

God, Sex, and the Meaning of Life Ministry

Website: www.godsexandthemeaningoflife.com

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God, Sex and the Meaning of Life Ministry, (GSML Ministry) was formed in 2006. Our ministry has presented over thirty Workshops on the *Theology of the Body* in many Parishes in the Toronto and Hamilton Archdioceses. As well, in the fall of 2009, we organized a Conference attended by over 1000 people. At the same time, we facilitated a Luncheon meeting on this same topic for Priests and Seminarians with over 120 in attendance. We have held twenty *Theology of the Body for Teens* workshops and have been invited into three high schools to facilitate 12 sessions on the *Theology of the Body for Teens* (4 classes per day). We have also held workshops for Parents. Our Ministry is approved by The Archdiocese of Toronto.

Our Workshops

God, Sex and the Meaning of Life Workshop: This workshop, for married couples, singles and celibates, male and female, young and old, is based on Christopher West's DVD talks in which he unpacks Pope John Paul II's teachings, translating them into language everyone can understand. It explores the connection between sex and the questions of human existence.

Theology of the Body for Teens: This program takes the two hottest topics on the planet—God and sex—and “marries” them through Pope John Paul II's compelling vision for love and life. This workshop, for teens and young adults, is a positive portrayal of our sexuality as a good and essential part of love and life. During 12 weekly sessions, which include activities appropriate to the age group, participants discover the beauty and purpose of their sexuality, and why it is such a major part of their ability to love.

Theology of the Body for Grade 6, 7 & 8: This program answers the questions young teens may have about sexual morality, relationships, and how they were uniquely created for greatness. It uses a dynamic mix of stories, real-life examples, activities, prayers, and relevant references to the culture, all packed into eight life-changing lessons.

Theology of the Body & Confirmation: Our workshop on Confirmation combines the teachings of Pope John Paul II on the “language of the body” in his *Theology of The Body*, with the Catholic Church's teachings on confirmation. The goal of the workshop for those approaching confirmation is to reinforce the teaching on the Gifts of The Holy Spirit and the good that comes from them, and how we act them out in the language of our bodies to live a life of chastity. We hope the youth will take this workshop to heart, as the benefits are enormous. Modesty, dignity, reduced chance of pregnancy, less chance of abortion – in other words, all of the good things parents would want for their child.

Guiding Your Child Through The Sexual Minefield: From Toddlers To Teens: Do your kids tune you out? Regardless of the ages of our children, as parents, we have the daily duty to be involved in moulding their morality and ethics in a Catholic way. It is no longer enough to leave the task to the schools. We must counteract the false messages about love that are rampant in our culture. This presentation will

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provide parents with tools to help them mould the morals and sexuality of children from toddlers to teens.

Theology of the Body in the Classroom: Our ministry was delighted to be invited to participate in Respect For Life Week by the Toronto Catholic District School Board. We provide a brief introduction to the Theology of the Body for Teens—suitable for one classroom period. The session can be expanded to cover more of the topic.

Training Presentation Skills and Basic Theology of the Body: This workshop will assist participants in organizing and facilitating workshops, making effective use of the microphone and PowerPoint presentations, as well as in running group discussions. Participants will also be offered the opportunity to practice their skills at any of our Workshops including Theology of the Body for Teens.

Parish Retreat / Workshop: An all day retreat suited for all ministries and staff in a parish to enable those in the Ministry to integrate the Theology of the Body into their ministries and daily activities.

About our Workshops

- Workshops are led by trained facilitators
- Facilitator-led small discussion groups
- Use of DVD and other resources
- Multi-Session workshops can be full day, half days, or weekly for several weeks
- Can serve as Lenten Retreat
- Offered Free of charge
- Books and resources are offered for purchase by participants

Note: We can adjust and adapt various workshops to suit a group or parish needs or interests. 98% of participation feedback is very positive, with many people commenting on the small group discussions, finding them to be a very important part of the workshop.

What participants say about the Workshops: - a few of the many comments

- Discussions and video. These helped to clarify answers about sexuality, the church and God for not only myself but in terms of answering questions posed by my high school students. *(Holy Redeemer - Pickering)*
- Very informative & educational, fruitful, enlightening *(Couples for Christ)*
- The videos were excellent. The facilitators were very enthusiastic. Please spread this course. *(St. Lawrence - Scarborough)*
- Extremely insightful. Completely opened up a new avenue of Christian morality. *(St. Lawrence - Scarborough)*
- 4th session was the best because I am married so could relate very personally to the topic. However, all topics were relevant and interesting, especially priestly celibacy and its history as

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an analogy of Christ and the Church. (*St. Bernadette - Ajax*)

- The highlight of this course was Christopher West's presentation and the group discussion afterward which helped you to digest more deeply the highlights of each talk. Also the explanation of each question by the facilitator and the final wrap-up afterwards. (*St. Gregory*)
- Sharing of content, coupled with interaction. Super format of presentation of video, sharing & interaction, summarizing. (*St. Margret Mary - Hamilton*)
- Relaxed, informative – puts Theology of the Body in full perspective. Explanation of celibacy, lust, love, marriage – all put into perspective (*St. Margaret Mary - Hamilton*)

What teens say about the Program: - a few of the many comments

- "I am very thankful for all the things you taught in the past 12 weeks. You taught us the true meaning of love and how we were made to love each other. It taught me to DREAM BIG to achieve me goal in life."
- "I am grateful for this program because I now have a better grasp on my sexual life and has changed my views on sex. I now understand the importance of treating your partner right and how to live in a pure way."
- "I think theology of the body is great. It makes sense by using language and examples that we understand."
- "Theology of the body was a good experience as it taught us about real issues affecting our lives today."
- "Was a great experience that taught me more about God and His relationship with me."
- "I enjoyed all of the different activities that the group had us do and I had learned a great deal from them. I also enjoyed the videos they had shown us."
- "I know understand what the purpose of human sexuality is. It has taught me how to respect myself and other people."
- "I learned a lot including how to date with a purpose."
- "Every single week I learned something new about what Jesus expects from me as a human being."

Completed Workshops:

God, Sex and the Meaning of Life Workshops

- St. Bernadette, Ajax - Oct. 2006
- St. Gertrude, Oshawa - Jan. 2007
- Holy Redeemer, Pickering - Feb. 2007
- St. Lawrence, Toronto - March 2007
- St. Bernadette, Ajax - June 2007

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- St. Rose of Lima, Toronto - Oct. 2007
- St. Bernadette, Ajax - Jan. 2008
- St. Aidan, Toronto - Feb. 2008
- North Toronto Prayer Group, Toronto - March 2008
- St. Isaac Jogues, Pickering - Apr. 2008
- St. Gregory the Great, Oshawa - May 2008
- Couples for Christ, Toronto - Oct. 2008
- St. Boniface, Toronto - Mar. 2009
- The Bukas Loob sa Diyos Covenant Community, Toronto - May 2009
- St. Theresa Shrine of the Little Flower, Toronto - Nov. 2009
- St. Margaret Mary, Hamilton - Nov. 2009
- Epiphany of Our Lord, Toronto - Feb. 2010
- Holy Martyrs of Japan, Bradford - Mar. 2010
- St. Dunstan, Toronto - Apr/May 2010
- Guardian Angels, Orillia - May 2010
- St. Philip Neri - Winter - 2011/2012
- Couples For Christ – Foundation for Family and Life, Young Couples Group - June 2015

Theology of the Body for Teens - Workshops

- Holy Redeemer, Pickering - Fall 2008
- St. Thomas Aquinas, Toronto - Spring 2009
- St. Nicholas Bari, Toronto - Fall 2009
- St. Mary's Malankara Catholic Mission, Toronto - Winter 2010
- Precious Blood, Scarborough - Winter 2012

Theology of the Body for Teens – 12 Week Study Group in the Classroom

- Father Leo Austin High School - Fall 2011
- Father Leo Austin High School - Fall 2012
- St. Patrick's High School - Fall 2012
- Monsignor Paul Dwyer Catholic High School in Oshawa - Spring 2013

Theology of the Body for Teens in the Classroom (One period Introduction)

- Archbishop Romero RCHS, Toronto - May 2009
- Loretto College RCHS, Toronto - May 2010
- Bishop Allen Academy - Etobicoke - May 2011
- Bishop Marrocco/Thomas Merton, Toronto
- Francis Libermann, Toronto

Theology of the Body Teen Retreats

- Ancaster – Weekend Retreat - 2014
- St. Don Bosco Secondary School in Toronto

Theology of the Body Teens for Grade School

- St. Bernadette's Parish, Ajax, 2013/2014

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Theology of the Body and Confirmation

- St. Bernadette's Parish, Ajax, Winter 2012
- St. Bernadette's Parish, Ajax, Spring 2013
- St. Bernadette's Parish, Ajax, Spring 2014
- St. Bernadette's Parish, Ajax, Spring 2015

Guiding Your Child Through the Sexual Minefield Workshops

- St. Bernadette, Ajax (Mini) - Spring 2008
- St. Matthew, Oakville - (Full Day) Fall 2010
- Mother's Group , Ajax (Mini) - Nov. 2010
- St. James CS, Ajax (Mini) - Mar. 2011
- St. Bernadette's, Ajax, (Full Day) Spring 2011
- St. Philip Neri - North York (Mini) - Oct. 2011
- St. Philip Neri - North York (Full Day)- Nov. 2011
- St. James CS, Ajax (Mini) - Apr. 2012

Girl Talk

- GeorgeTown - Feb 2015

Marriage Preparation - Theology of the Body Talk

- St. Jerome's Parish, Brampton - March 2011

Training Presentation Skills and Basic Theology of the Body

- St. Bernadette, Ajax, March & May – 2010
- Couples For Christ – Foundation for Family and Life – July 2015

Light Weigh - A Catholic weight loss program - (12 weeks)

- St. Bernadette's, Ajax - Fall 2010
- St. Bernadette's, Ajax - Winter 2011
- St. Bernadette's, Ajax - Fall 2011
- St. Bernadette's Ajax - Winter 2012

Other Workshops

- A Biblical Walk Through the Mass - St. Bernadette's, Ajax - Spring 2011
- A Biblical Walk Through the Mass Holy Redeemer, Pickering - Fall 2011
- Catholicism - St. Bernadette's Ajax , 2013
- The Great Adventure – Bible Timeline (24 weeks) – St. Bernadette's, Ajax, 2014/2015
- Apologetics – Various Topics - monthly at St. Bernadette's, Ajax, 2014/continuing

Our Goal:

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Our goal is to disseminate Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body as widely as possible and to encourage a more in-depth study of his teachings. In order to ensure that as many people as possible are exposed to the Theology of the Body, our ministry offers workshops and other resources on this topic.

Toronto's Cardinal, Thomas Collins stated: [John Paul II] *teachings, and especially his Theology of the Body, are a permanent gift of immense benefit to us all. I earnestly invite everyone to study prayerfully the teachings of Pope John Paul, especially the Theology of the Body. We need very much in these days to deepen our awareness of the dignity of the human person, and Pope John Paul helps us to do that.*" - Address of Archbishop Thomas Collins - 32nd Annual Archbishop's Dinner, Oct 27, 2011

Contact:

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Rose & Pat Heron 905-683-9055 (Youth Leaders) or roseheron@gmail.com
Jan Noonan 905-420-8696
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Susan and Tom Kennedy attended the week long Head & Heart Immersion Course as well as Theology of the Body: Going Deeper (Level 2) offered by the Theology of the Body Institute in Philadelphia, USA. Susan earned an undergraduate credit from Creighton University by fulfilling the requirements for this course. Tom, now retired, has facilitated numerous workshops and training seminars during his employment.

Rose Heron is the past Executive Director of the Natural Family Planning Association (NFPA) in Toronto. Rose is the Program Director of the NFPA and is the Trainer Liaison for WOOMB Canada. She has taught the Billings Ovulation Method for over 30 years. She has facilitated many Marriage Preparation courses on both the Billings Ovulation Method and Theology of the Body. She has taken several courses on the Theology of the Body.

Jan Noonan is a retired teacher with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. She has a Masters of Theological Studies from St. Augustine's Extension Division and has held many seminars and training sessions in her position as Resource Teacher for the Board. She has taken several courses on the Theology of the Body.

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The GSML Website contains many resources and material for teens, parents, teachers, and anyone interested in the Theology of the Body, as well as the latest news and events about our group. We also publicize Theology of the Body events organized by other groups.