



YOU.

LIFE, LOVE, AND THE THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Theology of the Body?

The Theology of the Body refers to the series of 129 lectures given by St. John Paul II during his Wednesday audiences in Rome between September 1979 and November 1984. These addresses were later compiled and published as a single work entitled *Theology of the Body According to John Paul II* (now called *Man and Woman He Created Them*). The Theology of the Body covers such topics as the bodily dimension of the human person, the nature of human sexuality, the human need for communion, and the nature of marriage.

The Theology of the Body is an articulation of the Faith that is intended to enrich the lives of all people. Commentator Emily Stimpson describes it in this way:

Theology of the Body is more than an exposition of the Church's teachings on human sexuality. It is, in fact, the Catholic sacramental worldview, understood, structured, and articulated for a culture plagued by a diseased understanding of man. When properly understood and truly lived, that worldview has the power to transform the way men and women understand their bodies and their souls, their masculinity and femininity, their vocation in this life, and their destiny in the next (*Franciscan Way*, Autumn 2007).

2. Is this something that will really interest teens?

Absolutely! Many teens do not understand their sexuality, let alone their purpose in life, yet they have a strong desire to do so. The Theology of the Body speaks to the deepest meaning of why they were created, the purpose of love and sexuality, and the meaning of life. Not only will teens be interested in the Theology of the Body, they will crave it—even though they may not know it at a cognitive level. Teens are yearning for answers to life's deepest questions, as well as a positive portrayal of their sexuality. John Paul II's vision for the meaning of our bodies and our sexual desires is a topic that will connect with teens in a way that speaks to the deepest desires of their hearts.

3. What is the YOU program?

YOU: Life, Love, and the Theology of the Body is the successor to *Theology of the Body for Teens*. Like *Theology of the Body for Teens*, it applies the principles of St. John Paul II's teaching to the lives of teenagers, specifically addressing questions relating to identity, chastity, and sexuality. It is a multifaceted, ten-part program that can be used in a variety of different contexts.

4. Is this a chastity program?

Yes, but it is also much more. While *YOU* addresses for teenagers the real questions they have about their sexuality, it is much more comprehensive than traditional chastity programs. Such programs often take a "no" approach to sex, placing an emphasis on abstinence. This, of course, is good, but the Theology of the Body language offers us much more. It offers us a new language that is rooted in

human freedom. The Theology of the Body looks at the human experience and proposes to each of us a vision for love and life that resonates in a profound and satisfying way. In short, it is a very positive presentation of the gift of human sexuality.

5. If I am already running a chastity program, should I still introduce my teenagers to the Theology of the Body through this program?

Absolutely. *YOU* is not just a study about sexual virtue. It addresses sexual meaning in the context of bigger questions about identity. It is this meaning that provides one with the understanding and tools to develop sexual virtue as a result of an appreciation of God's plan for their lives. Even still, the understanding of sexuality offered through St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body will greatly enhance any chastity outreach you are currently doing.

6. Why do teens need this?

Teens, in fact, all human beings, were made for greatness. We were made to know God, know truth, and live life in a way that brings us peace and happiness. These pursuits, though, are hard to come by in today's distracting and permissive culture. As a result, it is perhaps harder to live as a teenager today than at any other time. The wounds our teenagers experience are deep and manifold. Today's teens are starving for real love; they are looking for meaningful and lasting relationships. They have witnessed firsthand the pain of divorce and seen how permissive sex plays out in their own lives and the lives of those around them. Due to our culture's focus on immediate gratification, many teens have lost their way, and in the process, have lost hope. *YOU* and the solid wisdom of the Theology of the Body brought through this program will help restore their hope because it reveals for them a road map to real love and authentic happiness.

7. What will the *YOU* program do for my students?

This program will help them understand the meaning of their lives. It will answer the questions they have about their own bodies, about the Church's teachings on sexual morality, and how they were created for greatness. This program will help them to unlearn the misguided teachings of the modern culture and provide them with the very key to life—the key to happiness and peace. It will help them discover the ultimate purpose for which God created them—communion with him.

8. Will this program make them feel guilty about bad decisions from their past?

The beauty of our message is that it brings hope to the hopeless and redemption to the fallen. While some teens may become convicted by the truths they hear and feel sad or guilty for past decisions, they will ultimately feel free and be filled with hope as they pursue God's plan for love and life.

9. Is this program designed for youth groups, high schools, or parish CCD programs?

All of the above. *YOU* works anywhere teens meet. It can be used in a high school class, a youth group study, a CCD program, home school study, or as an after-school program.

10. What is the age range recommended for *YOU*?

This program is intended for High School aged youth. Discretion should always be exercised, though, when discussing topics related to sexuality, as attitudes on the part of parents greatly vary. We recommend you seek the appropriate approvals before conducting any chastity program.

11. Is there a particular grade level this program works best with?

Our experience has shown that *YOU* is most suitable for use with tenth- and eleventh-grade students. As many high-school religious education curricula present the topic of vocations in twelfth grade, *YOU* is ideal for high-school seniors as well.

12. Would it work with ninth graders?

Yes, for mature ninth-grade students. Because the program covers sensitive topics and involves rich theological and philosophical concepts, the maturity level of your ninth-grade students needs to be carefully considered.

13. Aren't the concepts taught in this program too lofty for teens?

No. This program is the fruit of many years of experience in youth ministry and education. It builds on the strengths of the program that preceded it and has been a help to thousands of teens over the past decade. Based on this experience, great consideration was given in making *YOU* relevant, relatable, and understandable for today's Catholic teenager. The students may, at times, be challenged by the Theology of the Body, but its content is perfectly suited for a Catholic teenage audience.

14. How explicit is the material covered in *YOU*?

Our program is faithful to the language of St. John Paul II's original lectures. As such, it presents the Church's teachings on human sexuality using specific—but never overly explicit or graphic—language. Therefore, we believe that its content is appropriate for the maturity level of the average Catholic teen.

15. Does *YOU* address such sensitive topics as homosexuality, masturbation, pornography, and contraception?

Yes. This program presents Catholic teaching on these topics and others, always with great pastoral sensitivity. Recognizing the major shifts and developments that have taken place culturally in the past decade, our program is carefully crafted to address sensitive topics in the much broader context of human thriving and fulfillment. Since most Catholic teenagers are aware of such issues in today's culture, we thought it was important to address them.

16. Is this program "pastorally sensitive"?

Absolutely. We realize that there are a number of difficult issues teenagers face in regard to love, sex, relationships, and marriage. We have made every effort to teach teens the truths of the Theology of the Body, keeping in mind the challenges young people face today.

17. Is there any prerequisite learning my teenagers should do before engaging the *YOU* program?

While we do recommend *Theology of the Body for Teens: Middle School Edition* as a primer for *YOU*, this program will be understood by most students without any preliminary instruction. Study of the Theology of the Body is as much interior reflection and understanding as it is comprehension, so the more time teens spend deeply considering the big questions, the better.

18. Is there a parent's guide for *YOU*?

Yes. The Parent's Guide and video serve as excellent and informative overviews of the program. While it has been specifically written for parents of teens participating in the program, it can be used by any parent wishing to learn more about the Theology of the Body and pass it onto their teens. It includes summaries of each of the ten sessions contained in the Student Workbook, a basic intro to the

Theology of the Body, study questions for parents to discuss with their teens, and family applications to help create and foster a Theology of the Body culture in the home.

19. Does Ascension Press have a Theology of the Body program for middle school aged youth?

Yes. *Theology of the Body for Teens: Middle School Edition* was developed as a program to engage sixth, seventh, and eighth graders in fundamental questions of identity, virtue, and formation in human sexuality. This program supports and empowers parents as the primary educators of their children in these matters and is a great precursor to the *YOU* program.

20. Should this program be presented to co-ed classes or do you suggest separating classes or youth groups into separate male/female groupings?

The authors agree that there are benefits to separating guys and girls into single-sex groups when studying this material and would encourage such a separation, if possible. The willingness of teens to explore sensitive topics involving sexuality and chastity usually corresponds to their comfort level with others in the room.

We realize, though, that splitting up a class into same gender groups is not always possible. Knowing this, the authors have adapted St. John Paul II's original material in a way that is certainly suitable for use in coeducational settings. There can even be a benefit at times to having the teens hear both male and female perspectives on the material, as there are ample discussion questions in the program. Teachers and youth ministers must take care to control the discussion, however, and keep immature behavior to a minimum.

21. What is the length of each lesson?

Each session of *YOU* can be presented in a variety of time formats. The length of the lesson will depend on the time you spend in discussion, activities, outside reading, and the needs of the class. The Leader's Guide lays out four different schemata for each lesson: 60, 75, 90, and 120-minute class scenarios.

22. Is there a video series for *YOU*?

Yes. The video content is fully integrated into the study. Each session features three engaging segments with dynamic presenters. These segments are beautifully filmed in a variety of locations and, in the tradition of *Chosen* and *Altaration*, are sure to prove helpful, not only for teens, but for anyone who watches them. The presenters are leaders in their respective fields and represent a diversity of vocational state of life, personal experience, and insight into teen experience.

23. What products do I need to teach *YOU*?

Each teacher or presenter should have a *YOU* Leader's Guide, a subscription to Ascension's online platform, and/or a set of the DVDs. Each student needs a *YOU* Student Workbook. It is also highly recommended that a copy of the Parent's Guide booklet be given to the parents of participating teens (See question 18). Books that can enhance the studies of your teens are Christopher West's *Theology of the Body for Beginners* and Jason Evert's *Theology of His Body/Theology of Her Body*.

24. Is the content difficult to teach?

Although the content of the program is very rich, it is presented in a way that professional teachers, youth ministers, and prepared volunteers can understand and teach it without much difficulty. The Leader's Guide is loaded with helpful teaching tips and discussion questions for each topic, and the

DVD series provides an invaluable overview and introduction to each of the ten sessions to further facilitate the learning experience.

25. Does *YOU* have the *Imprimatur*?

Yes. Both the Leader's Guide and Student Workbook have been granted the *Imprimatur* by the Most Reverend Gregory Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans.

26. Who are the authors of *YOU*, and what are their credentials?

The three primary authors of the program—Brian Butler, Jason Evert, and Crystalina Evert—are recognized leaders in education, youth ministry, and chastity education. Here is some biographical information on each:

Brian Butler is co-founder and executive director of Dumb Ox Ministries, a nonprofit organization dedicated to evangelization and formation of teens, young adults, and families through the lens of the Theology of the Body. Brian holds a bachelor's degree in communications and a master's degree in theology from Notre Dame Seminary School of Theology. He served as associate director for youth catechesis in the Archdiocese of New Orleans for two years, and before that spent five years teaching theology and coordinating campus ministry at the high-school level. Brian is also co-author of *Theology of the Body for Teens: Middle School Edition*, a featured presenter in the *Chosen* video series, and a popular speaker and trainer around the country. He has more than fifteen years of youth ministry experience and is the founder of ECHO Theology of the Body Camps (echoretreats.com) for teens and young adults. Brian lives in the New Orleans area with his wife, Lisa, and their four children.

Jason Evert has spoken to more than one million teens on six continents about the virtue of chastity. He is the author of more than ten books, including *Theology of His/Her Body*, *Saint John Paul the Great*, and *How to Find Your Soulmate Without Losing Your Soul*. Jason holds a master's degree in theology as well as undergraduate degrees in counseling and theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is a frequent guest on Catholic and secular media and has appeared on Fox News, MSNBC, BBC, and EWTN. Jason is the founder of the Chastity Project (chastityproject.com), an international alliance of young leaders who promote chastity in more than forty countries.

Crystalina Evert is the co-founder of Chastity Project and Women Made New Ministries. She is a best-selling author of the books *Pure Womanhood* and *How to Find Your Soulmate Without Losing Your Soul*. Crystalina has spoken internationally to hundreds of thousands of people about the virtue of chastity, healing, and God's plan for human sexuality. She is a frequent guest on radio programs throughout the country, and her television appearances include MSNBC, the BBC, WGN-TV news, and EWTN. She has spoken at World Youth Days in Sydney and Madrid as well as the World Meeting of Families.

The presenters in the videos, along with the authors, are recognized experts as well.

27. Can a teacher or youth minister use portions of the program, or do all ten sessions have to be used at once?

The Theology of the Body is an extensive and cohesive body of work, yet it contains many concepts that can be understood individually. As with any educational program, the concepts in *YOU* will be best understood if they are presented as a whole. This said, we believe each individual session, as well as concepts within a given session, can be taught individually.

28. How much do the YOU materials cost?

The Starter Pack is \$129.00.

Prior to placing an order, please call Ascension Press' sales department at 1-800-376-0520 for more information.

29. Does the program follow John Paul II's same six-cycle schema?

Yes, and no. The program features all six of the cycles in the Pope's original schema, but we have taken into account the unique needs of teenagers, and, therefore, it intentionally deviates from the original order of catechesis. The content, however, is not changed or altered; rather, it is merely presented in a manner that will best facilitate a teenager's desire to learn the material, as well as making it easily understandable to them.

30. Can this material be used in a retreat format?

Yes. Using the Leader's Guide, Student Workbook, and DVD set, the YOU authors have developed an easy to follow weekend Retreat Guide that is currently available as a free download.

31. Can YOU replace a high school sexual morality or chastity program?

Absolutely. This program speaks to the heart of what sexual morality and chastity programs are based upon. The ten sessions of the YOU study provide a greater understanding of love, relationships, and the basic meaning of life, so that one is able to appreciate the sexual virtue of chastity, and therefore live it in a more profound and meaningful way.

32. Can it be used in a vocations course?

This program is an excellent supplement for a vocations course because it addresses both marriage and the celibate life and questions related to finding one's vocation. While it is not designated as a text for the USCCB elective, it certainly is complementary to it.

33. Does one need to be trained to teach this program?

The Leader's Guide and videos make the mechanics of the program very easy, and ample discussion of sensitive topics happens through the videos. That being the case, receiving training in this program will be beneficial for every presenter. The most well steeped Theology of the Body enthusiasts will agree that a day to refocus on the vision of St. John Paul II is always helpful. Not only that, but trainings are great opportunities to hone in on best practices, to network with other study leaders, and to share wisdom from experience.

Ascension Press offers full-day trainings for religious educators. The training is a great opportunity for those who are just learning about the Theology of the Body and Theology of the Body enthusiasts alike and will also be beneficial to those who have experience with the *Theology of the Body for Teens* program that preceded YOU.

Your teens will undoubtedly have many questions about the material, as it will engage and inform them. You will want to be as prepared as possible to give them the answers to these questions that they desperately seek. There are many difficult questions and issues that arise when discussing human sexuality. While training is not essential, it is a great asset and resource when preparing to teach this material.

34. If I am already familiar with the Theology of the Body, why should I be trained?

If you already have a solid grasp of the Theology of the Body, you should be able to understand this material without training. There are many other facets to running an effective program, though, that have made our trainings beneficial through the years. Attendees have appreciated everything from the analysis of teen culture, to the inspiration, to the simple opportunity to network with other study leaders. Like most of Catholic theology, the Theology of the Body is rich in meaning; its depths are virtually inexhaustible. In addition, because the program involves much more than just theological content, learning about the experience of those who have used it will be valuable to teachers.

35. What is involved in the full-day training?

Our training is typically conducted in an intensive, full-day seminar. During this time, the facilitator will guide attendees through three or four sessions while providing a basic catechesis in the Theology of the Body. An understanding of the pedagogy of the program and how it can best be implemented in various religious education settings will also be considered. An interactive and comprehensive question-and-answer session, during which the most common questions teenagers have about issues of sexuality will be discussed, is included in the training session.

36. Who should attend the training?

Whoever wants to get a better grasp of how to most effectively use this material with teenagers (e.g., teachers, priests, parents, youth ministers, directors of religious education, etc.).

37. Can this be used for college-level audiences?

This program would be a great supplement for an early college level course on Catholic sexuality or for use in a Newman Center or campus faith-formation setting.

38. How can I integrate YOU into my high school theology curriculum?

YOU covers sexual morality and moral decision making. It would make a great supplement to a high school theology class.

39. How can I integrate this with my youth group?

Each session has options for using icebreakers and prayer experiences that help youth ministers incorporate this material into a “series” on the Theology of the Body. Youth ministers could easily adapt a session of the study into a youth night.

40. Is the Leader’s Guide needed to teach the class?

Even if you are already an expert in the Theology of the Body, we highly recommend you use the Leader’s Guide. It is filled with demonstrations, explanations, song and movie clip suggestions to accompany the teaching, applications, case studies, and helpful hints for applying this material to the lives of teenagers. It also includes the structure options with different time frames to help you plan how long to spend on each part of a session to keep your teaching on track. The Leader’s Guide is a fantastic resource that both experienced teachers and “rookie” catechists will find helpful in teaching YOU.

41. How much preparation is needed for a teacher to teach this program?

This depends on how familiar the teacher is with the the material, and how thoroughly one wants to explore the issue. We recommend that the teacher who is not familiar with the Theology of the Body invest some time reading an introduction to the subject such as Christopher West’s *Theology*

of the Body for Beginners. It is also recommended that teachers attend the training. A teacher with a strong theological background, though, will be able to understand how to present the materials after reviewing each session and determining which of the segments he or she wishes to use in a particular class session.

42. Should this program precede or follow confirmation?

Ascension Press offers *Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation* as a comprehensive confirmation preparation program. Both programs represent a complementary approach, style, and vision. In dioceses where confirmation happens early on in high school, we highly recommend *YOU* as a follow up to the *Chosen* program since *YOU* is a great program to engage the newly confirmed in an experience of mystagogy. In dioceses where confirmation occurs later on, for example in the eleventh grade, *YOU* could even precede the comprehensive study of the Catholic Faith found in the *Chosen* program.

43. What is the typical outcome for the students?

Students exposed to the beauty of the Theology of the Body have a deeper appreciation for the meaning of human sexuality as it relates to God's plan of salvation. Because of this, students are more likely to value human dignity, chastity, and other virtues associated with their sexuality. Most importantly, students will grow in their faith and love for God and his Church.

44. What other resources are available for *YOU*?

In addition to the Leader's Guide, Student Workbook, Parent's Guide, and DVD set, some free support resources are available at AscensionPress.com, including the Retreat Guide, Parent Information Session Guide, the DVD series overview with sample clips, session overviews, sample session from the workbook, and more.

**For More Information:
AscensionPress.com or Call 1-800-376-0520**