

St. Anthony Catholic School

Theology of the Body Course Layout

(as presented by Danette Cantu)

All of the material used in the classroom is within the guidelines and parameters of the *Theology of the Body for Teens* (specifically the Middle School edition) program which comes through Ascension Press and has been granted the Imprimatur.

This course is taught in one 45-minute elective period per week for the duration of the academic year for seventh and eighth grade separately.

The following is how the program topics are presented to each grade level:

Seventh Grade

Chapter 1 - Who am I? : Discovering My True Identity

A significant amount of time is devoted to acknowledging their true identities as children created in the image and likeness of God.

Activities:

1. Make a "This is ME!" collage to emphasize the beautiful things that make each of them unique.
2. Thorough discussion about how God makes each of them unique but still in His own image and likeness. He loves each of them individually. All are worthy of His love.

Chapter 2 – Our Story: God’s Plan, Human Sin, Jesus’ Love

Sin is brought in to explain how man gets off course due to the influences of sin and how the ways of the world are not necessarily God’s way nor God’s will. The discussion of free will and the effects of personal choices where even the smallest of sins come into play.

Activities:

1. Madame Blueberry VeggieTales video – Beautifully displays the lesson that happiness does not come to us from the tangible things of this world but in the meaningful relationship we develop with those around us.
2. Adam and Eve comic strip – The influence of sin in our world and how it is not God’s will for us to sin.

Chapter 3 – My, Myself and I: Body and Soul

The term 'language of the body' is introduced. Man are more than a body; he/she is a body-soul composite. Jesus came to Earth fully God and fully

human; He is the key to understanding man's own humanity. The sacraments are visible signs of God's love and grace in each of our lives.

Activities:

1. Student each take a selfie and each of the remaining students in the class will add positive, supportive adjectives to describe the person.
2. Charades of various feelings and actions – must be depicted without voice, only the body language.
3. Create an image that illustrates the message for the Scripture passage. Use only images, no words. *"So be imitators of God, as beloved children."*
Ephesians 5:1

Eighth Grade

***Beginning of year (August) Two-day retreat to the Spiritual Renewal Center to develop a sense of solidarity, safety and the bond of friendship upon which to continue developing the beautiful gifts of this program throughout the upcoming year.*

Chapter 4 – How Should I Act?

Vice vs. Virtue – We develop habits, both good and bad, over time and through behavior. Recognize the necessity of grace in the practice of virtue. Explore the importance of sacraments as sources grace. Understand the need for consistency in the practice of virtue

Activities:

1. Choose one personal vice and challenge oneself for a period of time to battle that vice, realizing it takes a change of habit to eliminate vice, just as it takes a change of habit to develop virtues.
2. Learn the cardinal and theological virtues.

Chapter 5- Sex, Love and Chastity

Why did God create the two genders?

Understand the significance of our bodies being made for complementarity.

Selfishness vs. self-gift

Chastity is a positive virtue that frees us.

Activities:

1. Gender Differences Drawings – Boys and girls divided into separate groups; boys work together to draw a life-size outline of a girl and include features on the girl that are essentials for the 'ideal' girl; girls do the same of the 'ideal' boy. Discuss which of these are valid characteristics to achieve what God intended our male and female bodies to be.

2. Discuss and understand the design of the human body as being such that each gender does not make sense without the other gender in terms of complementarity. God designed man and woman to be beautiful pieces of the puzzle designed to bring life and unity in marriage.

Chapter 6 – To Use or Not to Use? : That is the Question: The Opposite of Love

Love vs. Lust

Evaluate current culture and behaviors (music, TV, Internet, pornography, “sexting”, premarital sex) with the standards of chastity

What is considered ‘too far’ when dating?

Activities:

1. Explore through case examples how these principles apply to concrete circumstances, especially the critical standard of loving, not using, others.
2. “Love is.....” Project – Choose one of the following for a presentation:
 - a. Create an infomercial displaying the ideas of love and lust and which one may seem more attractive by worldly standards but will not achieve true freedom and happiness. –OR--
 - b. Watch a ‘love story’ movie and create a display in some form demonstrating the scenes from the movie that portray authentic love (and why) and those scenes that display lust or using (and why). –OR--
 - c. Create a poster board display demonstrating the common misconception that it is okay for us to ‘use’ people and ‘love’ things instead of the proper order of loving people and using things of this world.

Chapter 7 – Vocation: God’s Call, My Response

Universal call to holiness in the vocations of marriage, consecrated life and ordained life.

How can we live the universal vocation to holiness in our daily lives?

Activities:

1. Letters to future spouses – Each student will write a letter and seal it to keep for future years in the hope of sharing it one day if his/her vocation is marriage.
2. Visit the Bishop – This visit during the beginning of the 8th grade year gives students the opportunity to explore the possibility of a vocation to priesthood or the religious life.

Chapter 8 – HOPE AND FUTURE: Daily Living Out the Language of the Body

Apply core concepts of the “theology of the body” to:

Friends: bullying, gossip, peer pressure, social justice

Family: broken or dysfunctional, lack of intimacy with parents, siblings

World: works of mercy, social justice

To overcome fear and make a deeper commitment to embrace and live their Catholic faith

Activities:

1. Explore case examples and scenarios to practice the process of recognizing these concepts and proper Christian responses to them.
2. Closing (end of year) day retreat – Complete the course by coming together as a class to renew our commitment to one another as well as review some of the key concepts and how to carry them on into the upcoming teenage years.