



Key
Stage
4

Love & Sex Matters

Relationships & sex education
in a context of Christian values

. Kate Guthrie
. Katy Staples





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Introduction

Although this resource has been written with Church schools in mind, the active classroom learning strategies and multi-faith approach are such that it can make a rich contribution to SRE in all schools.

‘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 worrying (although slowly improving) 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 10 years.³

Under the new coalition Government, the status of sex and relationships education has not changed. Therefore, the most up-to-date legislation relating to sex and relationships education (SRE) is contained within the Education Act (1996) and the Learning and Skills Act (2000). This Government has, however, outlined their commitment to SRE in the Schools’ White Paper “The Importance of Teaching” published in November 2010. The paper states that “children need high-quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices and the Government promises to work with teachers, parents, faith groups and campaign groups to improve SRE”. The consultation and guidance to ensure this improvement will follow the National Curriculum review as part of a PSHE evaluation. However, the Government has stated that:

Ministers have been clear that they want SRE delivery to have a much stronger focus on relationships. They know that parents are concerned about the way in which the media and commercial sector can sexualize girls at an early age and about the worrying levels of violence in teenage relationships. They have made a specific commitment to ensure all young people are taught about sexual consent.⁴

This emphasis chimes with many concerns that have been raised by other bodies in recent years. The Children’s Society published *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*, a report about children’s contemporary experiences of growing up that makes strong recommendations about the way sex education should be taught.⁵ In early 2011, the Mothers’ Union conducted the *Bailey Review*, which called on “businesses and media to play their part in ending the drift towards an increasingly sexualised ‘wallpaper’ that surrounds children”. The recommendations included putting age restrictions on music videos and limiting the number of sexually explicit advertisements displayed outdoors, particularly in areas where children are likely to see them, such as near schools.⁶ In the same year, the Mothers’ Union also launched the *Bye Buy Childhood* campaign, which aims to empower families to challenge the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood through positive action.⁷ *Love and Sex Matters* hopes to offer a vision, a policy, guidance and materials that are informed by the concerns held by many today. These materials have been created within a framework of Christian values and the emphasis is on creating dialogue through activity. This will help children and young people to 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”.⁸

These materials also aim to help young people open their eyes to the media and advertising world, which places human sexuality and relationships within the realm of consumerism and thereby removes the spirituality from intimacy. These lessons aim to help young people 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* material 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”.⁹

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 these 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”.¹⁰

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 SRE 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 which will give them the guidelines for their lives. 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”.¹¹

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.

Kate Guthrie, Verity Holloway and Katy Staples, March 2012

1. Rowan Williams quoted in Mike Higton, *Difficult Gospel: The Theology of Rowan Williams*, (Canterbury: SCM Press, 2004), 19.

2. Judy Dunn & Richard Layard, *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* (London: Children’s Society, 2009). Report Summaries: Friends [online]. Available at http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/all_about_us/how_we_do_it/the_good_childhood_inquiry/report_summaries/14748.html [accessed 17 June 2009].

3. Avert.Org, *STD Statistics for the UK*, [online] (updated 20 February 2009). Available at <http://www.avert.org/std-statisticuk.htm> <http://www.avert.org/std-statisticuk.htm> [accessed 22 June 2009].

4. Department for Education, *Policy on Sex Education*, [online] (updated 19 November 2010). Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/foi/disclosuresaboutthedepartment/a0076821/policy-on-sex-and-relationship-education> <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/foi/disclosuresaboutthedepartment/a0076821/policy-on-sex-and-relationship-education> [accessed 20 October 2011].

5. Judy Dunn & Richard Layard, *A Good Childhood*.

6. Department for Education, *Bailey Review of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood: Final report published* [online] (updated 6 June 2011). Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a0077662/bailey-review-of-the-commercialisation-and-sexualisation-of-childhood-final-report-published> <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a0077662/bailey-review-of-the-commercialisation-and-sexualisation-of-childhood-final-report-published> [accessed 20 October 2011].

7. Mother’s Union, *Bye Buy Childhood* [online]. Available at <http://muenterpises.org/byebuychildhoodmu> <http://muenterpises.org/byebuychildhoodmu> [accessed 21 October 2011].

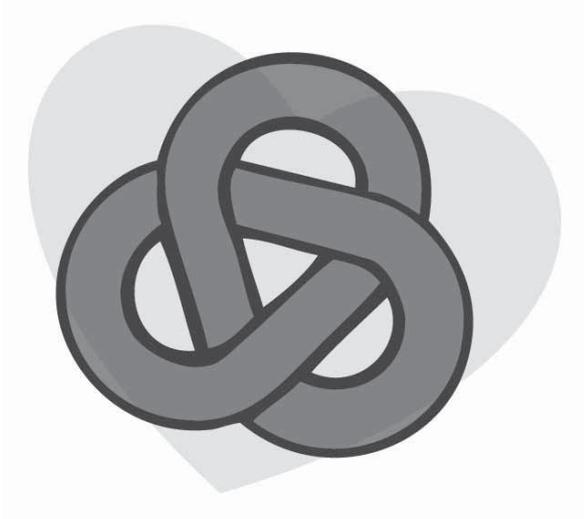
8. Dunn & Layard, *A Good Childhood*, 4.

9. Dunn & Layard, *A Good Childhood*, 49.

10. Rowan Williams quoted in Dunn & Layard, *A Good Childhood*, 178.

11. Gospel of John, Chapter 10 verse 10. *The Bible*, New International Version (Michigan: Zondervan, 1978).

In summary



***Love and Sex Matters KS4* aims to:**

- Offer exciting, fun and interactive lessons.
- Give opportunities to rehearse appropriate language and develop articulation.
- 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 whilst respecting alternative life choices.
- Open the eyes of children and young people to critique media and advertising messages about body image and sexuality.
- Offer a starting point that does not assume teenage sexual activity as the norm.
- Be a multi-belief resource offering views from a variety of Christian, other faith and non-religious life perspectives.
- 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 the 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 material accessible to those of all faiths and none.
- Recognise each person’s intrinsic worth and value.
- Allow for human relationships to be considered as part of the greater love of God.
- Offer a vision of sacred committed relationships where personal, spiritual growth and mutual support can flourish.



In this lesson, pupils will consider how societal expectations and attitudes influence the way individuals relate to their bodies. In particular, they will explore the role that clothes play in expressing sexual identity and think critically about how we make judgements on people because of the way they dress. They will be encouraged to reflect on how people use their bodies for self-expression and for “marketing” themselves to others. Pupils will be encouraged to consider what it means to live within your own body in today’s world.

Activity Resources

Learning Objectives

- To explore what influences a person’s relationship with his/her body.
- To reflect on how we judge people in response to what they wear.

Learning Outcomes

- I can describe things that influence the way a person presents him / herself.
- I can suggest what messages are given by the way people dress.

Lesson Activities

- Introduction: Marketable me? (15 minutes)
Powerpoint 1.1a or 1.1b: *Facts about Dan / Ella*
- Are you what you wear? (30 minutes)
Worksheet 1.2: *Are you what you wear?*
- Plenary (15 minutes)