



Please Pray That

- Moms and Dads find time to converse daily with their children.
- Parents will embrace their role as primary educators for their kids.
- Parents will have the courage to teach their children the beauty of God's plan for sex and marriage.
- Our children will be open to marriage as a vocation and a Sacrament.
- Parents will make time to pray daily with and for their children.
- No child (or parent) will ever find themselves beyond God's love and mercy.
- Families will desire to have holy homes.
- Children will seek the love of God rather than the approval of the world.

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Having Necessary Conversations About Human Sexuality

As a parent of a son and daughter, both in middle school, I am deeply concerned about the perception of sexuality that my children are absorbing through the culture they are immersed in. The sexual revolution has caused us to accept a number of assumptions about sexuality rather than the good news that God intends. The culture promised that the sexual revolution would lead to greater happiness. But has it? All objective indications tell us that it hasn't. People - especially women - report far less happiness in their relationships, less sexual satisfaction, and less happiness in general. In fact, researchers report increased stress and frustration despite all objective indications of prosperity. The American Economic Journal (August 2009) even gave this phenomenon a name: the "Paradox of Declining Female Happiness."

As a Catholic parent, I have to give serious consideration to the possibility (I would even say the likelihood) that this drop in happiness may have something to do with our culture's rejection of God's loving plan for human sexuality. So when I have conversations with my son and daughter about sexuality and chastity, my main goal is to share with them the fulfillment of love that God intends; what will truly make them happy.



Why does our cultural understanding of sexuality ultimately lead to dissatisfaction? For the most part, our culture has defined sexuality as a physical act that is done for pleasure and self-expression. A sexual relationship is judged based on the level of pleasure and on emotional connection. The sexual "marketplace" becomes a competition based on attractiveness and sexual "skill." Consequently, young people are even more obsessed with not measuring up than they have ever been. Talk about a life of stress and frustration! Not only that, but many women have learned to trade sex for power, material gain, or attention. Many young women report seeing sex as a "duty" to their partner done in exchange for keeping the relationship.

Because humanity passes by way of the family . . .

In contrast, God gives us the gift of sex in the context of our vocation to love with complete, selfless love. For Catholics, the term sexuality refers to the ability to give and receive love as a man or a woman. So sexuality is much more than just an act. It affects every part of us, especially our capacity to love, to procreate, and to form bonds of communion with others (see CCC 2332).

Following God's plan frees us from judging ourselves based on impossible scales of attractiveness and sexual skill. Instead, we judge ourselves on our ability to love: to will the good of the other. And we can always grow in love. When we follow God's plan, sexuality draws us out of ourselves and makes it possible for us to focus on the other. That is why it finds its full expression in the creation of new life and in family love. That is also why our home is to be a "school of love" in which we learn intensely how to love as Jesus loves.

So while God's plan is challenging, it does not set us or our children up for the frustration and disappointment that our culture seems to. This is especially true because when we follow God's will, He gives us grace to help us to live out His plan. With God's help, we can lead our children to the full joy of God's plan for human sexuality and love.

Preparing Yourself for a Necessary Conversation on Human Sexuality

Through conversations with your son or daughter, you can share the good news of God's plan for human sexuality. Prepare yourself for these conversations by asking yourself the following questions:

- How versed am I in the Church's teachings on human sexuality? Do I understand how God's plan impacts marriage, family, and my ability to will the good of the other?
- Do I truly see God's way as good news, or do I chafe at what I perceive as restrictions in the moral law?
- Can I express to my son or daughter the difference between the apparent freedom our culture offers and the true, long-term freedom that God offers?
- Am I enthusiastic about helping my son or daughter plan his or her life around God's truth and goodness? Am I enthusiastic about planning **my** life around God's plan as well?

Teaching the Way of Love can help you prepare for this necessary conversation with your son or daughter. The second session in the "Necessary Conversations" webinar series focuses on having necessary conversations about sex and chastity. Register for the series today at www.twl4parents.com/necessary-conversations-webinar/.

This article tells about just a small part of good Catholic parenting. Visit www.twl4parents.com for more strategies that will help you become the best parent you can be. And for the best systematic approach to parenting, consider purchasing the [Teaching the Way of Love](#) program, which can be found at the same website.

This article series is brought to you by Alice Heinzen and Jeff Arrowood, authors of the [Teaching the Way of Love](#) home study series for parents. Find out more at www.twl4parents.com/teaching-the-way-of-love.