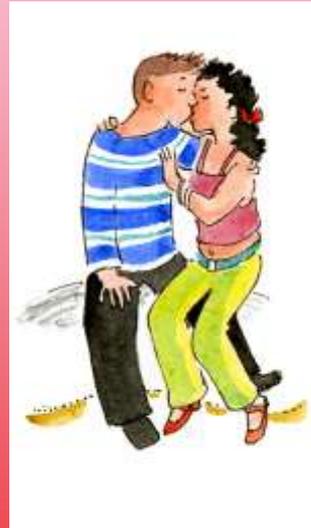
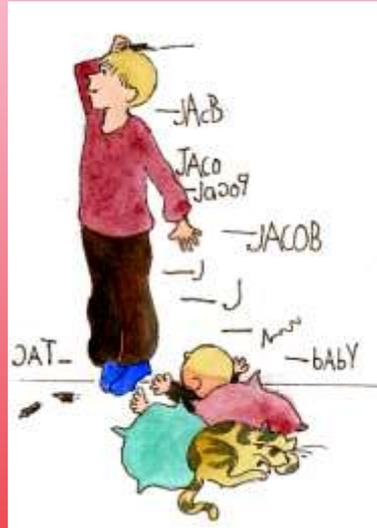


A Journey in LOVE

A developmental programme for children in the primary years



Frequently Asked Questions

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 making healthy relationships with other people. The most fulfilling and deepest relationship for most people will be within the Sacrament of Marriage when the complementarity of genders allows us to have a glimpse of God our Creator Himself. Other relationships such as father/son, mother/sister, brother/sister are also influenced by our gender as are relationships of 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.

Cardinal Basil Hume: *“Love is an art to be learned. It is a giving experience, a selfless act. Every experience of love gives us yet another glimpse of the meaning of love in God himself. Human love is the instrument we can use to explore the mystery of love which God is.”*

What do we teach?

In the Brentwood Diocese the Programme a”**Journey in Love**” is the recommended resource for the teaching of Sex and Relationship 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 Year R to Year 6. Young people are encouraged to marvel at the wonder and beauty of God’s creative love reflected in each person under the components: physical, intellectual, social emotional and spiritual. Each section has suggested progressive/developmental tasks/activities/reflections. Cross curricular links e.g. Come and See, science, art, drama, music, literacy, circle time, worship, prayer and hymns.

OVERVIEW of Themes

Year R: God loves each of us in our uniqueness.

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 God’s love.

Year 4: God loves us in our differences.

Year 5: God loves me in my changing and development.

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

Programme presents the ideal (a comment from a parent)

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. It is good to allow parents to see the power-point presentations of the programme for each relevant Year group so that they can see for themselves what the children will be experiencing (these are available to view on our school website)

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 support this but surely knowledge is better than ignorance. We do not want to leave our children in dangerous spaces.

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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 **Journey in Love** glossary what the Catechism teaches about homosexuality.*

“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 with regard to children’s present or former positions.

“My parents are divorced, why is divorce wrong?”

Divorce is not wrong but unfortunate.

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 **Journey in Love** 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.*

Journey in Love Glossary

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.

Glossary (continued)

Annulment

For Christian marriage to be genuine, that is valid and lawful, certain conditions apply. For example, each person who is marrying must be completely free to make the life-long commitment involved. If, after the marriage ceremony, one or more of the conditions can be proved to be unfulfilled, the Church authorities can be petitioned to declare that the marriage is not valid and can be declared null and void. There must be a serious reason and solid proof for such a petition.

Birth Control (see Contraception)

Celibacy

Making a conscious choice not to marry and abstain from sexual relationships is usually associated with the Catholic priesthood and the religious life, although it is a life style open to all. Consecrated celibacy ('for the sake of the Kingdom', Catechism of the Catholic Church 1579) is intended as a witness and sign of total dedication to Christ and his Church.

Glossary (continued)

Chastity

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

Conscience

The Church teaches (CCC1778) 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 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.

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. (CCC2368). 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', because it accords with Nature, is approved; artificial means are considered sinful.

Glossary (continued)

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 to autonomous and mature independence. In single parent families, that exist for whatever reason, the lone parent does his/her best to supply for the missing parent.

Homosexuality

Men and women who are sexually attracted to members of the same sex, 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 homosexual; on the contrary they must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Insofar as the homosexual 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 must be quite clear that a homosexual orientation must never be considered sinful or evil in itself.

Glossary (continued)

Love of self

Christ gave us the twofold commandment, 'Love God with 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 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 worth; but this must be balanced by a truthful recognition that every person is unique and God-loved, otherwise love of self can become selfishness which fails to acknowledge and respect others.

Marriage

Love for another, of the opposite sex, compels the gift of oneself; marriage is that gift formalised by a life-long, exclusive commitment. The Church calls it in imitation of the loving friendship between God and his People, revealed 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.

Glossary (continued)

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 reaping the consequences.

*"In the name of God,
respect, protect, love
and serve life,
every human life"*

John Paul II in the Gospel of Life

'Love is an art to be learned. It is a giving experience, a selfless act. Every experience of love gives us yet another glimpse of the meaning of love in God himself. Human love is the instrument we can use to explore the mystery of love which God is'.

Cardinal Basil Hume