



# A TIME TO SPEAK

FAITH COMMUNITIES AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Second Edition

Reverend Debra W. Haffner and Kate M. Ott

Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing



*F*or everything there is a season,  
And a time for every matter under heaven:  
A time to be born, and a time to die;  
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
A time to kill, and a time to heal;  
A time to break down, and a time to build up;  
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
A time to seek, and a time to lose;  
A time to keep, and a time to throw away;  
A time to tear, and a time to sew;  
A time to keep silent, and A TIME TO SPEAK;  
A time to love, and a time to hate;  
A time for war, and a time for peace.

*Ecclesiastes 3:1–8*

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## RELIGIOUS DECLARATION ON SEXUAL MORALITY, JUSTICE, AND HEALING

Sexuality is God's life-giving and life-fulfilling gift. We come from diverse religious communities to recognize sexuality as central to our humanity and as integral to our spirituality. We are speaking out against the pain, brokenness, oppression, and loss of meaning that many experience about their sexuality.

Our faith traditions celebrate the goodness of creation, including our bodies and our sexuality. We sin when this sacred gift is abused or exploited. However, the great promise of our traditions is love, healing, and restored relationships.

Our culture needs a sexual ethic focused on personal relationships and social justice rather than particular sexual acts. All persons have the right and responsibility to lead sexual lives that express love, justice, mutuality, commitment, consent, and pleasure. Grounded in respect for the body and for the vulnerability that intimacy brings, this ethic fosters physical, emotional, and spiritual health. It accepts no double standards and applies to all persons, without regard to sex, gender, color, age, bodily condition, marital status, or sexual orientation.

God hears the cries of those who suffer from the failure of religious communities to address sexuality. We are called today to see, hear, and respond to the suffering caused by violence against women and sexual minorities, the HIV pandemic, unsustainable population growth and over-consumption, and the commercial exploitation of sexuality.

Faith communities must therefore be truth seeking, courageous, and just. We call for:

- Theological reflection that integrates the wisdom of excluded, often silenced peoples, and insights about sexuality from medicine, social science, the arts and humanities.
- Full inclusion of women and sexual minorities in congregational life, including their ordination and the blessing of same sex unions.
- Sexuality counseling and education throughout the lifespan from trained religious leaders.
- Support for those who challenge sexual oppression and who work for justice within their congregations and denomination.

Faith communities must also advocate for sexual and spiritual wholeness in society. We call for:

- Lifelong, age appropriate sexuality education in schools, seminaries, and community settings.
- A faith-based commitment to sexual and reproductive rights, including access to voluntary contraception, abortion, and HIV/STD prevention and treatment.
- Religious leadership in movements to end sexual and social injustice.

God rejoices when we celebrate our sexuality with holiness and integrity. We, the undersigned, invite our colleagues and faith communities to join us in promoting sexual morality, justice, and healing.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## To the Second Edition

**T**he Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing is grateful to SIECUS, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, for permission to update and publish **A Time to Speak: Faith Communities and Sexuality Education, Second Edition**.

I wrote the first edition of “A Time to Speak: Faith Communities and Sexuality Education” in the summer of 1998 when I was the President and CEO of SIECUS. Since then, I have completed my Masters of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary and the requirements for ordination as a Unitarian Universalist Minister and co-founded the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing. During my journey to ministry, many people have influenced my thinking and understanding of the role that sexuality plays in a faith community. In particular, I am profoundly grateful to Rev. Kathryn Booth, Rev. David Bryce, Rev. Dr. John Buehrens, Rev. Barbara G. Fast, Rev. Dr. Larry Greenfield, Rev. Frank Hall, Rev. Dr. Joseph Hough, Rabbi Steven Jacobs, Rev. Barbara Lundblad, Rabbi Dennis Sasso, Rabbi Sandy Sasso, and Rev. Dr. Bill Stayton for their support, guidance, and encouragement.

The ministry of the Religious Institute flourished because of the support of the Christian Community, which has provided the organizational framework for the work for the past four years. I am deeply appreciative of the generosity of heart, spirit, and time of its Executive Director, Rev. Steve Clapp, who is the ideal colleague and friend. I am also indebted to my students at Union Theological Seminary and the congregants at the Unitarian Church in Westport who provide the grounding for my work in the larger world.

Kate M. Ott joined the Religious Institute as an Associate in 2004. A Ph.D. candidate at Union Theological Seminary, she has provided invaluable research and programmatic support on this publication as well as numerous other Religious Institute projects. She is grateful to her mentors and professors, Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes, Rev. Dr. Letty Russell, Dr. Margaret Farley, Rev. Dr. Kristen Leslie, her fellow doctoral colleagues, and the youth with whom she works for inspiring, encouraging, and supporting her. In addition, she has received the Woodrow Wilson Practicum Grant to support her work on this publication. I am proud to have her as co-author.

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—Rev. Debra W. Haffner

## To the First Edition

**M**any people provided input and guidance on this monograph *A Time to Speak: Faith Communities and Sexuality Education*.

I am grateful to the Rev. Joe Leonard, National Council of Churches of Christ; Rev. Larry Greenfield, The Park Ridge Center for the Study of Health, Faith, and Ethics; Sarah Gibbs, Unitarian Universalist Association; Pernessa Seele, The Balm In Gilead; and Eugene Roehlkepartain, the Search Institute, for their careful review and suggestions for this guide.

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# FOREWORD

## To the Second Edition

*“For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equality.”*

*Proverbs 1:2-3*



Religions have a venerable tradition of supporting education, including education about our sexuality. Almost every religious tradition affirms sexuality as one of life’s most fulfilling and life-affirming gifts and counsels its members to understand and exercise this gift wisely.

For almost four decades, Jewish and Christian denominations in the United States have encouraged some type of formal sexuality education for their children and adolescents. Many have been involved with supporting sexuality education programs in the public schools.

Since the first edition of this monograph was written in 1998, there has been significant progress in efforts to promote an open and honest discourse about sexuality issues in faith communities. Several additional denominations have passed policies in support of sexuality education and several have developed new curricula on these issues. For example, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ jointly published a multi-volume approach to lifespan sexuality education, *Our Whole Lives*. It is used in thousands of congregations around the country.

The Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing (see page 2) was published in 2000. It is a seminal call for faith communities to become more involved in sexuality issues, including a faith-based commitment to sexuality education in the congregation, in seminaries, and in public schools. As of this printing, more than

2400 religious leaders from more than 40 denominations endorse the Religious Declaration.

Certain issues have become more contentious in religious denominations during the past seven years. The clergy sex abuse crisis challenged not only the Roman Catholic Church but called on faith communities of all kinds to assure that children and adolescents are safe from sexual abuse and harassment. Some seminaries began to assess how they prepare future clergy to deal with sexuality issues including their own sexual attractions. Several denominations have recently debated the full inclusion of sexual minorities, including the ordination of gay, lesbian, and transgendered clergy and support for marriage equality. Marriage equality, a distant dream in 1998, is now a reality in Massachusetts, Belgium, Canada, Spain, and the Netherlands.

The landscape of school-based sexuality education has changed dramatically since the first edition of this monograph. Moreover, “the federal government will spend approximately \$170 million on abstinence-only education programs in fiscal year 2005, more than twice the amount spent in fiscal year 2001.”<sup>1</sup> These programs must only teach young people about abstinence and that “sexual activity outside of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects.” Community battles about the content of sex education programs have often been divisive, pitting parent against parent. Many young people are now receiving more comprehensive information

about sexuality from their church or synagogue than from their public school.

The need for faith-based sexuality education for people throughout the life span continues to grow. Adults need help understanding their denomination's positions on sexuality issues as well as support for the sexuality issues they face in their own lives. Parents need trusted partners in providing education about values-based issues to their own children. Adolescents need religious leaders who are committed to their spiritual, moral, physical and emotional development, including their need

for education and support about their sexuality and their sexual decisions.

We hope this publication inspires you to become more involved with sexuality education in your congregation and in your community. We hope that it provides you with resources and strategies that you can adapt in your own work with children, teenagers, and adults. We look forward to the day when all faith communities, within their own moral and religious commitments, embrace their role in providing sexuality education to their congregants and offer a prophetic voice for sexual justice.

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# INTRODUCTION

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

*Matthew 5:6*



Sexuality is a sacred and blessed part of human life. Every day, religious institutions affirm the connection between spirituality and sexuality:

- A minister or rabbi provides couples counseling . . .
- A congregation offers sexuality education for young people . . .
- A congregation becomes a sanctuary for domestic abuse survivors or a meeting place for parents of lesbians and gays . . .
- A social action committee conducts a letter writing campaign for full funding of family planning services . . .
- A youth group leader educates teens about dating and relationships . . .
- A study group explores the ramifications of a new denominational report on sexuality . . .
- A rabbi, priest, or minister proclaims that sexuality is a gift from God and must be exercised wisely . . .

## **Congregations can play a unique role in addressing sexuality issues.**

Many families turn to their religious institutions for guidance and support. In fact, most religious institutions are already involved in some type of work related to sexuality issues. For example, almost all churches, synagogues, and mosques assist in marriage preparation and provide marital counseling, family support, and religious education of children. In recent years, many have become involved more directly with sexuality issues, including: teen parenthood programs, divorce support groups, single parent groups, gay and lesbian support groups, AIDS pastoral care, and care for survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

## **Congregations can play a unique role in life span sexuality education.**

In our culture, religious institutions are unique in that they provide support and education to people of all ages. Babies are dedicated or named and elderly people rely on their faith communities for support. In between, churches, synagogues, and mosques provide counseling, education, and help with all aspects of life. Congregations can provide sexuality education to their members from preschool through retirement.

## **Religious institutions can play a unique role in supporting sexuality education in their community.**

Religious congregations have traditionally helped determine community ethical standards. In some communities, organized religious support for sexuality education is the key to determining whether or not a program is offered and which subjects are included.

Almost 40 years ago, the National Council of Churches, Commission on Marriage and the Family, the Synagogue Council of America Committee on Family, and the United States Catholic Conference Family Life Bureau called upon churches and synagogues to become actively involved in sexuality education within their congregations and in their communities. On June 8, 1968, they jointly released a statement that is still remarkable today in its call for religious institution involvement in sexuality issues.

They began their statement by affirming that sexuality is a precious gift:

“Human sexuality is a gift of God, to be accepted with thanksgiving and used with reverence and joy. It is more than a

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mechanical instinct. Its many dimensions are intertwined with the total personality and character of the individual. Sex is a dynamic urge or power, arising from one's basic maleness or femaleness, and having complex physical, psychological and social dimensions."

They called on religious institutions to provide sexuality education to children, youth and adults:

"We recognize that some parents desire supplementary assistance from church or synagogue and from other agencies. Each community of faith can provide resources, leadership and opportunities as appropriate for its young people to learn about their development into manhood and womanhood, and for adults to grow in understanding of their roles as men and women in family and society in the light of their religious heritage."

They called on schools and community agencies to offer sexuality education:

"In addition to parents and the religious community, the school and other community agencies can have a vital role in sex education in two particular ways:

1. They can integrate sound sexual information and attitudes with the total education which the child receives in social studies, civics, literature, history, home economics and the biological and behavioral sciences.
2. They can reach the large numbers of young people whose families have no religious identification but who need to understand their own sexuality and their role in society."

*A Time to Speak* reaffirms this call for all churches, synagogues, and mosques to become involved in sexuality education, both within their congregations and within their communities. This call is particularly important in light of the federal abstinence-only-until-marriage education program which has severely curtailed the sexuality education that young people are receiving in public schools. In many communities, it is the activities of the religious right that has ended or severely limited sexuality education in the public schools. In too many communities, the only public religious voices on sexuality issues are associated with groups such as the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, and Concerned Women for America. It is indeed a time to speak for religious people who support sexuality education.

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## INTERFAITH STATEMENT ON SEX EDUCATION (1968)

**H**uman sexuality is a gift of God, to be accepted with thanksgiving and used with reverence and joy. It is more than a mechanical instinct. Its many dimensions are intertwined with the total personality and character of the individual. Sex is a dynamic urge or power, arising from one's basic maleness or femaleness, and having complex physical, psychological and social dimensions. These dimensions, we affirm, must be shaped and guided by spiritual and moral considerations which derive from our Judeo-Christian heritage. The heritage teaches us that the source of values to guide human behavior is in God.

The sexual attitudes of children develop as part of their general social attitude. Furthermore, respectful and considerate sexual attitudes help create healthy social attitudes. When the family and society view sex as loving and fulfilling, rather than prurient and exploitative, then both the social and sexual attitudes of children benefit. A healthful approach to sexual relations, willingness and ability to impart sexual information in a manner proportionate to the child's stage of development—these are among the elements which foster healthy sexual attitudes and behavior in the young. So, also, is resistance to social pressures which in some instances lead to premature sophistication or unhealthy attitudes in young people.

Responsibility for sex education belongs primarily to the child's parents or guardians. A home permeated by justice and love is the seed-bed of sound sexual development among all family members.

Both the attitudes and the activities of the parents—toward each other and toward each child as an individual affect this development. Healthy attitudes toward sex begin in the child's earliest years; they can best develop in an atmosphere that fosters in him a deep sense of his own self-worth, bolstered by love and understanding.

Sex Education is not, however only for the young; it is a life-long task whose aim is to help individuals develop their sexuality in a manner suited to their stage of life.

We recognize that some parents desire supplementary assistance from church or synagogue and from other agencies. Each community of faith can provide resources, leadership and opportunities as appropriate for its young people to learn about their development into manhood and womanhood, and for adults to grow in understanding of their roles as men and women in family and society in the light of their religious heritage.

In addition to parents and the religious community, the school and other community agencies can have a vital role in sex education in two particular ways:

1. They can integrate sound sexual information and attitudes with the total education which the child receives in social studies, civics, literature, history, home economics and the biological and behavioral sciences.
2. They can reach the large numbers of young people whose families have no religious identification but who need to understand their own sexuality and their role in society.

For those who would introduce sex education into the schools, however, the question of values and norms for social behavior is a problem indeed, the most difficult problem. It is important that sex education not be reduced to the mere communication of information. Rather, this significant area of experience can be placed in a setting where rich human, personal, and spiritual values can illuminate it and give it meaning. In such a setting, we are convinced it is not only possible but necessary to recognize certain basic moral principles, not as sectarian religious doctrine but as the moral heritage of Western civilization.

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The challenge of resolving this problem of values in a pluralistic society makes it all the more imperative that communities planning to introduce sex education into their schools not only call upon educators to become involved in decisions about goals and techniques, but also invite parents and professionals in the community to take part in shaping such a curriculum.

To those groups responsible for developing school and community programs in sex education, we suggest the following guidelines:

- a) Such education should strive to create understanding and conviction that decisions about sexual behavior must be based on moral and ethical values, as well as on considerations of physical and emotional health, fear, pleasure, practical consequences, or concepts of personality development.
- b) Such education must respect the cultural, familial, and religious backgrounds and beliefs of individuals and must teach that the sexual development and behavior of each individual cannot take place in a vacuum but are instead related to the other aspects of his life and to his moral, ethical and religious codes.
- c) It should point out how sex is distorted and exploited in our society and how this places heavy responsibility upon the individual, the family, and institutions to cope in a constructive manner with the problem thus created.
- d) It must recognize that in school sex education, insofar as it relates to moral and religious beliefs and values, complements the education conveyed through the family, the church, or the synagogue. Sex education in the schools must proceed constructively, with understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of difference.
- e) It must stress the many points of harmony between moral values and beliefs about what is right and wrong that are held in common by the major religions on the one hand and generally accepted legal, social, psychological, medical, and other values held in common by service professions and society generally.
- f) Where strong differences of opinion exist on what is right and wrong sexual behavior,

objective, informed and dignified discussion of both sides of such questions should be encouraged. However, in such cases, neither the sponsors of an educational program nor the teachers should attempt to give definite answers or to represent their personal moral and religious beliefs as the consensus of the major religions or society generally.

- g) Throughout such education human values and human dignity must be stressed as major bases for decisions of right and wrong; attitudes that build such respect should be encouraged as right, and those that tear down such respect should be condemned as wrong.
- h) Such education should teach that sexuality is a part of the whole person and an aspect of his dignity as a human being.
- i) It should teach that people who love each other try not to do anything that will harm each other.
- j) It should teach that sexual intercourse within marriage offers the greatest possibility for personal fulfillment and social growth.
- k) Finally, such a program of education must be based on sound content and must employ sound methods; it must be conducted by teachers and leaders qualified to do so by training and temperament.

The increased concern and interest in this vital area of human experience now manifested by parents, educators, and religious leaders are cause for gratitude. We urge all to take a more active role—each in his own area of responsibility and competence—in promoting sound leadership and programs in sex education. We believe it possible to help our sons and daughters achieve a richer, fuller understanding of their sexuality, so that their children will enter a world where men and women live and work together in understanding, cooperation, and love.

*By the National Council of Churches Commission on Marriage and Family, the Synagogue Council of America Committee on Family, and the United States Catholic Conference Family Life Bureau.*

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# At a Glance: WHY RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS MUST BE INVOLVED

*“Those who walk in wisdom come through safely.”*

*Proverbs 28:26*



**R**eligious institutions reach a majority of Americans.

- There are no other institutions in a community that touch as many people throughout the life span.
- Four in ten Americans attend a worship service regularly.<sup>2</sup>
- Two-thirds of Americans are members of a church or synagogue.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2003, more than half of the adults in the United States said that religion is very important in their lives.<sup>4</sup>

## **Religious institutions reach a majority of youth.**

Religious institutions have a unique role to play in reaching children and youth with sexuality information. After schools, religious institutions serve more teens and young adults than any other community agency, and they are the only ones which are specifically empowered to do so from a moral perspective.

- 43 percent of American teens report attending religious services on a weekly basis.<sup>5</sup>
- More than 60 percent of American youth spend at least one hour per week in activities at a church or synagogue.<sup>6</sup>
- Three-quarters of teens say religion is at least somewhat important to them, including almost half who say it is very important.<sup>7</sup>
- 84 percent of teenage girls say religion is important to them.<sup>8</sup>
- 80 percent of college students in the U.S. believe in God.<sup>9</sup>

- Two-thirds of college students report praying regularly.<sup>10</sup>
- In the last year, eight in ten college students attended religious services.<sup>11</sup>

## **Sexuality is a source of alienation and hurt for too many Americans.**

Sexuality should be a wonderful and enriching part of life for all of us. However, all too often it is abused or exploited. Religious institutions have a special role to play in helping people heal when the abuse of sexuality causes pain and suffering.

- Half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended.<sup>12</sup>
- Eight percent of young people in grades 9 through 12 have been pregnant or have gotten someone pregnant.<sup>13</sup>
- Approximately one in seven sexually experienced 14-year-old girls reports having been pregnant. That translates into about 20,000 pregnancies each year and approximately 8,000 births.<sup>14</sup>
- There are 19 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases each year.<sup>15</sup>
- Every year, about 8 million youth between ages 15-24 acquire a sexually transmitted disease.<sup>16</sup>
- More than 500,000 people have died of AIDS in the United States.<sup>17</sup>
- More than 400,000 children, adolescents, and adults are living with AIDS in the United States.<sup>18</sup>
- As many as 350,000 Americans are currently infected with HIV.<sup>19</sup>

- Half a million children are thought to be sexually abused each year.<sup>20</sup>
- In 90 percent of cases of child sexual abuse, the children know their abuser well—they are parents, family members, neighbors, clergy, coaches and teachers.<sup>21</sup>
- One in ten men and one in six women were sexually abused as children.<sup>22</sup>
- One in five women reports she has been raped or physically or sexually assaulted in her lifetime.<sup>23</sup>
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 20 percent of violent crime against women and three percent of violent crime against men.<sup>24</sup>

### **Young people and their parents say that religious institutions fail them on sexuality issues.**

Parents and teens want their faith communities to provide more sexuality education.

- Only four in ten young people say they receive support and care from adults in their religious community.<sup>25</sup>
- Only half of young people say that their congregation does a good or excellent job in giving them a sense of purpose in life.<sup>26</sup>
- Only four in ten youth agree that their congregation portrays sex in a healthy and positive manner.<sup>27</sup>
- Four in ten teens report that they have spent less than six hours addressing sexuality issues at their synagogue or church in their lifetime.<sup>28</sup>
- Youth rate their congregations as poor in providing information in the areas of sexual information, marriage, and parenting.<sup>29</sup>
- Eighty-nine percent of youth active in religious institutions say they receive inadequate information on sexual decision-making.<sup>30</sup>

### **Religious involvement helps keep young people from engaging in sexual intercourse.**

Involvement in a religious community actually protects young people from risk-taking behaviors, including too early sexual intercourse. Offering sexuality education programs is one way to keep young people coming to the church and synagogue during their teen years.

- Teenagers who say that religion and prayer are important to them are more likely to delay sexual intercourse and less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.<sup>31</sup>
- Almost half of teens say they have “made a conscious decision to wait to have sex.” The more importance a teenager places on religion, the more likely he or she is to name this as their reason for delaying intercourse.<sup>32</sup>
- Teens who report significant levels of involvement in and connection to congregational life and its leaders have the lowest rates of sexual intercourse. Thirty-one percent of faith-involved 17 year olds have sexual intercourse compared to 61 percent of all teens in the U.S.<sup>33</sup>
- Nine in ten teens say morals and values should play a major role in the decision to have sexual intercourse.<sup>34</sup>
- Boys who consider religion very important in their lives are half as likely to have sexual intercourse compared to boys who do not consider religion important.<sup>35</sup>
- Religiously involved teens have high levels of sexual involvement besides intercourse: 29 percent of males and 26 percent of females engage in oral sex; 70 percent in fondling; 50 percent in nudity with the opposite sex; 89 percent of males and 71 percent females masturbate; and kissing is universal.<sup>36</sup>
- One in six boys and one in ten girls who are active in faith communities say they are homosexual, bisexual or currently questioning their orientation.<sup>37</sup>

### **Clergy support religious involvement in sexuality education.**

In 1999, the Christian Community conducted a survey of 635 congregations (Protestant, Roman Catholic, Unitarian, Jewish, Islamic, other), 5,819 teenagers, 635 clergy and 442 adult youth workers on their attitudes about adolescent sexuality and sexuality education.

- Sixty-one percent of clergy and adult leaders agreed that faith-based institutions should teach comprehensive sexuality education including information about abstinence.<sup>38</sup>

- Sixty-eight percent of the leadership in the congregations agreed that they could be doing more than they currently were in the area of sexuality education.<sup>39</sup>
- About half said that their congregation offered a limited amount of information and/or discussion in existing classes or groups, while 37 percent reported doing almost nothing.<sup>40</sup>
- Seventy-four percent of clergy and 76 percent of youth advisors agreed with the statement “My congregation portrays sex in a healthy and positive way,” compared to only 44 percent of the youth.<sup>41</sup>
- Clergy and youth advisors rated their congregation’s provision of information on marriage, sexuality, and parenting as “Fair” or “Good” compared to the teens’ rating of “Poor” in all three areas.<sup>42</sup>

According to a survey of nearly 500 clergy by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice:

- Eighty-nine percent agree that sexuality needs to be part of the congregation’s educational program.
- Ninety-five percent agree that individuals can benefit from dialogue within the congregation about sexuality issues.
- Eighty-five percent agree that it is appropriate to speak about sexuality from the pulpit.
- Ninety-five percent agree that it is appropriate to speak about sexuality in religious schools or youth groups.
- Ninety-eight percent agree that it is appropriate to speak about sexuality in adult education settings.
- Seventy-five percent consider lack of religious-based sexuality education a serious problem in their faith community.
- Seventy-six percent would be interested in a program to stimulate congregational dialogue from a faith-based perspective on human sexuality.<sup>43</sup>

### Denominations support sexuality education.

In the spring of 2003, the Religious Institute—under the auspices of its parent organization, the Christian Community—surveyed the departments of youth ministry at the 28 largest denominations and religious organizations that serve Jewish, Christian, and Unitarian Universalists youth in the United States.<sup>44</sup> The Religious Institute was pleased to find that 84 percent of the national respondents and 83 percent of the model congregations indicated that they were providing sexuality education. These results are in sharp contrast to two earlier studies: in a 1994 survey by the Search Institute, only 38 percent of mainline Protestant youth rated their congregation good or excellent in helping young people develop their sexual values and behaviors;<sup>45</sup> and in a national 2000 survey, by the Christian Community, only 14 percent of local congregations offered a comprehensive sexuality education program.<sup>46</sup>

However, there are gaps in the program offerings:

- Only half of the national respondents encourage teen-parent programs, and only one-quarter of the model programs offer them.
- Only one-third of the national respondents and only 42 percent of the model congregations indicated that they welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth. Only two of the national respondents reported that they encouraged support groups for GLBT youth and none of the model congregations had such a group.
- Only one-quarter of the national respondents encourage congregations to make referrals to community-based sexual health organizations, and only one of the thirteen model congregations actually did so.

Many denominations have passed denominational statements strongly supporting sexuality and HIV prevention education, both within their congregations and in the community. A sample of denomination statements follow on page 15.

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## FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

### **Supporting Sexuality Education Within Their Congregations**

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Mennonite Church  
National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.,  
Office of Family Ministries and Human Sexuality  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Roman Catholic Church  
Reform Church in America  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
United Church of Christ  
The United Methodist Church  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

### **Supporting Sexuality and/or HIV/AIDS Education in Public Schools**

American Jewish Congress, Commission on Women's Equality  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Church of the Brethren  
Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc  
Jewish Women International  
National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A,  
Office of Family Ministries and Human Sexuality  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Reform Church in America  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
United Church of Christ  
The United Methodist Church  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism  
Young Women's Christian Association of the United States

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## DENOMINATION STATEMENTS ABOUT SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Many denominations have affirmed the need for sexuality education, both within their own faith community and in the public schools.

These resolutions are often passed at the national assemblies of the denominations and are meant to guide local congregational activities.

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**Commission on Family Ministries and  
Human Sexuality Ministries in Christian  
Education and Discipleship Unit National  
Council of the Churches  
of Christ in the U.S.A.**

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### **A Resolution on Human Sexuality 1991**

“... The Commission on Family Ministries and Human Sexuality is committed to the task of enabling member communions and organizations to provide broad-based sexuality education relevant to the urgent issues of human sexuality that are before the churches and the wider society.”

“... We affirm that... children, youth, and adults have a right to education that responds to the full range of their questions and concerns about human sexuality. The churches’ response to human sexuality must include pastoral, prophetic and educational efforts to achieve sexual and spiritual wholeness in collaboration with home, school, and community.”

“We therefore resolve to address concerns about human sexuality in the churches and in the society and to collaborate with others who share our values.”

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**Committee on Family Ministries and  
Human Sexuality, Education and  
Leadership Ministries, National Council  
of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.**

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### **Committee Mission**

“The Committee assists participating denominations and organizations in:

- the life-long nurturing task of families
- strengthening marriage, parenting and familial living through programs of education and leader development
- addressing human sexuality throughout the life cycle
- supporting families in a time of many cultural changes
- providing remedial strategies for problems affecting families, preventative strategies for enhancing the health of families, and advocacy regarding public policies that impact families.”

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**American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.**

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### **American Baptist Policy Statement on Family Life**

*No. 7036:6, 1984*

“We affirm that children are a gift from God, entrusted to parents for love, care and nurture.”

“We are committed to providing programs of education and support to guide and nurture persons making choices about singleness, marriage, divorce, remarriage and parenthood; strengthen family units of all kinds, including single parent and blended families, foster/adoption families,

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those living in group homes and other covenantal family-like groups.”

“We are committed to working with others for public policies and practices which enhance the status of families and empower them to do their unique work of nurturing succeeding generations of citizens.”



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### Central Conference of American Rabbis

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#### **On Sex Education in the Schools, Adopted by the 98th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis 1987**

“WHEREAS, Judaism considers sexual relations a matter of religious concern, and

WHEREAS, the incidences of both teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in the population at large are on the rise, and

WHEREAS, the availability of accurate information about reproduction, sexually transmitted diseases, and contraception have been demonstrated to have a positive impact on curbing adolescent pregnancy and the incidence of sexually transmitted disease,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVLED, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis urge all the synagogue schools, day schools, and youth groups of our movement to offer courses and programs, on all levels, in sex education, which would deal both with Jewish values with emphasis on the centrality of the family and with objective information about reproduction, sexually transmitted diseases and contraception, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVLED, that the CCAR urge the inclusion of sex education in the public schools on all levels (from grade school through high school) and the establishment of parent/educator advisory groups for local schools to formulate the curricular objectives of these programs, and the consideration, by

local school boards and parent groups, of school-based health clinics as effective agencies for the dissemination of birth control information and devices.”

#### **Sexuality Education, Adopted by the 114th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis**

2003

“ . . . Experience with the Reform Movement’s youth programs indicates that Reform Jewish youth are as sexually active as their peers. In addition, every scientific study that breaks down participants by religion shows the same results. Just as importantly, at programs such as the *L’Taken* seminars and NFTY conventions, workshops dealing with topics of sexuality fill quickly. Our youth are asking questions, and they are looking to us for guidance . . . ”

“THEREFORE, the Central Conference of American Rabbis resolves to:

Encourage the UAHC and its departments and affiliates to work with synagogue schools, day schools, camps, and youth groups of our movement to:

Offer all our members courses and programs appropriate to each age level built on Jewish values, emphasizing the role of sexuality in the context of healthy committed relationships, and provide comprehensive sexuality education including objective information about reproduction, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, sexual orientation, and other issues of sexuality; and

Provide tools and educational materials for parents, to assist them when they talk to their children about these issues; and

Support federal, state, provincial, and local legislation to provide for the inclusion of comprehensive and age-appropriate sexuality education in the public schools on all levels (from grade school through high school), while opposing federal, state, provincial, and local funding exclusively for abstinence-only programs.”

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**Christian Church of Christ  
(Disciples of Christ)**

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**Resolution Concerning Sexuality Education,  
adopted by the General Assembly**

No. 8718, 1987

“WHEREAS, the number of teenage pregnancies is increasing, and it is evident that there is a need for sexuality education for teenagers and their parents, and

WHEREAS, human sexuality is recognized as a gift from God, and sexuality education is therefore a concern of the church, and

WHEREAS, the church affirms the basic values of love, respect and responsibility in all human relationships,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Disciples congregations play a central role in the education of their young people and parents by offering clear and responsible information on human sexuality . . .”

**The Church’s Leadership in Sex Education  
Adopted by the General Assembly**

No. 9721, 1997

“WHEREAS, the church community holds the responsibility to teach, model and bear witness to a health understanding of sexuality but has failed to fulfill this responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the church should offer strong, faithful sexuality counsel to families, children, youth and adults; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ, after many years of careful study, has developed a curriculum for adults based on a Biblical understanding of sex, and has instituted a pattern of careful selection and training of teachers for this program, and is willing to share this program with us; and


WHEREAS, many church organizations have developed curriculum for adults and children

based on biblical understanding of sexuality, and are willing to share these materials with us;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Denver, Colorado, July 25-29, 1997:

1. Encourage congregations to speak openly and teach about human sexuality from a Christian perspective.
2. Encourage congregations to make use of the comprehensive sexuality bibliography available from Homeland Ministries.
3. Encourage all manifestations of the church to make use of the various sexuality education materials already available with special attention being given to opportunities for partnerships with others involved in sexuality education, with special encouragement to congregations and regions to work in partnership with congregations, associations, and conferences of the United Church of Christ.
4. Encourage Homeland Ministries to work with the staff of the United Church Board of Homeland Ministries to make use of curriculum such as “In God’s Image” and to cooperate with them in selecting and training persons qualified to teach such curriculum.”

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**Church of the Brethren**

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**Annual Conference Statement Human  
Sexuality from a Christian Perspective,  
Family-Life Education**

1983

“Education for family life is appropriate also within the public school. It is needed to supplement instruction in the home and church. Public school instruction should include information about the body, sex organs, and the reproductive system, but the emphasis should be on values and relationships. Teachers who are responsible for this task should be well trained and themselves be worthy models of

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mature and responsible sexuality. The church supports responsible family-life education in the public school as long as the religious commitment of all students and residents of the community is respected.”

“Parents should keep themselves informed about the content of family-life education courses in which their children are influenced, and use that educational experience to foster open discussion of the topic of sexuality with their children. Parents should also be acquainted with the content of such courses for the purposes of continuing dialog with school officials. In such dialog, parents should clarify their Christian principles to insure that their own ethical values are not undermined.”

“Family-life education will not solve all sex, marriage, and family problems. The task requires the coordinated efforts of home, school, and church.”



### Episcopal Church

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#### **Develop Educational Resources Relating to Sexuality and Family Life, General Convention**

No. 1982-D076, 1983

“*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, that the Executive Council through its Committee on Education for Mission and Ministry develop educational ways by which the Church can assist its people in their formative years (children through adults) to develop moral and spiritual perspectives in matters relating to sexuality and family life.”

#### **Promote Use of Materials on Human Sexuality and Abortion for All Age Groups,**

No. 1988-A089, 1989

“*Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, that this 69th General Convention call on the Presiding Bishop and the Executive Council to provide and promote the use of materials on

human sexuality, birth control and family planning for all age groups as part of this Church’s on-going Christian Education curricula as reflective of God’s creation; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the topic of abortion be included in the Church’s education curricula and that these materials be explicit, with a full understanding of the physical, emotional and spiritual realities and risks involved in abortion; and be it further

*Resolved*, That we encourage the members of this Church to give strong support to responsible local public and private school programs of education in human sexuality.”

#### **Call for AIDS Education Programs Final Text of the Resolution**

No. 1988-8006, 1989

“*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, that this 69th General Convention call for AIDS education programs in every congregation by the end of 1989; request that models of AIDS education programs be made available by the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition in conjunction with the National Church staff; and request that such models promote abstinence or monogamy as well as candid and complete instruction regarding disease prevention measures, such as use of condoms in sexual intercourse and ending sharing of contaminated needles by intravenous drug users.”



### Mennonite Church

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#### **Resolution on Human Sexuality**

1986

“... We covenant with each other to study the Bible together and expand our insight into the biblical teachings relating to sexuality...we will promote congregational study of the complex issues of sexuality through Bible study and the use of *Human Sexuality in the Christian Life: A Working Document for Study and Dialogue* . . .”

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**A Call to Affirmation, Confession and Covenant Regarding Human Sexuality, Adopted by the Ninth Mennonite Church General Assembly**

1987

**A Call to Affirmation**

“We affirm that sexuality is a good and beautiful gift of God, a gift of identity, and a way of being in the world as male and female.

We affirm that we can feel positive about our bodies and our sexuality because we are created in God’s image and know our Creator.

We affirm that sexual drives are a real part of our lives, but that the satisfaction of those drives is not the chief good in life.

We affirm both the goodness of singleness and the goodness of marriage and family in the Lord.”

**A Call to Confession**

“We confess that our sexual attitudes and practices too often fall far short of the biblical standards. No one can boast of perfection in this area.

We confess that sexism lingers among us, damaging the self-esteem of women and hindering their full contribution to personal relationships and to the church, and denying men a true understanding of themselves.

We repent of our wrong view of the body which keeps us from speaking openly and honestly about our bodies, including our sexual nature.

We repent of our judgmental attitudes and our slowness to forgive each other when we fail or when our sexual values differ from those of other Christians.

We confess our fear and repent of our absence of love toward those with a different sexual orientation and of our lack of understanding for their struggle to find a place in society and in the church.”

**A Call to Covenant**

“... We covenant with each other to take part in the ongoing search for discernment and for

openness to each other. As a part of the nurture of individuals and congregations we will promote congregational study of the complex issues of sexuality, through Bible study and the use of materials such as *Human Sexuality in the Christian Life*.

Finally, we covenant that as we discern God’s will for our lives and our fellowship, we will seek to obey it, through God’s grace and strength. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit may continue to work within us as we relate with understanding to persons with varied needs and concerns in our church . . .”



**Presbyterian Church  
(U.S.A.)**

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**Covenant and Creation: Theological Reflections on Contraception and Abortion, from minutes of the 195th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

1983

“... urges Presbyterians to support sexuality education programs in families, churches, schools, and private and public agencies.”

**To Meet AIDS With Grace and Truth AIDS and The Church As a Healing Community, Adapted by the 200th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

1988

“The AIDS pandemic calls the church to maturity of proclamation, education, service, and advocacy in response to the human needs of persons who would otherwise be alone and alienated in their suffering. This crisis may also grace the church with appreciation of the spiritual growth that can be experienced by persons facing AIDS.”

“The church as a healing community, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is called to confession, celebration, and action.”

“We Resolve That:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels, in all places, should be a community of openness and caring for persons with AIDS and their loved ones, working to overcome attitudinal and behavioral barriers of race, social class, and sexual orientation that hamper acceptance of and positive ministry with sufferers from this disease.”

“Educational efforts must include reliable medical and scientific information, as well as theological and biblical components that enable participants to address issues related to death and dying, human sexuality, and recognition of people’s fear and lack of knowledge. Such educational efforts can prepare congregations to respond appropriately when they learn that a member or persons in the community have been infected by the HIV or diagnosed as having AIDS, and can lead to the developing of compassionate, rational policies, educational materials, and actions.”

“Pastors, educators, and other church workers, as well as seminary students, should prepare themselves to provide appropriate pastoral care and counseling to persons living with AIDS or AIDS-related Complex and the loved ones of these persons.”

“Presbyteries and congregations should use their human and material resources to respond to the AIDS crisis with support groups, counseling, grants, facilities for recreational activities, and community organization of persons with AIDS.”

“We . . . urge presbyteries and congregations to: Support AIDS prevention education throughout community and church life that provides the information required for persons to engage in behavior which reduces or eliminates the risk of infection; because sexual and intravenous drug using activities can begin at a young age, encourage school boards to initiate AIDS education activities at the elementary school level; affirm the necessity for comprehensive health education including human sexuality and drug abuse prevention designed for children and youth; support massive public

distribution of factual AIDS educational materials such as the *Report on AIDS of the Surgeon General of the US, Everett Koop, M.D.*”

### **Sexuality Education for Youth**

1994

“WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognized at the 204th General Assembly (1992) that sexuality education is a positive factor in preventing unintended pregnancies and the need for abortion; and

WHEREAS, Christian sexuality education should first be done within the family; and

WHEREAS, the church can support and train parents and other custodial adults, youth directors, and clergy in this important task; and

WHEREAS, the church recognizes that the public schools are also an appropriate setting for educating students about sexuality as an important part of human growth and development, especially when that education is not available in the home or church; and

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) feels strongly that the public education system should include quality sexuality education as a component of any human growth and development curriculum beginning in the elementary grades;

THEREFORE, the 206th General Assembly (1994) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Supports the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Surgeon General in planning and implementing comprehensive school health education that includes age and developmentally appropriate sexuality education in all grades as a part of human growth and development curriculum for youth.”

“Calls upon state legislatures to require that all schools provide comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade human growth and development education that is complete, factual, accurate, free of bias, and does not

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discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.”

“Calls upon the congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide additional sexuality education that reflects the values of the Reformed theological tradition.”

(The General Assembly added this comment: This support for a public educational program should not supplant the use of the church’s curriculum on human development and sexuality nor absolve the church of its responsibility to educate people of all the ages in this area.)

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### Reformed Church in America

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#### **AIDS Education, Reports and Resolutions on Social Issues, Reformed Church in America General Synod**

1987: 59, 1987

“To instruct the minister of education and faith development to begin immediately to prepare (literature) resources to educate RCA congregations about the AIDS virus and its prevention, dealing not only with the physiological and psycho-social factors, but also dealing with it in the larger context of Christian (sexual) values.”

“To encourage RCA congregations to utilize the above materials and work especially with younger people to address the topic of sexuality from a Christian perspective.”

#### **General Synod Statement on Abortion, Minutes of the General Synod,**

1990

“To request that regional synods and classes ‘develop regional and local strategies for sexuality education’.”

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### Roman Catholic

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#### **Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education, Declarations of the Magisterium**

2000

“The Magisterium’s declarations on sex education mark out a course which satisfies the just requirements of history on the one hand and fidelity to tradition on the other.”

“Vatican Council II in the “Declaration on Christian Education” presents the perspective in which sex education must be set, affirming the right of young people to receive an education adequate to their personal requirements.”

The Council states: “With the help of advances in psychology and in the art and science of teaching, children and young people should be assisted in the harmonious development of their physical, moral and intellectual endowments. Surmounting hardships with a gallant and steady heart, they should be helped to acquire gradually a more mature sense of responsibility towards ennobling their own lives through constant effort, and toward pursuing authentic freedom. As they advance in years they should be given positive and prudent sex education.”

“The Pastoral Constitution “Gaudium et spes,” in speaking of the dignity of marriage and the family presents the latter as the preferential place for the education of young people in chastity. But since this is an aspect of education as a whole, the co-operation of teachers with parents is needed in the accomplishment of their mission. Such education, therefore, must be offered within the family to children and adolescents in a gradual manner, always considering the total formation of the person.”

“In the Apostolic Exhortation on the mission of the Christian family in the world as it is, John Paul II reserves an important place to sex education as valuable to the person. “Education to

love as self giving,” says the Holy Father, “also constitutes the indispensable premise for parents called to offer their children a clear and delicate *sex education*. Faced with a culture which largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person—body, emotions and soul—and manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love.”

“The Holy Father immediately goes on to speak of the school, which is responsible for this education in service of and in harmony with parents. “Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must also be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents.”



### Unitarian Universalist Association

#### Sexuality Education In Public Schools, General Assembly Resolution of Immediate Witness

1994

“BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm the value of loving relationships heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender; and

WHEREAS, youth are increasingly exposed to and victimized by rape and incest, unplanned pregnancy, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Republican Party platform, adopted on June 11, 1994, states that “homosexuality should not be presented as an acceptable lifestyle in our public schools” and that “we also oppose the use of any tax dollars for any program . . . which teaches and legitimizes sexual activity, birth control, abortion, and homosexuality”; and

WHEREAS, there are high suicide rates among heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender high school students; and

WHEREAS, each high school class graduating without appropriate sexuality education is more prone to prejudiced attitudes, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 1994 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association condemns the platform expressed by the Texas Republican Party; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 1994 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges member congregations to advocate the availability of comprehensive, objective, unbiased, up-to-date, age-appropriate sexuality education curricula in public schools, including information about:

- the reproductive system and its functions
- the proper use of all forms of contraception, including the option of abstinence
- sexually transmitted diseases, their prevention and treatments
- sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape (including date rape), and incest as well as their prevention and treatment through counseling, information and resources
- pregnancy counseling and options including information about organizations such as Planned Parenthood and Birthright.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that sexuality education curricula be taught by teachers specifically trained to educate youth on the topic of sexuality education, and that the curricula encompass heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and

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transgender orientations and include a focus on sexual responsibility and the emotional aspects of relationships and crises; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that member congregations are urged to make available sexuality education programs such as *About Your Sexuality* to both Unitarian Universalist youth and youth in the community at large.”



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### United Church of Christ

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#### **Recommendations in Regard to the Human Sexuality Study, Adopted by the Eleventh General Synod, United Church of Christ** 1977

“Resolved, that the Eleventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to continue to provide leadership in developing resources concerning human sexuality for appropriate use by various age groups in local churches and to provide consultative services and training for Conference, Associations, and congregations who wish to sponsor programs concerned with human sexuality and family life.”

“Requests the UCC-related seminaries, Conference, and Instrumentalities to continue developing courses and resources through which clergy, seminary students, and laity may be prepared to minister in the area of human sexuality and to address related public policy issues.”

“Urges pastors, members, congregations, Conferences and Instrumentalities to support programs in which information about human sexuality can be made available through such major American institutions as elementary and secondary education, adult education, social welfare agencies, medical services, and the communication media.”

“Calls upon the Board for Homeland Ministries, the Commission for Racial Justice,

the Office of Communication, and the Conferences to develop and share model programs that can help local churches minister to and educate their communities about the components of sexual violence, including rape, marital violence, child abuse, abusive medical practices, and domination and submission images in the media of relationships between women and men portrayed as exclusive expressions of human interaction.”

“Affirms the wide public attention being given to issues related to sexuality and sex roles, particularly as they affect women, but expresses concern regarding the need to explore such issues as they affect men. The Eleventh General Synod urges the Board for Homeland ministries, the Office for Church Life and Leadership, Conferences, Associations, and congregations to develop programs which take into account the needs, experiences and viewpoints of both males and females, and which encourage further understanding of sexual identity; the effects of sex role stereotyping and present economic, legal, political, and other societal conditions based upon gender.”

“Recognizes that diversity exists within the UCC about the meaning of ordination, the criteria for effective ministry, and the relevance of marital status, affectional or sexual preference or lifestyle to ordination and performance of ministry. It requests the congregations, Associations, and Conferences to address these issues seeking more full and common understanding of their implications. It requests that Office for Church Life and Leadership to develop resources to facilitate such understanding.”

#### **A Statement of Christian Conviction, Sixteenth General Synod**

1987

“In light of the pandemic of AIDS that has struck 100,000 people and is expected to spread to millions unless effective medical, educational, research and control programs are established, the Sixteenth General Synod of the United

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Church of Christ calls upon the churches to embody God’s love for the world and to announce the good news that in Christ, God has redeemed all creation. It also calls for a public response that makes the following affirmations.”

“All persons need to be educated about the pandemic and about prevention of AIDS in ways that enable them to work through their fears and prejudices and convinces them to adopt effective preventive behavior.”

“Sex education beginning early in elementary school, as called for by the Surgeon General, is a major component of the effort to contain the AIDS pandemic. Curricula need to address the physical, social, and ethical nature of human sexuality and teach skills for responsible personal decision-making.”

“Government funding of research, service, education, treatment and prevention must become a global priority.”



### The United Methodist Church

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**The Social Principles,**  
*The United Methodist Book of Discipline*  
2004

“We recognize the continuing need for full, positive, and factual sex education opportunities for children, youth, and adults. The Church offers a unique opportunity to give quality guidance and education in this area.”

“All children have the right to quality education, including full sex education appropriate

to their stage of development that utilizes the best educational techniques and insights. Christian parents and guardians and the Church have the responsibility to ensure that children receive sex education consistent with Christian morality, including faithfulness in marriage and abstinence in singleness. . .”

**Pornography and Sexual Violence,**  
*The United Methodist Book of Resolutions*  
2000

“The supervision and love of Christian parents and other caring adults, supported by the extended church family, are the primary source of sex education. A comprehensive approach to sex education offers an additional basis for countering pornography. Children, youth, and adults and opportunities to discuss sexuality and learn from quality sex education materials in families, churches and schools.”



### The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

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**Judaism and HIV/AIDS, A United  
Synagogue Resolution Implementation  
Packet**

*Elul 5754, 1994*

“... calls upon all of its affiliated congregations to affirm the *mitzvah* of *pikuah nefesh* (the saving of lives) by instituting comprehensive, effective, and age-appropriate educational programs about preventing transmission of the AIDS virus . . .”

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# WHAT IS SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

*“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”*

*John 8:32*



There is often confusion about what constitutes sexuality education. Some people object to sexuality education because they think it means teaching about the mechanics of sexual behaviors. The term “sexuality education” is used intentionally rather than “sex education” to emphasize that this type of education addresses not just anatomy and reproduction, but who we are as men and women.

Sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about identity, relationships, and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, and gender roles. Sexuality education addresses the biological, socio-cultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain (information); the affective domain (feelings, values, and attitudes); and the behavioral domain (communication, decision-making and other relevant personal skills).

Comprehensive sexuality education that is appropriate to students’ age development level and cultural background is an important part of the religious education program for people of all ages. A comprehensive sexuality education program respects that even in a religious community there is likely to be a diversity of values and beliefs about sexuality. Programs for young people must always complement and augment the sexuality education that children receive from their families.

The primary goal of sexuality education is the promotion of sexual health. The World Health Organization defines sexual health as:

“Sexual health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being related to sexuality. It is not merely the absence of dysfunction, disease or infirmity. Sexual health is evidenced in the free and responsible expression of

sexuality that enhances life and personal relations. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, a socio-cultural milieu conducive to well being related to sexuality must be fostered and the sexual rights of all persons must be recognised and upheld.”<sup>47</sup>

Sexuality education seeks to assist people in developing a positive view of sexuality, provide them with information about taking care of their sexual health, and help them acquire skills to make sexual decisions now and in the future.

**Sexuality education for young people in a faith community has four primary goals:**

### *Information*

To provide accurate information about human sexuality, including growth and development, human reproduction, anatomy, physiology, masturbation, family life, pregnancy, childbirth, parenthood, sexual response, sexual orientation, contraception, abortion, sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases.

### *Attitudes, Values, and Insights*

To provide an opportunity for young people to articulate their sexual attitudes in order to understand their family’s and religion’s values, increase self-esteem, develop insights concerning relationships with family members of both genders, and understand their obligations and responsibilities to their families, religious community, and others.

### *Relationships and Interpersonal Skills*

To help young people develop interpersonal skills in the areas of communication, decision-making, assertiveness and peer refusal, and to learn to build satisfying relationships. Sexuality education

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programs can help young people develop the capacity for caring, supportive, noncoercive, and mutually pleasurable intimate and sexual relationships when they become adults.

### **Responsibility**

To help young people exercise responsibility regarding sexual relationships by addressing abstinence, resisting pressure for sexual intercourse, and encouraging the use of contraception and other sexual health measures when they do become sexually involved. Sexuality education can be a central component of programs designed to reduce the number of sexually related medical problems, including teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV infection, and sexual abuse.

Sexuality education should be based on specific values about relationships and moral and ethical integrity. Because sexuality is such a deeply complex and personal subject, it is important that programs in both religious and secular settings clearly articulate the values that are the foundation for the program.

The following list of values is from the *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education program, developed jointly by the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association.<sup>48</sup> They were adapted from the National Guidelines Task Force list of values reflecting the beliefs of most communities in a pluralistic society. Of course, each faith community will need to review and modify these values in accordance with its own ethics, values, and religious teachings as well as community norms and diversity.

### **Values Inherent in Most Sexuality Education Programs**

#### ***Self-Worth***

- Every person is entitled to dignity and self-worth and to his or her own attitudes and beliefs about sexuality.

#### ***Sexual Health***

- Knowledge about human sexuality is helpful, not harmful. Every individual has the right to

accurate information about sexuality and to have her or his questions answered.

- Healthy sexual relationships are:
  - Consensual (both people consent);
  - Nonexploitative (equal in terms of power, neither person pressures or forces the other into activities/behaviors);
  - Mutually pleasurable (both receive pleasure);
  - Safe (no or low risk of unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and emotional pain);
  - Developmentally appropriate (appropriate to the age and maturity of persons involved);
  - Based on mutual expectations and caring; and
  - Respectful (including the values of honesty and keeping commitments made to others).
- Sexual intercourse is only one of the many valid ways of expressing sexual feelings with a partner. It is healthier for young adolescents to postpone sexual intercourse.

### **Responsibility**

- We are called to enrich our lives by expressing sexuality in ways that enhance human wholeness and fulfillment and that express love, commitment, delight, and pleasure.
- All persons have the right and obligation to make responsible sexual choices.

### **Justice and Inclusivity**

- We need to avoid double standards. People of all ages, people of different races, genders, backgrounds, income levels, physical and mental abilities, and sexual orientations must have equal values and rights.
- Sexual relationships should never be coercive or exploitative.
- Being romantically and sexually attracted to both genders (bisexual), the same gender (homosexual), or another gender (heterosexual) are all natural in the range of human sexual experience.<sup>49</sup>

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# HOW CONGREGATIONS CAN PROVIDE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

*“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.”*

*Romans 12:9-10*



Religious organizations have a critical role to play in the sexuality education of children, youth and adults. Churches, synagogues and mosques can offer formal sexuality education programs as part of religious education and adult education. They can also create informal opportunities for pastoral counseling and support for congregation members on a variety of sexuality issues.

It is important to develop a life-span approach to sexuality issues. Just as religious education does not end at confirmation or bar mitzvah, so education about sexuality is ongoing throughout life. Congregations can consider how they are educating parents, elementary school children, pre-teens, adolescents, college students, single adults, engaged couples, married couples, mid-life, and older adults.

## Congregation Environment

*It is important to create a positive climate in your congregation for responding to the sexuality needs of your congregation. According to a report by the United Church of Christ, a positive climate is “one in which members and clergy create a caring atmosphere, where differences are accepted, and where the environment is nonjudgmental and holistic. Scripture and prayer contribute to a positive climate and openness to opportunities for grace.”<sup>50</sup>*

Consider these ideas:

- Articulate a core set of values around sexuality issues consistent with your faith’s teachings.
- Consider posting these values on your bulletin board, periodically including them in the order of service or newsletter, and giving them to congregation members.

- Develop and adopt clear guidelines for preventing sexual abuse of children in the congregation. Many denominations have guidebooks for safe congregation policies. The Christian Community publishes *A Time to Heal* (information on page 56) which may be helpful.
- Develop and adopt clear guidelines on sexual harassment and sexual abuse for the faith community. Be sure to address interactions between clergy and congregants, adults and youth, and youth interactions. Specify procedures for reporting violations of the policy.
- Have pamphlets about birth control, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual orientation, and other sexuality-related subjects in the pamphlet racks in the foyer or vestibule. Have pamphlets from organizations in the community that provide sexual health services.
- Have a current events bulletin board where you can feature sexuality-related issues on World AIDS Day (December 1), National Family Sex Education Month (October), National Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Month (May) and National Coming Out Day (October 16th).
- Adopt a policy that affirms the full participation of gays and lesbians in the community. The Unitarian Universalists have information on becoming a “welcoming community”; the United Church of Christ encourages its congregations to declare themselves “Open and Affirming” (ONA) toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons; and the Association of Hebrew Congregations has a manual for its synagogues on full participation.

- Include a section on sexuality in the congregation's library. Consider including books for parents, single adults, married couples, children, and adolescents.
- Sponsor a concert or theater event at the church, synagogue or mosque with the proceeds going to such community needs as sexuality education materials for schools, an AIDS service organization, a crisis shelter for abused women and children, or a gay and lesbian community organization.
- Host a health fair for the congregation; make certain to include such sexuality-related services as Planned Parenthood, HIV prevention and counseling, adoption agencies, and marriage and family counseling.

### Support for Parents

*Congregations can provide important support for parents. Parents are the primary sexuality educators of their children, but most welcome the assistance of their faith community in helping to provide their child with morals and values. Congregations can help parents provide this education to their children.*

Consider these ideas:

- Hold parenting education programs as part of adult education. These could include programs on parents as sexuality educators, parenting children at different ages, or parent/adolescent programs. Help adults develop the skills to effectively parent on a wide range of issues, including sexuality.
- Encourage parent/child communication on difficult subjects, including sexuality issues. Some congregations provide conversation starter questions in the worship bulletin or newsletter.
- Schedule a one-day retreat for middle school students and their parents; focus on communication skills between students and parents, including the discussion of sexuality issues. Encourage youth involvement in the planning process.
- Hold a group discussion on a book that helps parents talk to their children about sexuality issues. Rev. Haffner has written two books for parents: "From Diapers to Dating: A Parents Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children"

and "Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teenagers." They are available in paperback and at discount prices in bulk (Newmarket Press, 212-832-3575).

- Partner with local secular organizations to bring parenting experts to the community.

### Programs for Youth

*Congregations can offer young people adult support, a positive peer group, opportunities for service, and a faith-based foundation for decision-making.*

Consider these ideas:

- Provide professional staff and volunteers with initial and ongoing training on adolescent growth and development and adolescent sexuality.
- Encourage youth group participation in community activities related to sexuality. Young people can volunteer at an AIDS hospice or hospital nursery, educate or minister to peers, or staff a community hot line. Community service teaches young people about giving to others. It may also protect them. Teens who volunteer are less likely to become sexually involved or pregnant. Provide opportunities for youth to reflect together on their community service.
- Hold after-school programs at the church, temple, or mosque facility for pre-teens and teenagers. These programs may include sexuality topics or have a primarily recreational purpose. Young people who are involved in after school activities are less likely to become involved in sexual behaviors.
- Launch a peer education program about sexuality issues. Train the high school youth group to provide education and information about sexuality to middle school students and preadolescents. Both groups will benefit.
- Offer sexuality education programs for high school youth during religious school. Many congregations "lose" their adolescents after their coming of age ceremonies. A sexuality education program just might keep them involved.
- If the number of young people is large enough, offer programs by developmental

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age. A single youth group is unlikely to meet the developmental needs of all young people. If possible, offer programs for early adolescents (middle school), middle adolescents (9th and 10th grades) and late adolescents (11th and 12th grade). If not, try to have occasional separate activities for the younger and the older teens, and seek additional volunteers to work with youth with differing needs.

- Make certain to address sexuality issues and guidelines for youth retreats, sleep-overs, and camping trips. Be explicit about your expectations for youth behavior, including public displays of affection and private sexual relationships. Involve young people in setting the standards for their behaviors in the group, including clear consequences for infractions of those behaviors. Post standards prominently in the rooms where the youth group meets. Develop those standards each year with each new group of teens.
- Make certain that leaders know about the expectations for their own behavior and how to handle infringements of rules.
- Help youth learn assertiveness skills and provide them with opportunities to explore controversial issues. Making controversial topics a regular part of youth discussions helps young people to understand why they have certain values and beliefs.
- Help young people develop friendship and relationship skills. Encourage them to become friends with people who are different from them.
- Articulate high expectations for the youth in the congregation. Set goals such as to remain free from pregnancy, free from sexually transmitted diseases and to graduate from high school. Motivate the young people in the faith community to accept and work toward these goals.
- Provide mentors for young people. Offer career and educational counseling. Young people need significant adults in their lives in addition to their parents. Young people who are planning for their future are less likely to become involved in high-risk behaviors and are more motivated to delay sexual involvement and childbearing.

- Provide opportunities for young people to participate in the congregation. Young people who are engaged in important activities are less likely to become involved in a range of high risk behaviors, including sexual intercourse. Show young people in the congregation that you value their involvement. Provide intergenerational activities so that youth and adults can develop caring and respectful relationships.
- Keep parents informed and up-to-date on sexuality education efforts. Provide opportunities for parents to review the curricula and materials, meet with the adult leaders, and complete parent/child homework sessions to increase communication about sexuality issues. Seek parental consent for sexuality education programs for youth.

A bibliography of faith-based sexuality curricula follows on page 31.

### **Education for Adults**

*Sexuality education is a lifelong process. Make certain the adult education program addresses sexuality issues from the diverse perspectives and needs of the congregation's members.*

Consider these ideas:

- Hold intergenerational programs on sexuality issues. Programs for teenagers and adults can provide an opportunity to begin a respectful dialogue about sexuality issues.
- Develop a study group on sexuality for adults in the congregation. This could include reviewing a denominational report or studying some of the sexually themed stories in the Bible.
- Develop support groups for adults on sexuality issues. This could include singles groups, divorce groups, sexual abuse survivors groups, marriage enrichment groups, gay and lesbian support groups, and support groups for parents of gay and lesbians.
- Advocate for sexual justice at the denominational level. Participate in national study groups on sexuality issues such as abortion, homosexuality, stem cell research, and marriage equality. If appropriate, develop congregation policies on these issues.

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## SCRIPTURE READINGS ON SEXUALITY

This is a partial list of texts for worship or Bible study.

Genesis 1:27-28	Judges 11:37-39	Mark 3:31-34
Genesis 2:18-24	1 Sam 18:1	Luke 7
Genesis 17:11-13	2 Sam 1:26	John 4:16-30
Genesis 29	Song of Solomon	John 8
Genesis 30	Isaiah 62:4-5	1 Corinthians 7, 13
Leviticus 17-26	Ruth 1:1-18	Ephesians 5
Leviticus 18:20	Ecclesiastes 3:5	1 John 2-4
Deuteronomy 24:5	Matthew 19:12	

### Liturgy

*The majority of clergy in one survey felt they should address sexuality issues from the pulpit.*

Consider these possibilities:

- Focus on sexuality issues in worship services. Create services around such themes as sexual justice, HIV/AIDS, sexuality education, sexual abuse prevention, parenting, reproductive choice, the changing family, gender issues, and marriage equality.
- Develop sermons on sexuality issues.
- Use diverse Scripture readings on sexuality, love, and blessed relationships.
- Hold candlelight services to remember people with HIV/AIDS, people who have lost pregnancies, or survivors of abuse.
- Announce the availability of religious marriages for same sex couples, holy union ceremonies or opportunities to sanctify domestic partnerships or civil unions.
- Address sexuality issues in coming-of-age ceremonies. Acknowledge that forming a sexual identity is a key developmental task of adolescence.
- Expand rite of passage ceremonies to include puberty, divorce, remarriage, and adoption services.

The box above provides some examples of scriptural passages to include in worship services on sexuality issues.

### Clergy

*Many rabbis and pastors did not receive sexuality training in seminary, yet they are called upon almost daily to minister to couples in crisis, survivors of sexual abuse, parents of lesbians and gays, people with HIV, and others struggling with sexuality issues.*

Consider these ideas:

- Encourage clergy to seek professional training in sexuality issues.
- Encourage the director of religious education and religious youth workers to obtain training and support on sexuality issues.
- Encourage lay persons to receive sexuality education to supplement the clergy's ministry in sexuality issues.
- Ensure that the clergy can respond to parishioners' individual sexuality needs for counseling.
- Make certain that clergy and lay ministers have access to local sexuality-related referral sites for more information. Reproduce the list of national hotlines on page 52 and post it on the bulletin board and in pastoral counseling offices.

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## GUIDES FOR SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN FAITH COMMUNITIES

Many denominations have developed curricula and guides for sexuality education in faith communities.

A few denominations, including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, and the Unitarian Universalist Association, have developed comprehensive lifespan programs for their congregations.

The following annotated list of materials may help congregations plan sexuality education programs. These materials reflect diverse faith perspectives and diverse values, and are not appropriate for use in the public schools or in every faith community.

Inclusion in this list does not imply an endorsement by the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing.

All of these materials are available directly from the publisher. The Religious Institute welcomes information about other sexuality education curricula for faith communities so it can include them in future bibliographies.

Please email us at [info@religiousinstitute.org](mailto:info@religiousinstitute.org) or contact us at: Religious Institute on Sexual Morality Justice, and Healing, 304 Main Avenue, # 335, Norwalk, CT 06851 or on the web at <http://www.religiousinstitute.org>.



### American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.

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#### Family Sexuality Education:

##### A Course for Parents

*Joe H. Leonard*

This five-unit program is for parents with children between the ages of three and 12. Topics include: “Exploring and Understanding Our Own Sexuality,” “Sexuality Through Childhood,” “Sexuality in the Home,” “Values,” and “Communication Skills.”

1995; \$15; *Judson Publishing*, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851; Phone: 8001458-3766; Fax: 6101768-2107; Website: <http://www.judsonpress.com>.



### Catholic

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#### Benziger Family Life Program,

##### Grades K–8

*Third Edition*

Curricula including teachers’ and students’ guides for each grade level, kindergarten through eighth grade. Each grade has its own curriculum consisting of ten lessons that address five themes: “God’s Gift of Family,” “God’s Gift of Self,” “God’s Gift of Life,” “God’s Gift of Sexuality,” and “God’s Gift of Community.” Topics include: anatomy, reproduction, dating, marriage, intercourse, and date rape. A Student Text, Teacher’s Wraparound Edition, Family Connection, and Teacher’s Resource Book are available for each grade. There are also an implementation manual and a video for parents. Online program resources include student games, extra activities, official church

documents, child development information, and frequently asked questions. Call for exact prices.

*Benzinger Publishing Company, 15319 Chatsworth Street, P.O. box 9609, Mission Hills, California 91346-9609; Order from Glencoe McGraw-Hill, Phone: 800/442-9685; Web site: <http://www.mhschool.com/benzinger>.*

### **In God's Image: Male and Female**

*Patricia Martens Miller*

A human sexuality program for grades five through eight. Teacher's Manuals, videos, student and parent worksheets, and additional materials are available for each grade. The program has four areas: "Respecting Yourself," "Asserting Yourself," "Informing Yourself," and "Challenging Yourself." There are five units in each area. There is one video and one teacher manual per area, with student/parent worksheets for each of the five units. Materials come in English and Spanish with online updates provided yearly.

*1989; Teacher Manual \$10.00 each manual; Call for pricing of additional materials; Flannery Company, 13123 Arrowspace Drive, Victorville, CA 92394; Phone: 800/456-3400; Fax: 800/284-5600; Website: <http://www.flannerycompany.com/Catlgipg2.html>.*

### **Real Life: Living My Faith Every Day, Sexuality Edition**

The Real Life series offers nine full-color magazines that cover relevant issues for younger teens. The sexuality edition defines the topic and discusses relationships and responsibility within an abstinence-only framework over the course of five meetings. It includes a facilitator's guide (\$15.96) and student magazine (\$4.77).

*1996; Call for current prices; Benzinger Publishing Company, 21600 Oxnard Street, Suite 500, Woodland Hills, California 91367; Order from Glencoe McGraw-Hill, Phone: 800/442-9685; Web site: <http://www.mhschool.com/benzinger>.*

### **Sex and the Teenager: Choices and Decisions**

*Kieran Sawyer, S.S.N.D.*

The twelve session curriculum can be used in high school religious education settings. "The program deals with a variety of topics including: what to do on a date; how to tell the difference between love, infatuation, and exploitation; premarital sex; contraception; abortion; adoption and teen parenting; homosexuality; and setting personal moral limits and holding to them." There are suggestions for use on a retreat including games and music selections.

*1999; \$7.95 Participant Book, \$21.95 Leader's Guide; Ave Maria Press, P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556; Phone: 800/282-1865; Fax 800/282-5681; Web site: <http://avemariapress.com>.*

### **Tough Choices: Bringing Moral Issues Home**

*Sean Lynch and Brian O'Brien*

The curriculum covers eleven specific issues with an appendix addressing another nine issues. The issues range from divorce to drug and alcohol abuse to capital punishment; of particular interest are the sections on abortion, homosexuality, sexuality, child abuse and domestic violence. "Though applicable in several different courses and programs, the basic approach is for a teacher, catechist, or youth minister to assign a moral dilemma to be taken home, read, and discussed using the questions that accompany each." Then each student returns ready to discuss the dilemmas. Information is provided on the official church statements as well as contemporary religious readings.

*2003; \$16.95; Ave Maria Press, P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556; Phone: 800/282-1865; Fax 800/282-5681; Web site: <http://avemariapress.com>.*

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## Church of the Brethren/Mennonite

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### Dating: The Art of Respect

*Debbie Eisenbise and Lee Krahenbuhl*

From the Generation Why Bible Studies, a middle school and high school curriculum that provides role-playing situations in friend, parent, and boy/girlfriend relationships. The main focus is on defining healthy relationships based on scriptural foundations. There are eight sessions: a kick-off activity, six lessons, and a closing or summary session. This curriculum is jointly published by the Mennonite Church and the Church of the Brethren.

1998; \$14.99; *Faith & Life Resources*, 616 Walnut Ave, Scottdale, PA 15683; Phone: 800/245-7894; Fax: 724/887-3111; Web site: <http://mph.org/flr/youth-fastlane.html>.

### God's Gift of Sex

*Carol Duerksen*

From the *Fast Lane Bible Studies* series, this five session course is for junior high students. It follows traditional bible study format with additional skits that address respect for sex role differences, consent, dealing with negative sexual experiences, and how present personal identity affects future sexual happiness. This curriculum is jointly published by the Mennonite Church and the Church of the Brethren.

1998; \$9.99; *Faith & Life Resource*, 616 Walnut Ave/ Scottdale, PA 15683; Phone: 800/245-7894; Fax: 724/887-3111; Web site: <http://www.mph.org/flr/youth-fastlane.html>.

### Sex: God's Great Idea

*Carol Duerksen*

This curriculum consists of seven sessions and is structured around the encounters of two teenagers, Chris and Ali, who interview people

in the Old Testament about their experiences with sexuality. These interviews include Adam and Eve, who remind teenagers that sexuality is a beautiful God-given "design"; Samson and Delilah, whose relationship is used as a lesson in how not to treat a date; and Isaac and Rebekah, newlyweds whose love blossomed with their trust in God.

1994; *out of print*.

### Some Body!

*Steve Ropp*

From the *Fast Lane Bible Studies* series for middle school students, this five-session study helps youth better understand, celebrate and care for their bodies. The units deal with issues of self-esteem, sexuality, physical fitness, and the pressures of alcohol, drugs, and an unhealthy diet from a Biblical perspective. This curriculum is jointly published by the Mennonite Church and the Church of the Brethren.

1998; \$9.99; *Faith & Life Resources*, 616 Walnut Ave, Scottdale, PA 15683; Phone: 800/245-7894; Fax: 724/887-3111; Web site: <http://www.mph.org/flr/youth-fastlane.html>.

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## Episcopal

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### Journey to Adulthood

*LeadeResources*

This is an online curriculum for youth from 6th to 12th grade. Youth progress through three levels: Rite 13, Journey to Adulthood (J2A), and Young Adults in Church (YAC). The youth remain with the same group until senior year. The two-year curriculum cycle includes Sunday school and retreat material, parent meetings, movie lists, service projects and fundraisers. The program offers a comprehensive approach to self-society, spirituality, and sexuality. On

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sexuality, the Rite 13 material focuses on gender issues and identity formation, while the high school material focuses on relationships and sexual behavior. The senior high material has two sections titled “Meaningful Is Not Good Enough: How to Decide When to Do It” and “Be Yourself and Stay Alive: Feedback on Sexuality.” The material is usually downloaded but can be mailed on CD.

*Updated yearly; \$200 per year (includes resource help); LeaderResources, 38 Mulberry Street Box 302, Leeds, MA 01053-0302; Phone: 800/941-2218; Website: <http://www.leaderresources.org>.*

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### Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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#### **YouthTalk: Sexuality**

*Youth Talk* is a theme-based curriculum for junior high and high school youth. Topics include “Voices & Messages,” “Relationships,” “Real Difficulties,” “Selfesteem,” “Religion,” and “Sexuality.” *Youth Talk: Sexuality* consists of five sessions that help youth understand that sexuality is an ongoing aspect of their lives and to appreciate the goodness of their own sexuality. It addresses gender roles, dating, date rape, AIDS, and attitudes and behaviors.

*1994; Leader Guide \$4.99; Student Guide \$5.49; Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 426 South Fifth Street, P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209; Phone: 800/328-4648; Fax: 612/330-3455; Web site: <http://www.augsburgfortress.org>.*

#### **[m]Louie**

*M Louie* is the name of the Lutheran adolescent confirmation resources. *M Louie* comes with leader guides (\$14.99) and student magazines (\$9.99). Each magazine contains fifteen sessions (5 units, 3 sessions each) covering

biblical reflection, catechesis, and a link to media. Two of the magazines-Darius McCrary and Agape-feature the article “Speaking of Sex: What’s Love Got to Do with It?” The website <http://www.mlouie.com> offers leader information and additional student resources.

*2000; \$14.99; Augsburg Fortress, P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209; Phone: 800/328-4648; Website: <http://www.augsburgfortress.org>.*

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### Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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**The Congregation: A Community of Care and Healing, HIV/AIDS Awareness Resources**  
*Beth Basham, Editor*

This 12-session study guide for older adolescents and adults is designed to engage local leaders and congregations in the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS.

*1993; \$250; Presbyterian Distribution Service, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396; Phone: 800/524-2612; Fax: 502/569-8030; Web site: <http://www.pcusa.org/pcusa/currpub>.*

#### **God’s Gift of Sexuality: A Study for Young People**

*A curriculum for 7th to 12th graders developed jointly by the Presbyterian Church, USA and the Reformed Church in America.*

The younger student curriculum establishes fundamentals while the older offers a more in-depth, nuanced view of sexuality. The course for middle school students consists of seven sessions. Topics include anatomy and physiology, puberty, relationships and intimacy, sexual violence, values and decisions, and communication. The course for high school students consists of 11 sessions. Topics include sensuality, intimacy, sexual identity, anatomy and physiology, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases,

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parenthood, decision-making, and communication. The curriculum is geared toward supplying information and is activity centered. A separate parent's guide (\$7.95) and youth guide (\$7.95) can be purchased in addition to the leader's guide (\$17.95). In 1999, Presbyterian Church, USA developed *Sexual Abstinence and the Abundant Life*, a supplement supporting abstinence-only education, as a modification to the original curriculum (\$2.98).

1998; Witherspoon Press, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396; Phone: 800/524-2612; Fax: 502/569-8030; Website: <http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace>.

### **God's Plan for Growing Up**

*Faye Burdick, Editor*

This program is designed to assist parents in talking about sexuality with their elementary-age children. It includes a *Leader's Guide*, *Parent's Guide*, *Wonderfully Made*, a book for children in grades 2-3; *Amazing Stuff*, a book for children in grades 4-5; and *Listening In*, an audio cassette.

1996; *Leader's Guide*, \$11.95; *Parent's Guide*, \$6.95; *Wonderfully Made*, \$6.95; *Amazing Stuff*, \$6.95; *Listening In*, \$8.95; *Presbyterian Distribution Service*, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396; Phone: 800/524-2612; Fax: 502/569-8030; Web site: <http://www.pcusa.org/pcusalcurrpub>.

### **In God's Image**

*Janet Neff Brewer*

A book for parents and their children ages 2-5. The large-format picture book for toddlers and preschoolers allows parents or caregivers to comfortably teach the facts and values of sexuality education from a faith perspective. Topics include fetal development, boys and girls body differences, how to stay healthy and safe, how to tell bad touching from good touching and what to do about it, and how to deal with emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. It consists of three resources: *Children's Book*, for

parents to share with their children throughout the early years; *Guide for Parents*, to help parents deal with situations and questions as they teach their children facts and values related to sexuality from a faith perspective; and the *Guide for Congregations*, to suggest ways that churches can support parents as the primary sexuality educators of their children.

1998; *Children's Book* \$7.48; *Guide for Parents* \$3.48; *Guide for Congregations* \$3.48; *Presbyterian Distribution Service*, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396; Phone: 800/524-2612; Fax: 502/569-8030; Web site: <http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace>.



### **Reform Church in America**

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#### **God's Gift of Sexuality: A Study for Young People**

A curriculum for 7th to 12th graders developed jointly by the Presbyterian Church, USA and the Reformed Church in America.

*Reference under Presbyterian Church, USA.*



### **Salvation Army**

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#### **Bridging the Gap Between Youth and Community Services: A Life Skills Education Program**

This program consists of 12 sessions and discusses self-respect, physical and emotional development (including sexuality), and information about community resources.

1996; \$20; *The Salvation Army; Social Services Department*, 440 West Nyack Road, West Nyack, NY 10994-1739; Phone: 914/620-7383; Fax: 914/620-7759.

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## Southern Baptist Convention

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### The Christian Sex Education Set

This series is designed for parents to use with their pre-adolescent and adolescent children in the home. It includes an orientation session to introduce parents to the material. In addition, it suggests that parents meet in a support group format to discuss issues related to their experiences. This series promotes abstinence, chastity, self-esteem, and self-discipline. It consists of the following books: *Boys and Girls Alike & Different: A Book for Young Children*, *My Body and Me: A Book for Middle-age Children*, *Sex! What's That? Written for Preadolescents*, *Sexuality: God's Gift for Adolescents*, and *Christian Sex Education*.

1993; Complete set, \$39.95 (also available individually), Lifeway Christian Resource, Customer Service Department, P.O. Box 113, Nashville, TN 37202-0113; Phone: 800/458-2772; Fax: 615/251-5933; Web site: <http://www.lifeway.comstores>.

### True Love Waits 2001: Pure Joy: God's Formula

An abstinence-only-until marriage campaign for teenagers and college students. Six sessions are designed as an individual study book for personal use or group study. Also available are similar resources: *Sexual Resolutions-True Love Waits Resource Book* (\$3.95), *True Love Waits Takes a Look at Courting, Dating, and Hanging Out* (\$5.95). *True Love Waits Goes Home Manual—2003–2004* (\$14.95) is a leader's guide for use with *True Love Waits* material.

2001; \$4.95 Lifeway Christian Resource, Customer Service Department, P.O. Box 113, Nashville, TN 37202-0113; Phone: 800/458-2772; Fax: 615/251-5933; Web site: <http://www.lifewaystores.com/lwstore>.

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## Union of American Hebrew Congregations

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### AIDS: Insights and Strategies A Resource for Religious School and Congregational Program Development *Dr. Betsy Katz and Linda S. Haase*

This HIV/AIDS education resource is targeted at three age groups: kindergarten through third grade, fourth through sixth grade, and seventh grade through high school. It provides congregational activities as well as suggestions for parental involvement. The HIV/AIDS information needs updating.

\$10; UAHC Press, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021; Phone: 888/489-8242; Fax: 212/650-4119; Web site: <http://www.uahc.org>.

### KULANU (All of Us) A Program for Congregations Implementing Gay and Lesbian Inclusion *For Union of American Hebrew Congregations*

This manual offers practical suggestions and curriculum content to encourage gay and lesbian inclusion in the Jewish community. Chapters include: "History and Texts," "Steps to Inclusion," "Life-Cycles," "Leadership Training and Education," "(Re)Defining Family and Temple Membership," and "Employment Practices."

1996; \$12; UAHC Press, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021; Phone: 888/489-8242; Fax: 212/650-4119; Web site: <http://www.uahc.org>.

### Loving Wisely: Making Responsible Reproductive Choices, A Curriculum for Jewish Teens *For Union for Reform Judaism*

The curriculum was written in preparation for the March on Women's Lives. The curriculum draws on a variety of texts "central to Judaism"

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in order to “present a variety of opinions and ideas regarding responsible reproductive choices.” The curriculum contains three ninety-minute sessions focused on ethical decision-making as well as a section for further reading. The interactive curriculum is appropriate for use with high school age youth.

2004; Download at <http://urj.org/pac/education/>; Pennsylvania Council, Philadelphia Federation Union for Reform Judaism, 1511 Walnut Street, Suite 401, Philadelphia, PA 19102; Phone: 800/368-1090; Fax: 215/563-1549.



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## Unitarian Universalist Association

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### **About Sexual Abuse: A Program for Teens and Young Adults**

*Fred and Betty Ward*

This nine-session program is designed to help individuals understand sexual abuse and abusive behaviors as well as to examine individual attitudes and feelings about this issue and to explore ways of preventing or escaping abusive situations.

1990; \$5; Unitarian Universalist Association, UUA Bookstore, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; Phone: 800/215-9076; Fax: 617/723-4805; Web site: <http://www.uua.org>.

### **Beyond Pink and Blue: Exploring Our Stereotypes of Sexuality and Gender A Program for Ages 13 to 15**

*Tracey Robinson-Harris and  
Ritch C. Savin Williams*

This 12-session curriculum is designed to increase adolescents’ awareness of their attitudes, behaviors, emotional reactions, and understanding of gender identity, gender roles, and sexual orientation.

1994; \$20; Unitarian Universalist Association, UUA Bookstore, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; Phone: 800/215-9076; Fax: 617/723-4805; Web site: <http://www.uua.org>.

### **Our Whole Lives (OWL):**

#### **A Lifespan Sexuality Education Series**

**This is a comprehensive lifespan sexuality education series developed jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.**

The series includes: OWL: *Sexuality Education for Kindergarten and First Grade Children*; OWL: *Sexuality Education for Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grade Children*; OWL for Children: *Parent’s Guide* (for parents whose children are participating in the above mentioned curricula); OWL: *Sexuality Education for Grades 7-9*; OWL: *Sexuality Education for Senior High Youth*; OWL: *Sexuality Education for Adults*. Each curriculum in the series covers the six concepts outlined by SIECUS’ *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education Kindergarten-12th Grade*: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture.

Material for grades K-1 support parents in educating children about birth, babies, bodies and families. Following a Parent Meeting and Parent/Child Orientation, the eight class sessions engage children with stories, songs, and activities.

In grades 4–6, participants address changes during puberty, read *It’s Perfectly Normal*, and examine topics such as values and sexuality, communication and decision-making. Both offer a weekly “Home Link,” a homework project for parents and children to do together.

The junior high and high school curricula include lessons on positive and negative limit-setting, development of moral decision-making, and disability and sexual identity differences.

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The adult curriculum and companion volume use “values, communication skills, and spirituality as starting points... [exploring] sexuality issues of interest to adults of all ages. Builds understanding of healthy sexual relationships, affirms diversity and helps participants accept and affirm their own sexuality throughout the life cycle.”

The advocacy guide includes “helpful guidelines for introducing a comprehensive sexuality education program in a faith-based or community setting, working with local school boards and the media, lobbying, and more. Provides case studies, readings on spirituality and sexuality and a useful resource list.” It is developed for use with all levels of *Our Whole Lives*.

**Sexuality and Our Faith** is a series of five companion resources, one for each of the five age levels of *Our Whole Lives*. *Sexuality and Our Faith* provides a framework for incorporating specific faith-based teaching and practice of the Unitarian Universalist or United Church of Christ into each session of the curriculum.

*Call for prices for each level. Unitarian Universalist Association, UUA Bookstore, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; Phone: 800/215-9076; Fax: 617/723-4805; Web site: <http://www.uua.org>.*

**The Welcoming Congregation Handbook: Resources for Affirming Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian And/Or Transgender People**  
*UUA Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns*

This resource is for congregations struggling to address and solve the problem of homophobia in church communities. Features updated material on the radical right, racism and homophobia, and bisexual and transgender issues. Included are session plans for 14 workshops, readings for participants and a special section on materials for Christian worship.

1999, \$30, *Unitarian Universalist Association, UUA Bookstore, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; Phone: 800/215-9076; Fax: 617/723-4805; Web site: <http://www.uua.org>.*



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## United Church Of Christ

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### **Affirming Persons-Saving Lives: AIDS Awareness and Prevention Education**

*William R. Johnson and Cynthia A. Bouman*

This curriculum integrates Christian values, Bible study, and theological reflection and prayer into a comprehensive HIV-prevention program. It includes eight learning series for each of the following age groups: Preschool/ Kindergarten (four sessions), Grades 1-2 (four sessions), Grades 3-4 (four sessions), Grades 5-6 (six sessions), Youth (11 core sessions and one optional session), Adults (seven sessions), Parents (three sessions), and Intergenerational (seven sessions). Also included are a teacher's booklet, handouts, teacher's support resources, and two videos.

1993; \$130, *UCC churches, agencies, institutions, or organizations; \$175, other churches and organizations; \$195, individuals; United Church Press, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100; Phone: 800/537-3394; Fax 216/736-3713; Web site: <http://www.ucc.org>.*

### **Created in God's Image: A Human Sexuality Program for Ministry and Mission**

*Overview: Faith A. Johnson and Gordon J. Svoboda, II*

**Leader's Manual:** *Eleanor S. Morrison and Melanie Morrison*

**Participant's Book:** *Melanie Morrison and Eleanor S. Morrison*

**A Manual for Ministry in the Congregation:** *Mary Ellen Haines and Bill Stackhouse*

This program is written for college age and adults. It consists of 10 sessions and is designed to create an opportunity for a congregation to integrate sexuality issues in its ministry and mission. The resources explore human sexuality from Biblical, theological, and ethical perspectives. Topics include “Sexuality and the Life of the Church,” “Early Sexual Learning in Home,

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Church and School,” “Intimacy and Loneliness,” “Moral Agency and Decision Making,” and “Male and Female Sexuality.”

1993; *Available with training; contact Ann Hanson for more information 216/736-3282; Division of the American Missionary Association, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1110.*

### **Creating Compassion: Activities for Understanding HIV/AIDS**

*Phyllis Vos Wezeman*

This activity book is designed for children and adults. It utilizes nine themes: world, nation, state, community, neighborhood, school, congregation, family and self-and employs art forms as teaching methods. Each theme consists of 13 activities that are appropriate for different age groups.

1994; \$15.95; *United Church Press, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100; Phone: 800/537-3394; Fax 216/7363713; Web site: <http://www.ucc.org>.*

### **Our Whole Lives (OWL): A Lifespan Sexuality Education Series**

This is a comprehensive lifespan sexuality education series developed jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.

*Reference under Unitarian Universalist Association.*

### **Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Ages 5-8**

*Kathryn Goering Reid*

### **Ages 9-12**

*Kathryn Goering Reid with  
Marie M. Fortune*

These two curricula provide information about sexual abuse and prevention. Age 5–8 curriculum offers 10 sessions while the ages 9–12 curriculum offers 13 sessions to be used

in Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, or youth meeting settings.

1994, *Ages 5-8, \$9.95; 1989, Ages 9-12, \$11.95; United Church Press, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100; Phone: 800/537-3394; Fax 216/736-3713; Web site: <http://www.ucc.org> or <http://www.faihttrustinstitute.org>.*

### **Sexual Abuse Prevention: A Course of Study for Teenagers Revised and Updated**

*Rebecca Voelkel-Haugen and  
Marie M. Fortune*

This curriculum for teenagers covers sexual abuse and harassment in six sessions, one and a half hours each, providing information ranging from the facts and myths of sexual assault to media messages about women, men, and relationships.

1996; \$8.95; *United Church Press, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100; Phone: 800/537-3394; Fax: 216/736-3713; Web site: <http://www.ucc.org> or <http://www.faihttrustinstitute.org>.*



## **The United Methodist Church**

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### **Created By God: About Human Sexuality for Older Girls and Boys, Grades 5-6**

*James H. Ritchie, Jr.*

A six-session curriculum for older elementary school children emphasizing a healthy biblical and Christian perspective on human sexuality, values, and relationships. There is also a Leader's Resource Kit, which is a step-by-step guide to planning and implementing the curriculum.

1999; *Leader's Guide \$6.95; Student Book \$3.50; Cokesbury, 201 Eighth Avenue South, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202-0801; Phone: 800/672-1789; Fax: 800/445-8189; Web site: <http://www.cokesbury.com>.*

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### **Male and Female: Blessed by God**

This curriculum is designed for adolescents in grades 10-12 and their parents. It consists of seven core sessions and four optional sessions. Topics include the Biblical and theological foundations for sexuality, decision-making, relationships, dating, sexuality in the media, sexually explicit materials, sexual abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases.

1989; *out of print*.

### **Talking with Your Teen: Conversations For Life**

*Lynn Hutton*

One of six chapters focuses on communicating and discussing sexuality with your teen. The section on sexuality can be a helpful addition to youth curricula that do not include a parent section. The curriculum as a whole is a good parent education tool. It includes a leader's guide (\$10.00) and individual workbooks (\$6.00).

1999; *Abingdon Press, 201 Eighth Avenue South, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202-0801; Phone: 800/251-3320; Fax: 800/836-7802; Web site: <http://www.abingdonpress.org>.*

### **To the Point: Confronting Youth Issues/AIDS**

*Diane L. Hynson, Editor Carmen M. Gaud*

This resource offers practical ways to talk to teens and adults about AIDS in a biblical and theological context. It consists of five sessions as well as teacher background information. A Spanish section is also included. The HIV/AIDS information needs updating.

1993; \$9.95; *Cokesbury, 201 Eighth Avenue South, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202-0801; Phone: 800/672-1789; Fax: 800/445-8189; Web site: <http://www.cokesbury.org>.*



### **Multifaith**

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### **Breaking the Silence: A Faith Based Model for Adult Dialogue on Sex and Sexuality** *Black Church Initiative of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice*

A faith-based sexuality education model developed to help adults better address sex and sexuality to assist teens in making healthy life choices. The goal of the nine session programs is to help participants increase their comfort level talking about sex with teens. The curriculum package includes a leader's guide, training modules, bulletin announcements, glossary of terms, information on pregnancy prevention, HIV/AIDS resources, technical assistance, and an extensive biography.

2004; *Free, when trained to facilitate curriculum; Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, 1025 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 1130, Washington, D.C. 20005; Phone: 202/628-7700; Web site: [http://www.rcrc.org/get\\_involved/black\\_church\\_initiative/index.htm](http://www.rcrc.org/get_involved/black_church_initiative/index.htm).*

### **Challenging Myself, Deepening My Faith A Multifaith Curriculum Countering Homophobia**

*Terri Casey, Editor*

This curriculum targeted at adolescents and adults explores attitudes and points of view from different faith perspectives. It consists of four sessions: Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, as well as nondenominational attitudes and points of view about homophobia. A video is included.

1997; \$20; *Multifaith AIDS Project, 1729 Harvard Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122; Phone: 206/324-1520; Fax: 206/324-1128; Web site: <http://www.multifaith.org>.*

**Good Sex:  
A Whole-Person Approach  
to Teenage Sexuality & God**

*Jim Hancock and Kara Eckmann Powell*

A non-denominational Christian-based high school sexuality program. In seven sessions, the curriculum covers communication, sexual identity, intimacy, desire, boundaries, and responsibility. The package includes a leader's guide, with assistance in setting up parent meetings and supplemental activities, plus a student journal and video series (\$44.99). Additional discussion starters can be purchased (\$11.99). This curriculum engages popular culture, uses realistic skits, and provides solid reflection activities.

2001; *Youth Specialties Books, Zondervan Publisher, 5300 Patterson, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49530; Phone: 800/776-8008; Website: <http://shop.gospelcom.net/cgi-bin/YouthSpecialties.storefront>.*

**Keeping It Real:  
A Faith-Based Model for  
Teen Dialog on Sex and Sexuality**

This is a seven session program for high school teenagers developed by The Black Church Initiative of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. It consists of a facilitator's guide and a teen activity book. The material deals with popular culture, relationships with others, and defining one's personal identity amidst current real life pressures. This curriculum incorporates direct discussion of racial issues.

2000; *Free, when trained to facilitate curriculum; Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, 1025 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 1130, Washington, D.C. 20005; Phone: 202/628-7700; Web site: [http://www.rcrc.org/get\\_involved/black\\_church\\_initiative/index.htm](http://www.rcrc.org/get_involved/black_church_initiative/index.htm).*

**Let's Be Real: Honest Discussions  
about Faith and Sexuality**

*Duane A. Ewers and M. Stevens Games,  
Editors*

A non-denominational Christian curriculum designed for adolescents in middle school and high school. It consists of six sessions: anatomy, decision-making, relationships, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as media and culture. A parent resource, "Let's Listen Series," is included along with a "Let's Talk" student book. The curriculum is divided by ages for audiences from 6th through 12th grade with a learning sequence chart that helps leaders understand developmental needs.

1998; \$20.00; *Abingdon Press, 201 Eighth Avenue South, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202-0801; Phone: 800/251-3320; Fax: 800/836-7802; Web site: <http://www.abingdonpress.org>.*

**Love—All That and More**

A program for high school and college youth, it includes a six-session curriculum and three videos, as well as separate facilitators' guides for Jewish and Christian youth. The material focuses on developing healthy relationships that value mutual equality and respect as well as help teens recognize abusive relationships.

2000; \$285; *Faith Trust Institute, 2400 N. 45th Street, Suite 10, Seattle, Washington, 98103; Phone: 206/634-1903 or 877/860-2255, Web Site: <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org>.*

**Sexuality**

*Kelli B. Trujillo, Editor*

The curriculum is part of the senior high Bible study *Faith 4 Life* series. The bible based

approach is reinforced using games, group discussion exercises, and Bible text/story searches. Leaders are provided with “before the study” preparation outlines. This study promotes abstinence-only. The four sessions focus on “how to define sex,” “deal with temptation,” “understanding sexual identity,” and “responding to sexual victimization.”

2003; \$9.99; *Group Publishing Inc.*, P.O. Box 481, Loveland, CO, 80539; Phone: 800/447-1070; Fax: 970/292-4373; Web site: <http://www.grouppublishing.com>

### **Unmasking Sexual Con Games: Helping Teens Identify Good and Bad Relationships**

*Ron Herron and Kathleen M. Sorensen*

This five-session curriculum is targeted to middle school and high school youth. It helps them to learn to identify and deal with sexual harassment and abuse.

1997; *Leader's Guide*, \$29.95; *Student Guide*, \$4.50; *Parent Guide*, \$8.95; *Boys Town Press*, 14100 Crawford Street, Boys Town, NE 68010; Phone: 800/282-6657; Fax: 402/493-1310; Web site: <http://www.ffbh.boystown.org>.

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# HOW CONGREGATIONS CAN SUPPORT SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 6:8



All faith communities have a tradition of community service and many mainline denominations actively support public school education, including sexuality education. In many communities, congregations play an important leadership role in advocating for programs and policies to support young people. However, in other communities, congregations are not actively involved in their neighborhoods. For example, the Search Institute’s 1995 survey of religious youth workers found “that only a tiny percentage of them networked with secular youth workers over the previous year.”<sup>51</sup>

By supporting sexuality education programs in the community, congregations:

- Demonstrate support for all young people in the community, not just the congregation’s children.
- Demonstrate the congregation’s commitment to service and justice.
- Help identify resources for young people in the faith community.
- Raise the congregation’s visibility and influence in the community.
- Encourage individual member involvement in the community.
- Provide an opportunity to network with other congregations on common goals.
- Assist in community-wide partnerships.
- Assure that schools respect the diversity of religious beliefs in the community.

Many religious institutions hesitate to become involved at the community level because they do

not want to promote a particular religious viewpoint. And indeed doing so is inappropriate. Instead, churches, synagogues and mosques can play an important role in advocating for quality sexuality education for all children that respects the diversity of values and beliefs about sexuality that exist in a pluralistic, democratic society.

## Sexuality Education Is a Moral Issue

*The Open Letter to Religious Leaders on Sexuality Education* outlines a theological framework for providing comprehensive sexuality education in public schools. The complete text of the Open Letter follows this section on page 48. In brief, it states that young people need adult assistance in developing their capacity for moral discernment and a freely informed conscience. Young people require information and skills to make moral and healthy decisions for themselves now and in their future adult lives. With adult guidance and support, comprehensive information and education about sexuality—including abstinence, contraception, and STD prevention—young people will be better able to make responsible decisions.

The *Open Letter* specifically addresses the theological weaknesses of an abstinence-only-until-marriage education program. While pointing out that there is indeed “a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,” it says that programs that teach abstinence exclusively and withhold information about pregnancy and STD prevention deny young people life-saving information. The

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Scriptural commitment to truth-telling requires providing young people with full and honest education about sexual and reproductive health. The commitment to the most marginalized and most vulnerable people means that programs must benefit all youth regardless of income, class, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation. Programs that insist on marriage as a prerequisite to sexual behavior while working to deny same sex couples the right to marry contradict that commitment.

The *Open Letter* also calls for a higher standard for sexuality education in our schools. In too many communities, young people are taught only about anatomy, reproduction, and abuse prevention. Instead, a theological commitment to comprehensive sexuality education requires addressing all of the topics that young people need to know about. School-based programs should honor truth-telling and the diversity of religious and moral values represented in the community. Such education:

- Emphasizes responsibility, rights, ethics, and justice.
- Affirms the dignity and worth of all persons.
- Teaches that sexuality includes physical, ethical, social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.
- Complements the education provided by parents and faith communities.
- Publicly identifies the values that underline the program.
- Teaches that decisions about sexual behaviors should be based on moral and ethical values as well as consideration of physical and emotional health.
- Affirms the goodness of sexuality while acknowledging its risks and dangers.
- Introduces with respect the differing sides of controversial sexual issues.

The remainder of this section addresses how faith communities can help support comprehensive sexuality education in the community.

### **Encourage Individual Member Involvement**

*Congregations can encourage individual members to support sexuality education for the community's children.*

Consider these ideas:

- Ask for congregation volunteers for school and community-based organizations. Contact school and community-based sexuality education programs and ask if they need volunteers, fund-raising assistance, speakers, and materials.
- Encourage congregation members to volunteer as mentors in the public schools. Mentoring programs are effective in promoting youth development and helping adolescents avoid risk-taking behaviors, including substance use and early sexual involvement.
- Include notices in the worship bulletin to remind parents to support their school's sexuality education program.
- Conduct a worship service on sexuality education.
- Allow a local pro-sexuality education organization to post flyers or distribute information after services.
- Hold a school board forum. Invite candidates who are running for the school board to come to a meeting at your congregation. Consider co-hosting such a meeting with other churches, synagogues and mosques in the area. Be sure to extend invitations to all of the candidates for office.
- Conduct a voter registration drive during the coffee hour. Develop a voter's guide for your members, including school board races.
- Include the denomination's statement on sexuality education in the worship bulletin or newsletter.

### **Open the Congregation to the Community**

*Congregations that provide sexuality education programs can make them available to children and adults in the community.*

Consider these ideas:

- Open the sexuality education program to all neighborhood youth.
- Open after-school programs to all neighborhood youth.
- Open adult sexuality education programs and support groups to all adult members of the larger community.

- Provide physical space to other groups for sexuality education programs or for a community meeting.

### **Network with Other Congregations on Common Goals for Sexuality Education**

*Interfaith collaborations are essential in demonstrating broad-based religious support for sexuality education.*

Consider these ideas:

- Provide an alternative voice to religious groups that only support abstinence-only-until-marriage education. Mainline religious denominations can speak out together and let the public know that no one voice speaks for religion. Consider editorials or ads supporting sexuality education signed by clergy in local newspapers.
- Coordinate a briefing on sexuality education for the local interfaith council or clergy association. Discuss how the clergy together can support sexuality education in schools.
- Develop a local Clergy for Sexuality Education network. Meet periodically to discuss how clergy can support sexuality education in the local schools. Publicize the list of members and their affiliations.
- Develop joint programming for adults and youth in the community. Share expertise and resources on sexuality education.
- Co-host forums or meetings on sexuality education.
- Hold a press event on clergy support for comprehensive sexuality education. Develop and place op ed pieces, ads, or letters signed by clergy in local newspapers.

### **Participate In Community-Wide Partnerships**

*Clergy, youth workers, religious educators and lay members can provide a religious voice in community partnerships. Sexuality education is a shared community responsibility.*

Consider these ideas:

- Include building partnerships into the job descriptions for religious educators and youth leaders.

- Participate in community youth coalitions.
- Encourage staff to take a major role in advocating in the community for the well-being of all children and youth.
- Arrange for the clergy or a congregation representative to serve as a member of a community health, sexuality education, or AIDS advisory committee or volunteer for the school's curriculum review committee.

### **Provide Direct Support to Schools and Community Agencies Offering Sexuality Education**

*Congregations can provide direct support to schools and community-based sexuality education programs.*

Consider these ideas:

- Get to know the sexuality and HIV/AIDS educators in the community. Start with those who are members of your own congregation.
- Publicly affirm and support your members who address sexuality at their jobs. These may include educators, physicians, counselors, and advocates who may face intense pressure because of their work providing sexuality education and sexual health services and advocating for sexual justice.
- Educate the congregation about sexuality education. Know the goals of sexuality education, the research on its effectiveness, and how to respond to opponents.
- Create an adult education forum on sexuality education. Educate members about sexuality education.
- Have a delegation from the congregation meet with school officials. Ask them how your congregation can support sexuality education in the schools.
- Create a task force on sexuality education in the schools within your faith community.
- Know what is offered about human sexuality in the community's schools. Try to coordinate the church, synagogue or mosque's curricula with what children are learning in schools.
- Invite a sexuality education expert to speak to the congregation or lead study groups.

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## Support for Comprehensive Sexuality Education on the National Level

*Congregations can help support comprehensive sexuality education and oppose abstinence-only-until-marriage programs for children throughout America.*

Consider these ideas:

- Develop an educational forum on the abstinence-only-until-marriage federal initiative. Contact SIECUS, <http://www.siecus.org>, or Advocates for Youth, <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org>, for the latest information on the federal program. Be sure to include the goals of sexuality education, the research on its effectiveness and the lack of peer-reviewed research demonstrating that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs work, and how to respond to those who support such programs.
- Encourage the social action committee to set up an email campaign in support of the Responsible Education About Life Act (REAL Act, House of Representatives 768 and Senate 368). Be sure to identify yourself as a person of faith or a member of a faith community. Since the 2001 anthrax scare, snail mail letters are likely to take months to reach a Congressional office. Instead, find the email addresses of your Representative and Senators at <http://www.congress.org>.
- Ask the social action committee to put together a delegation to meet with Congressional representatives when they are in the district during the summer or holidays.
- Involve the youth group in these efforts.
- Become involved or encourage your denomination's social justice program to support the REAL Act.

## Help During a Community Controversy

*Unfortunately, in more than 100 communities in the United States each year, there are community controversies about sexuality education. Often the only religious voices in these debates oppose comprehensive sexuality education and support teaching young people only about abstinence. During a controversy, religious support for comprehensive sexuality education becomes especially important.*

Consider these ideas:

- The social action committee can conduct a letter-writing campaign in support of sexuality education. Write to the school board and to the editors of the local newspapers in support of sexuality education.
- Send a letter on congregational letterhead.
- Arrange for clergy who support sexuality education to appear on the local broadcast media to discuss the community controversy.
- Alert members to upcoming radio talk shows on the sexuality education controversy and ask them to call in and identify themselves as a person of faith supporting comprehensive sexuality education.
- Conduct a poll of the congregation's members on their support for sexuality education and widely publicize the results.
- Organize a group from the congregation to attend the next school board meeting or hearing. Arrange for babysitting and transportation.
- Arrange for clergy to speak at the school board meeting, legislative hearing or community forum in support of sexuality education.
- Post notices in the worship bulletin asking parishioners to write letters in support of comprehensive sexuality education. Include copies of denominational statements or congregation policies in support of sexuality education.
- Organize a bulletin board in the foyer or meeting room on the sexuality education controversy.
- Ask parishioners to pray for a just outcome to the controversy.
- Develop a model that supports open dialogue, respect, and dignity for all persons' beliefs during the community controversy. Seek common ground with diverse religious groups.

According to the First Amendment Center's statement of intent signed by such diverse groups as the conservative Christian Coalition and the progressive People for the American Way:

“Even when our differences are deep, all parties engaged in public disputes should treat one another with civility and respect, and

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should strive to be accurate and fair. Through constructive dialog we have much to learn from one another.”<sup>52</sup>

### **Stay Up To Date!**

*Congregations can stay up to date using internet resources and finding local education workshops.*

Consider these ideas:

- Find out what is being taught about sexuality in the local public schools, and how the state is supporting teenage pregnancy prevention, sexuality education, HIV prevention, and abstinence programs for youth.
- Find out if there is an existing sexuality education coalition in your state or community.

Find the list of state coalitions at <http://www.teenpregnancy.org> or community coalitions at <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org> under Communities Responding to the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention.

- Join the list serve of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, <http://www.rcrc.org>.
- Ask to receive the complimentary e-newsletter of the Religious Institute, email [info@religiousinstitute.org](mailto:info@religiousinstitute.org) or visit <http://www.religiousinstitute.org/newsletter.html>.
- For a daily news summary of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS issues, subscribe to the Kaiser Family Foundation Daily Reports, [http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily\\_reports/rep\\_index.fm](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.fm).

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## AN OPEN LETTER TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS ABOUT SEX EDUCATION

As religious leaders, we have a continuing commitment to the spiritual, emotional, and physical health of the nation's young people. Now we are called to join in the public discussion about the *nature of sexuality education* for the country's youth. Strong public health arguments support comprehensive sexuality education. Here we invite you to consider the *religious* foundations for supporting sexuality education—education that respects the whole person, honors the truth and diverse values, and promotes the highest ethical values in human relationships.

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### A DIVINE BLESSING

Religious traditions affirm that sexuality is a divinely bestowed blessing for expressing love and generating life, for mutual companionship and pleasure. It is also capable of misuse, leading to exploitation, abuse, and suffering. Sexuality, from a religious point of view, needs to be celebrated with joy, holiness, and integrity, but it also demands understanding, respect, and self-discipline. Our traditions affirm the goodness of creation, our bodies, and our sexuality; we are called to stewardship of these gifts.



### A TIME FOR DISCERNMENT

Our religious ancestors created rites of passage to recognize the transition to sexual maturity and adulthood. God created us as sexual beings from birth to death; but it is in childhood and adolescence, that we begin to develop the sexual wisdom, values, and morality that will determine whether we will become sexually healthy adults. As religious leaders, we want young people to learn about their sexuality, not primarily from the entertainment media or their peers, but from their parents, faith communities, and school-based programs that address the biological, psychological, cultural, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality.



### AN INCLUSIVE COMMITMENT

Religions have a venerable tradition supporting healing, health care, disease prevention, and health promotion. They also express commitment to the most marginalized, the most vulnerable, those most likely to be excluded. Sexuality education programs must benefit *all* young people regardless of income, class, ethnicity, and gender. Programs must also be inclusive of those who are heterosexual and those who are sexual minorities, those who are abstinent and those who have had sexual relationships, and those who have experienced brokenness and oppression about their sexuality.



### EDUCATION WITH INTEGRITY

Religions value education, including education about our sexuality. We have learned from our commitment to religious education that programs must be age-appropriate, accurate, and truthful, and have both immediate relevance and applicability for later life. Young people need help in order to develop their capacity for moral discernment and a freely informed conscience. Education that respects and empowers young people has more integrity than education based on incomplete information, fear, and shame. Programs that teach abstinence exclusively and withhold information about pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease prevention fail our young people.



### TRUTH TELLING

Scriptural and theological commitment to telling the truth calls for full and honest education about sexual and reproductive health. Young people need to know “there is a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing” but they also require the skills to make moral and healthy decisions about relationships for themselves now and in their future adult lives. They need help to develop the capacity for personal relationships that express love, justice, mutuality, commitment, consent, and pleasure. Our culture too often models sexuality without responsibility, and many adolescents are left on their own to struggle through conflicting sexual messages. It is with adult guidance and comprehensive information and education about sexuality—education that includes abstinence, contraception, and STD prevention—that young people will be able to make responsible decisions.



## A HIGHER STANDARD

As religious leaders, we call on policy makers, school officials, and educators to provide comprehensive sexuality education that honors truth telling and the diversity of religious and moral values represented in the community. Such education:

- Emphasizes responsibility, rights, ethics, and justice.
- Affirms the dignity and worth of all persons.
- Teaches that sexuality includes physical, ethical, social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.
- Complements the education provided by parents and faith communities.
- Publicly identifies the values that underline the program.
- Teaches that decisions about sexual behaviors should be based on moral and ethical values, as well as considerations of physical and emotional health.
- Affirms the goodness of sexuality while acknowledging its risks and dangers.
- Introduces with respect the differing sides of controversial sexual issues.



## IN CLOSING

People of faith must speak out for comprehensive sexuality education. We know that there are people of good faith who differ with us on what young people need. We seek to reach out to those from whom we may be divided to seek what is best for our nation's youth. We all must be truth seeking, courageous, and just in our efforts to provide all young people with the sexuality education they so urgently need.



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The Open Letter was developed at a colloquium of theologians sponsored by the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing. Participants included Rev. Mark Bigelow, Congregational Church of Huntington, L.I.; Rev. Dr. John Buehrens, Unitarian Universalist Association; Rev. Dr. Ignacio Casuera, Pacific Palisades United Methodist Church; Rev. Steve Clapp, Christian Community; Rev. Dr. Mark Ellison, Bangor Theological Seminary; Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell, Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Rev. Dr. Larry Greenfield, Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing; Debra W. Haffner, M.Div., Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing; Ann Hanson, Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ; Rev. Dr. Sheron Patterson, St. Paul United Methodist Church, Dallas; and Rev. Carlto

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# RESOURCES

## ORGANIZATIONS

### *Sexuality Education*

ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH  
2000 M Street NW, Suite 750  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-419-3420  
<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org>

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO  
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY  
1776 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-478-8500  
<http://www.teenpregnancy.org>

HEALTHY TEEN NETWORK  
(formerly National Organization on Adolescent  
Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention)  
2401 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20037  
203-293-8805  
<http://www.noappp.org>

PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION  
OF AMERICA, INC.  
434 West 33rd Street  
New York, NY 10001  
212-541-7800  
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org>

SEARCH INSTITUTE  
The Banks Building  
615 First Avenue NE, Suite 125  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
800-888-7828  
<http://www.search-institute.org>

SEXUALITY INFORMATION EDUCATION COUNCIL  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
130 WEST 42ND STREET, SUITE 350  
New York, NY 10036-7802  
212-819-9770  
<http://www.siecus.org>

### *Sexuality and Religion*

THE BALM IN GILEAD  
130 West 42nd Street, Suite 450  
New York, NY 10036  
212-730-7381  
<http://www.balmingilead.org>

CARPENTER PROGRAM IN RELIGION,  
GENDER, AND SEXUALITY  
411 21st Avenue South  
Nashville, Tennessee 37240  
615-343-3967  
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/divinity/carpenter/index.html>

CATHOLICS FOR A FREE CHOICE  
1436 U Street, NW, Suite 301  
Washington, DC 20009-3997  
202-986-6993  
<http://www.cath4choice.org>

THE CENTER FOR SEXUALITY AND RELIGION  
987 Old Eagle School Rd, Suite 719  
Wayne, PA 19087-1708  
610-995-0341  
<http://www.CTRSR.org>

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY  
6404 South Calhoun Street  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46807  
219-774-6510  
<http://www.churchstuff.com>

FAITHTRUST INSTITUTE  
(formerly known as the Center for the Prevention  
of Sexual and Domestic Violence)  
2400 N. 45th St. Ste 10  
Seattle, WA 98103  
206-634-1903  
<http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org>

GLOBAL AIDS IINTERFAITH ALLIANCE  
PO Box 29110  
San Francisco, CA, USA 94129  
415-461-7196  
<http://www.thegaia.org>

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PRO-CHOICE RELIGIOUS NETWORK PLANNED  
PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA  
434 West 33rd Street  
New York, NY 10001  
212-541-7800  
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org>

RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR  
REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE  
1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1130  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-628-7700  
<http://www.rcrc.org>

THE RELIGIOUS CONSULTATION ON POPULATION,  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND ETHICS  
2717 E. Hampshire Ave.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211  
414-962-3166  
<http://www.religiousconsultation.org>

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE FOR SEXUAL MORALITY,  
JUSTICE, AND HEALING  
304 Main Avenue #282  
Norwalk, CT 06851  
203-840-1148/ 773-324-8580  
<http://www.religiousinstitute.org>

SOULFORCE, INC.  
PO Box 3195  
Lynchburg, VA 24503  
877-705-6393  
<http://www.soulforce.org>

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE FOR THEOLOGY,  
ETHICS AND RITUAL  
8121 Georgia Avenue #310  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-589-2509  
<http://www.hers.com/water>

## HOTLINES/REFERRAL SOURCES

CDC NATIONAL STD HOTLINE  
Hours: 8 a.m.-11 p.m., Monday through Friday,  
E.S.T. Phone: 800-227-8922

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE  
Hours: 24 Hours  
Phone: 800-999-SAFE

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION HOTLINE  
Hours: 24 Hours  
Phone: 800-584-9911

NATIONAL AIDS HOTLINE  
Hours: 24 Hours  
Phone: English-800-342-AIDS  
Spanish-800-344-7432 TTY -800-243-7889

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE  
Hours: 24 Hours  
Phone: 800-4A-CHILD

NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN HOTLINE  
Hours: Monday-Friday, 6 p.m.-10 p.m.; Saturday,  
12 p.m.-5 p.m., E.S.T.  
Phone: 888-843-4564

NATIONAL HIV/AIDS TEEN HOTLINE, "FROM  
ONE TEEN TO ANOTHER" AMERICAN RED CROSS  
Hours: Friday and Saturday  
6 p.m.-12 a.m., E.S.T.  
Phone: 800-440-TEEN

NATIONAL STD HOTLINE  
Hours: 24 Hours  
Phone: 800-227-8922

STOP IT NOW!  
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm  
Phone: 888-PREVENT

TEENS TEACHING AIDS PREVENTION (TTAP)  
NATIONAL HOTLINE  
Hours: Monday-Friday, 4 p.m.-8 p.m., C.S.T.  
Phone: 800-234-TEEN

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## CLOSING WORDS

*“Love—rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”*

*1 Corinthians 13: 6–7*



**L**ifespan sexuality education is only a part of the foundation of a sexually healthy faith community.<sup>53</sup>

A sexually healthy faith community is committed to fostering spiritual, sexual and emotional health among the congregation and providing a safe environment where sexuality issues are addressed with respect, mutuality and openness. Every faith community – whether progressive or conservative, liberal or evangelical, Jewish or Christian or Muslim – is called to address the sexuality needs of the people it serves. Our traditions affirm that sexuality is a divinely-bestowed blessing that should never be abused or exploited. Every religious community has an important role in helping people become sexually healthy adults who express their sexuality in ways congruent with their religious and ethical values.

In a sexually healthy faith community:

- Sexuality is affirmed as a life-giving and life-fulfilling gift.
- Every person is treated with dignity and worth.
- There is full inclusion of women and sexual minorities in congregational life.
- There are policies to assure the prevention of sexual abuse and sexual harassment.
- Every adult—whether single, married, divorced, widowed, gay or straight, young or

old, able-bodied or disabled—finds support and affirmation for their life situation.

- Families are valued as the primary moral and sexuality educators of their children.
- Youth are valued members of the community.
- Pastoral counseling and support on sexuality issues are available from trained counselors to those whose sexuality has been broken.
- Age-appropriate sexuality education within the faith tradition is available throughout the life span.
- Social action committees work for sexual justice.
- The congregation plays an active role in supporting public school education, including sexuality education.
- There is a commitment to fostering spiritual, sexual, and emotional health.

We are called upon as religious people to acknowledge the inherent goodness of sexuality as part of creation and to respond to abuses of this sacred gift. The Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing ends, “God rejoices when we celebrate our sexuality with holiness and integrity.” May your work in promoting sexuality education to your members be a small contribution to this process. And so may it be.

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# RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MATERIALS AND PUBLICATIONS

## RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

The Religious Institute publishes reports, monographs, and theological frameworks on a variety of sexuality issues. Most can be downloaded from the web site, <http://www.religioustheology.org>. Single copies can be ordered by downloading and printing the order form at <http://www.religioustheology.org/orders.html>. Information about bulk orders can be obtained from the Christian Community, 419-872-7448.

### **A Time to Build: Creating Sexually Healthy Faith Communities** *by Debra Haffner.*

Congregations and clergy across North America are asking themselves how to assure the sexual health of their faith communities. This guidebook includes policies and procedures on preventing sexual abuse and sexual harassment; provides ideas for worship services and sermons on sexuality issues; and recommends strategies for providing sexuality education for children, youth, and adults.

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**Faith Matters: Teenagers,  
Religion, and Sexuality**

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and Angela Zizak.*

How do religious faith and congregational involvement influence the sexual values and behaviors of teenagers? This book reveals the results of a national study of 5,819 teenagers representing a broad range of religious traditions, ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, and geographical locations. Includes practical recommendations for churches and parents.

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*\$16 single copy, \$9 each for 10 or more.*

**Adult Guide for The Gift of Sexuality:  
Empowerment for Young People**

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This book was developed to accompany the book for youth and provides helpful guidance to parents, clergy, teachers of youth, youth group advisors, and persons in the community who are concerned about teens. It includes strategies to help adults feel more comfortable helping youth in this important area of need as well as strategies to help congregations implement more effective programming for youth.

*\$14 single copy.*

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The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing is an ecumenical, interfaith organization dedicated to advocating for sexual health, education, and justice in faith communities and society.

The primary objectives of the Religious Institute include:

Developing and supporting a network of clergy, religious educators, theologians, ethicists, and other religious leaders committed to sexual justice.

Building the capacity of religious institutions and clergy to offer comprehensive sexuality education within the context of their own faith traditions and to advocate for sexual rights.

Helping congregations become sexually-healthy faith communities.

Educating the public and policymakers about the religious vision of sexual morality, justice, and healing.

Developing a clearinghouse of resources on religion and sexuality.

The Religious Institute is a project of the Christian Community.  
The website of the Religious Institute is <http://www.religiousinstitute.org>.

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