

## A Journey in **LOVE**

*A developmental programme  
for children in the primary years*



### Overview for parents

- Early Years:** **The wonder of being special and unique.**  
AIM: To explore the wonder of being special and unique.
- Year 1:** **We meet God's love in our family.**  
AIM: To focus on families and specially growing up in a loving, secure and stable home.
- Year 2:** **We meet God's love in the community.**  
AIM: To describe how we are growing and developing in diverse communities that are God-given.
- Year 3:** **How we live in love.**  
AIM: To describe and give reasons for how we grow in love in caring and happy friendships where we are secure and safe.
- Year 4:** **God loves us in our differences.**  
AIM: To make links and connections to show that we are all different. To celebrate these differences as we appreciate that God's love accepts us as we are now and as we change.
- Year 5:** **God loves us in our changing and developing.**  
AIM: Show a knowledge and understanding of how we grow in awareness of the physical and emotional changes that accompany puberty – sensitivity, mood swings, anger, boredom etc. and grow further in recognising God's presence in our daily lives.
- Year 6:** **The wonder of God's love in creating new life.**  
AIM: To develop a secure understanding of what stable, caring relationships are and the different kinds there may be. Focusing on Catholic teaching, children will also know and understand about the conception of a child within marriage.

*What does love look like?  
It has the hands to help others.  
It has the feet to hasten to the poor and  
needy. It has eyes to see misery and want.  
It has the ears to hear the sighs and  
sorrows of others.  
That is what love looks like.*

St. Augustine

### JOURNEY IN LOVE AND DFE GUIDANCE

From September 2020, guidance from the Department for Education for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education becomes mandatory for all Schools, including Catholic Schools.

This initiative has been welcomed by the Catholic Education Service (CES), who state clearly that, Catholic schools are also required to deliver RSE in accordance with the teaching of the Church. RSE is part of the mission of Catholic schools to educate the whole person. It should be carried out as part of the holistic education, which seeks to form as well as inform young people in preparation for adult life. A Journey in Love offers opportunities to teach DFE guidance on Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education in age-appropriate ways.

The Catholic Education Service accentuates that any teaching about love and sexual relationships in a Catholic school must be rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ, what it means to live well in relationship with others and be presented within a positive framework of Christian virtue.

# A Journey in **LOVE**

*Learning to love encompasses a range of relationships not just sexual ones, because human beings flourish through various and different relationships with other people. God's gift of friendship is a way of loving, and while sexual loving presupposes friendship, friendship does not require full sexual involvement.*

Cardinal Basil Hume

## ***Journey of Life***

Birth is the beginning of this journey,  
And death is not the end; but the destination.  
It is a journey that takes us  
From youth to age,  
From innocence to awareness,  
From ignorance to knowledge,  
From foolishness to wisdom,  
From weakness to strength and often back again,  
From offence to forgiveness,  
From pain to compassion,  
From fear to faith,  
From defeat to victory and from victory to defeat,  
Until, looking backward or ahead,  
We see that victory does not lie  
At some high point along the way,  
But in having made the journey,  
Stage by stage.

Adapted from an old Hebrew prayer.

*"Our schools need to be places where everyone feels valued for their innate dignity."*

Pope Francis

***Sample pages of the book follow***



# A Journey in **LOVE**

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## Foreword

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**P**OPE FRANCIS in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, (“The Joy of Love”), reminds us that the family is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient, to help one another, learn closeness, care and respect for others, (n.276). He underlines the importance and vital role Catholic Schools play in assisting and helping pupils grow into mature adults, (n.279). He accentuates that sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children have not yet attained maturity. This information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age (n.281).

It is hoped that love starts to enter our life from the moment of birth when we are held tenderly in the arms of our mother and developed throughout our first intimate relationship of childhood with our parents, family members, friends and teachers. At puberty the secondary sexual characteristics arise. Now we begin to seek someone from outside our family and, armed with our first relationship, we explore our second intimate relationship of love, usually ending in marriage.

The whole purpose of Catholic education at home and in the primary school is to connect every aspect of growth: physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual, with love. The ultimate goal is to enable children to grow into adults who fully understand their own self-worth and love themselves (i.e. accept themselves positively) and, in turn, be able to love their neighbour (i.e. make themselves fully available to others).

Parents and teachers are privileged to assist children every moment of their lives to further this link of love with their humanity and thus with God. This revised edition of Journey in Love is a brilliant reconciliation between the human and divine aspects of love. It offers a vision that is none other than the Kingdom of God, summed up by Jesus in the double commandments of loving God and our neighbour as ourselves.

Baroness Sheila Hollins

# A Journey in **LOVE**

## A vision statement

.....

**T**O BE MADE IN THE IMAGE and likeness of God means to be a person in relationship and it is in the context of relationship that our sexuality grows and develops. From early childhood we are on a journey of self-exploration, discovering the depth and richness that various patterns of relationship offer and finding the appropriate expression that they call for.

As we become older, moving beyond the immediate boundaries of early childhood, we begin to become aware that there can often be an unwillingness to share with others: not just those things that are dear to us, but also the friends we love and something of ourselves, too. It is a kind of selfishness which can make us lonely and self-absorbed, depriving us in adulthood of self-knowledge and a sense of fulfilment. At the centre of our ongoing journey of exploration is God himself, a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, who is love; love is the highest form of relationship and so God is at the heart of our family ties and friendships. He reveals himself through our patterns of interdependence, including those that are shaped by our sexuality.

As puberty begins and continues we become more aware of ourselves as sexual beings and, inevitably, some of the relationships that we share become more emotionally charged and, because of this we need to find new, appropriate expressions for them. This can be a very confusing time but, even in the confusion – or perhaps especially so! – God is present. The young person will be exploring the whole business of belonging to, being a part of and identifying with others. For many, this is when the first experience of falling in love will come; however, deep below the surface at first, there is a growing realisation that no pattern of relationship is ever really truly satisfying and that none can bring an authentic experience of wholeness, of completeness as a human being. The young person is called to grow through the joy of love's discovery and the heartache of its passing in highly-charged relationships and, ultimately, to develop the maturity required for a life-long commitment to another in the Sacrament of Marriage.

The discovery of the right partner for life is like discovering “bone of my bone flesh of my flesh” as the Book of Genesis puts it; as this relationship grows and deepens, so does the desire to commit one's whole being to the other.

# A Journey in **LOVE**

The Sacrament of Marriage declares this commitment to be God-given and therefore permanent. In sexual union, husband and wife offer themselves selflessly to one another in the deepest expression of love possible and, in that act, the Sacrament is made real; husband and wife both experience the depth of God's love.

Fr David Clemens

*“Christian marriage is that sacrament  
which builds up the community of  
the Church and of society.*

*Marriage has been inscribed in creation's design  
by God, and, by his grace, countless Christian men  
and women have lived married life fully.”*

Pope Francis

SAMPLE

# A Journey in **LOVE**

## Introduction

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**A**T THE HEART of this revised teachers' resource, A Journey in Love, is our belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God and, consequently, gender and sexuality are God's gift, reflecting his beauty and sharing in divine creativity. In order that children may grow and flourish healthily and holistically towards an understanding of their gender and its implications for successful relationships, they must be at ease with themselves and deepen their self-knowledge.

An aspect of the mystery of love is treated in each year group; children and young people are encouraged to marvel at the wonder and beauty of God's creative love. This is reflected in each stage of a person's growth in the primary years through a series of suggested, progressive and developmental tasks, activities and reflections that focus on social, emotional, physical and spiritual development.

The team of compilers with interdisciplinary skills drew upon their diverse and rich experience in education, medicine and pastoral theology: Dr Sathi Aiya, Emeritus Consultant Physician in the NHS; Ilse Brockling, Founder, CEO and Director of Children's Health Projects; Fr David Clemens, Parish Priest, Analytical Psychologist and Film Script Writer; Sarah Feist, Adviser for Religious Education and Catholic Ethos in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton; Shaun Kelliher, Deputy Headteacher and former senior nurse in the NHS; Patrick Harrison, Adviser for the Diocese of Southwark; Pupils from years 5 and 6. The resource is greatly enriched by the generous Foreword by Baroness Sheila Hollins, adviser to the Vatican and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The team of compilers is assured that this resource does not contradict Catholic teaching and are, therefore, most grateful for the canonical permission given by Bishop Alan Williams SM, Bishop of Brentwood.

Sr Jude Groden, RSM

*All Family life is a 'shepherding' in mercy.  
Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others...  
seeking to bring out the best in them.*

(Amoris Laetitia, chapter 9, #322)

# A Journey in **LOVE**

## YEAR ONE

1

We meet God's love in our family

**AIM** To focus on families and specially growing up in a loving, secure and stable home.

**KEY WORDS** unique, friend, respect, secure, God, love, care, commitment, stable, important, different, special, signs, healthy, safe, boundaries, kindness, teasing, bullying, positive, negative, wrong, unacceptable, truth, lies, head, eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, tongue, throat, neck, shoulders, arms, breasts, nipple, waist, elbows, penis, vagina, vulva, bottom, anus, legs, knees, ankles, feet, toes.

**SKILLS** listening, observing, relating, speaking, respecting, praying, reflecting, understanding, recognising, supporting, celebrating, deciding.

### ■ Social and Emotional

**Learning intention** To recognise signs that I am loved in my family.

#### Introduction and content

Aristotle said that "the family is the first school of the child." Creating a happy family is both a great blessing and a demanding challenge. Relationships can never be taken for granted. At the heart of our Christian understanding of life is the belief that we are called to live with others and for others and it is by the love that we have for one another, everyone will know that we are disciples of Jesus. Pope Francis offers the following advice: *'In order to have a healthy family, three words are to be used: please, thank you, sorry! These words form the language of people who live not just for themselves, but for one another.'* – John Byrne, OSA

The experience of family life for children growing up is important because they share the 'give and take' of love, security and stability.



# A Journey in **LOVE**

# 1

Discuss the characteristics of positive and negative relationships, the different types of teasing and bullying which are wrong and unacceptable, how to recognise when people are being unkind and the difference between truth and lies.

Discuss the best way to respond to difficult/uncomfortable situations, including knowing who to go to if worried or in need of help, including outside agencies where appropriate.

Some characteristics of a healthy and secure family are:

- Spending time together, love, security, stability, mutual commitment, protection and care for children and other family members, supporting one another through both happy and difficult times.

*“The family is where the parents become their children’s first teachers in the faith. The family’s strength lies in its capacity to love and to teach love.”*

– Pope Francis

## 1 Questions to consider

- 1) How is love shown in your family?
- 2) Why are the words ‘please’, ‘thank you’ and ‘sorry’ important to create a happy family?
- 3) How does saying ‘please’ show care and consideration for members of your family?
- 4) How does saying ‘thank you’ show love for each other?
- 5) How does saying ‘sorry’ show respect, build bridges, keep us safe and help us to build a happy family and mend broken friendships?
- 6) Why is teasing and bullying wrong and unacceptable within families and friendships?
- 7) Why should we always tell the truth?

## 2 Possible activities

- 1) Draw your family showing some of the ways they show you love and kindness.
- 2) Encourage children to retell situations when their families kept them safe and protected.
- 3) Create a collage of pictures showing the happy, exciting, enjoyable things you do as a family.
- 4) Design a card to cheer up someone who is sad or upset.
- 5) Compose a prayer together thanking God for all the signs of his love and care for each person especially in your families.
- 6) Work in small adult led groups and share scenarios of someone being teased or bullied. How could the characters in the scenarios change their behaviour for the better? Encourage role-play activities.

# A Journey in **LOVE**

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### 3 Pause and reflect

Gathering music

The Holy Trinity is the family of God: God is revealed as a Father, Son and Spirit.

We praise God as we make the Sign of the Cross.

“In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen”

Light a candle to remind us that Jesus is with us and loves us.

Place cards and drawings around it.

Each one shares some signs of love experienced.

Pray together the ‘prayer of thanksgiving’ composed.

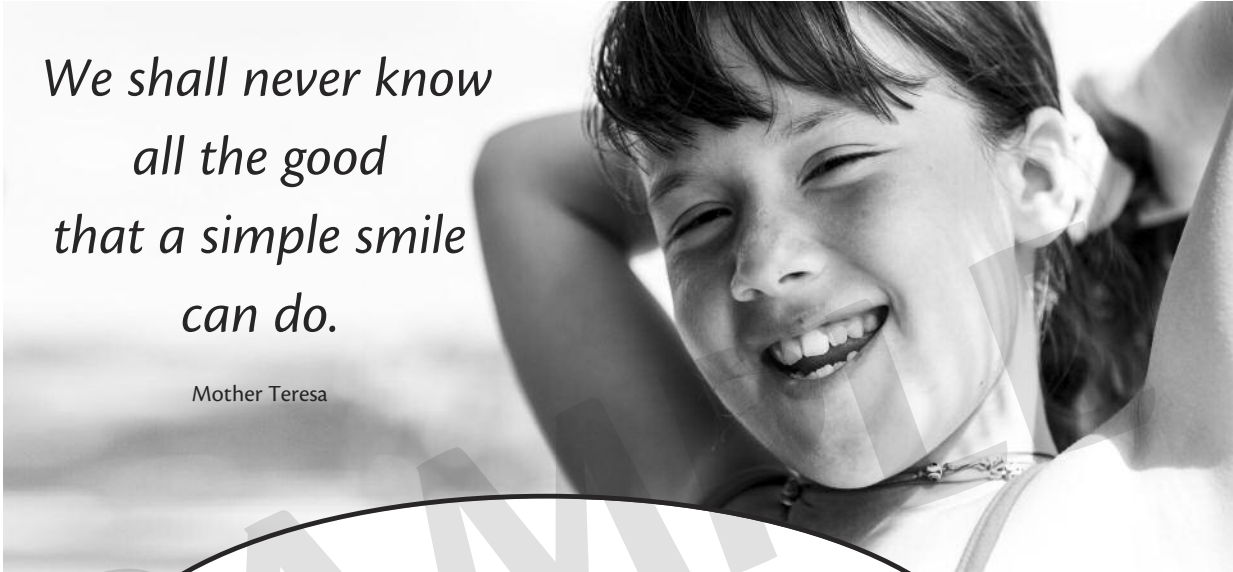
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### 4 Sing

‘Sing a simple song unto the Lord’

[Celebration Hymnal for Everyone, No. 644]

1



*We shall never know  
all the good  
that a simple smile  
can do.*

Mother Teresa

*“There is no such thing as the perfect family.  
Only by the daily exercise of forgiveness can  
the family grow.”*

Pope Francis

A Journey in **LOVE**

## 1

■ **Physical**

**Learning intention** To recognise how I am cared for and kept safe in my family.

**Introduction and content**

Pope Francis teaches that truly Christian families are known by their fidelity, their patience, their openness to life, and their respect for the elderly... the secret to this is the presence of Jesus in the family. Let us therefore propose to all people, with respect and courage, the beauty of marriage and the family illuminated by the Gospel! And in order to do this let us approach with care and affection those families who are struggling, forced to leave their homeland, broken, homeless or unemployed, or suffering for any reason; let us approach married couples in crisis or separated. Let us be close to everyone through the proclamation of this Gospel of the family, the beauty of the family.

We recognise that all families no matter how they are made up are different and that members of our families are individual people. We must also understand how to respect each other's differences and celebrate how individuals are similar in some ways and different in many ways from one another.

**Characteristics of keeping safe**

- Knowing how to maintain personal hygiene, keep healthy and stay safe.
  - Being treated with respect, showing respect to others, setting appropriate boundaries, realising that each person's body is their own, privacy and its implications for both pupils and adults, safe contact, awareness of the difference between appropriate or unsafe or other contact.
  - Knowing the difference between good and bad secrets and simple rules for resisting pressure when feeling unsafe or uncomfortable, and seeking and giving permission in relationships.
  - Knowing about rules and age restrictions that keep us safe and the people whose responsibility it is to keep us safe e.g. parents/carers/teachers/extended family members/police/ life guards etc
- Knowing the basic rules of keeping safe online when using digital devices.

*"Protect your families.  
Be sanctuaries of respect  
for life."*

Pope Francis

# A Journey in LOVE

## 1 Questions to consider

- 1) Who is in my family?
- 2) How do families show love and care for one another?
- 3) What are some of the characteristics of a happy family?
- 4) How do we act with adults that are not in our family or those we do not know?
- 5) In what ways are we made in the image and likeness of God?
- 6) How does your family help you to keep healthy? Include physical, mental and spiritual health. Include taking care not to spread diseases e.g. washing hands, coughs and sneezes etc.

## 2 Possible activities

- 1) Paint and draw your family tree.
- 2) Draw each member of your family, including yourself and even your pets. Cut them out, write their names on their backs and hang them to make a mobile.
- 3) Create a set of responses for children to use with people when they feel unsafe.
- 4) Draw around your hand and on each finger; write ways you have grown and changed.
- 5) Identify, name draw and label each part of the body and say what part of the body is associated with each sense. Include vocabulary, as agreed with parents/carers during parental consultation, for external genitalia (e.g. penis, breasts, nipple, vagina, bottom, anus).
- 6) Create a collage showing all the ways we can stay fit and healthy. Include all elements of discussion above e.g. physical activity, dental health, healthy eating, positive relationships etc.
- 7) Why do you think our families set rules and regulations/ boundaries for their children to follow e.g. staying safe at home e.g. not using certain electrical appliances, not playing with matches, fire etc. setting bed times, restricting TV and digital use, how to cross the road safely and stay safe on the beach/swimming pool etc.  
Create posters showing some of these ideas on staying safe.

1

## 3 Pause and reflect

### Gathering music

The Trinity is a celebration of love. Love begins in the Father; it is revealed to us in Jesus; it is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.  
We first encounter this love in our Baptism; we grow in it through the Mass, Holy Communion, through good lives and through prayer.  
We ask God to keep us safe in His love as we make the Sign of the Cross.

“In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen”

Assemble on the carpet.

Light a candle to welcome the presence of Jesus and arrange family pictures around it.

Prayer for all families:

Loving Father, thank you for my mum,  
dad, brothers, sisters  
and all who love and care for me.  
You love me so much that you have my  
name carved on the palm of your hand,  
Amen.

(Isaiah 49:16)

## 4 Sing

‘Sing a simple song unto the Lord.’

[Celebration Hymnal for Everyone, No. 644]

# A Journey in **LOVE**

# 1

## ■ Spiritual

**Learning intention** To celebrate ways that God loves and cares for us.

### Introduction and content

God loves and cares for us in a variety of ways:

He gave us life, parents, brother(s), sister(s), family, friends, school, teachers, priest(s), and a beautiful world.

In the story of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4-6) we hear how great is God's love and care for us: Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and loses one of them, what does he do? He leaves the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and goes looking for the one that got lost until he finds it. When he finds it, he is so happy that he puts it on his shoulders and carries it back home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says to them, "I am so happy, I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate."

*"Great love can change small things into great ones,  
and it is only love which lends value to our actions."*

St. Faustina Kowalska

### 1 Questions to consider

- 1) What ways have we grown in love and security in our families?
- 2) How have we shown love to our families this year?
- 3) How do we know that we are loved and cared for by God?
- 4) In the story of the Lost Sheep how does God show he loves and cares for each and all of us, in our families and school community?
- 5) How shall we thank God for his unconditional love?

### 2 Possible activities

- 1) Create a set of family rules to show how we can live in peace and harmony. (Include the words please, thank you and sorry).
- 2) Compose a 'Litany of Thanksgiving' to God' for his constant love, care, protection and keeping us safe.

### 3 Pause and reflect

#### Gathering music

The Cross is a reminder of the depth of God's immense love and care for each person and each family. With thanksgiving for such a wondrous gift we make the Sign of the Cross. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen"

Assemble in a circle around a focus with a candle and a cross.

When all are quiet, light the candle to welcome 'Jesus the Light of the World'.

Pray each 'litany of thanksgiving' and at the end of each all say:

"Bless (Name) and her/his family."

### 4 Closing hymn

'Sing a simple song unto the Lord.'

[Celebration Hymnal for Everyone, No. 644]

*" 'Please',  
'Thank you',  
and 'Sorry'  
are words that open up the road  
to a good family life."*

Pope Francis

**"To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others."**

St John Paul II



*"The human family  
is the greatest treasure of any country.  
Let us all work to protect and strengthen this,  
the cornerstone of society."*

Pope Francis

# A Journey in **LOVE**

5

## 2 Activities/supported discussions

- 1) Discuss the physical changes that take place during puberty. Discuss how it is normal for children to go through these changes at different times.
- 2) Recognise that sexual development is a natural part of human growth and that physical changes from child to adult means the ability and potential to become a mother and father. The purpose of the menstrual cycle is to prepare the female body for reproduction. There are two important stages to be completely aware of and prepared for: menstruation and ovulation.
- 3) Discuss how, as well as physical changes, emotions may change and/or become more intense as they grow and move through puberty. Discuss how these changes can positively and negatively affect physical, emotional & mental health.
- 4) As our bodies change there is pressure from outside including social media to look and feel a certain way. This can include images in the media that do not always reflect reality.

How can we deal with these external pressures and who can we talk to if we are unsure or do not understand the changes that are happening?

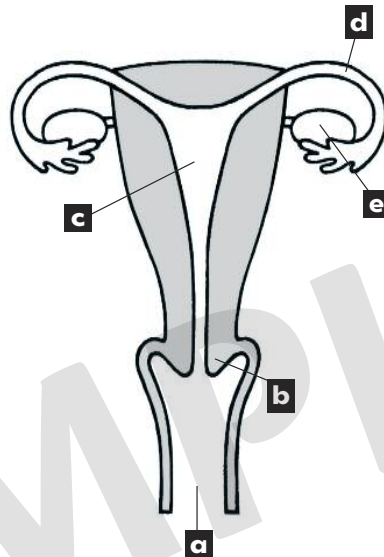
### Menstruation

*(From the Latin for 'month')*

- 1) The menstrual cycle is controlled by hormones released from the pituitary gland. Most menstrual cycles last for about 28 days.
- 2) The first day of the period marks the start of the cycle and is counted as day one.
- 3) If the uterus does not receive a fertilised ovum, the lining of the uterus breaks down and is shed over the next number of days. This is called menstruation.
- 4) The lining of the uterus begins to thicken and an ovum begins to develop.

### Ovulation

- 5) On approximately the 14th day of the cycle an ovum is released into the fallopian tube. This is called ovulation.
- 6) The ovum travels towards the uterus.
- 7) The lining of the uterus continues to thicken and gets full of blood in case a fertilised ovum arrives.
- 8) If the ovum is not fertilised it will dissolve and a period will occur.
- 9) Then the cycle starts again.



- a. Vagina
- b. Cervix
- c. Womb (Uterus)
- d. Fallopian tube
- e. Ovary

# A Journey in LOVE

# 5

### 3 Pause and reflect

#### Reflective music

Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit:  
we first encounter your love in our Baptism;  
we grow in it through the Mass, Holy  
Communion, through good lives and  
through prayer.

Strengthen us on our Christian journey as  
we make the Sign of the Cross.

“In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen”

We light a candle to welcome the presence  
of Jesus among us and listen to a short  
extract from:

*Psalm 139:13-18*

You created every part of me;  
you put me together in my mother’s womb.  
When my bones were being formed,  
carefully put together in my mother’s  
womb, when I was growing there in secret,  
you knew that I was there.  
You saw me before I was born.

Ponder: What does this text mean to me?  
What does this text mean to us?

### 4 Prayer

Loving Father and Creator of all, we thank  
you for the beauty, dignity and gift of  
human life. Help us to respect and treasure  
its sacredness from the moment of  
conception until its natural end. Amen

### 5 Sing

‘Take my hands.’

[Celebration Hymnal for Everyone, No. 676]

*“I alone cannot change  
the world, but I can cast a stone  
across the water to create  
many ripples.”*

St. Teresa of Kolkata

*“One smile can start a  
friendship. One word can end a  
fight. One look can save a  
relationship. One person can  
change your whole life.”*

Unknown





# A Journey in LOVE

## ■ Physical

6

**Learning intention** Explain how human life is conceived.

### Introduction and content

Love proclaims its presence by signs; the deepest, most intimate and wonderful of the human signs of love is the mutual giving of self in sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse is a body language through which the couple express a variety of emotions. They affirm each other as persons as they signal to each other that they are the most important person in each other's life. They confirm each other's sexual identity. The natural outcome (all conditions being fulfilled) of sexual intercourse is the conception of new life. As co-creators with God, the parents bestow life on a new human being; that being needs love and will, in time, express love itself, will go on to make love and so another new human being will join the human race

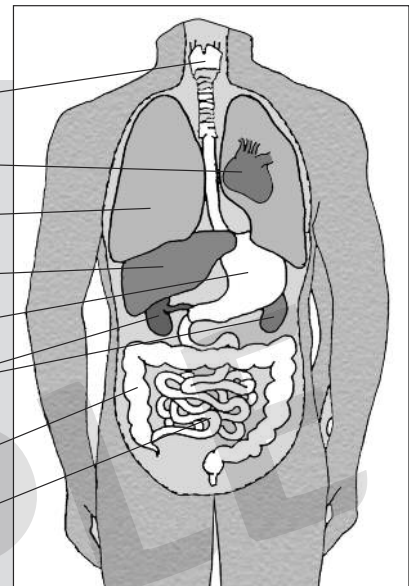
#### 1 Questions to consider

- 1) What are the key building blocks of a loving relationship?
- 2) How does conception take place?

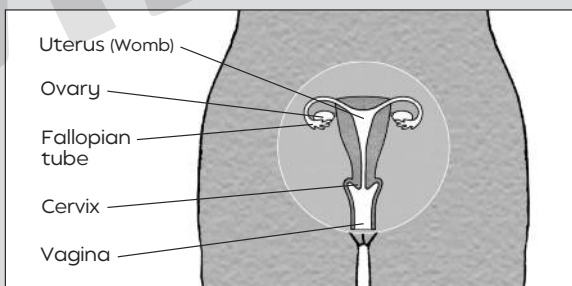
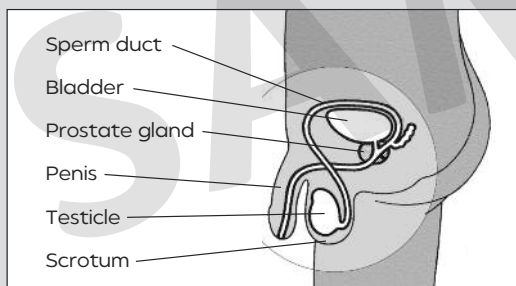
#### 2 Possible activities

- 1) Look at the illustrations of the organs of the human body including the male and female reproductive organs and explain how human life is conceived? ▶

- Voice box
- Heart
- Lungs
- Liver
- Stomach
- Kidneys
- Large intestine
- Small intestine



Male and female reproductive organs



# A Journey in LOVE

## 6

### Possible activities continued

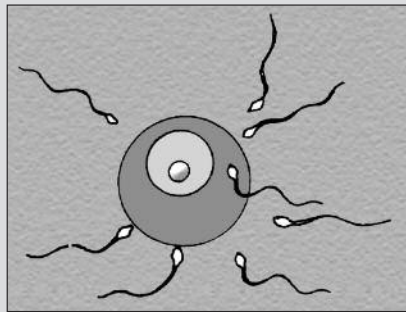
Sexual intercourse between husband and wife is a joyful expression of their love for each other.

It is an act of intimate self-giving, made by two people who want to give everything of themselves to the person they love and respect.

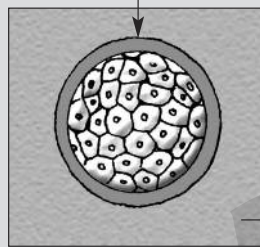
When a couple make love the husband's penis becomes stiff and is placed inside his wife's vagina. Millions of sperm cells are released when the man ejaculates at the peak moment of his sexual arousal. Each sperm cell has a long tail that it uses to swim through the cervix, into the uterus, and eventually into his wife's fallopian tubes.

*Relationships in Moral Education, p.23*

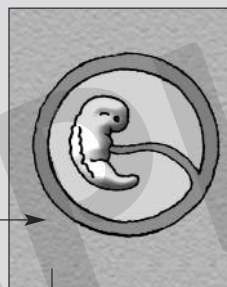
2) Understand how a child grows within the mother's womb.



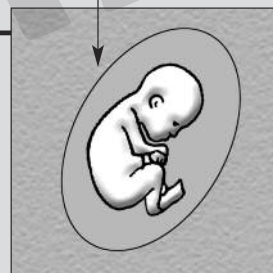
Although a hundred sperm cells may reach the egg cell only one sperm can enter the egg to fertilise it.



**After a few days,** the cell divides repeatedly to form a ball of cells.



**After 8 weeks,** the baby has eyes but no eyelids. It starts making its first tiny movements, but its mother cannot feel them yet.



**After 16 weeks,** the baby begins to swallow and pass urine. It has fingers and toenails. At this stage its skin is bright red and transparent.

# A Journey in **LOVE**

6

**Possible activities continued**



**After 24 weeks,** the baby can hear voices and other sounds from outside its mother. It has some hair and eyebrows and eyelashes. Its skin is very wrinkled.

**After 28 weeks,** the baby's kicks are quite strong and can be felt by putting a hand on the mother's tummy.



**After 36 weeks,** the baby has taken up its final position in the uterus. Its lungs are getting ready to take their first breath. The baby continues to get fatter. Sometime after 36 weeks, the baby's head is now positioned ready for birth. The baby could arrive any time between 38th and 42nd week of pregnancy.

# Some perspectives on marriage

## Scriptural foundation

The ideal place to be informed about any of the sacraments is the General Instruction issued on each of them after Vatican II. Therefore we need to grasp the key ideas about marriage from its instruction, supplemented by the section on marriage in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1602–1658.).

Marriage as a human institution is found in all cultures. It was regarded as God-centred in the Old Testament, particularly in Genesis:

He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your many descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds and all the wild animals." (Genesis 1:28)  
That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and they become one (Genesis 2:24).

The marriage relationship of husband and wife became an image of God's covenant relationship with his people.

Your Creator will be like a husband to you – the Lord Almighty is his name. The holy God of Israel will save you, he is the ruler of all the world. Israel, you are like a young wife deserted by her husband and deeply distressed. But the Lord calls you back to him and says: "For one brief moment I left you; with deep love I will take you back, I turned away angry for only a moment, but I will show you my love forever." So says the Lord who saves you. (Isaiah 54:5-8)

This covenant relationship was often broken by the people, though the love of God, the spouse, remains faithful.

The Lord told me to proclaim this message to everyone in Jerusalem. Remember how faithful you were when you were young, how you loved me when we were first married; you followed me through the desert, through a land that had not been sown. (Jeremiah 2:2)

Jesus re-established the original intentions of God with regard to marriage:

Jesus answered, "Haven't you read the scripture that says that in the beginning the Creator made people male and female? And God said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.' So they are no longer two, but one. Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together."

The Pharisees asked him, "Why, then, did Moses give the law for a man to hand his wife a divorce notice and send her away?" Jesus answered, "Moses gave you permission to divorce your wives because you are so hard to teach. But it was not like that at the time of creation. I tell you, then, that any man who divorces his wife for any cause other than her unfaithfulness, commits adultery if he marries some other woman." (Matthew 19:4-9)

Marriage, love and family were highly regarded by the New Testament. Throughout its history, the Church has always shared its concern for marriage, a concern expressed in legislation and teaching. The Catechism states: On the threshold of his public life Jesus performs his first sign – at his mother's request – during a wedding feast. The Church attaches great importance to Jesus' presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of

## A Journey in **LOVE**

marriage and the proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ's presence.

CCC [n.1613] *Ecclesia: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church*, pub. Liturgical Press, pp 285-289.

### Four moments

In his article on marriage in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Liturgical Press 1993), David H. Thomas expressed the view that the spirituality of marriage can be divided into four 'moments' or phases, which have both a chronological and a developmental dimension. Like the seasons of the year, these phases each have their own time, but no priority of importance is assumed: solitude, commitment, generativity and the Eucharist.

Solitude, he asserts, recognises that every Christian stands before God and all other persons as a differentiated and free individual who possesses a unique personality, distinctive ideas, feelings and a purpose, a reason for being himself/herself and no other. In marriage, both partners retain their individuality.

Secondly, the heart of marriage is the mutual commitment of both persons (man and woman) to share life for better or worse: sharing one's time and energy, sharing love physically, emotionally, sexually and spiritually.

The third phase is generativity. In all cultures the ideal situation for children to enter the world is within a stable family. The Church's understanding of marriage in the past, however, may have been too narrowly focussed on generation; this still has an essential place in Christian marriage, but now we recognise and understand other dimensions of the sacrament that are equally important.

Finally, marriage – like all the elements of Christian life – finds its highest expression in the Eucharist, "the source and summit of the Christian life" (Vatican II, Church LG11). From the Word and sacrament celebrated and received at Mass, parents and later

their children are nourished by the source of all healing, wisdom and strength.

### Mission

The other aspect of the Church's life is a 'mission' which points to the service of others: clothing the naked, visiting the sick or imprisoned and the other corporal works of mercy. Broadening this mission even further, Christian marriage contains its own communion (the love between the couple) and mission (the new life born of them.) Marriage is not only a relationship between two people, but also a creative relationship of service to others.

### Heart of true love

Cardinal Basil Hume believed that taking family responsibility seriously can draw people away from a self-centred view of the world, towards a realisation of the authentic claims made by spouse, children and parents. He says that there is kind of suffering love, struggle and sacrifice which every family will experience if it is to survive and grow strong. In fact, such an experience lies at the heart of all true love.

### The challenge

The challenge for teachers and parents in our Catholic schools is to teach, inform and encourage pupils to co-operate with God's plan for each one's wholeness and holiness and mentor them into responsible maturity.

*Build marriage and the family  
on the rock of true love,  
the love that comes from God.*

Pope Francis

# FAQs from Parents

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## QUESTION 1

### **Why teach Sex and Relationship Education in Catholic Schools?**

We teach Sex and Relationship Education because the Book of Genesis teaches us that we are made in the image and likeness of God, male and female. So our gender is part of our identity and is essential to forming healthy relationships with other people. The greatest fulfilment and deepest relations for most people will be within the Sacrament of Marriage, when the complementarity of genders allows us to glimpse our God as Creator. Other relationships, such as those with parents and siblings, are also influenced by our gender, as are friendships and other forms of love.

The above is part of our understanding of God's Creation and we respect and worship God by relating to his Creation in the appropriate way according to our age and our commitments to God and one another.

## QUESTION 2

### **What do we teach?**

The Programme a 'A Journey in Love' is a recommended resource for the teaching of Relationship and Sex Education because it is compiled specifically to present a Catholic vision. In each Year group, an aspect of love is explored and developed starting from: Early Years to Key Stage Two. Young people are encouraged to marvel at the wonder and beauty of God's creative love reflected in each person under the components: social and emotional, physical and spiritual. Each section has suggested progressive/developmental tasks/activities/reflections, cross-curricular links e.g. R.E., science, art, drama, music, literacy, prayer and hymns.

## OVERVIEW OF THEMES

### PRIMARY

Early Years: The wonder of being special and unique.

Year 1: We meet God's love in our family.

Year 2: We meet God's love in the community.

Year 3: How we live in love.

Year 4: God loves us in our differences.

Year 5: God loves us in our changing and developing.

Year 6: The wonder of God's love in creating new life.

## QUESTION 3

### **The programme presents the ideal; how are families with other family structures referenced?**

The programme presents Church teaching which is what is expected in Catholic schools. The compilers and all those using this are sensitive to the fact that not all children are from the same background or family setting.

## QUESTION 4

### **Do you find that having Sex Education lessons draws attention to the subject and thereby encourages children and young people to 'try it out'?**

We have no evidence to suggest this, but knowledge is surely better than ignorance. We do not want to leave our children in dangerous spaces.

## A Journey in **LOVE**

### QUESTION 5

#### **Do you teach boys and girls separately and why?**

This is entirely up to the school. In most instances when the information is shared children receive it together.

### QUESTION 6

#### **When are children taught about homosexuality and how do you approach this in a Catholic setting?**

This would be dealt with before the end of Key Stage 2 (if it arises) and information would be expected to be age appropriate. You will find in the 'glossary' what the Catechism teaches about homosexuality.

### QUESTION 7

#### **My parents were not married when I was born. Was that wrong? My parents are not married now.**

We need to teach that the best care of children is within marriage. We do not, however, level judgement. Pope Francis advocates a special kind of tenderness and compassion toward young unmarried couples.

### QUESTION 8

#### **Contraception is a common feature in discussions, with reference to AIDS, unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease; is this addressed at Primary school?**

In the 'glossary' the Church's teaching on contraception taken from the Catechism (#2368) is clearly stated. Sexually transmitted diseases are referred to in KS2 but treated in more detail in KS3.

### QUESTION 9

#### **What is Church teaching on same – sex marriage?**

In nearly all cultures and in all times, marriage has been understood as a total union bodily, emotionally and spiritually between man and woman. Of its nature it is

sexual because sex is the only way our body can form a complete union with another. Only a man and woman can enter into this total union of marriage because each person's body complements the other in sexual intercourse.

Sexual intercourse produces the single biological good in pregnancy and birth. This is the beginning of a family and protects the children by introducing them to the idea of a committed and stable relationship.

Relationships between people of the same sex do not include this biological good and so, therefore, in the Church's eyes, such relationships cannot be regarded as marriage.

Long-standing and stable relationships between people of same gender are considered "close friendships" because there is no complementarity. At the heart of marriage is the necessary sexual expression that should be naturally procreative. Therefore, same sex relationships cannot be regarded as marriage.

Civil partnerships were designed to give same-sex couples the civil and legal rights that opposite -sex couples have; any legislation that reduces discrimination is welcomed by the Church. The argument for same-sex marriage is also based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, but this is not the issue for the Church. The comparison of one relationship to the other does not respect the radical difference between the sexes.

### QUESTION 10

#### **What is Church teaching on transgender issues?**

The advice given and always taken by the schools involved has been to act with compassion and understanding and help the individual to be reintegrated into the school community with the gender that he/she feels most natural. This can only happen after sensitive preparation on the part of the school.

# A Journey in **LOVE**

## QUESTION 11

### **What is Church teaching on female genital mutilation?**

We need to be aware in primary schools of this as children are sometimes withdrawn for holidays in countries and cultures where this is practised. The Church can only be strongly opposed to such mutilation.

## QUESTION 12

### **What is Church teaching on anti-radicalisation?**

The process of radicalisation can begin surprisingly early in child development and we must therefore be watchful, alert to what our children may be exposed to at a time when they are struggling to achieve a personal moral compass. During adolescence there is an impulse to be different – which includes holding radical beliefs – and this is a natural challenge that needs to be sensitively addressed. This would not be in order to force children to conform, but to help them realise that God loves all his children and wishes them to respect one another.

*I have a dogmatic certainty:  
God is in every person's life.  
Even if the life of a person has  
been a disaster.*

*Even if it is destroyed by vices,  
drugs or anything else.*

*God is in this person's life.*

*You can, you must try to see God  
in every human life.*

*Even the weakest and most  
vulnerable, the sick, the old, the  
unborn and the poor are  
masterpieces of God's creation,  
made in his own image, destined  
to live forever, and deserving of  
the utmost reverence and respect.*

Pope Francis

Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is than  
**Falling in Love** in a quite absolute way.

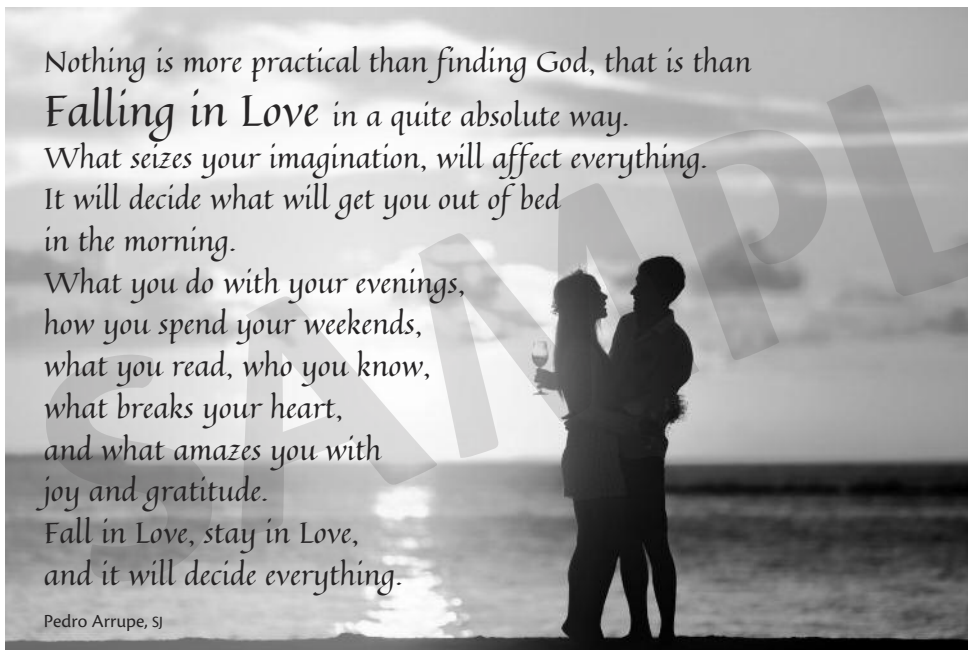
What seizes your imagination, will affect everything.

It will decide what will get you out of bed  
in the morning.

What you do with your evenings,  
how you spend your weekends,  
what you read, who you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with  
joy and gratitude.

Fall in Love, stay in Love,  
and it will decide everything.

Pedro Arrupe, SJ





# FAQs from Children

(Years 5 & 6 pupils)

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## Why do girls have periods?

Every month a girl releases an egg from her ovary which will find its way into the womb. If the egg is fertilised by a sperm, she becomes pregnant and the fused egg and sperm will become a baby. If the egg is not fertilised it is shed from the womb, together with the womb lining. This is called a 'period.'

## What happens if the baby is the wrong way round when the mum-to-be is ready to give birth?

Sometimes the baby can be turned around by special manipulation on the pregnant tummy. Sometimes the baby can be delivered normally, even if it is feet first. Sometimes the mum might need an operation called 'Caesarean' to deliver the baby, so that mother isn't in any danger.

## Where does sperm come from?

When a boy reaches puberty, his hormones (testosterone) produce sperm, which is stored in his testicles.

## What is transgender/gender neutral?

Transgender is when someone was born with the genitals of one gender but identifies with – and on the inside feels more like – the other gender. Gender neutral is when we do not classify things into girl vs. boy, and we don't divide roles into female vs. male. It covers a wide range of topics, like 'Boys can wear a dress' for example, or 'Boys and girls can share the same bathroom. This is sometimes not about whether you are a boy or a girl, but the way people expect boys and girls to behave.'

## Why can't men have babies?

### – Surrogacy and IVF

Babies need to be carried in a womb and only women have a womb. Surrogacy is when a couple ask another woman (a 'surrogate') to carry their baby. This is usually when the couple cannot have a baby of their own.

**IVF:** In vitro fertilisation is a process in which an egg is combined with sperm outside the body, in vitro – literally 'in glass' – in the laboratory. An ovum or ova from the woman is fertilised with sperm from the man and then replaced in the woman's womb to grow and develop in the normal way.

## How are twins created?

### Why is there pain in childbirth?

### Can you die in childbirth?

Babies are made by the process of "human reproduction", i.e. a human makes another human. Humans are made of cells (these contain our DNA and are the building blocks of life). Humans also have special cells called "gametes". Men have male gametes, which are sperms. Women have female gametes, which are eggs. When a sperm meets an egg inside a woman's womb, this is called fertilisation, and this makes an embryo. The embryo will grow inside the woman's womb and develop into a baby.

**How are twins created?** – Twins are a special type of fertilisation. Identical twins are made when the fertilised egg inside the woman's womb divides into two and makes two babies (they have all the same DNA). Non-identical twins are made when two eggs are fertilised by two sperm in the womb at the same time, so that two babies grow, although they have different DNA.

## A Journey in **LOVE**

#### **Why is there pain in childbirth? –**

Childbirth is the body's way of signalling that it is time for the baby to be delivered – the womb squeezes itself to 'push' the baby out; this squeezing is called 'contractions' and it is often painful. In historical times there was nothing to help with this but, nowadays, a woman can choose from a variety of different types of pain relief from doctors and midwives.

#### **Can you die in childbirth? –** Most women having babies don't have problems.

Sometimes, however, childbirth doesn't always go according to plan. In the past, childbirth used to be very risky, both for the woman and the baby, because babies can get stuck during delivery or the mother could bleed after the birth or even get infected. In the old days there were no antibiotics and some mums got blood poisoning, and this can kill. However, nowadays we have very advanced care for women when they give birth, which means it is safe for mum and baby. Unfortunately, this isn't true everywhere in the world. In some poorer countries where they do not have the same healthcare, childbirth can be much more risky.

#### **When does puberty start?**

Puberty is when a boy's or girl's body starts to change and become like that of an adult. It usually begins anywhere between the ages of 8-14. The exact age it starts is different for each person. It can take about 4 years to fully develop an adult body – again it varies in each person.

#### **Why do people go through puberty?**

Children go through puberty because their bodies need to fully develop fully develop reproductive organs, which are needed to make babies.

#### **How do girls have milk?**

In pregnancy the woman produces certain hormones in the body which have an effect on the breast tissue itself and which will produce milk to feed the new baby God has created.

#### **Why do men use condoms?**

There are two reasons:

- To avoid pregnancy.
- To avoid transmitting sexual infections.

#### **Can a Catholic be bisexual?**

'Bisexual' is the word usually given to people who find themselves sexually attracted to both genders; in his or her sexual make-up then, a Catholic can certainly be bisexual. In practice the answer must be no, since the Church teaches that only sexual activity between a man and a woman in marriage is morally acceptable.

*Learning to love encompasses  
a range of relationships  
not just sexual ones,  
because human beings flourish  
through various and different  
relationships with other people.  
God's gift of friendship is  
a way of loving,  
and while sexual loving  
presupposes friendship,  
friendship does not require full  
sexual involvement.*

Cardinal Basil Hume

## Glossary (Revised)

### An aid for the teacher (what the Church teaches)

#### Abortion

Human life is so precious and unique that it must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. From this moment, Christians have recognised the human being that God is forming in the womb as sacred and inviolable. Therefore, the deliberate termination of a pregnancy is gravely wrong.

#### Aids

(Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a physical condition caused by a virus, in which the body loses its ability to resist infection. Aids is transmitted by sexual intercourse, through infected blood, needles, and blood products and through the placenta. Regardless of whether the act by which the virus is transmitted is moral or immoral, the actual condition is neither. It is a tragic, life-threatening disease that deserves Christian compassion and care.

#### Annulment

For a Christian marriage to be genuine – that is, valid and lawful – certain conditions apply. For example, each partner in the marriage must be completely free to make the life-long commitment involved. If, after the marriage ceremony, one or more of the conditions required can be proved to be unfulfilled, the Church authorities can be petitioned to declare the marriage invalid – null and void. There must be a serious reason and proven evidence for such a petition.

#### Anti-radicalisation

The process of radicalisation can begin surprisingly early in child development and we, must therefore, need to be watchful, alert to what our children may be exposed to at a time when they are struggling to

**“Human life is sacred and inviolable. Every civil right is based on the recognition of the first, fundamental right, the right to life.”**

Pope Francis



achieve a personal moral compass. During adolescence there is an impulse to be different – which includes holding radical beliefs – and this is a natural challenge that needs to be sensitively addressed. This would not be in order to force children to conform, but to help them realise that God loves all his children and wishes them to respect one another.

#### Birth Control (See contraception)

#### Celibacy

Making a conscious choice not to marry and to abstain from sexual relationships is usually associated with the Catholic priesthood and the religious life, although of course it is a lifestyle open to all. Consecrated celibacy for ‘the sake of the kingdom of heaven’ (CCC #1579) is intended to be a witness and sign of total dedication to Christ and his Church.

#### Chastity

Abstaining from sexual intercourse until married (while preparing for marriage, for example) is a Christian virtue and considered to be one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. (See Celibacy)

**Civil Partnerships**

The Bishops' Conference in 2003 stated that the Church welcomes and endorses the removal of unjust and discriminatory treatment against all people, since "a civilized society must recognize that everyone retains their human and civil rights simply by virtue of their inherent dignity as human beings."

(www.carolinefarrow.com December 2011). However, the Conference noted that some of the provisions made in the Civil Partnership Act were unnecessary, because the inequalities it addressed had already been remedied in other legislation. A further development has been that same-sex couples are allowed legally to marry (Act 2013). The Church has always taught that sexual relations should take place with marriage between a man and a woman.

**Conscience**

The Church teaches (CCC #1778) that a person is bound to follow faithfully what he or she truly believes to be right and just. This judgement, which needs to be properly informed, springs from the person's reason, which recognises the moral quality of an action that she/he is going to perform or has performed. Pope St John-Paul II said that a person's conscience is where he/she encounters God.

**Contraception**

Since the Church considers, for sound reasons, that the place for sexual intercourse is only within marriage, contraception is considered as the 'regulation of births', 'for example, the spacing of births within the family (CCC #2368). A distinction is made between natural and artificial means of contraception. Natural is the use of the infertile periods of the wife; artificial is the use of condoms, the pill, the cap etc. 'Natural' contraception, because it accords with Nature, is approved; artificial means are considered licit.

**Dignity of the individual**

Individual persons are consciously aware of their unique personal identities; the Church would add that being created by a loving God is the true source of this individuality and dignity. It is from this that the authenticity of Human Rights spring.

**Divorce**

The marriage promises (vows) manifest the exclusive and permanent nature of the life-long marriage commitment. The Church believes that, if mature persons freely choose to make such a commitment and all the conditions for a valid marriage are present, it is a sacramental and unbreakable union. Divorce is a judgement of the courts of the civil authorities (the State) by which the bond of marriage is declared broken or dissolved. It is a civil act not acknowledged by the Church. Nevertheless, pastors will do all they can to help and support divorced persons. Such compassionate pastoral care is encouraged by Pope Francis in his encyclical of March 2016, *Amoris Laetitia*.

**Family**

Love, with its accompanying security, is the first basic need of the newborn child; this is best supplied and experienced in the unit of mother, father and child(ren) that we know as 'the family'. This natural and traditional unit of society provides the balanced care of both female and male to promote the child's growth into autonomous and mature independence. In single-parent families that exist, for whatever reason, it falls to the lone parent to do whatever he/she can to promote this growth.

**Female genital mutilation**

We need to be aware in primary schools of this as children sometimes go for holidays in countries and cultures where this is practised. The Church is strongly opposed to such mutilation. It is also a criminal offence.

A Journey in **LOVE****LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning)**

Men and women who are sexually attracted to members of the same sex, usually prefer to be known as gay or lesbian. The Church upholds the dignity of every individual and utterly condemns any unjust discrimination or abuse directed against people who are LGBTQ; on the contrary, they must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Insofar as the LGBTQ orientation can lead to sexual activity which excludes openness to the generation of new human life and the essential sexual complementarity of man and woman, it is – in this particular and precise sense only – objectively disordered. However, it should be made quite clear that an LGBTQ orientation can never be considered sinful or evil in itself. We should be wary of attaching labels to ourselves: we are all first and foremost human beings, whatever our sexuality.

**Love of self**

Christ gave us the twofold commandment, 'Love God with all your whole heart... and your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22: 36-40). Jesus was very wise, because you cannot give to others what you do not yourself possess; a healthy love of self must come first. This is simply defined as 'looking after ourselves, taking care of our bodies and minds and avoiding stress as much as possible' (Dr Jack Dominian). We cannot exaggerate our own individual worth, but this must be balanced by an honest recognition that every person is unique to God and equally loved by him; this honesty prevents love of self from becoming glorification of self and an indifference to the worth of others.

**Marriage**

Love for another of the opposite sex compels the gift of oneself: marriage is that gift formalised by a lifelong, exclusive commitment. The Church teaches that it symbolises and reflects the loving friendship between God and his people spoken of in the Bible – a 'Covenant' – which forms an

'intimate community of life and love established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws.' (CCC #1603) This Covenant, which creates a bond between the couple, is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church.

**Masturbation**

A mature and Christian understanding of the intimate sexual relations of marriage is one which recognises that the word 'intercourse' is real and important. In sexual union – love-making – the act is a sign that 'speaks' and expresses the love of the couple. In the most intimate of ways they make a gift of themselves to one another. A life-bestowing act. Masturbation, however, is the expression of a lonely act, which is for the gratification of the individual.

In childhood and adolescence it is commonly recognised as a part of growing up, but its continuance into adulthood may be prompted by a complex variety of reasons, some of them psychological in origin. The Church has always regarded it as a 'disordered action' (CCC #2352) but advises that moral responsibility for the act and pastoral action must take into account affective maturity; the force of an acquired habit; conditions of stress and anxiety, or other psychological or social factors.

**Premarital sex**

The sign of the covenant of marriage and also of the sacrament (see Marriage) is sexual intercourse. This is the deepest, most intimate and wonderful of all human signs; it is the 'language of love' (it is called 'making love' and intercourse). In teaching that sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage, the Church is protecting its dignity and worth; for it is the only way that God, who is Love, has decided to create a new human being. Our society has permitted and encouraged the debasement of this beautiful, life-enhancing act between a married couple and is currently suffering the consequences.