MADE IN HIS IMAGE

Safe Environment Curriculum
Grade 10

Diocese of Steubenville
MADE IN HIS IMAGE
A SAFE ENVIRONMENT CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

MADE IN HIS IMAGE is focused on the fundamental belief that each person is made in the Image of God and therefore deserves to be respected. The curriculum is rooted in a Catholic understanding of the human person (including human sexuality) as taught by the Magisterium. Educators using these materials must form themselves according to the principles taught by the Church.¹

MADE IN HIS IMAGE proceeds from the conviction that parents are key to the safety of children and youth. When children are younger, parents are called to take on a very active role in providing a safe environment for their children, in discerning risks involved in any given situation or relationship, and in assisting their children in discerning the various challenges they are presented with as they grow and develop. As children mature and proceed into adolescents the role of parents, although different, is still essential. While attempting to offer insights and information to adolescents, MADE IN HIS IMAGE also seeks to promote the sacred relationship between parents and their children, encouraging both parents and children to develop, maintain and deepen communication between them. MADE IN HIS IMAGE is intended to supplement the education provided by parents, and to assist parents in their task of educating and protecting the children entrusted to their care.

MADE IN HIS IMAGE follows a set pattern and strategy:

1. Information for Parents

Each lesson is proceeded by a letter sent home to the parents.² Intending to respect their role as primary educators and protectors of their children, this letter informs parents about the topics being addressed, providing the scope of the content covered, and offering them the opportunity to withhold their children from this instruction if they so wish. Explaining that classroom activities are only intended to serve as a supplement to the primary education in this area that takes place at home,³ the letter also serves as an invitation to parents to embrace their role as primary educators and protectors of their children by providing additional information and resources that they can use to instruct their children, and engage them in dialogue in this delicate area.

¹ See Guiding Principles from Church Documents for Addressing Sexuality and Sexual Abuse from the Diocese of Steubenville Safe Environment Program.
² “It is clear that the assistance of others must be given first and foremost to parents rather than to their children” (The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, 145).
³ See Guiding Principles from Church Documents, 48.
2. Prayer and Catechesis

Each lesson begins with prayer which is followed by a catechetical lesson that seeks to instill in the students a greater sense of God’s love for them, and the inviolable dignity that each and every person enjoys since they are made in the image of God. MADE IN HIS IMAGE is, in essence, a catechesis on the Church’s vision of human dignity with very practical implications about the choices that we make.

3. Moral Formation

Each lesson seeks to assist students in understanding the importance of making good choices, as well as the consequences that follow from the decisions that we make. Students learn the basic concept that virtuous living leads to freedom whereas sin leads to unhappiness.

4. Safety Information

Following the discussion on making choices, and flowing from it, students engage in activities that seek to instill basic safety guidelines in them. They are encouraged to make choices that protect their safety and the safety of others, and to reach out for help when they have experienced abusive behavior or feel unsafe.

5. Health Friendships and Relationships (Grades 4 – 12)

Formation in healthy friendships and relationships is an integral component of MADE IN HIS IMAGE. Students explore the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships in order to become aware of negative (and possibly harmful) influences in their lives, and to promote healthy relationships that will assist them in living according to God’s design.

6. Communication

Each lesson concludes with a reflection on the role of parents. Students are challenged to see their parents as gifts from God, and to recognize that they play a vital role in keeping them safe and helping them to become who God has created them to be. Students are encouraged to work to develop and maintain open lines of communication with their parents.

MADE IN HIS IMAGE was written and illustrated by Joseph and Christine Schmidt.

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4 “In accomplishing her mission the Church has the duty and the right to take care of the moral education of the baptised” (Educational Guidance in Human Love, 108).

5 “Children, adolescents and young people should be taught how to enter into healthy relationships with God, with their parents, their brothers and sisters, with their companions of the same or the opposite sex, and with adults.” (The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, 53).
Ten action steps for keeping teens safe.

1. **Spend time** with your son or daughter; develop **open** and **honest** lines of communication.

   Many argue that the greatest defense against abuse is the healthy relationship between parent and child itself. This not only applies to children; it also applies to teens as well. Information is not enough. Teens need the ongoing guidance of their parents to assimilate and apply the information they have learned, as well as to process and deal with the various situations they will encounter in their lives.

2. **Teach** them that they are **loved by God**, have infinite value, and they deserve to be respected. **Model respect** in the way you speak and act. Visibly live out your faith.

   The greatest gift you can give your son or daughter is a healthy relationship with God, rooted in the firm conviction that He loves them unconditionally. Nothing will sustain them more through the trials of life. It’s important to talk to them about God’s love. And it’s even more important for them to witness your own faith by how you live. So, go to Mass, receive the Sacraments, and practice Catholic morality. You should be able to say to your teenagers: follow my example!  

3. Be clear about your expectations for their behavior. Communicate **safety rules** and **moral rules** that you want them to follow.

   Don’t simply rely on safety programs or classroom lessons. Parents need to clearly articulate the expectations they have for their teens. Explain to your son or daughter the choices that you want them to make and why. Help them to see that following the moral rules of the Church will help them to preserve their safety and avoid many of the pitfalls and heartaches that young people suffer in our culture.

4. **Use “teachable moments”** to reinforce and apply safety rules.

   Life is full of opportunities to teach about health, safety and morality. Take passing opportunities to challenge your son or daughter to apply your safety rules. Present them with different scenarios and ask them what choices they would make. They may complain about this, but it will help them to assimilate these important lessons.

5. **Talk** to your son or daughter about the choices they face day to day. Offer them **guidance** as they try to make various decisions. Help them to **process** their thoughts and feelings.

   As much as they don’t want to admit it, teens need their parents. You may think they are not listening to you, but your guidance plays a tremendous role in your teen’s self-image, and in the choices they make. It’s especially important to offer your guidance in love, patience and respect.

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6 Living your faith is not only good for your soul, it’s also has many other positive benefits. Research studies have shown an astonishing number of positive effects of religious practice. Visit [www.marri.us](http://www.marri.us) and search for “religious practice” to learn more.
6. **Listen** to your teenager. **Pay attention** to their behaviors and attitudes. Be vigilant about anything suspicious that might point to a problem.

Abuse and unhealthy behaviors often stay hidden for quite some time. For example, in the vast majority of sexual abuse cases, the sexual offender is not a stranger, but rather someone who is known to the victim and the victim’s family. And whether the offender is a family friend, a relative, a teacher, or some other person, they often will try many tactics (including lies, manipulation, and force) to keep the abuse secret. Parents need to be vigilant.

7. Be **involved** in your teen’s life. Know their teachers, coaches, and other adults that work with them. Know their friends. Know where they spend their time. Be vigilant and cautious about the people in their lives, without being paranoid or overbearing.

Let’s face it: teenagers often will make foolish mistakes. They will put themselves in situations where they can get hurt. And they can often be deceived by people that want to manipulate, use and hurt them. When it comes to safety, there is no substitute for the careful vigilance of loving parents.

8. Be vigilant with your teen’s **media use**. Be sure they know safety rules for using the internet, texting, social networking, playing video games, etc.

The tools, devices, and services for media use have increased dramatically in recent years. While this is positive in many ways, these new methods of getting connected also pose many new threats, especially for youth. Statistics about exposure to pornography, outright sexual solicitation and cyberbullying demonstrate the need to be vigilant. The reality is that **the internet is the biggest threat facing your son or daughter right now – and the access they have to the internet is staggering.** Parents need to be educated and vigilant when it comes to internet safety.

The good news is that **great resources are available for parents. Netsmartz.org** is an excellent source to become familiar with the risks associated with various media devices and sources, as well as the steps parents can take to ensure the safety of their children.

One danger that is often overlooked by parents is **video games.** Video and computer games are everywhere. Many of them involve innocent entertainment and learning. But a great number (and more than you might think) involve extremely graphic displays of violence and sexuality. In many of the most popular games the players are often encouraged (and even rewarded in the game) for brutal displays of violence, even sexual violence. Parents are strongly encouraged to learn about the dangers of video games and monitor their teen’s exposure to them. Plugged In ([www.pluggedin.com](http://www.pluggedin.com)) is excellent source for reviews from a Christian perspective of a great variety of games, movies, music and more.

9. Don’t be afraid to **ask for help** when you need it! Teach your son or daughter that it’s okay to ask for help.

10. Don’t forget to **pray!**

    Pray alone. Pray with your spouse. And be sure to **pray together as a family!** Ask the Lord to protect your son or daughter. Ask Him to strengthen your faith and the faith of your family. Ask Him to teach you to be a good parent, and to make your marriage and family healthy and holy. **Don’t underestimate the power of God's grace!**

    Keep in mind: **“The family that prays together stays together.”** (Fr. Patrick Payten)

Prepared by Joseph A. Schmidt, MAT
Marriage Ministry Coordinator, Office of Family and Social Concerns

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MADE IN HIS IMAGE
A Safe Environment Curriculum
- Grade 10 -

THEME:
"We are made in the very image of God, the image of Love. We are called by God to enjoy the fullness of life, making choices that preserve our well-being and show respect for others. Having been made for community, God calls us to form healthy relationships with others, and to cherish the people He puts in our lives, especially our parents."

1. PRAYER: Our Father

2. CATECHESIS: God and Us

Objectives

✓ The students will recognize that they should be treated with love and respect because they are made in the very image of God.
✓ The students will come to a deeper understanding of God’s love for them.
✓ The students will reflect on the ways that we can respond to God’s love.

Every person, from the first moment of his life in the womb, has an inviolable dignity, because from all eternity God willed, loved, created, and redeemed that person and destined him for eternal happiness. If human dignity were based solely on the successes and accomplishments of individuals, then those who are weak, sick, or helpless would have no dignity. Christians believe that human dignity is, in the first place, the result of God’s respect for us. He looks at every person and loves him as though he were the only creature in the world. (YOUCAT, #280)

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ At the very heart of our faith as followers of Jesus Christ is a very simple, yet mysterious belief: each of us is loved by God.
☐ It sounds simple enough. And yet, it is a profound mystery and it raises all kinds of questions.

⇒ DISCUSSION: GOD’S LOVE

☐ Ask the students: Why do you think God loves each of us? How has He shown His love for us? Write their answers on the board. They might include such things as:

  o Why:
    ▪ Just because!
    ▪ Because God is love and love is part of who He is
    ▪ We are made in the image of God
  o How:
    ▪ Jesus died on the Cross
    ▪ The Bible tells us that God loves us
- God gives us our parents who love us
- God gives us each of us talents and abilities
- Etc.

☐ As Christians, we believe that God loves us. He has created the whole world for us and called us into a loving relationship with Him!

☐ Conclude the discussion by challenging the students to broaden their understanding of human dignity. Ask them the following questions:
  - We read about God's love for us. Does that apply to you or to everyone?
  - What about the students in this school that you can’t stand?
  - What about the homeless man on the other side of town?
  - What about the unborn baby that is not wanted by his mother?
  - What about the unborn baby conceived in rape?
  - What about the prisoner on death row?
  - Here's the point: Every person in the world is loved by God, regardless of their situation or abilities or status or even the choices that they make. Every person is made in God’s image and is loved by Him as a priceless treasure.

⇒ ACTIVITY: RESPONDING TO GOD – SEE PAGE 12 (See page 20 for a time saving answer key!)

☐ Distribute the activity page and have the students complete it working as individuals or as pairs. Once they have finished (or after a sufficient amount of time has passed) go over the page together.

☐ Ask the students if any of them would be willing to share their answers to the reflection question on the bottom of the page.

3. MORAL FORMATION: Making Good Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ The students will recognize that we should always act in ways pleasing to God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ The students will discover that we need to do what is right in order to be happy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ The students will summarize insights about moral living found in a series of Scripture passages.</td>
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Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ Since we are made in God’s image we should be respected by others, and treat others with respect.

☐ Being made in the image of God also means that we need to act according to our dignity. We need to act in ways pleasing to God, imitating His goodness and love.

☐ This is the only way we can become who God has called us to be, and enjoy the happiness that he promised.

☐ God provides us with all kinds of insights and guidance for living according to His plan. We’re going to look at some Scripture passages about this.
ACTIVITY: GOD’S WORD LEADS THE WAY – SEE PAGE 13 (See page 21 for a time saving answer key!)

Working as individuals or as partners, have the students look up the Scripture passages and summarize the key points made for each one.

Once the students have completed the assignment, review their answers together.

4. SAFETY INFORMATION: Promoting Safe Choices

Objectives

✓ The students will recognize that making good choices helps to keep them safe – physically, emotionally and spiritually.
✓ The students will review basic safety rules.

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ Your safety and well-being are very important to me, the parish (or school) and certainly to your parents. I want to give you some information that will help keep you safe.

HANDOUT: CALLED TO GREATNESS – SEE PAGE 14

☐ Read and discuss the handout with the students.
☐ OPTIONAL: Require the students to read the handout and be ready for a quiz on it.

☐ OPTIONAL: Show the video “You Can’t Take it Back: A teen regrets his participation on a website created to rate others at his school.” This video demonstrates the unintended consequences of what teens write and post online. It shows how real people can be hurt, and how they can hurt themselves. Stream it or download it here: http://www.netsmartz.org/RealLifeStories/CantTakeItBack

5. RELATIONSHIPS: Promoting healthy friendships and relationships

Objectives

✓ The students will recognize that God made them to be in relationship with other people.
✓ The students will reflect on the influences that other people have on their lives, helping them to follow God and be happy or hurting them and leading them into sin.
✓ The students will identify some of the qualities of healthy friendships and relationships.

Teaching the Lesson (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

☐ God made us in His Image. He made us to be in relationships with other people: parents, family, friends, etc.
The people in our lives can help us to follow God and be happy. But they can also hurt us and lead us into sin.

It’s important to understand the difference between healthy friendships and unhealthy ones, so that we can be more aware of the influences in our lives.

**DISCUSSION: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships**

- Ask the students to name some qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Write them in different lists on the board.
- Conclude the discussion with some simple observations:
  - Just like no one is perfect, no relationship is perfect either. Sometimes we do things or say things that are wrong and sinful. But we should always try to act in ways that are respectful, and we should expect other people to treat us with respect.
  - We should surround ourselves with people that will help us to love God, love our neighbor, and love ourselves.

**ACTIVITY: A VOW WORTH WAITING FOR – SEE PAGE 16** (See page 22 for a time-saving answer key!)

6. **COMMUNICATION: Fostering Communication with Parents and Guardians**

**Objectives**

- The students will recognize that God gave them their parents (or guardians) to love them, teach them and keep them safe.
- The students will recognize the importance of strengthening their relationship with their parents or guardians by talking to them about the things that happen to them on a day to day basis.
- The students will realize the importance of telling their parents if anything happens to them that makes them feel uncomfortable or scared.
- The students will identify ways to improve or maintain open lines of communication with their parents.

“A fool despises a parent’s instructions.”

(Proverbs 15:5)

**Teaching the Lesson** (NOTE: The text printed in bold can be read to the students.)

- Friendships and relationships are very important. But there is another relationship in your life that probably doesn’t get a lot of attention: your relationship with your parents or guardians.
- Maybe you have a great relationship with your mom and dad already.
- Or maybe you struggle. Maybe you feel like they don’t understand you, or even try to understand you!
- Whatever your situation is, your relationship with your mom and dad is extremely important for your development and well-being. They have, and will continue, to affect you in countless ways.
An open and honest relationship with your parents will be a great asset to you as you continue through High School and into adulthood.

It’s especially important to talk to them when you feel hurt or unsafe. First and foremost, your parents are there to protect you from harm. And that is the first thing in their minds: they want to make sure that you are safe.

It’s extremely important for you to talk to them when you are faced with situations where you feel unsafe, scared, worried, and unsure. More than anyone else, they can guide you to make good and healthy decisions in your life. They can help you to be safe.

Developing and maintaining an open and honest relationship with your parents takes work from both parents and teens to have a good relationship.

⇒ ACTIVITY: HELP OR HURT – SEE PAGE 18

Optional: Have a follow-up discussion after the students have completed the assignment. Ask them to share some specific things they can do to improve their relationship with their parents.

7. REVIEW

☐ Read the theme for the lesson to the students.
☐ Review the key points of each section.
☐ Have the students complete the STUDENT EVALUATION: WHAT DID YOU THINK? – SEE PAGE 19. Gaining their feedback will 1) help you to make your lessons more effective by identifying areas that need to be improved, and 2) help to identify other issues that need to be addressed. It may also be an opportunity for students to discretely identify themselves as needing some sort of assistance or counseling. *If you suspect that a particular student needs individual attention/counseling, be sure to bring it to the attention of your supervisors!*

8. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

☐ HANDOUT: DON’T SETTLE FOR LESS – SEE PAGE 24

☐ NETSMARTZ
  o The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has produced an excellent resource for internet and media safety: [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org). A variety of FREE resources are provided for students, parents and educators.

☐ START TALKING! *Building a Drug Free Future*
  o A new effort is underway across Ohio to prevent drug abuse. The Catholic Bishops of Ohio [issued a statement](http://www.starttalking.ohio.gov) about the initiative. “Start Talking is a program designed by the state of Ohio to help equip families and communities to clearly communicate the important message of drug prevention,” the Bishops said. “We support this critical initiative and we encourage Ohioans to visit [www.starttalking.ohio.gov](http://www.starttalking.ohio.gov) for details.”
Among the resources available is an email newsletter for educators. Their website explains: “Teachers are powerful influencers in their students’ lives. What is shared in the classroom can positively impact a child’s decision not to use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs. Teachers have an incredible opportunity to guide students toward making healthy, drug-free lifestyle choices. That is why Drug Free Action Alliance created TEACHable Moments, which are specially designed tips for educators, sent out via email twice monthly for FREE. They contain news that teachers can use to get those critical prevention talks started in the classroom.” Learn more at www.starttalking.ohio.gov/SchoolLeaders.aspx
RESPONDING TO GOD

“How can we respond to God when He speaks to us?” This question appears in the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (known as YOUCAT). The catechism goes on to offer the answer below.

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the missing words using the word bank below.

“To respond to God means to ________________________ him. Anyone who wants to believe needs a ____________ that is ready to ________________________ (see 1 Kings 3:9). In many ways God ______________ contact with us. In every ________________________ encounter, in every moving experience of ________________________, in every apparent _________________________________.

in every ________________________, every ________________________________, there is a hidden ___________________________ from God to us. He speaks even more clearly to us when he turns to us in his ________________ or in the voice of our conscience. He addresses us as ________________________.

Therefore we, too, should respond as friends and believe him, ________________________ him completely, learn to ________________________ him better and better, and accept his _____________________________.” (YOUCAT, #20)

believe
challenge
coincidence
friends
heart
human
listen
message

nature
reservation
seeks
suffering
trust
understand
will
Word

REFLECTION: The answer provided by YOUCAT is full of great insights! Read through the entire completed quote. Pick one phrase or statement that stands out to you or that you like and write it below:

Explain why you chose this statement:
**GOD’S WORD LEADS THE WAY**

**DIRECTIONS:** The Scriptures offer us a wealth of insights into living moral lives that are pleasing to God. Look up each passage below, and summarize the message in the space provided.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 6:5</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Sirach 7:27-28</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Matthew 5:43-44</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>John 15:5</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Romans 12:2</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 6:19-20</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 13:4-7</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 15:33</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Philippians 4:8</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Colossians 3:8-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>1 Thessalonians 4:3-5</td>
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CALLED TO GREATNESS

Guidelines for teens for making choices that protect their safety and well-being

God has made you for greatness! Not an artificial or superficial greatness, like you find in commercials and movies. God has made you for true greatness – a greatness that comes from dignity, freedom and love.

But we live in a fallen world. Much of the media, entertainment, and consumer products presented to you offer a distorted view of what it means to be happy. And the sad reality is that some of the people in your life will seek to manipulate you for their own interests, either in small ways or in ways that can be abusive.

This is NOT God’s way! God has created you for love and freedom. The Lord wants you to experience the fullness of life. God wants you to know the deep joy of authentic love, lasting friendships and true self-worth.

The following guidelines are presented as an attempt to make you aware of dangers to your physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, and provide you with clear boundaries that will keep you safe.

Guidelines for Personal Safety

- Strive to make safe and healthy choices. Be polite to everyone without allowing others to take advantage of you or those around you. Be a model of respect and integrity.
- Always talk to your parents about where you are going and who you are with. Too many young people turn up missing because they failed to follow this simple rule.
- Avoid going places by yourself, such as walking to school, going to the mall, etc. You should be with at least one other person.
- No one should ever touch you in a way that feels uncomfortable or wrong. If someone ever does, tell them to STOP! Be assertive, and get away.
- Tell your parents no matter what if anyone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. Even if someone threatens to hurt you or someone else, you need the help, support and guidance of your parents. If you parents don't believe you, talk to some other adult and keep talking until someone takes action!
- Always listen if a friend tells you they feel unsafe, depressed or have been victimized in any way. Take them seriously. Encourage them to seek help, and go with them to talk to their parents or another adult.
- Never feel obligated to keep a secret when it involves someone’s safety or wellbeing.
- Tell your parents, and an adult in authority, if anyone makes indecent, rude or suggestive comments about your body or bodily activities, or if anyone uses obscene gestures. This is called sexual harassment. It is illegal, immoral, and should not be tolerated.
- When you are at a party or some other event, never go off to a secluded area, especially with someone you just met. This places you in a dangerous situation – spiritually and physically.
- When you are at a party, never leave your drink unattended. This gives someone the opportunity to put alcohol or a knock out drug in your drink. Always finish or throw out your drink and get a new one in case someone put something in it when you weren’t looking.
• **Never use drugs or alcohol.** Avoid any situation where drugs or alcohol are being abused. Apart from being illegal and immoral, these situations pose many dangers and risks.

• **Never drive** with anyone who is texting, or anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you drive, don’t do this yourself.

• If you are in a situation that makes you feel scared or unsafe, **trust your instincts.** Try to remove yourself from that situation as soon as possible.

• **Be cautious** about adults (or teens who are much older than you) who seem to give you an **undue amount of attention,** or give you special gifts, routinely compliment you about your appearance, or single you out in other ways. This may be the beginnings of an unhealthy attachment or attempted abuse.

• **Don’t be afraid to ask for help** when you feel unsafe or depressed. Never forget that you are loved **by God** and you can **never lose your dignity as a child of God** – no matter what you do, or what others do to you! There is always hope and healing with Jesus Christ!

**Guidelines for Internet and Media Safety**

• **Think before you text, email or post anything.** Once something is sent electronically you can’t take it back, and you can’t always control what problems it may cause or where it may end up. Be aware of the unintended consequences of your media choices.

• Keep in mind that people online are **real people with real feelings.** Don’t use the internet to post rude, cruel or obscene things about other people.

• **Talk to your parents** about their expectations for the internet and media use.

• Never take or send **pictures** of yourself or others that are sexy, indecent or immodest.

• **Avoid all forms of media and entertainment that glamorize sex and violence.** The more people are exposed to these messages, the more they accept them. This causes people to lower their standards of conduct, makes it more difficult to enter into genuinely healthy relationships, and causes them to distance themselves from God.

• Don’t give your **passwords** to anyone except your parents, not even your best friends. Having your password accessible to others makes you vulnerable to others using your accounts to hurt or embarrass you.

• **Set your social network settings to private.** Only friend people that you actually know.

• Never give out **personal information** that will allow people to identify you.

• **Never agree to meet** anyone in person that you met online.

• Never respond to any **comments** that are rude or obscene.

• **Talk to your parents** about anything you encounter online that makes you feel uncomfortable, scared or dirty.

• **Don’t believe** everything you read online, and **don’t let yourself see** everything there is to see online. A staggering number of sites on the internet actively seek to expose youth to inappropriate, dangerous and offensive information.

*(NOTE: For more information about internet and media safety, visit [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org).*
A VOW WORTH KEEPING:
WHY WAIT UNTIL MARRIAGE?

BY COURTNEY KISSINGER

DIRECTIONS: Complete the puzzle by reading the Q and A below and filling in the missing words.

Q: Lately all of my friends have been having sex. I made a vow to wait until marriage, but how do I keep my vow when I’m around them and peer pressure is at its highest?

A: I’m so glad you’ve made a vow to wait until marriage to have sex. It’s a great decision to follow God’s will for your life! When we believe that God wants what’s ________ [27 across] for us, we can ________ [12 across] in His commandments (Exodus 20:14).

When you have sex outside of marriage you are ________ [24 down] yourself, your partner, and your future ________ [2 down]. The opposite is true when you save sex within marriage, as God intended it, you love and ________ [6 across] God, your spouse, yourself and others.

Before Brian and I gave ourselves ________ [29 across] and ________ [8 across] to each other, we knew that a few other things needed to happen ________ [15 across]. He decorated my apartment with rose petals and candles, and he got down on one knee and ________ [16 down]. Then we made plans for our ________ [34 across] day and, more importantly, we prepared for our ________ [19 across]. I walked down the aisle in a beautiful white dress and veil, and Brian cried as he saw me walking toward him. We promised to love one another, until ________ [22 across] separates us, in front of ________ [3 down], our ________ [9 across], and our friends.

When a husband and wife make love they are ________ [21 down] their wedding vows (CCC 2360). They are reaffirming their ________ [14 across] to be true to each other in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.
Each swears to love and honor their spouse all the days of their life. They are called to give themselves freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully to their spouse, just as Jesus Christ gave Himself to His Bride, the ___________ [14 down].

Having sex with someone before you’re married is a _______ [31 down] — a lie spoken with your _________ [32 down]. Instead of giving of yourself unconditionally, you are ______________ [20 across] from them with conditions. The conditions could be: I may leave you after tonight, I may have sex with others, I may love someone else, I may get you pregnant, I may give you a sexually transmitted disease, and so on. Even if both people love each other, each person deserves to know that the other person has made a _______ [30 down] before God and the Church that their partner will remain _______________ [25 across].

Your friends’ sexual relationships are going to end in one of two ways. They are either going to ______________ [4 down] up or get ________________ [28 across]. If they break up (the vast majority will) – they will suffer severe _______________ [6 down]. God didn’t intend for us to have sex with someone and then be separated. Pain, anxiety, and depression often result from sexual activity outside of marriage. Even if your friends end up marrying the person they’re currently having sex with, they will miss out on the _______________ [10 down] and _______________ [33 across] that the beginning of marriage brings to relationships. They will have missed their chance to _______________ [17 down] their sexual urges for the good of the other. Additionally, couples who have premarital sex have a higher chance of divorce than those who save sex for marriage. 4

Your decision to save sex for marriage is one of the best decisions you can make for yourself and your future spouse. Here are some ideas to help you stay strong in your commitment:

- Remember _____ [23 across] you have made your vow to save sex for marriage. Write your commitment down and look back to it when you feel tempted or pressured by friends to be sexually active.
- Find other _______________ [7 across] who share your morals and beliefs. The truth is that nearly two-thirds of high school students in America are not currently sexually active. 2
- Be an _______________ [5 down] of peace and hope to others as you live out your vow. Although your friends having sex may seem happy for a time, that time will end and they may be encouraged by your example.
- Live your life to the _____________ [26 down]! Go out with friends, call family members, pray, read a new book, cook, bake, go to the movies, journal, work hard on getting good grades, join a new Bible study or try a youth group event, etc.
- Look to a happily married Christian _______________ [11 down] as your role model. Instead of listening to your unmarried friends’ sex stories, try asking a married couple about how chastity has played a role in their relationship.
- Remember how _______________ [30 across] you are. Nothing that you’ve done and nothing that’s been done to you can ever diminish your _______________ [18 across]. Know that you are worth waiting for.

God wants to reward your _______________ [15 down]. Continue to seek His will for your life and follow His _______________ [1 across]. You don’t have to wait for _______ [13 across] to find you; He already has. Draw closer to the One who truly knows and loves you as you are.

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HELP OR HURT?

You may have a great relationship with your parents already. Or you may be struggling with them, feeling like they don’t understand you or accept you for who you are. The reality is that your relationship with your parents is extremely important for your development and well-being. They have, and will continue, to affect you in countless ways. An open and honest relationship with your parents will be a great asset to you as you continue through High School and into adulthood.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following statements and mark whether they will help or hurt communication with your parents.

**WHAT IF YOU…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELP</th>
<th>HURT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Look your parents in the eye when you talk to them.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Don’t talk to them about the decisions you make on a day to day basis.</td>
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<td>3. Complain whenever they tell you to do something.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Roll your eyes when they talk to you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Always tell them the truth.</td>
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<td>6. Talk to them about the dating relationship you are in.</td>
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<td>7. Tell them about the subjects and assignments that you are having a hard time with.</td>
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<td>8. Explain to them some of the challenges that teens face now that might be different from when your parents were young.</td>
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<td>9. Constantly listen to music with your earbuds in and pretend not to hear them when people are talking to you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Ask your parents for their advice about something.</td>
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<td>11. Ask them things when you can see they are super busy or super stressed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Expect your parents to “just know” how you feel and give you the support you need.</td>
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<td>13. Listen to them when they talk to you.</td>
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<td>14. Accept the advice they offer.</td>
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<td>15. Stay calm when you are talking to them and they say things you don’t want to hear.</td>
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<td>16. Speak to them respectfully.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Talk to them about your hopes for your future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Go to Mass with them each Sunday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Pray for them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Try to understand their rules.</td>
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<td>21. Remember that the restrictions they give you are to keep you safe and healthy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Complain about spending time with them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Hide your feelings from them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Remember that they’ve been around and may have good advice for you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Expect them to not understand you, and don’t even bother talking to them about things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Eat dinner together whenever possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Remember their lives are tough too sometimes and try to understand their problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Forgive them when they have hurt you.</td>
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<td>29. Be aware of the “real message” that your words and gestures communicate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Strive to honor your father and mother by talking about them to others in respectful ways.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**MAKE IT REAL:** Choose three of the positive ideas above and commit to putting them into practice this week.
WHAT DID YOU THINK?

Your feedback is important! Help us to make these lessons as effective as possible. Complete the questions below.

Part 1: This part seeks to instill in the students a greater sense of God’s love for them, and the dignity that each and every person enjoys since they are made in the image of God. Activity: RESPONDING TO GOD.

RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE:

1 2 3 4 5
Awesome! Good. I learned some Okay, I learned a little. Poor. I didn’t learn much. Terrible. I didn’t get anything.

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Part 2: This part seeks to assist students in understanding the importance of making good choices, as well as the consequences that follow from the decisions that we make. Activity: GOD’S WORD LEADS THE WAY.

RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE:

1 2 3 4 5
Awesome! Good. I learned some Okay, I learned a little. Poor. I didn’t learn much. Terrible. I didn’t get anything.

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Part 3: This part provides safety information and encourages students to make safe choices, and to reach out for help when they have experienced abusive behavior or feel unsafe. Handout: CALLED TO GREATNESS.

RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE:

1 2 3 4 5
Awesome! Good. I learned some Okay, I learned a little. Poor. I didn’t learn much. Terrible. I didn’t get anything.

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Part 4: This part seeks to help students recognize the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, and to work to develop relationships rooted in virtue and respect. Activity: A VOW WORTH KEEPING.

RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE:

1 2 3 4 5
Awesome! Good. I learned some Okay, I learned a little. Poor. I didn’t learn much. Terrible. I didn’t get anything.

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Part 5: This part challenges students to recognize the role their parents play in their safety and development, and encourages them to maintain open lines of communication with their parents. Activity: HELP OR HURT?

RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE:

1 2 3 4 5
Awesome! Good. I learned some Okay, I learned a little. Poor. I didn’t learn much. Terrible. I didn’t get anything.

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

What are some other issues you think should be covered?

NAME: ___________________________ (OPTIONAL)
RESPONDING TO GOD

“How can we respond to God when He speaks to us?” This question appears in the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (known as YOUCAT). The catechism goes on to offer the answer below.

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the missing words using the word bank below.

“To respond to God means to believe him. Anyone who wants to believe needs a heart that is ready to listen (see 1 Kings 3:9). In many ways God seeks contact with us. In every human encounter, in every moving experience of nature in every apparent coincidence in every challenge, every suffering, there is a hidden message from God to us. He speaks even more clearly to us when he turns to us in his Word or in the voice of our conscience. He addresses us as friends. Therefore we, too, should respond as friends and believe him, trust him completely, learn to understand him better and better, and accept his will without reservation.” (YOUCAT, #20)

believe  nature
challenge reservation
coincidence seeks
friends suffering
heart trust
human understand
listen will
message Word

REFLECTION: The answer provided by YOUCAT is full of great insights! Read through the entire completed quote. Pick one phrase or statement that stands out to you or that you like and write it below:

Explain why you chose this statement:
GOD’S WORD LEADS THE WAY

**DIRECTIONS:** The Scriptures offer us a wealth of insights into living moral lives that are pleasing to God. Look up each passage below, and summarize the message in the space provided.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 6:5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sirach 7:27-28</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Matthew 5:43-44</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>John 15:5</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Romans 12:2</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 6:19-20</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 13:4-7</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 15:33</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Ephesians 4:1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Philippians 4:8</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Colossians 3:8-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>1 Thessalonians 4:3-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q: Lately all of my friends have been having sex. I made a vow to wait until marriage, but how do I keep my vow when I’m around them and peer pressure is at its highest?

A: I’m so glad you’ve made a vow to wait until marriage to have sex. It’s a great decision to follow God’s will for your life! When we believe that God wants what’s best [27 across] for us, we can trust [12 across] in His commandments (Exodus 20:14).

When you have sex outside of marriage you are hurting [24 down] yourself, your partner, and your future spouse [2 down]. The opposite is true when you save sex within marriage, as God intended it, you love and honor [6 across] God, your spouse, yourself and others.

Before Brian and I gave ourselves freely [29 across] and totally [8 across] to each other, we knew that a few other things needed to happen first [15 across]. He decorated my apartment with rose petals and candles, and he got down on one knee and proposed [16 down]. Then we made plans for our wedding [34 across] day and, more importantly, we prepared for our marriage [19 across]. I walked down the aisle in a beautiful white dress and veil, and Brian cried as he saw me walking toward him. We promised to love one another, until death [22 across] separates us, in front of God [3 down], our families [9 across], and our friends.

When a husband and wife make love they are renewing [21 down] their wedding vows (CCC 2360). They are reaffirming their commitment [14 across] to be true to each other in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. Each swears to love and
honor their spouse all the days of their life. They are called to give themselves freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully to their spouse, just as Jesus Christ gave Himself to His Bride, the Church [14 down].

Having sex with someone before you’re married is a lie [31 down] — a lie spoken with your body [32 down]. Instead of giving of yourself unconditionally, you are taking [20 across] from them with conditions. The conditions could be: I may leave you after tonight, I may have sex with others, I may love someone else, I may get you pregnant, I may give you a sexually transmitted disease, and so on. Even if both people love each other, each person deserves to know that the other person has made a vow [30 down] before God and the Church that their partner will remain faithful [25 across].

Your friends’ sexual relationships are going to end in one of two ways. They are either going to break [4 down] up or get married [28 across]. If they break up (the vast majority will) – they will suffer severe heartbreak [6 down]. God didn’t intend for us to have sex with someone and then be separated. Pain, anxiety, and depression often result from sexual activity outside of marriage. Even if your friends end up marrying the person they’re currently having sex with, they will miss out on the excitement [10 down] and newness [33 across] that the beginning of marriage brings to relationships. They will have missed their chance to discipline [17 down] their sexual urges for the good of the other. Additionally, couples who have premarital sex have a higher chance of divorce than those who save sex for marriage.¹

Your decision to save sex for marriage is one of the best decisions you can make for yourself and your future spouse. Here are some ideas to help you stay strong in your commitment:

- Remember why [23 across] you have made your vow to save sex for marriage. Write your commitment down and look back to it when you feel tempted or pressured by friends to be sexually active.
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- Live your life to the full [26 down]! Go out with friends, call family members, pray, read a new book, cook, bake, go to the movies, journal, work hard on getting good grades, join a new Bible study or try a youth group event, etc.
- Look to a happily married Christian couple [11 down] as your role model. Instead of listening to your unmarried friends’ sex stories, try asking a married couple about how chastity has played a role in their relationship.
- Remember how valuable [30 across] you are. Nothing that you’ve done and nothing that’s been done to you can ever diminish your worth [18 across]. Know that you are worth waiting for.

God wants to reward your faithfulness [15 down]. Continue to seek His will for your life and follow His commands [1 across]. You don’t have to wait for love [13 across] to find you; He already has. Draw closer to the One who truly knows and loves you as you are.

¹ See http://www.focusinsights.org/article/marriage-and-family/premarital-sex-and-greater-risk-divorce#footnote1_1th3ppb
² See http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6504.pdf
**CHOICES**

Do you want to ignore all this stuff and just have fun?

That's your choice. But what are you saying that?

“I like it when others use my body and don’t care about me.”

“I’m not ashamed that I lied to my parents and violated their trust.”

“I don’t really care about you; I’m just trying to have fun.”

“I don’t like myself, why should you like me?”

“They like me when I do what they want; but no one knows who I really am.”

---

**COMMITMENT**

Are you willing to sacrifice for true love?

~ ♥ ~

Believing that sex is sacred, I promise to God that I will save the gift of my sexuality from now until marriage. I choose to glorify God with my body and pursue a life of purity, trusting that the Lord is never outdone in generosity.

Signed ________________________

Date ___________

(Text of pledge from Jason Evert)

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**Print Resources**

* Pure Love by Jason Evert
* Life on the Edge by Dr. James Dobson
* Pure Manhood by Jason Evert
* Pure Womanhood by Crystalina Evert

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**Online Resources**

[www.LifeTeen.com](http://www.LifeTeen.com)

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*The model of God’s love presented here is derived from Christopher West. See [www.christopherwest.com](http://www.christopherwest.com) for more!*

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**MADE IN HIS IMAGE**

A Safe Environment Curriculum from the Diocese of Steubenville

[www.diosteub.org](http://www.diosteub.org)

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**Don’t settle for less than GOD wants to give you!**

Reflections and practical guidelines for relationships and true happiness

Revised 2014
God calls us to share in the beauty and depth of True Love. He gives us a model of True Love and calls us to imitate Him. Our love must always be a reflection of God's Love. What is His Love like?

**FREE** - True love is not about force, coercion, or guilt. True love is a free gift of oneself to another.

**TOTAL** - True love is a sharing of the whole of one's life with another. Every dimension of your life must be involved: emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual.

**FAITHFUL** - True love is not something that is here one day and gone the next. True love lasts a lifetime.

**FRUITFUL** - True love is always life-giving. True love is always open to the gift of life that God sometimes blesses the sexual act.

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**Some guidelines & advice for finding true happiness**

*Are you willing to sacrifice for True Love?*

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### ~ ♥ ~ Talk with Jesus

Jesus is the best fried you will ever have. He cares deeply about you, your relationships and your choices. Talk to Him about your life.

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### ~ ♥ ~ Make your goal clear in your mind.

If you want to be pure you need to make that decision and commitment **BEFORE** you are faced with temptation. Once you are in a tempting situation it is not always easy to think clearly.

---

### ~ ♥ ~ Make a plan and set boundaries.

To preserve your purity you need a **plan** (I won't get into these situations...) and **boundaries** (I won't do these things...). You need to have this clear in your mind **BEFORE** you face temptation.

---

### ~ ♥ ~ Don't mistake physical intimacy for real intimacy.

So many people do immoral things because they are looking for love. Real intimacy isn't based on physical pleasure. **Real intimacy is about sacrificial love and commitment.**

---

### ~ ♥ ~ Make good choices & Avoid pitfalls.

**Save all sexual acts for marriage.** Avoid actions that can create the bonding of sex and/or lead you to sexual intercourse. No passionate kissing, kissing below the chin, or lying down together. Don't touch each other in ways that are arousing. **Save all these for marriage.**

---

### ~ ♥ ~ Focus on friendship.

Use dating as a time to get to who people really are and to grow in your understanding of yourself. **Physical affection needs to be founded on friendship.**

---

### ~ ♥ ~ Dress modestly.

(This is especially important for women because immodesty affects men much more than women.) Think about what you wear and what it says. Do you want to be remembered for your body or your personality, your humor, your kindness? Are your choices of clothing tempting others to lust? **The people that are lured by immodest dress are not the ones who will respect and love you - they have other motives in mind.**

---

### ~ ♥ ~ Stay away from alcohol and drugs.

These substances limit your ability to make good choices. Once you make the bad choice of using drugs or alcohol there is no limit to what you might do.

---

### ~ ♥ ~ Seek purity in all you do.

How can you be impure in every other area of your life and expect to be pure in dating? You must strive to be pure in all areas of your life: movies, video games, TV, conversations, recreation, etc.

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### ~ ♥ ~ Know when to quit.

Don't stay in a serious relationship with a person you know you cannot marry. If you carry on you are being dishonest with yourself and that person.

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“Christian MARRIAGE faithfully lived is the fulfillment and expression of True Love!” - Christopher West