set a non-judgmental tone. Remind students to respect one another.
- B. Answer any student questions from the index cards of the previous lesson. Then read and discuss “Whatever Is God Thinking?” Write the rule “wait until you marry” on the board under
- G. Distribute index cards for questions; have the students work on “Follow-up” questions; review the index cards. Complete the lesson by answering index card and “Follow-up” questions. Close with the Vocation of Love Prayer (p. 16, student text.).

## RESPECT FOR LOVE – FOLLOW-UP (key)

**01.** A good source of information regarding sexuality would be someone who knows and cares about you, has correct information and shares your values. Name one good source of information about sexuality, and explain why it is good.

*(Parents, family, etc; knows you, good information, shares Faith)*

**02.** Name a risky source of information about sexuality and explain why it is a poor choice.

*(Internet, hotline, friends, etc.; may not know you, or not have good information; doesn't share Faith)*

**03.** How are the last three generations of Americans different from all those who lived before them?

*(Excessive sexual images in mass media)*

**04.** What are the primary motivations for the excessive amounts of sexual messages in the media?

*(Money and fame)*

**05.** God is telling us 4 big ideas about sexuality. What are they?

*(Sacred gift, Life-giving, Intimate love, Commitment)*

**06.** What is the difference between a girlfriend and a wife? A boyfriend and a husband?

*(Level of commitment)*

**07.** What is the nickname for a sexual relationship based only on attraction and lack of commitment, in which one person usually ends up being “used” and rejected?

*(“Pizza love”)*

**08.** When a husband and wife promise to love each other “for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health”, whose love do they imitate?

*(God's)*

**09.** God's rule “to wait and marry” before sexual activity is a very difficult one in our culture. God gave us this rule to protect us. Name three ways this rule can offer protection to young people.

*(Freedom from disease. Freedom from untimely pregnancy. Freedom from being used “pizza love”.)*

**10.** Not all statements of love are the same. Name three ways people can mean “I love you.”

*(Attraction / desire, affection / caring, self-gift / commitment)*

**11.** Sexual pressure is something we all have to learn to manage. Some pressures come from within us, our own desires and need to belong; other pressures come from outside of us, social pressures – pressures from a boyfriend or girlfriend. If you were in a relationship with someone who was pressuring you to go further than you wished, what would you say?

*“Why not, everyone's doing it.” (I'm me. I don't need to follow the crowd.)*

*“You would if you loved me.” (If you loved me, you'd stop pressuring me.)*

*“If you don't, we'll have to break up.” (Sorry you feel that way. I have to do what's right for me.)*

*“Nothing will go wrong. We'll use a condom.” (Condoms aren't 100%. The risk is too high.)*

**12.** What do you do if you have said “no”, and someone keeps on pressuring you?

*Leave the relationship. Seek advice of trusted adult.)*

**13.** When young people use condoms to prevent pregnancy, the failure rate in the first year and a half is almost one in 5.

*(Failure to prevent disease is even higher.)*



14. Birth control pills protect against which STDs?

*(None)*

15. What is meant by “selfish sex”?

*(Sex without love, commitment or possible new life)*

16. A relationship between a man and a woman that is Sacred, Life-giving, Intimately loving and Committed is called a *marriage*.

17. Sex for the Christian must be treated as Sacred, Life-giving, Intimately loving and Committed. All 4 must be present. Does it belong? Why not?

- premarital sex?
- having an affair?
- pornography?
- homosexual activity, “gay sex”?
- contraception?
- cohabitation (living together without being married)
- divorce
- other?
- *Premarital sex = no commitment*
- *An affair = broken commitment*
- *Pornography = not intimate love, no new life; for a married person is a way of “cheating on your partner”, degrading, etc.*
- *Homosexual activity, “gay sex” = not life-giving, not true to God’s plan (Sacred)*
- *Contraception = can make “selfish sex” easy: no love, no commitment, and no possible new life; some forms prevent the implantation of an embryo*
- *Cohabitation = no commitment*
- *Divorce = broken commitment (Point out that life is complex, people can be deeply wounded by divorce and we should be careful not to pass judgment.)*

17. Look up the first few meanings of the word “love” in the dictionary. Give an example of each.

18. Read St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13, verses 4-13. Name some examples of how people show this kind of love.

Sources for data from student text, p.10

1. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 2001
2. *Perspectives on Reproductive and Sexual Health*, 2003

### **The Vocation of Love Prayer**

Father in heaven, we thank you today for all of your gifts to us, but most especially, for the gift of our very own life. Without the gift of life, there is no other gift – no love, no faith, no joy – we have nothing without life itself.

We thank you too for the gift of our sexuality. For it is through the true love between a husband and wife that we see a sign of your everlasting love; it is through the love between a man and a woman that a child comes into this world.

Teach us always to respect human life and human sexuality, because these are such good and precious gifts from you. Protect us from the pressures and false promises of the times in which we live and teach us to seek the love and fulfillment that you intended to be.

We ask you for all these things in the name of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

## PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

*Father, we are commanded by your Son Jesus to go out into the whole world and spread the Good News of your love. By the power of the Holy Spirit, please open the minds and hearts of all your followers to fulfill the Vocation of Love You have given them, in word and deed, with generosity, in all walks of life.*

### Let us pray:

*For Vocations to the priesthood, religious life and lay ministry*

We pray to the Lord.

*For faithful men and women who will honor the Vocation of Love in marriage*

We pray to the Lord.

*For Vocations as Christian parents, teachers and counselors*

We pray to the Lord.

*For Vocations as Christian doctors, scientists, and medical professionals*

We pray to the Lord.

*For Vocations as Christian lawyers, statesman and public officials*

We pray to the Lord.

*For Vocations as Christian musicians and actors, entertainers and athletes*

We pray to the Lord.

For Vocations as Christian business men and women

*We pray to the Lord.*

For Vocations as Christian authors and journalists

*We pray to the Lord.*

For Vocations as Christians who work in agriculture, construction, labor, and public safety

*We pray to the Lord.*

*Father in Heaven we give you thanks for the gift of faith. Please keep your people in your care and faithful to the Vocation you have given them, bringing the Good News of your peace and love to every corner of the world. We ask you for all these things in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

## RESOURCES – Archdiocese of Boston

Pregnancy Help: (Crisis Pregnancy Help) 888-771-3914 [www.pregnancyhelpboston.org](http://www.pregnancyhelpboston.org)

Project Rachel (Post-Abortion Healing): 508-651-3100 [www.projectrachelboston.com](http://www.projectrachelboston.com)

Courage (For those who struggle with same-sex attraction): [info@bostoncourage.org](mailto:info@bostoncourage.org), [www.bostoncourage.org](http://www.bostoncourage.org)

Respect Life Education Office: 617-746-5860 [www.respectlifeeducation.com](http://www.respectlifeeducation.com)

# APPENDIX A

## RITE OF MARRIAGE

**PRIEST:** My dear friends, you have come together in this church so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of the Church's minister and this community. Christ abundantly blesses this love. He has already consecrated you in baptism and now he enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. And so, in the presence of the Church, I ask you to state your intentions.

### Form B

**PRIEST:** \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?

**BRIDEGROOM:** I do.

**BRIDE:** I do.

**PRIEST:** Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

**BRIDEGROOM:** I will.

**BRIDE:** I will.

**PRIEST:** Since it is your intention to enter into marriage, join your right hands, and declare your consent before God and his Church.

**BRIDEGROOM:** I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, for my lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

**BRIDE:** I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

### Then

**PRIEST:** You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in his goodness strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessings.

What God has joined, man must not divide.

**BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE:** Amen.

## APPENDIX B

### AIDS AND THE CONDOM QUESTION (15 min.)

PURPOSE: to demonstrate the danger of relying on condoms for “protection.”

MATERIALS: index cards numbered from 1 - 5, enough for the class to have one card each.

PROCEDURE:

1. Conduct a quick AIDS review. What is HIV? (*human immunodeficiency virus*) What is AIDS? (*acquired immune deficiency syndrome*) How is AIDS transmitted? Can you get it from casual contact? (*exchange of body fluids through sexual contact, needle sharing, blood transfusions [rarely], mother to unborn child [less frequent]*).
2. Ask, “What is the best protection against AIDS?” Most students will answer condoms. If so, go to step 3. (Some students may say abstinence. If they do, agree with them and also point out the need to abstain also from alcohol and drugs, as many teens have their first sexual experience while under the influence. Remind the students however that God has created us as sexual beings, and does not intend that the majority of us to abstain for life. Ask, “What is the second best protection against AIDS?”)
3. Ask the students if they think condoms are perfect. How effective are they? 80% 90%? Explain to the student that you would like to demonstrate for them how unreliable condoms are and distribute the index cards, each card bearing a single number - 1,2,3,4 or 5.
4. Have the students stand up. Ask them to imagine that they have just met the partner of their dreams, and to imagine the times they will spend together at school, football games, etc. Now imagine that they have been in a long term relationship with this person, and have come to a point where they

are deciding whether or not to have sexual relations. After some discussion, they decide yes, but will use “protection”, condoms, since they are worried about pregnancy and / or AIDS. A year and a half goes by.

5. Explain the statistic: approximately 1 out of 5 young people who use condoms as a method of “protection” will become pregnant in the first year and a half anyway. (See Fact Sheet for Teachers and Parents, p.10.) Have the students look at their cards and say:
6. If you have #1, be seated, you / your girlfriend are not pregnant.  
#2 (same) #3 (same) #5 (same) **#4 remain standing**

Point out that an 80% success rate also means a 20 % failure rate. Students who are standing have to face several very difficult questions:

Do I believe in adoption?

Do I believe in abortion?

Will my partner marry me?

Can I handle being a single parent?

Can I talk to my parents about this?

Should I be tested for AIDS?

7. Point out also for the students who are seated, that the people who are standing experienced a condom failure at fertility – 4 to 6 days of a woman’s cycle when pregnancy is most likely to occur – and therefore a pregnancy resulted. However, an STD or AIDS can be contracted **any day** of the cycle, regardless of fertility.
8. Have the students with numbers 1 and 5 stand up and explain that they may have experienced a condom failure too, but not at fertility - and, depending on who their partner was, they may have contracted an STD, or AIDS.

9. Explain what a “condom failure” is (damage because temperatures got too hot in the glove compartment, or too cold in a wallet or pocket in the winter; the condom was used improperly because the partners were drinking; the condom broke, or slipped; etc.)
10. Conclude by explaining that condoms are not the second best protection. They are a risky **third**. Ask the students, “What is the second best protection against AIDS?” If no one answers, reveal the answer: A FAITHFUL MARRIAGE BETWEEN TWO UNINFECTED PEOPLE (who are not i.v. drug users). Truly safe sex is sex the way God intended - one man and one woman who are faithful partners for life.



**Face of an unborn child at 16 weeks. The entire baby is only about six inches in length and could rest on top of your hand.**

## Fact Sheet for Teachers and Parents (from The Vocation of Love)

### GENERAL DATA

- condoms fail about 1 in 5 young couples with respect to pregnancy in about 18 months of use; by the end of the second year, the rate of failure is **more than** 1 out of 4 <sup>1</sup>
- about 1 out of 5 young people using **all forms** of birth control will become pregnant by the end of the second year of use<sup>1</sup>
- over half of high school pregnancies are due to birth control failure<sup>2</sup>
- pregnancy can occur only a few days per month; an STD can be transmitted any day
- after reviewing the scientific research on condom effectiveness, the National Institutes for Health were **unable** to prove that condoms reduce the risk of certain STDs - herpes, HPV, chlamydia, syphilis
- the Food and Drug Administration has recommended that warnings be included in packaging to alert the public to the limitations of condoms
- hormonal methods of birth control - pills, patches, injections – have side effects (migraines, depression, weight gain, stroke), offer no protection against diseases, and may be abortifacient (it may prevent implantation of an embryo)
- the so-called “morning after” pill (plan B, emergency contraception) contains 50 times the hormone dose of a birth control pill, and may also be abortifacient

### PREGNANCY

- 50% of pregnancies in the U.S. every year are unintentional; 60% of these occur when a woman is using birth control<sup>3</sup>
- about 1 out of 5 young people using **all forms** of birth control will become pregnant by the end of the second year of use<sup>4</sup>

- **over half** of high school pregnancies are due to birth control failure<sup>5</sup>

### THE PILL

- between 8 and 13 % of unmarried girls who go on the pill become pregnant annually <sup>6</sup>
- offers **no** protection against STDs
- has side effects: nausea, high blood pressure, migraine, weight gain, tiredness, depression, missed periods
- increases the risk of heart attack with prolonged use, and among smokers
- can prevent an embryo from implanting in the womb (an early abortion)<sup>7</sup>
- some research shows an increased risk of breast cancer with early/prolonged use<sup>8</sup>
- is easy to forget or take at the same time daily

### THE CONDOM

- fails about 1 of 5 young couples with respect to pregnancy in the first year and a half; failure rates are higher for STDs<sup>9</sup>
- can slip, break or tear
- is less effective after exposure to high temperatures (like a hot car in summer) or very low temperatures (latex may crack)
- the National Institutes for Health, after researching condom effectiveness, were not able to prove that condoms reduce the risk of certain STDs (herpes, chlamydia, HPV, etc.)

### STDs <sup>10, 11</sup>

- 26% of teenage girls in America has an STD
- 48% of African American teenage girls has an STD

### HERPES

- is a virus that has infected at least 1 in 5 sexually active people
- there is no cure; people have it for life

- the virus can be active on the surface of the skin without showing any signs
- outbreaks appear as blisters and sores in the sexual and other parts of the body
- the average number of outbreaks is about 4 per year, but can be higher
- the virus can be passed from mother to baby if an outbreak occurs during childbirth
- medications only “reduce the risk” of passing the virus to someone else
- a person without symptoms can still infect another person
- according to the Centers for Disease Control, “Since a condom may not cover all infected areas, even correct and consistent use of a condom **cannot** guarantee protection from genital herpes.”

## CHLAMYDIA

- a bacterial infection that can be treated with antibiotics, **but**
- three quarters of women and one half of men have no symptoms, so the disease is undiagnosed

- up to 40% of women with untreated chlamydia will develop Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID); up to 20% of these women will be left unable to have children
- the opening of the uterus (cervix) is not fully mature in teenage girls and young women; they are more susceptible to infection
- condoms do not guarantee 100% against infection

## HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS (HPV)

- there are 30 kinds of sexually transmitted human papilloma viruses
- they can cause genital warts
- some of these viruses are high risk types that can lead to cervical cancer
- 20 million people are currently infected
- most of these infections have no symptoms
- a vaccine has been developed for HPV, but, about 30% of cervical cancers will not be prevented by the vaccine
- HPV infection can occur in areas not covered by a condom

## Notes

1. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 2001
2. *Perspectives on Reproductive and Sexual Health*, 2003
3. *U.S. News and World Report*, August, 2006
4. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 2001
5. *Perspectives on Reproductive and Sexual Health*, 2003
6. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 2001 (girls not co-habiting or married).
7. The Pill Book; The Physician's Desk Reference
8. LanFranchi, A. and Brind, J., "Breast Cancer Risks and Prevention, Third Edition."
9. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 2001
10. [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) 7-19-07
11. 2008 National STD Prevention Conference