

Discussion Starter

Talking with your kids about pornography

Using Genesis to guide the conversation on human sexuality

Chastity is not sexual repression, but rather it is the “successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being” (Cat. #2337). This means that as Catholics we go beyond mere abstinence and saying “no” to sex, as if it were something dirty, and instead we integrate our sexual longing and desires within this overall project of being a follower of Christ Jesus. Though chastity involves abstinence and saying “no”, it goes far beyond into love.

This “inner unity of man” is learned by looking at Genesis 1 & 2. These two stories of creation reveal the human heart. Genesis One reveals the uniqueness of being made in the Image of God. God is the Trinity- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- united forever. God is utterly happy as God. The Catechism says it in its very first words: “God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life.” And it is in the image of this God that you and I are created in, which showcases our uniqueness in Creation.

Genesis Two shows us how Man and Woman are made for each other. In this chapter Scripture reveals the beautiful nature of the union of man and woman. “The man and his wife were both naked, without shame.” This nakedness implies total vulnerability between the man and the woman. They had no shame for there was no sin or selfishness between them. They loved and gave themselves in love to one another without fear of abandonment, mockery, shame or humiliation. They saw only persons, not things, when they looked at one another.

1

REVEALED DIGNITY

Man and Woman made in the image of God, the source of true dignity.

2

TOTAL UNITY

Man and Woman were both naked without shame, vulnerable love in its completeness.

3

LOST INTEGRITY

Man and Woman in sin now fear being used by one another, so they hide their nakedness.

4

CALLED TO CHASTITY

Chastity integrates sexuality so that Man and Woman can be freed to love fully.

The Fall Brings Fear, Selfishness and the Ability to Use Another.

“Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes.” #2351

In chapter 3, as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, Scripture says, “The eyes of both of them were opened and, seeing that they were naked, sowed fig leaves together to cover themselves.” They hid themselves from each other. They are guarded. Why? Because once sin enters the picture, it becomes easy to cease viewing the other as a person and regard them only as an object to be used.

“Love People, not Things. Use Things, not People.”

Lust is the way we reduce the person to just his or her sexual value, and then we use that value to make us happy or satisfied. Pornography is particularly difficult because it is everywhere. Now it is piped into every home in HD through the Internet, or on our smart phones. Youth today have it worse than ever before, with the average age of exposure to hardcore porn for both boys and girls at age 11. Without the emotional or spiritual maturity to handle this, kids are quickly becoming addicts to porn, with guilt and shame driving them deeper into the porn-addict lifestyle. Parents often feel powerless because access is so ubiquitous and kids seem to know how to find their way around the Internet better than their parents.

That is why we are asking parents to no longer have “The Talk” but to start “The Discussion.”

This needs to be an ongoing part of what it means to be a parent. And no double standards! The call to chastity is the same for boys as it is for girls, for husbands as it is for wives.

Chastity recovers, through moral effort and divine grace, the self-mastery of the powers of life and love. If love is self-gift, then chastity leads to self-possession. You cannot give what you do not have, especially in love. After all, their “Yes” is only as good as their ability to say “No.” Chastity brings integrity, and that is why Jesus says the pure of heart shall see God.

Pro Tips for Parents and Porn Talks

1. *Don't just talk about porn.* Talk about relationships and what it means to be in a healthy relationship.
2. *Don't use shame to steer them from porn!* Love is a better motivator and shaming them will just drive them to isolation.
3. *Don't excuse its use!* Porn is incredibly damaging. While you shouldn't shame them, you should also not fear saying it is wrong and self-destructive. “It's a guy thing” is a horrible lie.
4. *Support them!* If they struggle with porn, let them know you'll support them to find freedom. Pray for them daily.
5. *Ask them questions about love and sex!* Kids are constantly talked at by adults. Ask them questions about these topics and listen, listen, listen. They will respect you more, and you'll know what they need to hear.