



## Sexual Education Assessment Exercise

This lesson is designed to help groups become more

intentional about communicating equitable, healthy, and positive sexuality education grounded in faith values.

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## ENHANCER OF JOY

Holistic Sexuality Education

## DURATION

60 minutes

## LESSON DEVELOPED BY

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## GOAL

A Youth Ministry Assessment

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## TIPS TO PREPARE

A productive assessment and plan requires thoughtful selection of participants. Youth ministry leaders should consider inviting representatives including parents, youth, and pastoral team members as well as any specialists in the congregation like a social worker, health teacher, doctor, or nurse.

## MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Candle and matches
- Printout of Proverbs Passage or Bibles for each participant
- Sexuality Topic Inventory Worksheet
- Sexuality Messages and Planning Worksheet

## SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

The meeting space should be set up with a round or rectangular table so that all participants have an equal presence in the conversation. Place a candle in the center of the table to be lit for the duration of the meeting.

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## SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Proverbs 1: 2-6 (NRSV)

For learning about wisdom and instruction,

for understanding words of insight,

for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity;

to teach shrewdness to the simple,

knowledge and prudence to the young—

let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill.

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## Purpose

This session will assist the youth ministry leaders, participants, and supporters to consider the ways that explicit, implicit, and null curriculum teach about aspects of sexuality so as to become more intentional about communicating equitable, healthy, and positive sexuality education grounded in faith values.

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## Objectives

In this session, a youth ministry team will:

- Assess sexuality-related policies, practices and teachings specific to the youth ministry program;
  - Evaluate the impact of these policies, practices and teachings on inhibiting or enhancing joy;
  - Explore sexuality education opportunities for change, growth, and new programming.
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## Further Study

Facilitator can utilize one or more of the following faith-based resources to better understand and define sexuality, consider the importance of faith-based sexuality education, and explore a variety of sexuality education resources for ministry.

Ott, Kate. *Sex + Faith: Talking to Your Child from Birth to Adolescence*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013.

*A Time to Speak: Faith Communities and Sexuality Education*, 3rd ed. Dr. Kate Ott and Rev. Debra Haffner, Religious Institute, 2012 <http://religiousinstitute.org/timetospeak/>

NOTE: Contains a full annotated bibliographical list of denomination based curriculum. The Religious Institute at <http://www.religiousinstitute.org/resources> provides organizational links to faith-based groups that work on sexuality education, abuse prevention, LGBT issues, and reproductive health.

United Church of Christ. Our Whole Lives. This is a series of sexuality education programs for six age groups: grades K-1, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, grades 10-12, young adults, and adults. There are materials for each age group including a leader's guide, parent guides for K-1 and 4-6, as well as a supplementary series called Sexuality and Our Faith. <http://www.ucc.org/justice/sexuality-education/our-whole-lives.html>.

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## Gather

### **Gather (5 minutes)**

- As participants arrive, give each person a name tag even if the assumption is that everyone knows each other.
- Make sure every participant has an equal place at the table.
- If using a handout for the scripture, give each person a copy or have participants find the passage in the Bible.
- Light the candle at the center of the table.

**PRAYER:** Together, read the following scripture passage.

Proverbs 1: 2-6 (NRSV)

*For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young— let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill.*

**GREETINGS:** Invite participants to share their name and role on the ministry assessment team (e.g. student leader, specialist from the congregation, parent, etc) and a word or phrase from the scripture reading that resonates with them.

**INTRODUCTION:** Briefly thank the participants for committing their time and energy to assist the youth ministry program. Remind them that you have gathered the group to assess the various ways the youth ministry program addresses a wide variety of sexuality aspects. If you have not in the past discussed sexuality issues, consider sharing a holistic definition of sexuality which can be found in any of the additional recommended resources. It is important to name that sexuality is more than behaviors or sexual orientation, as many of the assessment topics will deal with issues like gender, body image, sexual abuse prevention, and access to information. In your own words, express to the participants why you feel called to provide holistic sexuality education to the teens in your ministry.

## Engage

### **Engage (30 minutes)**

#### **Activity 1: What Are We Already Doing?**

- Handout the Sexuality Topics Worksheet. Give instructions to the participants to complete the worksheet. You can say something like, “Please take a few minutes to answer the 12 questions on the worksheet and provide a brief example of how you see each being done in the youth ministry program or the reasoning for why you think we aren’t doing this.”
- Emphasize, there are not “right or wrong” answers here – no particular number of yesses or nos expected – this is a critical thinking opportunity.

#### **Activity 2: Pair and Share**

- After the participants have completed the worksheet, invite them to pair up with a partner, select several of the prompts, and share what they wrote.
  - Invite each pair to share with the whole group one thing that surprised them in their conversation.
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## Reflect

### **Reflect (20 minutes)**

#### **Activity 3: What Do Our Practices, Policies, and Programming teach?**

- Handout the Sexuality Messages and Planning Worksheet.
- As the facilitator, read through each of the 12 questions giving participants time to fill in responses to the middle column, “What is being taught or reinforced to youth as a result of what we’re doing?”

#### **Activity 4: What Could We Do?**

- Before moving to the second column remind the participants that intentions can be positive, neutral or negative. However, regardless of intention, behaviors (or lack thereof) have an

impact on the youth they serve.

- As a large group go through each topic and vote on whether the youth ministry program needs to do more, less, or something differently. Ask participants to do a thumbs up for more, thumbs down for less or a sideways thumb for do differently.
  - After each vote, invite conversation on why participants voted the way they did.
  - Explore what possibilities there are for change, affirmation, or new opportunities.
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## Send Forth

### ***Send Forth (5 minutes)***

- Collective Commitment based on Activity 4, ask participants to propose one sexuality topic which they would like to continue to work on in the next month. There may be energy to work on more than one, but it is important that the group select at least one.
- Closing Prayer: Invite participants to say aloud the word or phrase from the Proverbs passage that they shared in their introduction. After all participants have shared, conclude with:

“May God be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.” (adapted from 2 Timothy 4: 22)

- Blow out the candle.