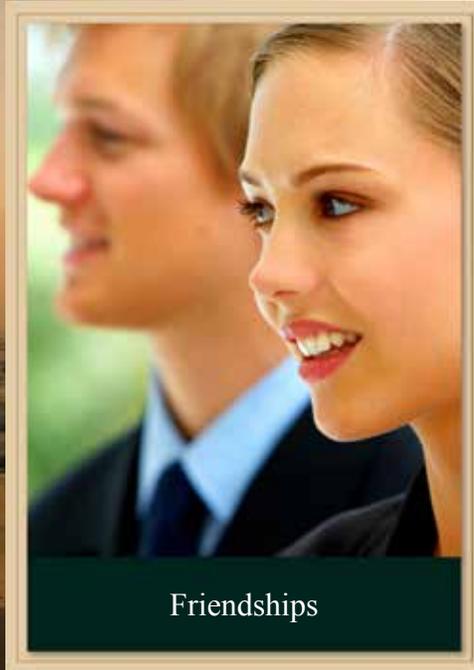


The Life Cycle: Friendships



The[♂]ology
of the BO[♀]dy for families
& single people
plus Family Chastity Formation in Virtue & Purity of Heart

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

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Copyright © 2006-2016 *Communitas Dei Patris*
All rights reserved.

Theology of the Body for Families & Single People plus *Family Chastity Formation in Virtue & Purity of Heart* may be copied or reproduced for non-commercial use by parents for educating their children in virtue and purity of heart, and by clergy and other Catholic educators for the purpose of developing complementary programs at the diocesan or parish levels to provide parents with appropriate support and training so they, in turn, may be better able to educate their own children in matters of human sexuality in the safe environment of the family home.

All other uses for this publication require written copyright permission from the publisher.

Acknowledgments located in the front of the book must be included with copied or reproduced versions of this book, or excerpted pages that may be redistributed. Quotes from Church documents and other sources listed in the Acknowledgments belong to their respective copyright owners.

All capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, formatting, footnotes, etc., pertaining to quotes from all Church documents and other secular sources must appear exactly as in the original version in any reproductions or copies, or parts thereof.

This free pdf version of *Theology of the Body for Families & Single People* plus *Family Chastity Formation in Virtue & Purity of Heart* is a gift from parents to parents with the blessings of the Church. Any reproductions, full or partial, are not to be sold; sales, as such, are strictly forbidden.

Published by
Communitas Dei Patris
3726 Birchwood Road
Kettle River, Minnesota 55757

Friendships

What the Church Says

719 Pope John Paul II spoke of friendship with Christ as the heart of all our relationships: “Christ offers you his friendship. He gave his life so that those who wish to answer his call can indeed become his friends. His is a friendship which is deep, genuine, loyal and total, as all true friendship must be. This is how young people ought to relate to one other, for *youth without friendship is impoverished and diminished*. Friendship is nourished by sacrifice for the sake of serving one’s friends and truly loving them. And *without such sacrifice there can be no real friendship, no truly healthy youth, no future for one’s country, no genuine religion*” (John Paul II, Message to the Young People of Cuba [January 23, 1998], 1).

Wisdom of Parents

720 The period of forming friendships from the age of innocence until young adulthood is a time to meet new people and to develop a values-based discernment process about whether or not you want to associate with one person or another. Youth is a time to have fun and enjoy life, to discover and share life experiences, and to form quality and lasting friendships.

721 Children will often become like the people they associate with so it is important to help them choose their friends wisely. All of the good work that a parent does over the years to prepare a child to live a chaste and holy life can be destroyed overnight by one harmful friend. Parents must never underestimate the influence

of an unequally yoked friendship or the power of peer pressure. Vigilance is required to assist each child in making good choices throughout the years of innocence, puberty, adolescence and young adulthood.

722 The younger the child, the more a parent should be involved in deciding who their children’s friends will be and under what circumstances. Children should be given more freedom to choose their own friends as they mature. However, as long as a child is living in your home and under your authority, you have the right to approve or disapprove of the people with whom they associate. By cultivating loving and trusting relationships with your children as they mature, the process of helping them form quality friendships should be an exciting and enriching experience for everyone.

723 All of the seven pillars of family chastity formation should be integrated when teaching your children to cultivate good and holy friendships. A young person needs to develop an obedient faith, not just in the Church, but in his parents. In addition, he must have his conscience formed properly, learn sacrificial love, self-mastery, acquire virtue, fulfill the vocation to holiness and always have in the forefront of every choice the goal of eternal life.

724 Discernment of a spirit of obedience, right order and respect for authority is a critical factor for parents when reviewing their children’s friends and the families and schools where they will form friendships. A solid commitment to practicing the full Catholic truth should be the highest priority, as obedience to

the Pope indicates obedience to God; respect for law, order and fatherly authority; faithfulness to moral teachings; and purity in faith. Therefore, parents are encouraged to enroll their children in true Catholic schools or home school programs and associations, not only for educational value, but for developing quality friendships as well.

725 Friends, for better or worse, are the most influential voice in the formation of a child's conscience after his or her parents and God. Through peer pressure and the desire to be socially acceptable, your child can easily be influenced by friends to change his or her behavior, morals, attitudes and even religion. Because the conscience of a young person is still in a vulnerable stage of development, parents must guide them to primarily pursue friendships in families or schools that are truly Catholic, or at least Catholic friendly (all the way through college age).

726 With all good intentions, many parents often permit their children to befriend, associate with non-Catholic, weak Catholic, troubled, or irreligious young people hoping the child will have such heroic virtue that his or her positive influence will evangelize and convert others. Most often, however, especially when outnumbered, most children and adults will tend to go along with the crowd rather than stand up for what is right and good. Parents must be ever vigilant in monitoring these situations carefully and daily assist their children in learning how to interact properly so they do not suffer any loss of their own faith or morals. Parents must help their children to discern friendships and associations that could corrupt their moral values and damage their spiritual life. Often, parents do not recognize their lack of vigilance

in this area until it is too late and they see good kids start to adopt the behaviors, attitudes and morals of their peers, particularly on sexual issues. Therefore, it is very important for parents to be actively involved in helping their children choose good friends—and decide what schools and social events are best for them—even into young adulthood.

727 Friendship is nourished by that sacrificial love which Christ demonstrated when He called us His friends and proved it by laying down His life for us. There is no greater love than for a friend to say no to his or her selfish desires (for the good of his friends and family). This Christian sacrificial attitude is essential for friendship and chastity so that young men and women understand that saying no to sin is in fact saying a resounding yes to true love. True friends will not encourage or lead their friends to sin.

728 The discipline of self-mastery and self-control requires vigorous practice, not unlike the arduous training needed for perfection in sports or in the fine arts. Good friends should be in a holy competition to outdo one another in virtue and acts of self-sacrifice and love, and should encourage one another toward the goal of holiness. Everyone has known friends who do not sufficiently control or possess themselves—their emotions, tongues, physical bodies—and sadly are not truly capable of giving genuine love. Parents can help guide their children toward friends and families that practice spiritual discipline, self-restraint, a team attitude or good sportsmanship and self-giving love.

Putting this Knowledge to Work

729 Fundamental considerations

- Friendships should be developed between children who are about the same age as each other.
- _____
- _____
- _____

730 Quality friendships should have some or all of these attributes:

- Friendships that will produce the best fruits are based solidly in Christ and the desires of each person to truly become holy by living the teachings of Scripture and the Catholic Church.
- Friendships based in Christ are neither fragile nor easily broken.
- Good friends are completely honest with each other and are not afraid to challenge one another to be people of integrity and honor.
- Good friendships respect chastity, holiness and purity.
- Healthy friendships create clarity, energy, vibrancy and a sense of being alive.
- Good friendships are developed over time and are based upon mutual trust, respect and confidentiality.
- Quality friendships can be exciting and fun.
- Good friends are faithful in good times and bad.
- Quality friendships build up rather than tear down.
- Good friends can be a source of inspiration and joy.
- Quality friendships tend to last a lifetime and are worth preserving.
- Quality friendships are life-giving.
- A good friend expresses love, caring or concern in healthy and holy ways.

- Good friends challenge each other to achieve their best.
- Good friends hold each other accountable for maintaining high moral standards.
- Good friends are honest, kind and willing to make sacrifices for others.
- Good friends inspire through imagination and sharing hopes and dreams.
- Quality friends have good listening skills and are sincerely interested in the other person.
- Good friends are respectful of other people, personal property, authority, and the rules and laws established for the common good.
- Good friends have a genuine respect for another's need for privacy.

Good friendships are based on sharing the same:

- Values.
- Expectations of the friendship.
- Sense of humor.
- Interests.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Good friends have strength of character.
- Good friends are faithful, trustworthy and loyal.
- _____
- _____
- _____

731 Levels of friendship (help your child understand what types of friendships are appropriate for them and which ones to avoid)

1. Intimate friendships such as between husbands and wives.
2. Spiritual friendships based upon encouraging one another to advance in living the Gospels and the Catholic Faith.
3. Deep friendships between people who share

nearly everything with one another knowing that what they share will be respected and/or held in strict confidence when requested (a high degree of transparency between friends).

4. Friendships between family members and relatives.
5. Friends at work, church, volunteer projects, in the neighborhood, in sporting activities, and friends of friends.
6. Fair-weather friends and people who appear to be friends but are really only out to use or get something from you (money, fame, sex).
7. Casual friends with very limited expectations.
8. Superficial friends with no meaningful depth in the relationship.

732 Red flags (these friendships must not be permitted to continue). Do not get involved with people who:

- Try to manipulate, dominate or control other people.
- Are physically abusive, use violence to get what they want or try to coerce people into submission.
- Are sexually abusive.
- Are verbally abusive.
- _____
- _____
- _____

733 Avoid or end friendships with people who are:

- Friends but have developed destructive and abusive behaviors.
- Unchaste.
- Co-dependent.

- Critical, negative, judgmental or belittling.
- Addicted to drugs, alcohol, gambling, pornography or sex.
- Gossips.
- Jealous.
- Dishonest and do not tell the truth.
- Only concerned about themselves and will cheat or steal from others.
- _____
- _____
- _____

734 Special issues to consider about opposite sex friendships before courtship, engagement and marriage:

- Be sure that spiritual values are shared.
- Avoid situations that could become moments of temptation by always being with friends of the opposite sex in group or chaperoned settings.
- Establish rules for friendship to preserve chastity and purity.
- Understand the difference between being platonic friends or seeking a lifetime partner.
- Get to know a lot of different people before deciding to form an exclusive relationship with one person in courtship.
- Group activities should take precedence over being alone together.
- What is the basis of the friendship? Common interests, need, just for fun, mere physical attraction?
- What is the reason for developing the friendship in the first place?
- _____
- _____
- _____