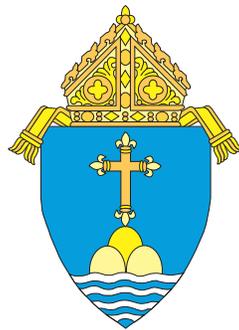


CREATED FOR LOVE

God's Plan for Life, Love, Relationships & Marriage



Respect Life Education Office - Archdiocese of Boston
www.RespectLifeEducation.com

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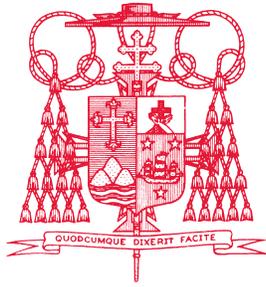
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Created for Love is a mandated Middle School Religion Curriculum designed to be integrated into the existing religion curricula in Grades 6, 7, & 8 in parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese of Boston. Please use this text along with the DVD that accompanies it to share the beauty of God's Plan for Life, Love, Relationships & Marriage. For more information, resources, and curriculum training dates, please contact the Respect Life Education Office at 617-746-5964 or visit www.RespectLifeEducation.com.



CARDINAL'S OFFICE

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November, 2014

Dear Friends,

One of the most important gifts we can hand on to our youth is the gift of our faith, which will help them understand God's plan for life, love, relationships and marriage. For the past eight years, the *Created for Love* chastity curriculum has been taught to 7th grade students in schools and parishes throughout the Archdiocese. I am pleased to announce that important revisions have been completed on the *Created for Love* curriculum that will now be available for all middle school students in the Archdiocese.

The revised chastity curriculum is the result of collaboration between the Offices of Respect Life Education, Faith Formation & Parish Support, Catholic Schools, and Child Advocacy. The revisions concentrate on the joy of living according to God's plan while highlighting the universal call to holiness through the discernment of one's vocation. New sections on vocations, family life and adoption allow for a more comprehensive, integrated model that will be woven into the existing religion curricula in schools and parishes beginning in Grade 6 and continuing through Grade 8.

Created for Love is of utmost importance in the moral development of our Catholic youth. It lends support to Catholic parents whose duty it is to raise their children in the faith. I strongly endorse *Created for Love* and its synthesis of sound Catholic moral teaching and hereby direct all parishes and schools in its implementation.

Our expectation is that *Created for Love* will be phased-in between January and June 2015, with all parishes and schools fully embracing this mandate by September 2015. Please give this curriculum your most serious attention.

In order to assist the schools and parishes of the Archdiocese, the Respect Life Education Office has been directed to coordinate all training and implementation with the support of the Offices of Faith Formation & Parish Support, Catholic Schools, and Child Advocacy. Grateful for your cooperation in incorporating *Created for Love* into our mission to teach God's Word and Truth, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

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Cardinal Seán: Welcome

IDENTITY

Who am I? Discovering God's Gift

When we meet someone for the first time, we usually begin by telling each other our name. As we get to know each other better, we may share where we are from as well as some of the activities we are involved in, like playing a sport or a musical instrument. We may also share some of our favorite things: favorite food, favorite color, favorite song, favorite TV show, etc.



As we become friendly with another person it can be fun to talk about the things we have in common. One of the most important things that every human person has in common is that each and every one of us is created in the image and likeness of God. Each human person is created by love and for love and is a unique, unrepeatable masterpiece created by the Master builder...God! Our dignity and worth does not come from the

way we look or the way we dress. Nor does it come from our achievements whether they happen in the classroom, at a sporting event or an extracurricular activity. Our dignity and worth doesn't even come from how others treat us. Instead every human person from the moment of his/her conception (from the beginning moment of life inside their Mother's belly!) becomes a daughter or son of the King of Kings!

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I appointed you as prophet to the nations."
 ~Jeremiah 1:5

Girls, you are the crown of creation! Each of you is a *beautiful* princess of a Father who loved you into creation and continues to love you every day of your life! Boys, you are noble princes...created to love, honor and protect, the way God does for His Church! As sons and daughters of the King, we are given great responsibility!



"When God created human beings, He made them in the likeness of God; He created them male and female. When they were created, He blessed them and named them humankind."
 ~Genesis 5: 1-2



Created in the Image and Likeness of God

God created us from love, to be loved, to spread love! God is with us from the very beginning when we are conceived in our Mother's womb and remains with us for all eternity! God has a beautiful plan for each and every one of us!



“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—says the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.”

~Jeremiah 29:11

God's plan for every human being involves love. Birds were created to fly and fish were created to swim but human beings were created for love! Because we were created *from love*, it only makes sense that we were created *to love*—God and others—and *to allow* God and others to love us! The one thing we can be certain of is that when we follow God's plan for our lives then it will always bring great joy! It doesn't mean life will be perfect and free from suffering, but when we stay close to God through prayer and when we receive the Sacraments (i.e. Eucharist & Reconciliation) on a regular basis, then living as a child of God becomes much easier and brings joy and peace to our lives! When we (or others) stray from God, it hurts our hearts and souls. That is why when people say or do something unkind to another, it can hurt that person very deeply. Our hearts were made for love, not for hurt! When you are living a life according to God's plan, our hearts will be happy and at peace. As St. Augustine said, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You, O Lord.” Just look at the example of Jesus. His life had ups and downs just like ours does and He suffered the ultimate suffering out of love for each of us. Jesus' life teaches us about true, sacrificial and unconditional love!



#1 Created IN Love, Created BY Love, Created FOR Love: Fr. Matt Williams

God created each human person as body and soul. We do not just *have* a soul or *have* a body but instead we *are* a body and soul together—united as one! Our body and soul make us completely human from the very moment of conception until the moment of natural death. Our visible body united with our invisible soul makes us a complete human person! The only way our body and our soul are separated is when we die.

As a result, we differ from *all* other creatures on the earth! Our lives come with great responsibility. We are responsible not only to care for our body and soul but also to love God and love others as we love ourselves. We realize that sometimes it's not easy to love the way God intended us to love.



Some people around us may not be good examples of loving the way God intended and many times they influence the way we choose to live. Sometimes we become confused by the real definition of love. People in our lives, along with television shows, movies, music, video games and social media all contribute to how we view love. Many times, these influences can be harmful because they portray false things and call it love. The good news is that when God asked us to love like He loves, He actually showed us what He meant. He loved us so much that He suffered and died for us. *Think about that for a minute.* God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world as a tiny baby, *just* like you and me. He grew up in a small town with His young mother, Mary and



Childhood of Jesus Christ, by Del Parson

His foster father, Joseph. He shared the same emotions as we do! At times, He felt misunderstood and frustrated. He felt sad and disappointed. He laughed and was joyful. He felt loved by others and He gave love to all. Jesus was fully human in every way, but sin. Through all of life's ups and downs, Jesus always trusted in His Father's loving plan. He always knew that God, Our Father, would be with Him, even when

things were difficult...even when He suffered and died on the cross. Jesus knew that to love like God loves, it meant that sometimes we must sacrifice our wants and desires and suffer for the sake of those we love.



Created for Love

True love is a sacrifice. True love always seeks to give and never seeks to get. We are drawn to true and authentic love because our hearts were made for it! A famous teen speaker, Jason Evert, sums it up beautifully; "Because we are made in the image and likeness of God and God is love-we are made in the image and likeness of love."



#2 What Satisfies Our Hearts: Jason Evert

Saint Pope John Paul II reminds us that, "Real love is demanding. I would fail in my mission if I did not clearly tell you so." Some people have a difficult time giving and receiving love the way God intended and sometimes people may even feel like they don't deserve to be loved. They may have wounds from past relationships that has made their vision cloudy and may cause them to be afraid of authentic love. Past experiences and heartbreak can at times impair our ability to see the beautiful love God has planned for us.





During these times, Jesus asks us to bring our wounded hearts and our fears to Him. It takes time in prayer and a lot of patience to work everything out, but Jesus is the *only* one that can properly heal our hearts while restoring our vision so that true and authentic love becomes our focus. Overcoming heartache, fear, and disappointment is always worth the effort, hard work, and patience that is necessary to experience true love!

So now that we know that we were created differently than any other creature on the planet because we are both body and soul, then our life needs to take on a whole new meaning! We often hear a lot about taking care of our body by eating healthy foods, not watching too much television, getting enough rest, exercising, not smoking and not using harmful drugs.



These are all *very* important things for our bodies! But do we also take care of our souls? Remember, body and soul cannot be separated except through death, so therefore it makes sense that the way we use our body will affect our soul. And since our soul lives forever, then it is very important to care for our soul by following God's



plan for our life. After all, God created us so we could spend eternity with Him in Heaven! So following God's ways here on earth are very important for our eternal life.

Do not be afraid, then, when love makes demands. Do not be afraid when love requires sacrifice.
~Saint Pope John Paul II

God's Creation vs. Culture

So many things in our world can lead us astray and even seem more fun and exciting than what God has in store for us. These are temptations that can possibly lead us to sin. These are not God's ways. It is important to remember that all the things the world has to offer will *never ever* compare to what God has in store for us...both here on earth and especially in Heaven! When we begin to replace God with other people and other things and even when we put other people and worldly pleasures before God then we are disobeying God's first commandment: "I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods besides me."



#3 Teens Talk: Relying on God

Sometimes without even realizing it, we begin to treat other people and even things of this world as if they were gods. We begin to move away from God, His Sacraments and His commandments because we prefer to spend our time doing other things. Perhaps sporting events and extracurricular activities have taken the place of Sunday Mass. Sometimes, hanging out with friends or sleeping in seem more fun and appealing than giving thanks to God at Sunday Mass. Sports, friends, jobs, etc. are not bad in themselves, but when *anything or anyone* replaces God or causes us to put God in second place then they can become occasions of sin and certainly are not good for our soul. “The world is passing away, and also its desires; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” (John 2:17)



No matter what circumstances occur in your life and no matter what your family upbringing has been like, always remember that you are here for a reason. It is no accident that you are alive at this point in time. God *wanted* you to be alive from the moment of your conception and He wants you to be alive now! God wants a relationship with YOU! He created you for a purpose at this very moment in time! Your life will never make sense until you realize that you were made *by* God and *for* God and that He has a plan for your life because He loves you unconditionally! It is only in knowing and loving God that we discover our origin, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, and our destiny!



#4 Teens Talk: What Would Jesus Do?

#5 Teens Talk: Why Believe? Why Pray?