

Sub-Task #4 Abstinence as a Choice: Abstinence in Relationships

Materials

See list of Appendices

Description

Students review the meaning of abstinence and discuss scenarios where abstinence is a factor in making decision that apply to healthy sexuality.

Expectation Code	Learning Expectation
7p12	Explain the term abstinence as it applies to healthy sexuality

Assessment Opportunities – Suggestions for Assessing Expectations

- **Diagnostic Assessment: Personal Communication** – Assess group discussion/interaction (individual student contribution) to activity based on Teaching/Learning Strategy B. This will act as a check to determine student’s understanding of the term abstinence as it relates to healthy sexuality.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

Explain that students need to feel good about themselves (positive self-image) before the can begin to use effective communication skills in order to build a positive relationship with others.

1. You’re the Judge

- Students complete worksheet “You’re the Judge” (see Appendix W). Take up and discuss worksheet and appropriateness of expressing their interest in another person.
- Divide class into small groups, each with chart paper and marker. Students brainstorm and list positive ways (makes the other person feel good) of expressing affection and things you can do together that do not involve sexual intimacy.

2. Class Discussion

- Students post chart paper and lead class discussion around the responses generated. Help students to understand the appropriateness of the activities depending on circumstance. (i.e., You’re the Judge #9 “Talk About Sex” – when would it be appropriate and inappropriate to talk about sex?)
- **Abstinence Review:** Review the meaning of abstinence. Refer to Teacher Background information in the overview.

- Brainstorm and discuss the question: Why might people be abstinent? In the following situations?
 - Monogamous partners:
 - during menstrual cycle
 - away on a business trip
 - always serving in the armed forces
 - prolonged illness
 - temporary impotence
 - following childbirth
 - Divorced, separated or widowed partners:
 - did not prefer to have another relationship
 - did not meet the right person
 - would only have sexual relations if they remarried again
 - Teens or single adults are remaining abstinent because:
 - they prefer to wait until marriage
 - sexual intercourse may interfere with future plans
 - prevent pregnancy and STDs
 - not ready for sexual intercourse emotionally
 - personal values and beliefs
 - may have a STD
 - want to complete education
 - establish a career
 - or are returning to abstinence (sometimes called “secondary virginity”)

3. Teenage Relationships

- In groups, with one student recording, complete the following discussion points:
 - What might happen in a teenage relationship when sexual intercourse takes place.
 - Develop a list and decide whether each situation is positive or negative.
 - What might influence a teenager who has been sexually active to choose abstinence?
- Discuss the responses with the class and remind students that the concept will be continued in Sub-Task #5.

Notes to Teacher

As an optional activity you may want to use the video, **Real People: Teens Who Choose Abstinence** (24 minutes) (from Sunburst Communications, P.O. Box 1150, Station A, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6P8, 1-800-431-1934) which explores the reasons that students choose to be abstinent.

Abstinence/Postponing Sexual Involvement:

The practice of abstaining from sexual intercourse, avoiding genital contact and other high risk sexual behaviour is a focus of this Sexual Health curriculum.

This information sheet is designed to provide the teacher with background to present and promote abstinence among your students.

There are a number of reasons for choosing abstinence, the only method of conception control that is 100% effective and 100% free of side effects. Many teens choose abstinence because of religious and moral beliefs. They feel that sexual intercourse belongs only in marriage and that it is wrong to

become sexually intimate prior to being married. Other people believe that sexual activity belongs only in a serious committed relationship (a decision to continue the relationship monogamously). In Ontario, data showed that 55.1% of males and 62.5% of females under the age of 16 had **not** had sexual intercourse (Thomas, DiCenso and Griffith, 1998).

A couple may find that abstaining allows for positive emotional growth between them. Abstaining may give them time to develop a deeper friendship. They may spend time talking, building mutual interests, sharing with other friends, learning that intimacy can be other than sexual, and maturing as individuals. Abstinence also serves to protect teens emotionally. When a person becomes sexually active they open up a very intimate and sensitive part of themselves. There is the potential to feel both intense happiness and intense emotional pain as the result of becoming sexually intimate with another person.

The realities of today's society include the proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases. Abstinence reduces the risk of contracting chlamydia, herpes, gonorrhea, and HIV, to name a few. Many teens will choose abstinence as a way of avoiding potential contact with these diseases.

There are medical reasons for teens to postpone intercourse. Vaginal intercourse for females before the age of 20 years is a risk factor for cervical cancer. During adolescence, the process of maturation of cervical cells is most active and young women are vulnerable to infection because of the cervical immaturity. Infection with some human papilloma virus (HPV) types is associated with cervical cancer (Policar, 1998).

It is vital that the students consider the option of abstinence prior to being confronted with a situation in which they are forced to decide whether or not to have sex. Many of these situations are such that it is extremely difficult for the person to make a rational decision, and to consider all options and consequences. If the student plans for abstinence as a result of this program, then the decision may be easier for them to make in the face of pressure.

In Teaching Learning Strategy #2, the teacher could allow students to form their own groups in order to enhance discussion.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

CGE (4) A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential

CGE 4(1) Demonstrate a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others

CGE (6) A caring family member who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community

CGE 6(b) Recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God-given gifts, to be used as the Creator intended

CGE (7) A responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life

CGE 7(d) Promotes the sacredness of life

Fully Alive

Theme 2, **Living in Relationship** will also provide useful content for teaching about effective communication skills in relationships.

Theme 2, **Living in Relationship** , Topic 2, *The Family*

- Be encouraged to value good communication in family relationships
Lesson 2, TM pp. 41-42, SB pp. 42-45

Resources for teaching chastity should be investigated to promote a sense of self-esteem and respect.

Appendix

Unit 4 Appendix W You're the Judge – Worksheet