

Church Teaching *Purity of Heart*

Have you ever wanted to see the face of God? In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus promises the pure of heart that they shall see the face of God. So what does this mean? It means quite literally that we shall see the face of God in Heaven but it also has implications for our lives here on earth. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2518-2527) explains that purity of heart is the ability to see ourselves and others as the image of God and as temples of the Holy Spirit. When Adam and Eve fell into sin (Gen 3), they immediately covered their bodies because they “realized that they were naked” and



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began to see themselves and each other as objects rather than as the beautiful creation of a loving God. When Jesus came and died for us on the cross, He raised the dignity of the human body to a new place. The body was no longer just an object to be cast aside at death, but was now washed and made new, redeemed along with our souls and raised up on the last day. Through the practice of modesty, we can learn our own value as temples of the Holy Spirit and help others to see us as the image of God. As we become more practiced in patience, decency and discretion, we can grow to see the face of God in everyone that we meet (CCC 2533).

Growing in Virtue

Prudence is known as the virtue of wisdom. It is also known as the prince of virtues because it governs each of the others. Aid your child in developing the ability to examine situations and properly pay attention to the world around them. As this virtue is developed, they may become more aware of how others react to them and the way that they speak, dress, and behave. Help them learn to seek good attention rather than bad attention in this regard.

Justice is the virtue of right relationship. The Church teaches that by the age of seven most children have developed, at least to a limited degree, a sense of right and wrong and the ability to practice

right reason. At this point your child should be able to have simple conversations about hypothetical situations. Asking them questions about what they should do in a given situation, gives them the practice that they need so that they can act correctly when a real situation arises.

Culture Alert...

Early exposure to sexual content in media may have a profound impact on children’s values, attitudes and behaviors toward sex and relationships. Unfortunately, media portrayals do not always reflect the message parents want to send.

*Carolyn C. Ross M.D.
Psychology Today*

Guidelines for Answering your Child's Questions

- Ask for more information before answering, (i.e., "Why do you ask?", or "Tell me more"). Your child's response will provide you with insight, context and time to think.
- Pause to ask God for the wisdom and grace to provide an appropriate answer.
- Phrase your answer in the context of your family's Catholic values (i.e. "When you are grown and married..." or "As Catholics, we believe...").
- Keep your answer short and simple.



Example: What is sex?

Know the context of the question (see above guidelines) i.e.: did they hear something on TV, see something on the computer or are they just curious? Be aware that today's culture does not label many sexual behaviors as "sex." Remember the above key questions. The information your child provides to these questions will help frame your answer in a way that is meaningful to them.

Possible responses:

- "The word can mean different things. It can mean your God-given gender, male/female."
- "It is any sexualized behavior with another person (engaging in intimate contact with another's private body parts). It can also mean sexual intercourse."
- "As Catholics we believe that sexual behaviors and intercourse are a very special activity that is reserved for married couples only."
- "It is one way a married couple can show how much they love each other."
- "It is how a married couple makes a baby."

Practical Suggestions

Children many times mirror their parents' behavior, good and bad. They do this because they trust their parents as all-knowing and look to them for guidance .

This is a good age to reinforce the virtue of modesty. At this age children begin to be more influenced by their peers. You can use the Circle of Grace concepts to assist you in teaching modesty and respect for ones self.

- ◆ Lay a foundation of self-respect, by modeling appropri-

ate attire and language that your child will imitate.

- ◆ Modest clothing can be trendy and popular. It may take a little extra effort but it is worth it.
- ◆ When discussing sexuality with your children, remind them, it is nothing to be embarrassed of, but it is not "lunchroom or playground" talk.
- ◆ Assure them that you are willing to listen if they have any questions.
- ◆ Remind them to talk to you about any uncomfortable feel-

ing or situations that enter into their Circle of Grace.



May We Recommend...

Circle of Grace Parenting and Sexuality Handout

Catholic Children's Bible

St. Mary's Press (Ages 5-9)

Good Picture Bad Picture (Ages 7-9)

By: Kristen A. Jensen and
Gail Poyner

Dear Pope Francis

By: Pope Francis

<http://integrityrestored.com/>

<http://family.archomaha.org/respecting-life/human-sexuality-formation/>

YouTube: *Jason Evert: Why Modesty?*
(*YouTube videos are recommended for parent viewing only*)

The Divine Mercy Chaplet For Kids (DVD)