

Sex Education: An Objective View

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learn. Attitudes to be developed as the children learn how the mother's body provides for the baby before birth are the appreciation of how much gratitude parents deserve from children and the consideration due to a woman in pregnancy.

Activities for this period of learning include class reading of the biblical story of creation, discussion of different kinds of love existing between two persons and the ways in which a husband and wife express their love for each other and their children.

Although the syllabus for this grade contains detailed information for the teachers about human fertilization and development through the months of embryo and fetal growth to actual delivery, the physical facts are to be used only for simple understanding by the children.

The syllabus for the seventh graders aims at building respect for sex and the dignity of the human body.

Admitting that strong sex urges are present in all, the children are shown that company-keeping involves responsibility for the welfare of one's

date and that "sex activity outside of marriage (seeking and getting) often involves selfish use of another person." True love, as the goal and ideal of sex interest, is shown to be "self-giving" not "taking."

Activities to highlight proper respect for sex include classroom discussion of magazine advertisements which picture cooperation between the sexes, joy in the boy-girl relationship, respect for another's individuality.

Gym activities in mixed groups for this age should stress the good pleasure both sexes get in one another's company and should help the shy ones to overcome silliness and embarrassment when mixing with the opposite sex, the syllabus says.

Personality development toward emotional maturity and practicing increased concern for the people of different personalities and temperaments are other interesting parts of the seventh grade instruction.

The eighth grade syllabus has a number of understandings labeled "too advanced" by many critics of the syllabus. The program includes recognition that birth control, the Pill, abortion, prostitution and premarital intercourse and pregnancies are social realities young teens will be facing soon, if not earlier.

That parents can control the number of children they may have for a number of reasons and in various ways is used to teach recognition of the responsibility for conceiving a child and respect for the individual consciences of couples who have a family.

The sacredness of sex because of its purpose of begetting children and expressing married love is set forth to show the twisted moral values behind intercourse outside of marriage. The syllabus conveys the grave responsibility that goes with the use of sex by mentioning the problems that flow from extra-marital intimacies, and pre-marriage pregnancies.

Attitudes to be sought here include: "Since intercourse is the most complete physical expression of love, we save it for our lifetime spouse. We give it to the one we love most because it is a precious and special gift."

The syllabus lists among the goals for this grade's understanding concepts about adoption for children born out of wedlock and for those orphaned by death or negligence of their parents.

The last items in the eighth graders' syllabus concern diseases spread by sexual contact and the existence of homosexuality. The attitude sought from the factual instruction should be "healthy caution," the sex education manual says.

A neutral reader of the entire syllabus has to remark on the balanced treatment of information, attitudes and activities which are precisely lined up for the teacher's use in conveying the appropriate message at each grade. The attitudes sought, flowing from an understanding that the beauty of the relationship between men and women is God-created, seem clear and strong and reachable.

Unfortunately neither all parents nor all critics of the program have read the entire syllabus, nor had the opportunity to see its implementation in the classroom. The uneasiness of many has been tragically stimulated by the non-factual and prejudiced public furor of letters, and radio-opinion programs.

That sexuality is a positive and beautiful possession, given to humans by God and calling for responsible awe in its use, is found on every page of the syllabus. That it may develop respect for the opposite sex because boys and girls have come to understand their roles in God's plan of creation should be a healthy result of the grade-by-grade instruction.

HOLY HOUR SET

Special prayers for the Holy Father, bishops and priests will feature a Mass and Holy Hour at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 7 in Holy Cross Church, Lake Avenue.

The Holy Hour is the fourth to be sponsored by the St. Michael's Garabandal Center of Rochester. Officiating will be Father Leo J. Mans.

Issue Still Controversial

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school year: the section on adoption will be revised; the tour of lavatories suggested for mixed groups of second-graders will be dropped, and the name of the program may be changed from "Sex Education and Family Life" to "Education in Love."

Speakers made the following points in answers to questions:

• Father Brent said Bishop Fulton J. Sheen had seen the program and had approved it.

• Sister Ruth Agnes said only a few copies of the first printing of the syllabus are still available, that no more will be printed until after the revisions, and that "then we will make them available."

• Sister said the program is keyed to the "average" child, and that many parents "don't seem to sense what the timetable should be for instructing their child."

• Mrs. Ruth Joynt, vice-chairman of the urban Ministry Council and another panel member, drew a groan from the audience when she suggested that some parents might have difficulty understanding the program because "this is very similar to the new math."

• Sister Ruth Agnes said children who are not emotionally or intellectually ready for the information "turn it off" and that "it might be advanced can be taken aside for individual attention, she added.

• Dr. Guerinet, discussing the competency of religious to teach the program, noted "they have the same need as the rest of us to appreciate

one's sexuality," and "to know what is meaningful and what is negligible."

• Dr. Guerinet, answering a questioner who thought discussion of venereal diseases should be eliminated, replied: "Doctors meet the problem daily. It won't go away by our not discussing it."

Sister Ruth Agnes was firm in declaring that parents should be teaching about sex. "Parents know the child best, how he understands. Also they are the epitome of masculinity and femininity to a child. Further they will be on the scene when a youngster asks questions," she said.

But statistics taken in this diocese satisfied school authorities, she declared, that the majority of parents were not instructing children at home in the values and attitudes of sexuality. The diocesan program was inaugurated after a poll of principals in the diocese, a nudge from Vatican II and the U.S. Bishops' 68 Pastoral, and Bishop Sheen's own insistence that sex education in the schools would be a vital preparation for Confirmation as the "Sacrament of Christian Maturity."

She acknowledged the parental right to set the timetable for the instruction of their own children, but insisted that "educators know the timetable for the average child."

"By setting the timetable which we follow in this syllabus, we are attempting to push parents to do their job and to help them do it by offering the classroom material, which is not a course but an installment of attitudes, as a supplement to the home."

Vatican II, State Positions

Sex Course Mandated?

Is the teaching of sex education in parochial and public schools mandated by a 1967 state education law?

No—not specifically—but practically so.

Is such teaching advocated by Vatican Council II?

The Council called for a "reverent and prudent" sex education.

Traditionally, the prime responsibility for such instruction is in the home. Since this responsibility has not been adequately carried out in a great proportion of families, it has been a natural transition to endeavor to include some such instruction in the school as a supplement to the home.

Whether or not mandated legislatively, Catholic educators around the nation regard Vatican II directives as a fundamental reason to include some degree of sex instruction in the parochial school system.

Questioned last week about the sex education "mandate," Dr. Gerard T. Guerinet, chairman of the Committee on Sex Education for the Rochester Diocese, replied:

"We were led to believe by the State Education Department that this was mandated by the state as part of the whole science curriculum."

"I am now informed that this is not mandated. Now, as far as we can see it, it will be dependent on the school district. The individual school district can decide to use it or not to use it."

"But we had been working long before (we thought there was a state mandate. We did not start with the

premise that the state had mandated a course; therefore we were going to try to fulfill the criteria."

The state Speno law declares that "the best interests of the citizens of the State of New York necessitate that the educational curriculum include instruction in the prevention of smoking, drugs and narcotics and excessive use of alcohol set forth in this act become the basis for a broad, mandatory health curricula in all elementary and secondary schools."

"Such curricula," it continues, "shall include instruction appropriate for the various grade levels in nutrition, mental and emotional health, family living, disease prevention and control and accident prevention."

State education officials subsequently suggested that "family living" would be a required course, and that sex education would be part of such a course.

This implication was contained in a guideline for curricula preparation distributed by the State Education Department about a year ago.

The guideline, intended for use in kindergarten through grade six, with subject matter divided accordingly, was prepared in response to "an increased public interest in the health sciences," wrote Robert H. Johnstone, chief of the Bureau of Elementary Curriculum Development, in a foreword.

Dr. John S. Sinacore, chief of the Bureau of Health Education in the state department, was quoted as having told area school officials at a recent meeting in Batavia that sex education "should be" part of their schools' health programs.

Harold Hacker Gets \$100 Civic Award

Harold S. Hacker, director of the Rochester Public Library and the Monroe County Library System, has been named the 1969 winner of the Helen Stone Jones Memorial Award.

The \$100 award for community service was established by friends and family of the late Mrs. Jones in recognition of her contributions to local urban planning, housing, and civic organizations. It is administered by the University of Rochester.

Hacker was cited for his activities in bringing public television to the community. He is a trustee and former president of the Rochester Area Educational Television Association (RAETA), which operates on Station WXXI (Channel 21).

A native of Buffalo, Hacker came to Rochester in 1954. In

addition to his RAETA post, he is a former member of the board of directors of the Council of Social Agencies, former president of the Catholic Family Center of Rochester, a trustee of St. John Fisher College, and vice president of the Monroe County chapter of the American Society for Public Administration.

In making the presentation, Dr. Matthew E. Bairbank said: "He is recognized as one of the leading librarians in the country—and today we recognize him as one of Rochester's leading 'activists' for community service."

A graduate of Canisius College, Hacker holds a library science degree from the University of Buffalo.

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TOPICS

Dear Friends,
In past years this week has marked the start of a new POP Game. But, as in other things, changing times mean changing customs. As we've told you previously, the whole POP Program will end April 30. In other words, the "expiring" Game is extended for a month. So if you were a "Johnny-Come-Lately" who just couldn't make the customary March 31 deadline, take heart. You have all this month to bring in your collection.

Replacing POP will be an even more profitable project for your charitable group. This is Money Labels, about which you'll be hearing more and more in the near future.

At the moment, the Courier is holding a series of informational meetings throughout the diocese. If you'd like to attend one of these, just call Mrs. Dennis at the Courier, 546 5140, at her home, 865 1554. She'll be happy to tell you the location and date of the meeting scheduled for your particular area. It will pay you to investigate the fabulous possibilities of this new money-making adventure.

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When are you happiest? Happiness lies in giving. You're happiest when you give yourself to the people who need you most... A mother, for instance, hugs with happiness when she bathes and dresses her baby. A good nurse always has time for a smile. Good fathers whistle at their work... The best sort of giving involves more than writing checks—still, how better can you help the children now who need you overseas? Boys and girls who are blind, lepers, deaf-mutes, orphans—your money gifts, large and small, will feed them, teach them, cure them, give them a chance in life... Want to be happier this Easter? Give some happiness to a child. You'll be happy, too!

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Where there is none in south India, you can build a six-room permanent school for only \$3,200. Archbishop Mar Gregorios will select the village, supervise construction and write to thank you. The children will pray for you, and you may name the school for your favorite saint, in your loved ones' memory!

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