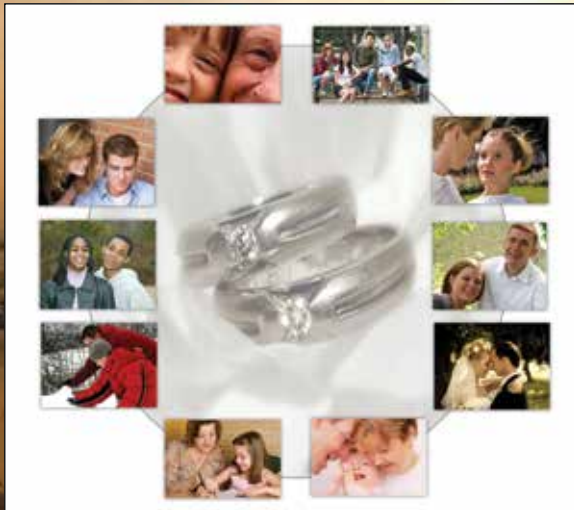


# The Life Cycle: Introduction



The<sup>♂</sup>ology  
of the BO<sup>♀</sup>dy for families  
& single people  
plus Family Chastity Formation in Virtue & Purity of Heart

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Universal Truths about Human Sexuality for People of All Ages  
With extensive references to the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church

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## Part II: The Life Cycle Workbook



Putting **Part I: A Way of Life** to Work



# Introduction to the Workbook

Train your children in the way they should go:  
and when they are old, they will not depart from it

(Cf. Prov. 22:6. Note: Different Bible translations use the word “boy, child, or children”).

## About the Life-Cycle Workbook

**545** The **Life-Cycle Workbook** is a tool for the practical application of the teachings, principles, and guidelines of the Church and Sacred Scripture presented in **Theology of the Body for Families and Single People**. It is a tool for parents, engaged couples and newlyweds to help them consider the broader implications of personality development in the various stages of chastity formation. The workbook will also help parents and children make good life choices that strengthen the ability to live a chaste life while avoiding the pitfalls that weaken or cripple chastity in marriage and family life.

**546** As we have shown, God’s plan for chastity is founded first and foremost upon a couple’s establishing and maintaining a holy marriage. If an engaged or married couple practices chastity as God desires, establishes a home and family atmosphere devoted to prayer and holiness, and fills it with love and affection, then the vast majority of chastity formation for their children will have been accomplished indirectly.

**547** Once a marriage and family home are well-grounded in prayer, holiness, and love, parents must then create a plan to directly communicate, educate, form, and protect their

children in chastity throughout the various stages of personality development. This plan is primarily carried out by parents in the school of the home. The workbook offers suggestions for each stage in the lifelong cycle of chastity formation within the family, from the beginning of life through childhood, young adulthood, and entering into a vocation of marriage or virginity for the Kingdom, and concludes with the important role of grandparents.

**548** While the workbook is an excellent foundational tool, it is not meant to be all-inclusive. It is a guide that will help you to explore the various dimensions of life that affect chastity formation. We encourage you to include your own ideas, cultural differences, personal experiences and knowledge in the information being provided. Couples can use the workbook as a starting point for dialogue on the many issues related to chastity formation and as a tool to help form their plan for marriage, family life and the education of their children.

**549** If you have suggestions that you feel would help others, you are encouraged to submit them for consideration. The wisdom of parents, grandparents, pastors and other educators is welcomed. Ideas and other information that are received and approved will be made available for viewing, downloading, and printing from our web site at **TheologyOfTheBodyForFamilies.org**.

## The Starting Point: Having a Vision for Your Marriage and Family

**550** Family chastity formation is a lifelong process that begins even before birth as a mother communicates with her child in the womb and ends at death as the soul enters into eternity. Formation in chastity is the formation of personality: Who we are, what we believe and stand for, how we act and treat other people, and, most of all, how we love. It touches upon the secrets of our very nature and involves the most intimate depths of our body and soul and thus will determine whether or not we become people of integrity, honor and justice. Only a chaste person is truly able to love.

**551** It is important for those called to the vocation of married love to mutually decide upon a lifetime vision for their marriage and family, which, like true north on a compass, will remain constant and provide certain direction in the vicissitudes encountered on the journey of life together. This “true north” will provide stability to your decision-making process and to the daily choices you will inevitably be called upon to make on a myriad of subjects. The best time to formulate your lifetime vision, or true north, is before you set out on the journey, that is, during the periods of courtship and engagement.

**552** The vision for your marriage and family must have holiness and eternal life as the goal and destination. To achieve this goal, chastity is required in order to enter into communion with God on earth and in heaven. This short life on earth ends quickly, and we will be held accountable for our decisions on chastity and whether or not we have led our children, by word and example, to an eternity in heaven or hell. Blessed Jacinta was told by Our Lady of

Fatima that more souls go to hell because of sins of the flesh than for any other reason.

**553** Family chastity formation is necessary not just for children and young people but for parents as well. In the vision for your marriage and family, the truth that chastity formation will be a lifelong process means preparing for a daily struggle to be chaste until the soul is safely in the arms of God. Praying together as friends during courtship and engagement, as a married couple, and as a family is the best means for lifting up one’s vision, heart, and mind to God and allowing His supernatural grace and purity to enter into loving relationships.

**554** This workbook provides suggestions to help parents form a clear vision for their marriage and family, so that chastity will become a priority which will influence every daily decision they make in regard to their own lives and the lives of their children. Chastity should be a primary consideration in deciding how to create and arrange a home as well as what media to allow or reject. It should also play a role in discerning the suitability of particular churches, pastors, schools, teachers, doctors, family friends, workplaces, public places, and family or friends that children may wish to visit. In addition, chastity must be considered in choosing baby-sitters, child care providers, and in discerning friends chosen by young people, especially those chosen during courtship and engagement.

**555** Many of us did not receive adequate chastity formation as children, and there are many parents who only start to realize the importance of chastity formation when their children reach the teen years or young adulthood. The important thing for parents is to begin today with this authoritative resource,

to live the principles of true love taught by the Catholic Church, so that this information can be passed on to your children and others.

**556** Make no mistake—parents must lead chaste lives if they are to be effective educators of their children in chastity formation. The well known adage, “Do what I say, not what I do,” will not work because children will primarily imitate the attitudes and moral values of their parents as they mature. Another adage states that, “The apple does not fall far from the tree.” In general, good apples come from good trees, and bad apples come from bad trees. The good example of parents living chastely in marriage will establish and prepare children to live lives of purity and holiness according to their dignity as children of God.

**557** Tragically, parents who choose to live unchaste lives and fail to provide a safe, secure, and loving home environment, along with adequate Catholic-based chastity formation, are leaving a legacy to their children that could easily bear bad fruit. In such homes, it is possible that children could end up being subjected to the unnecessary pain and suffering of unhealthy or broken relationships related to the misuse of sexuality, which often contributes to personality breakdowns, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, suicide and the loss of a soul for all eternity.

**558** In truth, there are really only two roads to choose from for your marriage and family, the wide or the narrow, the way of death or life. Fathers, in particular, are called, like Joshua in the Old Testament, to choose life, to stand up and declare, “As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15)! In our day, Pope John Paul II illuminated clearly the paths of life and death, and his constant call to action was, “You must decide!”

**559** *Theology of the Body for Families and Single People plus Family Chastity Formation in Virtue and Purity of Heart* is, in the end, primarily about teaching parents how to be chaste so they, in turn, can feel confident about teaching chastity to their children by word and example. In this endeavor, chastity formation for children will be 95 percent accomplished through the example of parents who:

- Love God above everyone and everything.
- Live their Faith everyday by embracing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially unconditional love and unconditional forgiveness.
- Live official Church teachings, without compromise, especially on the subjects of human sexuality, marriage and family life.
- Practice daily family prayer and pray together as a couple; make prayer the highest priority from the beginning of their life together.
- Mutually love, respect and show affection for one another.
- Provide a safe, secure and loving family home environment.
- Assume their proper role as primary educators of their children.
- Administer loving, appropriate and consistent discipline when needed.
- Establish rules about what their children can and cannot see and hear through the mass media, including television, internet, movies, music, radio, CDs and computerized games.

- Establish high moral standards and modest dress codes for themselves and their children.
  - Develop personal relationships with each of their children that foster trust, respect, honesty and open communications.
  - Protect their children from premature and inappropriate information about sex that is taught in mixed classroom settings in both private and public schools.
- 560** The remaining five percent of chastity formation consists of directly providing education in human sexuality by parents to their children which is adapted to the various stages of life and in accord with each child's unique emotional, psychological, spiritual and physiological development. The Church and State's role is to support parents 100 percent in the mission of educating their children but not to replace them, and also to reinforce the moral, spiritual and legal safeguards for chaste living as essential to a culture of life – this *is* their subsidiary role.