



Key
Stage
3

Love & Sex Matters

Relationships & sex education
in a context of Christian values



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Introduction

'We are all held in a loving, accepting gaze ... what difference will it make to our relationships with others if we believe we are all held in the same loving regard?'¹

These materials have been written in the light of appalling statistics for teenage pregnancies and rising rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in young people. At present, Britain has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Europe, at 27 per 1000,² the most common STI, Chlamydia, has seen a 150% rise over the past ten years.³

Meanwhile the DCSF's *Sex and Relationships Education Guidance for 2010* contains clear recommendations about a needed shift in emphasis; sexuality should be taught within relationships and a diversity of beliefs and lifestyles should be explored.⁴ The Children's Society have published *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*, a report about children's contemporary experiences of growing up, which makes strong recommendations about the way sex education should be taught.⁵

Love and Sex Matters hopes to offer a path that will deliver the recommendations of the DCSF's *Sex and Relationships Education Guidance* within a framework of Christian values and is offered as a response to suggestions made in *A Good Childhood*. The emphasis in these materials is on creating dialogue through activity that will help children and young people grow in emotional articulacy and develop the self-esteem to navigate a personal life that honours both themselves and others.

'Excessive individualism ... commercial and peer pressures encourage risky lifestyles.'⁶

These materials also aim to help young people open their eyes to how media and advertising place human sexuality and relationships within the realm of consumerism, so removing the spirituality from intimacy. These lessons aim to help children and young people to reject the advertising pressures for conformity in beauty and, instead, realise their own wonder and worth as unique and beautiful people. Thus, good self-esteem is presented as a necessary foundation for building mutually satisfying and beneficial relationships. *Love and Sex Matters* also seeks to question the media representation that teenage sexual activity is, or should be, the norm.

'As sex can create human beings, sex education should be treated with seriousness and it should centre on love and responsibility within the context of family life.'⁷

These materials do not offer one Christian moral path, such as abstinence before marriage; however, they do seek to present that path as a positive, viable life choice and uphold the importance of marriage and family life.

In several of the lessons, students are asked to consider a variety of Christian, other faith, agnostic and atheist perspectives on issues of relationships and sexuality. They are then encouraged to use these perspectives to discuss their own ideas, with the emphasis on developing emotional articulacy.

'There is more involved than the defence of traditional family patterns – unless believers can show all of us ways of handling the education of emotion and of preparing people for adult commitment in relationships, all that will be seen is an agenda of anxiety, censoriousness and repression.'⁸

It is hoped that through these materials children and young people will be encouraged to ponder the profound significance and meaning of sex and consider the spirituality of relationships. Although this resource has been written with church schools in mind, the teaching ethic and multi-faith approach are such that it can also make a rich contribution to sex and relationships education outside this context.

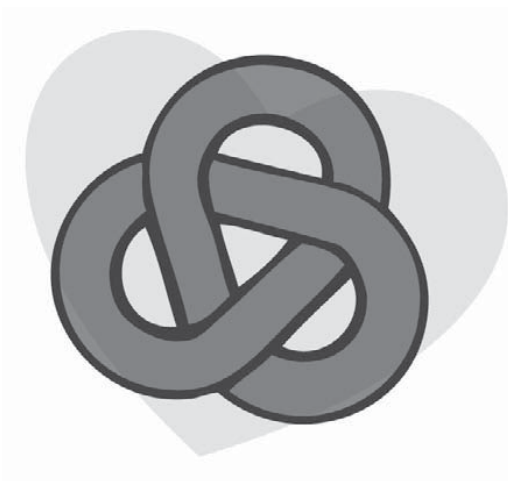
At a time of changing family patterns and parental stress overload, there are many youngsters seeking the love, attention, security and identity that may not have been afforded them as a foundational experience. As a result sexual and emotional needs, love and relationships, often get confused, conflated and entangled. Many children and young people in our schools are not given the opportunity to discuss and formulate a language to articulate their feelings and needs either at home or in other contexts. They are not, therefore, being offered a safe environment in which to decide upon a meaningful sexual ethic for themselves, one that will give them the guidelines for their life. In this way, we are not protecting the young in our care and we are not helping them to live 'life in all its fullness'.

All schools, and in particular church schools, have a responsibility to love, serve and protect the children and young people they are educating. These materials seek to help children in today's world to find their own course through the smorgasbord of modern sexuality. This is offered against the backdrop of a belief in the unconditional love of God for all and the grace of God's forgiveness.

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In summary



***Love and Sex Matters* aims to:**

- Offer exciting, fun and interactive lessons.
- Give opportunities to rehearse appropriate language and develop articulacy.
- Build self-esteem and high regard for others; in church schools this is rooted in a belief that all are loved by God.
- Uphold the sanctity of marriage, the importance of long-term relationships and stable family life.
- Offer abstinence before marriage as a valid life choice to be taken seriously while respecting people and their life choices.
- Offer views from a variety of Christian perspectives, from other faiths and from non-religious life perspectives.
- Enable children and young people to question messages in the media and advertising about body image and sexuality.
- Offer a starting point that does not assume teenage sexual activity as the norm.
- Create opportunities for children and young people to explore the deeper questions as to the meaning and significance of the sexual act in relationships.
- Invite a holistic consideration of sexuality that takes it beyond just the physical and explores the emotional, spiritual and moral aspects of sexuality: more than an exploration of bodily changes at puberty and 'how to put a condom on a banana'.
- Be realistic in understanding the raging power and force of sexuality.
- Acknowledge the complex context of the modern world in which today's children and young people find themselves.
- Be accessible to those of all faiths and none.
- Recognise each person's intrinsic worth and value.
- Allow consideration of human relationships as part of the greater love of God.
- Offer a vision of sacred committed relationships where personal and spiritual growth and mutual support can flourish.

Lesson 1

Making me: sexuality and the media



In this lesson pupils will learn to assess critically the way in which the media shapes perceptions of sexuality. They will reflect, by analysing the role of sexuality in advertising, on how sex has been made into a consumer item. They will consider what fears this plays on and how it contributes to their expectations of sex. Pupils will then think about Christian, Buddhist and atheist reactions to the media and how these help a critical assessment of and response to the workings and impact of the media.

Learning Objectives

- Consider and critically assess the role of the media in shaping perceptions of sexuality, particularly within advertising.
- Reflect on the morality of the way the media works.

Learning Outcomes

- I can explain how an advert uses sex to make me want to buy the product.
- I can explain why the way the media works can be seen to devalue people.

Lesson Activities and Resources

- Introduction: Opening advert (10 minutes)
Adverts from teen magazines (not included)
- Playing the media (25 minutes)
Photos of products (not included)
Worksheet 1.1 *Spirituality, sexuality, media*
- Plenary (10 minutes)
Dove campaign for real beauty advert (not included, optional)

PSHE Curriculum

This lesson covers:

- 2.1.a.** Pupils should be able to reflect critically on their own and others' values.
- 3.a.** A study of personal wellbeing should include examples of diverse values encountered in society and the clarification of personal values.

Lesson 1 Making me: sexuality and the media