



Same Sex Attraction

Grade Eight

UNIT OVERVIEW

DURATION 3 lessons, 40 minutes each.

- 1. QUESTIONS ABOUT SAME SEX ATTRACTIONS**
- 2. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS**
- 3. HOMOSEXUALITY AND CHURCH TEACHING**

DESCRIPTION

At this time in their lives, grade 8 students are known to engage in harassing behaviour to students who appear to be homosexual in their orientation. To ensure a safe school environment for all students, teachers have requested additional education guidance on this topic.

Material related to the topic of same sex attractions is included in both grade 7 and grade 8 *Fully Alive*. Over the last 20 years, however Canadian culture today has become far more open about homosexuality. Catholic teachers have expressed the need for Catholic educational resources that will help them respond to challenging questions that are coming up in class. Grade 8 students are receiving conflicting messages and misinformation from the media and from each other. These lessons will give students the opportunity to assess their knowledge of sexual orientation, while considering information from both the social sciences and the Catholic Church.

The discussion of same sex attractions will be situated within the context of Church teaching of chastity, a virtue which relates to the lives of all students.

NOTES TO TEACHER

Attitudes to persons with same sex attractions within the school and within the local community remain sensitive.

There are many difficulties and insecurities with students at this age. They can be egocentric, wilful, seemingly invulnerable and totally unaware of the needs or feelings of others. Sometimes “homophobic” language can be little more than thoughtlessness and insecurity, often motivated by the need to fit in. It must be pointed out to students, however, that such language is inappropriate. If they used a term like “retard”, it would be quite offensive, particularly if someone had a brother or sister or friend that had a

mental exceptionality. Some, however, engage in quite deliberate harassment of students which becomes bullying or worse.

These lessons build on the foundation of *Fully Alive*, student texts, pages 83 – 84. This unit includes supplementary material that will assist the Catholic teacher in responding to age appropriate questions related to this topic. The appendices offer some background resources from the teachings of the Catholic Church that affirm the principle of human dignity in general, and that of persons with same sex attractions in particular.

Boundaries

As with all topics related to sex and sexuality, the teacher must outline very clear boundaries as to what is acceptable and not acceptable in the classroom setting.

Family Life education is concerned with the human, moral, social, religious and justice aspects of all issues related to sexuality. Questions or comments related to sex acts, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are strictly off limits in the classroom. This point should be made very clear, in a calm but firm manner, **before** the unit begins.

Establishing clear boundaries early in unit will help to avoid inappropriate remarks and questions by setting clear limits to the topic.

Answering Questions

It is always a good pedagogical approach to receive student questions respectfully, acknowledging the value of the question. This demonstrates respect for all students in the classroom and keeps the door open to further questions on any number of other issues.

Not all questions, however, need to be answered in the classroom context.

When you feel that the question goes beyond the maturity of the class, simply say that the question is sensitive and is best answered by their parents.

Note to Teachers: Although written for Catholic high schools, the information below is easily accessible and quite helpful for intermediate teachers.

Guidelines for Staff

From Pastoral Guidelines for Students with Same Sex Attractions

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

- Make it clear that harassment of and discrimination against students with a same-sex orientation will not be tolerated in staff rooms, classrooms, in hallways, or anywhere on school property. Respect the confidentiality of students.
- Ensure that the required lessons on homosexuality, chastity, and sexual morality outlined in educational curriculum documents for your grade are taught well. If

you are uncomfortable with, or not knowledgeable about the topic, seek help from department heads, board consultants and/or administration. Attend in-services/workshops that will help you to become more comfortable and knowledgeable.

- Inform yourself about the needs of and resources for the student.
- Do not assume that all students or their parents are heterosexual. Use inclusive language when referring to this relationship.
- Do not apply labels to students such as homosexual, gay or lesbian.
- During classroom discussions do not suggest that a youth should disclose their same-sex orientation to parents, family and friends. They need to do that at their own safe pace. Many students who reveal their same-sex orientation to their parents are forced to leave home. The decision to tell their parents must be their choice and they must be ready to live with the consequences.

Lesson One: Questions about Same Sex Attractions

From *Fully Alive*

The students will:

- explore the changes in relationships that occur because of sexual attraction
- deepen their understanding of the role of sexuality in their relationships
- understand elements of homosexuality

Lesson Two: Harassment and Homosexuality

Phys Ed Health/Personal Safety

- describe harassment and identify ways of dealing with it (e.g., by communicating feelings and reporting incidents of harassment);
- identify people and resources that can support someone experiencing harassment;

Lesson Three: Chastity and Homosexuality

From *Fully Alive*

The students will:

- deepen their understanding of the importance of chastity in honouring the sacred gift of sexuality.
- deepen their understanding of the human person
- be encouraged to respect the mystery of each person as a reflection of God

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Before the questions are distributed, it is recommended that the teacher makes it quite clear that the work in this unit is being assessed. This will create a situation of accountability for what is written for these sensitive three lessons.

Students could also engage in writing a summative reflection paper that uses the questions of the three lessons. An additional question or two might be included like:
Has my attitude to persons with same sex attractions changed in any way?

LINKS TO FULLY ALIVE AND HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Fully Alive

Grade 7 Student Text

“Sometimes young people also have very strong feelings about someone of the same sex. It is often someone they admire very much and want to be like. This is a normal part of development, especially in early adolescence. If this has happened to you, you might be wondering if it means that you are a homosexual. At your stage in life, having strong feelings for someone of the same sex does not indicate homosexuality. You are going through a period when you have intense feelings about many things. Your likes and dislikes are very strong, and you are just beginning to discover how overpowering your feelings about other people can be. This experience is part of maturing, and learning to be a man or woman.”

Fully Alive

Grade 8 Teacher Manual

In your discussion of this issue with them, there are several points that should be stressed:

- The causes of homosexuality remain unknown, although there are a number of theories.
- It is important to distinguish between a person’s sexual orientation and the choices the person makes regarding intimate sexual activity.
- All people, whether heterosexual or homosexual are called by God to be chaste and to honour the loving and life-giving nature of sexuality. Chastity is the virtue that helps us to live as sexual persons in the way that God intends.

Fully Alive: Teacher Manual

As part of the discussion of sexual attraction, homosexuality is mentioned from the perspective of same-sex adolescent crushes. Students of this age can have very intense feelings about people, and they need to be reassured that such feelings are a normal part of development.

FOR TEACHER REFERENCE ONLY NOT FOR STUDENT USE:

Pastoral Guidelines for Students with Same Sex Attractions

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops

Although written for the Catholic high school context, this document provides extensive background information on this topic.

Homosexuality and the Catholic High School

Although originally written for the high school context, there is very useful information here related to the topic of homosexuality and youth. Included are articles related to:

- ✓ A Catholic mother’s journey after her son discloses his homosexuality identity.
- ✓ An article about suicide and homosexual orientation.
- ✓ Stories from Catholic teachers, counsellors, chaplains and students.

<http://www.carfleo.org/Homosexualitypackage.pdf>

Homosexuality and the Catholic High School is available at this site hosted by the Catholic Association of Religion and Family Life Educators of Ontario.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homophobia>

An interesting and balanced discussion of the term “homophobia” is given in this article. The limitations of this term are clearly outlined.

<http://www.apa.org/topics/orientation.html>

Posted at the American Psychological Association, this article summarizes, in relatively plain language, the current thinking of the majority of psychologists on homosexuality. Questions and answers include the following:

- [What Is Sexual Orientation?](#)
- [What Causes a Person To Have a Particular Sexual Orientation?](#)
- [Is Sexual Orientation a Choice?](#)
- [Can Therapy Change Sexual Orientation?](#)
- [What About So-Called "Conversion Therapies"?](#)
- [Is Homosexuality a Mental Illness or Emotional Problem?](#)
- [Why Do Some Gay Men, Lesbians and Bisexuals Tell People About Their Sexual Orientation?](#)
- [Why Is the "Coming Out" Process Difficult for Some Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People?](#)
- [What Can Be Done to Overcome the Prejudice and Discrimination the Gay Men, Lesbians, and Bisexuals Experience?](#)
- [Why is it Important for Society to be Better Educated About Homosexuality?](#)
- [Are All Gay and Bisexual Men HIV Infected?](#)
- [Where Can I Find More Information About Homosexuality?](#)

Pediatrics: Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://www.cpa.ca/publications/yourhealthpsychologyworksheets/>

Although written for pediatricians, there is helpful information in this journal article.

Same Sex Attractions**Grade Eight****Lesson One****QUESTIONS ABOUT SAME SEX ATTRACTIONS**[top](#)**DESCRIPTION**

With homosexuality quite openly referenced and depicted in the media, some grade 8 students are confused. This lesson will give students the opportunity to assess their own knowledge of this human reality, hear what others think, and finally consider definitive information from the teacher.

MATERIALS

- Photocopied “Student Questions” Worksheet (if required)
- Teacher Script.

NOTES TO TEACHER

This lesson builds on the foundation of *Fully Alive*, student texts, pages 83 – 84.

It is a requirement that teachers read and review the material in the Unit Overview before teaching this class.

Due to the sensitive nature of this lesson, the material below is repeated for ease of reference.

Boundaries

As with all topics related to sex and sexuality, the teacher must outline very clear boundaries as to what is acceptable and not acceptable in the classroom setting.

Family Life education is concerned with the human, moral, social, religious and justice aspects of this issue. Questions or comments related to sex acts, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are strictly off limits in the classroom.

This point should be made very clear, in a calm but firm manner, **before** the unit begins.

Establishing clear boundaries early in unit will help to avoid confusion by setting clear limits to the topic.

Answering Questions

It is always a good pedagogical approach to receive student questions respectfully,

acknowledging the value of the question. This demonstrates respects all students in the classroom and keeps the door open to further questions on any number of other issues.

Not all questions need to answered in a classroom context.

When you feel that the question goes beyond the maturity of the class, simply say that the question is sensitive and is best answered by their parents.

LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Questions about Same Sex Attractions from *Fully Alive*

The students will:

- deepen their understanding of the importance of chastity in honouring the sacred gift of sexuality.
- deepen their understanding of the human person
- be encouraged to respect the mystery of each person as a reflection of God

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Students worksheets are collected and assessed for knowledge, thinking and communication expectations.

Work on this lesson becomes part of a broader paper for evaluation at the end of this unit

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

Although this lesson might be a little controversial, teachers are asked to make as little fuss as possible, present a few ideas, touch on a few basic facts and thoughts, but be firm in your position that challenges harassing or bullying language related to same sex attractions.

You may wish to inform students that their work for this lesson will be assessed.

Dictate Student Questions individually or have students copy from overhead or blackboard.

BLM 1

Questions About Same Sex Attractions

From *Fully Alive*, Grade 8.

✓ *Is it okay if you're not really interested in having a boyfriend or girlfriend?*

✓ *Is it normal to have strong feelings of attraction toward someone of the same sex?*

Additional Questions

✓ *Approximately, what percentage of the adult population is attracted to the same sex or homosexual in their sexual orientation?*

✓ *Why are some people romantically and sexually attracted to people of the same sex?*

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Strategy 1:

1. Students are to write their responses to these questions individually. Move through the questions one by one.
2. Invite the students to share their answers with the class, reserving comment.
3. Have students revise their responses.
4. After students have responded, teacher can use the teacher script to respond to these questions. Give students time to add information to their answers.
5. Students submit their work for assessment, or keep their work as basis for final summary statement at the end of the unit.

Strategy 2:

1. If there is an appropriate level of maturity, break class into small, mixed groups and have them share these answers. Teacher can move from group to group to ensure good discussion.
2. Read passages from the Teacher Script and invite class discussion..
3. Give a time for students to add to their own answers in light of their discussions.
4. Give students time to add to their answers before submitting for assessment.
5. Students submit their work for assessment, or keep their work as basis for final summary statement at the end of the unit.

Teacher Script Grade 8 From *Fully Alive*, Grade 8.

- ✓ *Is it okay if you're not really interested in having a boyfriend or girlfriend?*

Yes. It's complete natural at this stage in your life to feel most at ease with your own sex and to find relationships with the opposite sex more stressful. This is one of the challenges of adolescence – to learn how to relate as males to females, and as a female to males. This doesn't happen automatically; it takes time to put new sexual feelings, the desire for friendship, and the need for intimacy in perspective. What's important is to be headed in the right direction.

From *Fully Alive*, Grade 8.

- ✓ *Is it normal to have strong feelings of attraction toward someone of the same sex?*

Yes. Many different feelings, some of them very powerful, come and go during adolescence, and the experience of being strongly attracted to someone of the same sex does not mean the person is a homosexual. It's also important to remember that people are unique individuals. Some become quite interested in the opposite sex early in adolescence. Others develop casual friendships, but aren't interested in closer relationships until much later.

From *Fully Alive*, Grade 8.

- ✓ *If people tease you about your masculinity or femininity (call you a sissy or a butch) does it mean you're not a 'real' boy or a 'real' girl?*

No. All young people need to recognize that masculinity and femininity are not defined by a person's interests or way of behaving.

- ✓ *Approximately, what percentage of the adult population is attracted to the same sex or homosexual?*

Most scientists put the number at about 3 or 4 percent of the population. Several years ago a scientist named Kinsey put the number at 10 percent, but it is agreed that this is far too high. His definition included any kind of same sex experience or fantasy. Now scientists define homosexuality as something that is a fixed part of the personality.

3 or 4 percent makes this population a minority. But this minority status is never permission to engage in prejudice. There are religious minorities in our society, and ethnic minorities. Minorities always deserve respect.

When you go to high school, consider 3 or 4 percent in a school population of 1,000. That's 30 or 40 people who are homosexual in their orientation. That's still a considerable number of people who are likely having a difficult time in high school.

- ✓ *Why are some people romantically and sexually attracted to people of the same sex?*

From *Fully Alive*, Grade 8

“The causes of homosexuality are not well understood. One theory says that some homosexual people are born with a tendency to be attracted to their own sex. In other words, the cause lies in their biological make-up. Another stresses the influence of the social environment, especially relationships with parents, other family members and friends. Perhaps it is a combination of genetic and environmental influences. Whatever the cause, in most cases, homosexuality is not something that is deliberately chosen.”

Further script:

Sexual attraction is a very complex and mysterious thing.

Scientists generally agree that sexual orientation appears to be “wired” or programmed into the human brain, probably at a very young age. There has been some research on a genetic cause, but that theory is not well documented.

As the human brain develops in the womb and in the first few years of life, hormones are shaping and influencing very aspects of sexual identity, including the centres for sexual attraction. Some of the most convincing theories point to a brain that is hormonally wired differently, so sexual orientation, whether heterosexual or homosexual, is something that is naturally determined in our brains.

That being said, there is always a learned aspect to sexual behaviour. We learn from our culture how to react and behave sexually. This is true for heterosexuality and homosexuality. There is a learned component, and it is something that we can control and make decisions about so that sexuality becomes a good and healthy part of our personality.

Sexual orientation, whether homosexual or heterosexual, has formative components that are genetic, hormonal, environmental and learned. These dimensions all act within the complexity and mystery of the human person. Sexual orientation, therefore, has no clear scientific explanation. For most people, however, sexual orientation is not something deliberately chosen. The Church affirms this when it teaches that homosexuality is not according to the natural order of things or disordered.

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Same Sex Attractions Grade Eight**Lesson Two****DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS**[top](#)**DESCRIPTION**

Students will apply their learning on bullying and harassment to the issue of harassment or discrimination against homosexual persons.

MATERIALS

- Student Questions on handout or overhead
- Teacher Script.

NOTES TO TEACHER

As grade 8 teachers well know, there are many difficulties and insecurities with students at this age. They can be egocentric, wilful, seemingly invulnerable and totally unaware of the needs or feelings of others. Sometimes “homophobic” language can be little more than thoughtlessness and insecurity, often motivated by the need to fit in. It must be pointed out to students, however, that the language is inappropriate. If they used a term like “retard”, it would be quite offensive, particularly if someone had a brother or sister or friend that had a mental exceptionality. Some, however, engage in quite deliberate harassment of students which becomes bullying or worse.

Attitudes to persons with same sex attractions within the school and within the local community remain sensitive. The appendices offer some background resources from the teachings of the Catholic Church that affirm the principle of human dignity in general, and that of persons with same sex attractions in particular.

LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

- identify ways in which homosexual persons experience harassment or discrimination
- describe harassment and identify ways of dealing with it (e.g., by communicating feelings and reporting incidents of harassment);
- identify people and resources that can support someone experiencing harassment;

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Students worksheets are collected and assessed for knowledge, thinking and communication expectations as part of a broader evaluation at the end of this unit.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

Although this lesson might feel challenging, teachers are asked to make as little fuss as possible, present a few ideas, touch on a few basic facts and thoughts, but be firm in your position that challenges harassing or bullying language related to same sex attractions.

You may wish to inform students that their work for this lesson will be assessed.

1. Dictate Student Questions About Homosexuality From Fully Alive, Grade 8. individually or have students copy from overhead or blackboard.

If people tease you about your masculinity or femininity) call you a sissy or a butch) does it mean you're not a 'real' boy or a 'real' girl?

Why do some people have negative attitudes to homosexual people?

Do people from different countries have different attitudes to homosexuality?

Strategy 1

1. Students are to write their responses to these questions individually.
2. Move through the questions one by one.
3. Invite the students to share their answers with the class, reserving comment.
4. Have students revise their responses.
5. After students have responded, teacher can use the teacher script to respond to these questions. Give students time to add information to their answers.
6. Students submit their work for assessment, or keep their work as basis for final summary statement at the end of the unit.

Strategy 2

1. If there is an appropriate level of maturity, break class into small, mixed groups and have them share these responses.
2. Teacher can move from group to group to ensure good discussion.
3. Read passages from the Teacher Script and invite class discussion..
4. Give a time for students to add to their own answers in light of their discussions.
5. Give students time to add to their answers before submitting for assessment.
6. Students submit their work for assessment, or keep their work as basis for final summary statement at the end of the unit.

Teacher Script Grade 8

Discrimination against homosexual persons... from *Fully Alive*, Grade 8.

If people tease you about your masculinity or femininity (call you a sissy or a butch) does it mean you're not a 'real' boy or a 'real' girl?

No. All young people need to recognize that masculinity and femininity are not defined by a person's interests or way of behaving.

Why do so many people have negative attitudes to homosexual people?

From *Fully Alive*, Grade 8

"Because most people are heterosexual, which means they are attracted to the opposite sex, homosexual people find themselves living in a world where they are "different". This can cause much confusion and pain. Because of their difference, homosexuals are often treated in ways that are cruel and deeply disrespectful – name-calling, stereotyping, or assuming they are not unique individuals who need love and friendship in their lives, as all people do."

Extended script:

It isn't easy to grow up and live in this world if you have same-sex feelings. Many people have negative attitudes about same-sex orientation. These negative attitudes are also called "homophobia." We must be careful using this label, however. Some extreme attitudes against people are considered to be hate crimes and subject to charges under the criminal code. As well, it is not necessarily homophobic to criticize a homosexual person or activities of the homosexual community. Because the Church makes moral evaluation about homosexual sex does not mean that the comments reflect homophobia. The Church's call to chastity is a message that it gives to young people that are both heterosexual and homosexual. (see Lesson 3)

People are often targets for discrimination, abuse and even violence. Because of this, they may have feelings of confusion or fear. They may worry that their families and friends will reject them or keep them at a distance.

Do people from different countries have different attitudes to homosexuality?

There is a broad range of attitudes to homosexuality in different countries. These are shaped by history, religion and other factors. In some middle eastern countries, homosexual relationships are punishable by death. That's quite a range! In most countries and cultures in the world, there are negative attitudes to homosexual persons but this appears to be changing over time. In Canada about 30 years ago, for example, homosexual acts were illegal and people were put in jail. Today this is no longer the case. [top](#)

Same Sex Attractions Grade Eight
Lesson Three

HOMOSEXUALITY AND CHURCH TEACHING

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DESCRIPTION

There is often a great deal of confusion among students and teachers alike regarding the Church's teaching on homosexuality. Although most know the Church's prohibition on homosexual activity, there is a lack of knowledge about the wisdom of the virtue of chastity as well as the need for respect for the dignity of the homosexual person.

MATERIALS

- Teacher Script.

NOTES TO TEACHER

Again in this lesson, students may be inclined to pose questions related to homosexual activity. It is clearly not within the boundaries outlined below to respond to these questions. Some students will have this knowledge, but it is sufficient for the teacher to indicate that the Church considers same sex sexual activity of any kind to be immoral.

For your reference, these boundary guidelines are repeated below.

Boundaries

As with all topics related to sex and sexuality, the teacher must outline very clear boundaries as to what is acceptable and not acceptable in the classroom setting.

Family Life education is concerned with the human, moral, social, religious and justice aspects of this issue. Questions or comments related to sex acts, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are strictly off limits in the classroom.

This point should be made very clear, in a calm but firm manner, **before** the unit begins.

Establishing clear boundaries early in unit will help to avoid confusion by setting clear limits to the topic.

Answering Questions

It is always a good pedagogical approach to receive student questions respectfully, acknowledging the value of the question. This demonstrates respects all students in

the classroom and keeps the door open to further questions on any number of other issues.

Not all questions need to be answered in a classroom context.

When you feel that the question goes beyond the maturity of the class, simply say that the question is sensitive and is best answered by their parents.

LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Homosexuality and Church Teaching from *Fully Alive*:

The students will:

- deepen their understanding of the importance of chastity in honouring the sacred gift of sexuality.
- deepen their understanding of the human person
- be encouraged to respect the mystery of each person as a reflection of God

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Students' worksheets are collected and assessed for knowledge, thinking and communication expectations.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

Although this lesson might be controversial, teachers are asked to make present these ideas simply and clearly, maintaining the focus on the foundational Gospel values of chastity and human dignity.

You may wish to inform students that their work for this lesson will be assessed, either at the end of the class or at the end of the unit.

Dictate Student Questions or have students copy questions from overhead or blackboard.

Student Questions Grade 8 Questions About Homosexuality

What does the Church teach about homosexuality?

What is the basis for Church teaching on homosexuality?

How does the Church want us to treat homosexual persons?

Strategy 1: Students are to write their responses to these questions individually. Move through the questions one by one.

Invite the students to share their answers with the class, reserving comment.

Have students revise their responses.

After students have responded, teacher can use the teacher script to respond to these questions. Give students time to add information to their answers.

Students submit their work for assessment, or keep their work as basis for final summary statement at the end of the unit.

Strategy 2: If there is an appropriate level of maturity, break class into small, mixed groups and have them share these responses. Teacher can move from group to group to ensure good discussion.

Read passages from the Teacher Script and invite class discussion..

Give a time for students to add to their own answers in light of their discussions.

Give students time to add to their answers before submitting for assessment.

Students submit their work for assessment, or keep their work as basis for final summary statement at the end of the unit.

Teacher Script Grade 8

Church Teaching on Homosexuality from *Fully Alive*, Grade 8.

What does the Church teach about chastity and homosexuality?

From *Fully Alive* Grade 8:

“It is important to understand that to be attracted to a person of the same sex and to act on those feelings are not the same thing.

It is not sinful to have homosexual tendencies,
but sexual acts between people of the same sex are morally wrong.

Like everyone else, homosexual people need acceptance, friendship, and love from others.

In order to respect God’s plan in creating us male and female, however, these relationships cannot include intimate sexual activity.”

What is the basis of Church teaching on homosexuality?

It has always been the teaching of the Church that sexual activity belongs only within marriage.

Sexual intercourse has two essential dimensions:

it should be within the context of the committed love and marriage and
it should be open to bringing new life into the world.

In the words of the Ontario Bishops:

“Marriage is, in the solid tradition of the Church, the only proper context for sexual relationships.

It is in marriage alone that the two-fold meaning of sexual intercourse,
the unitive (oneness of committed love)
and procreative (bringing new life into the world)
finds its proper place.

Sexual activity is truly meaningful only when it embodies and expresses marital love,
love that is both fully committed
and open to life,
and it cannot do that outside of marriage for anyone, heterosexual or homosexual.

This means that sexual activity which is outside marriage cannot be condoned, and is taught by the Church to be immoral. This includes masturbation, fornication and adultery, and sexual activity with a person of the same sex.”

From *On Sexual Morality*, OCCB 2003.
Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops

How does the Church want us to treat homosexual persons?

(From *Fully Alive*, Grade 8):

“As Christians, we are called to treat others with the respect that is owed to them as persons whom God created and loves.

We all need to recognize that God’s plan for us is mysterious. Each person has challenges in life that can seem overwhelming.

Like everyone else, homosexual people need committed friendships, a deep belief in God’s love, and the support and prayers of the Christian community.

Many who are trying to live as good Christians struggle with their sexual feelings and their desire for physical intimacy.

Yet all of us, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are called by God to be chaste, and to honour the gift of sexuality.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Although developed for the Catholic high school, the following guidelines can be easily adapted for elementary schools. Since the text below comes from the Catholic Bishops of Ontario, it can be received as the teaching of the Church on this topic.

Guidelines for Staff

From **Pastoral Guidelines for Students with Same Sex Attractions**

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006

For Teacher Reference Only

- Make it clear that harassment of and discrimination against students with a same-sex orientation will not be tolerated in staff rooms, classrooms, in hallways, or anywhere on school property. Respect the confidentiality of students.
- Ensure that the required lessons on homosexuality, chastity, and sexual morality outlined in educational curriculum documents for your grade are taught well. If you are uncomfortable with, or not knowledgeable about the topic, seek help from department heads, board consultants and/or administration. Attend in-services/workshops that will help you to become more comfortable and knowledgeable.
- Inform yourself about the needs of and resources for the student.

- Do not assume that all students or their parents are heterosexual. Use inclusive language when referring to this relationship.
- Do not apply labels to students such as homosexual, gay or lesbian.
- During classroom discussions do not suggest that a youth should disclose their same-sex orientation to parents, family and friends. They need to do that at their own safe pace. Many students who reveal their same-sex orientation to their parents are forced to leave home. The decision to tell their parents must be their choice and they must be ready to live with the consequences.

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