

CHECKLIST FOR CATHOLIC PARENTS

What Young Teenagers Should Know About Human Sexuality

Use this checklist to determine if your son or daughter knows what younger teenagers should know about human sexuality. The checklist is based on guidelines for adolescents ages 12-15 suggested by the Committee on Education of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and published in *Human Sexuality--A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning* [USCC, 1990].

Because early adolescents may differ in their maturity level in many areas, it is important for parents and guardians to be sensitive to the need to adapt instructional material, methods and consideration of times when same sex or individual instruction is more appropriate. At this stage in a child's development it is important to:

- | | Yes..... | No |
|--|----------|----|
| 1.1. teach early adolescents respect for their bodies. | — | — |
| 1.2. explain to early adolescents the nature of personal maturation. | — | — |
| 1.3. help early adolescents deal with their own growth, maturation, and the consequent psychological effects | — | — |
| 1.4. reaffirm for early adolescents the value of personal modesty. | — | — |

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Because early adolescence presents youth with many new experiences, both physical and emotional (e.g., menstruation and nocturnal emissions), parents and guardians need to assist them in making sense of these new experiences in ways that respect the early adolescence experience and honor the dignity of sexuality from a Catholic perspective. At this stage in a child's development it is important to:

- | | Yes..... | No |
|---|----------|----|
| 2.1. reassure early adolescents that sexual attraction is natural and normal. | — | — |
| 2.2. instruct early adolescents on proper hygiene and health care for their bodies. | — | — |
| 2.3. assist early adolescents to develop good nutritional habits and regular exercise routines. | — | — |
| 2.4. inform early adolescents of the health hazard that smoking presents. | — | — |
| 2.5. educate early adolescents about the harmful effects of alcohol and drug abuse on physical and mental health. | — | — |

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Because physical growth is such a dominant concern in early adolescence, it is especially important for parents and guardians to teach the purpose, respect and care of the body. At this stage in a child's development it is important to:

- | | Yes..... | No |
|--|----------|----|
| 3.1. provide early adolescents with an understanding of the biological processes of the body, appropriate to their stage of development. | — | — |
| 3.2. teach early adolescents the basic facts of human fertility and reproduction in the context of Christian marriage. | — | — |
| 3.3. extoll the virtue of chastity and the right of early adolescents to bodily integrity, include respect for and from others. | — | — |

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What Young Teenagers Should Know About Human Sexuality

Because early adolescents are becoming more aware of the power of their own sexuality, parents and guardians need to help them understand that the human person is called to experience and express love by means of the body in appropriate and respectful ways. At this stage in a child's development it is important to:

- | | Yes.....No |
|--|-------------|
| 4.1. reassure early adolescents that they have the capacity both to love and to be loved. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 4.2. assist early adolescents to recognize the role and model of parents and family regarding love and relationships. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 4.3. instruct early adolescents in the appropriate ways of expressing love physically and emotionally. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 4.4. teach early adolescents that Christian marriage is the context in which love is expressed fully by means of the body. | ___ ___ ___ |

Because early adolescents look for guides and adult models, it is necessary for parents and guardians to tell the story of Jesus and other holy people who show us how to appreciate, make decisions about, and live out the gift of human sexuality. At this stage in a child's development it is important to:

- | | Yes.....No |
|--|-------------|
| 5.1. encourage early adolescents to become familiar with the life and story of Jesus as the model for personal maturity, friendships, and relational skills. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 5.2. make available to early adolescents the lives of the saints for inspiration and as models for imitation. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 5.3. identify and foster adult role models and mentors in the family, school, church and local community. | ___ ___ ___ |

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Because the gifts of sexuality and sex can be abused, it is timely for parents and guardians to reaffirm that some touches are inappropriate and may constitute sexual abuse, and to give guidance on how to resist the temptations of immoral, aberrant, and inappropriate sexual behavior. At this stage in a child's development it is important to:

- | | Yes.....No |
|---|-------------|
| 6.1. teach early adolescents how to deal morally with pornographic literature, abusive language, and the exploitation of sex and sexuality in movies, television, music, videos and other forms of entertainment. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 6.2. inform early adolescents about the Church's teaching and pastoral approach to the issue of masturbation. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 6.3. instruct early adolescents on the Church's tradition regarding genital sex outside of marriage. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 6.4. inform early adolescents of the nature and effects of sexually transmitted diseases. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 6.5. provide a simple explanation of church teaching regarding heterosexuality and homosexuality. | ___ ___ ___ |

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Because early adolescents may begin to explore, experiment, and experience their sexuality in new ways, parents and guardians need to explain Catholic moral principles and teach them the moral decision-making process. At this stage in a child's development it is important to:

- | | Yes.....No |
|--|-------------|
| 7.1. teach early adolescents the art of moral decision-making, moving from values to general norms to application in specific moral situations. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 7.2. provide early adolescents with the necessary resources for the formation of a good conscience (e.g., Scripture, church teachings, prudent counsel). | ___ ___ ___ |
| 7.3. assist early adolescents in developing a sense of personal and social responsibility concerning the consequences of their choices and actions. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 7.4. prepare early adolescents for the reception of the sacraments. | ___ ___ ___ |
| 7.5. encourage early adolescents to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist regularly. | ___ ___ ___ |