

Principles, Values, and Assumptions for a Faith-Based Course on Human Sexuality

Sound principles, values, and assumptions inform a faith-based course about human sexuality for young people in the church. These elements must be based on our understanding of biblical and theological teachings about sexuality.

In designing a faith-based course on human sexuality for young people, we must acknowledge that we have a set of values about sexuality that we want to convey. Since most values are formed at an early age and largely through observation as opposed to verbal instruction, the young people will come into the course with a set of values in place. Therefore, the course needs to help young people clarify the values they already hold and to intentionally connect young people with biblical values. This will prove extremely helpful to them when their values are called into question.

As you design a faith-based course on human sexuality, keep these principles, values, and assumptions in mind:

Basic Principles for a Faith-Based Course about Human Sexuality

- The teachings of Scripture and the church are essential resources. Do not waste an opportunity to strengthen the ties between faith and life.
- Sex is not portrayed as evil, wicked, nasty, or dirty, but rather as a gift of God, which, if we are good stewards, must be used wisely and responsibly.
- Teaching about sexuality reduces rather than increases the intensity of the adolescent sex drive. When sex is talked about and put into perspective, young people begin to see it as a part of life created by God, not as a god in life that must be experienced. Rather than putting it into practice, they have put it into proper perspective, making such practice unnecessary.
- Such a course respects young people's dignity and values their opinions and beliefs.
- An atmosphere of trust is developed. Sex is difficult to talk about under the best of circumstances; to talk about sex if trust does not exist is impossible. Many activities should be used to build group trust and self-esteem.
- The course employs a model of learning that provides information in a variety of ways. It does not assume that young people are vessels waiting to have the right information poured into them; it allows students to choose and to wrestle with what is being taught.
- Males and females are best taught together. Learning the similarities and the differences in the sexes and learning to communicate with people of the opposite sex about sex is important.

Values in a Faith-Based Course about Human Sexuality

- Before making important decisions, individuals need to consider their responsibility to God and to consider the decision within a faith framework.
- Recognize the worth and dignity of all individuals and treat all individuals with respect, regardless of their sex, race, religion, culture, or sexual orientation.
- It is wrong to use pressure or physical force to make people do things against their will.
- It is wrong to take unfair advantage of, or exploit, others.
- People are responsible for their own behavior and its consequences.
- Before making important decisions about sexuality and other matters, individuals need to weigh the current and future consequences for themselves, significant others, and society.
- Open communication is an important part of healthy relationships with others.

Basic Assumptions in a Faith-Based Course about Human Sexuality

- At appropriate age levels, people need access to accurate information about the physical, psychological, social, and moral aspects of sexuality.
- Accurate information, clearer values, and enhanced skills will increase responsible decision making.
- Parents are the primary educators about the sexuality of their children. Churches, schools, and other agencies function as partners with parents in providing education about sexuality.