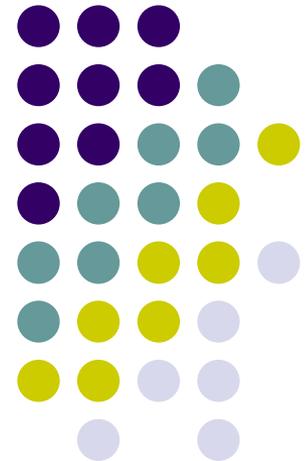
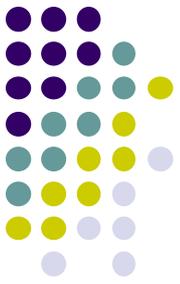


Education in Sexuality

Rev Kevin McGovern:
Professional Development on Sexuality and Gender
at Brigidine Ministry Centre, Albert Park
on 6 June 2017.

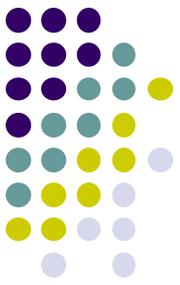


Critique the dominant ideology of sex and sexuality



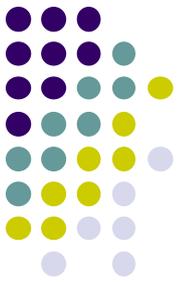
- Five Steps to Learning
 1. My Present Understanding
 - What have I thought until now?
 2. Its History
 - What has formed me in this opinion?

Critique the dominant ideology of sex and sexuality



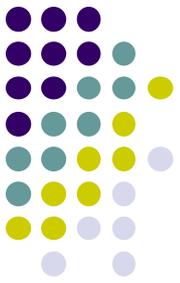
- **Five Steps to Learning** (cont'd)
 3. **New Information**
 - What was said? What did I read?
 4. **Critical Reflection**
 - = Let's consider all this...
 5. **Appropriation**
 - All things considered, what do I conclude?

The Long Game



- The Church's vision of marriage and family is very attractive to many young people.
 - They want faithful, exclusive love which lasts a lifetime.
 - They want children as the fruit of their love.
 - Because of sad experiences in their families, many fear that they will never have this sort of love.
 - In this context of yearning and anxiety, the Church's vision of marriage and family is very attractive to many.

The Long Game (cont'd)



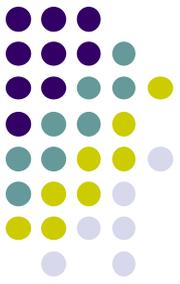
- Ask them to consider what they must do – or not do – now to achieve this sort of love in the long term.
 - Professor Albus Dumbledore:
 - “We must all face the choice between what is right and what is easy.” (in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*)
 - What is the right thing to do now so that in the long term we might achieve faithful, exclusive, fruitful love?
 - What is the easy thing now which may reduce our future chances of faithful, exclusive, fruitful love?

Be upfront about the levels of authority of Church teaching



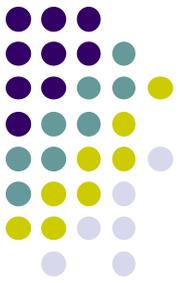
- In education in sexuality, we are dealing with authoritative but non-infallible Church teaching.
- Our task as teacher is to present this teaching as fully and as compellingly as we can.
- Their task is *obsequium*: engaging with this teaching, being open to it, considering whether it may be right and they might be wrong, persevering with it.
- Can we provide a respectful space for respectful disagreement with the teaching?
- Should we as teacher reveal if and when we respectfully disagree with the teaching?

Growing into Maturity



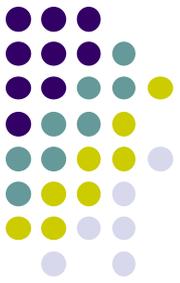
- We should take a developmental approach which emphasises that there is always more to learn and better choices to make.
- If one of our students agrees with some element of Church teaching, we ask them to continue to reflect on this. They may discover new and deeper insights which support this teaching.
- If one of our students disagrees with some element of Church teaching, we ask them to continue to reflect on this. They may discover new reasons for continuing to disagree – or they may discover new insights which challenge them to change their views.

Philosophical Underpinnings



- There are three intrinsic values in sexual intercourse:
 - pleasure
 - expressing and deepening love (unitive meaning)
 - creating new life (procreative meaning)

Philosophical Underpinnings



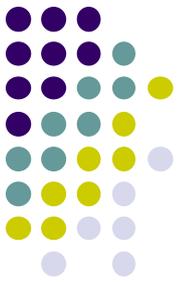
- The Church once taught that the primary purpose of sexual intercourse was procreation. (1917 Code of Canon Law)
- The Church now teaches that sexual intercourse has two, equally important meanings: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning. (*Gaudium et Spes*)

Philosophical Underpinnings



- In *Let's Make Love: The Meaning of Sexual Intercourse*, English psychiatrist and theologian Jack Dominian argued that the primary purpose of sexual intercourse is its unitive meaning.
- The Church teaches that it's acceptable for a married couple to have pleasure as an immediate goal, provided that they respect the limits of moderation and do not exclude procreation.

Philosophical Underpinnings



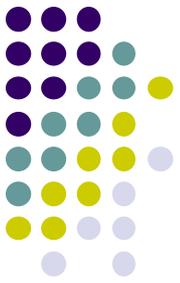
- What do you think are acceptable goals for sexual intercourse?
 - Is it acceptable to have sex for pleasure alone?
 - If sex is about expressing and deepening love, how committed should a couple be before they have sex?
 - Is it acceptable to exclude procreation from sexual intercourse for an entire lifetime?

Delay onset of sexual intercourse – or limit its frequency



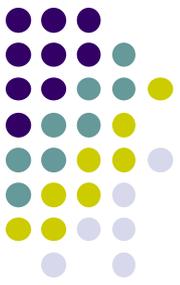
- I believe it's a mistake not to be concerned about the onset or frequency of sexual intercourse in the lives of young people.
- If we help a young person to delay the onset of sexual intercourse, they will be more mature and more able to make wiser choices.
- If we help a young person to limit the frequency of sexual intercourse, we reduce – but do not eliminate – the risk of harmful consequences.
- There is little evidence that programmes which advocate chastity until marriage are effective.
- There is more evidence for the efficacy of programmes which delay onset or limit frequency, e.g. asking young people to nominate a time during which they are committed not to have sexual intercourse.
- Do we care enough – do we dare – to do this?

Homosexuality



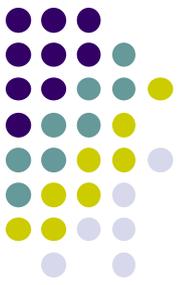
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (Persona Humana)*, #8. (29 December 1975).
- CDF. *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (Homosexualitatis Problema)*. (1 October 1986).
- CDF. *Some Considerations Concerning the Response to Legislative Proposals on the Non-Discrimination Of Homosexual Persons*. (23 July 1992).
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2357-2359, 2396. (1994; revised in 1997 with an alteration to #2358).
- Pontifical Council for the Family. *Family, Marriage and 'De Facto' Unions*. (26 July 2000).
- CDF. *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*. (3 June 2003).

Catholic Teaching about Controversial Matters



- 1) Homosexual sexual intercourse is morally wrong.
 - “A person engaging in homosexual behaviour acts immorally. To choose someone of the same sex for one’s sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals, of the Creator’s sexual design. Homosexual activity is not a complementary union, able to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says is the essence of Christian living.... When homosexual persons engage in homosexual activity they confirm within themselves a disordered sexual inclination which is essentially self-indulgent.”
(*Letter, #7*)

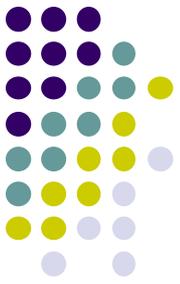
Catholic Teaching about Controversial Matters (cont'd)



- 2) There should not be legal recognition of homosexual unions.
 - “Legal recognition of homosexual unions... would mean... the approval of deviant behaviour.” (*Considerations*, 11)

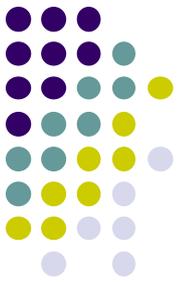
- 3) Being homosexual is itself objectively disordered.
 - “Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.” (*Letter*, #3)

Other Catholic Teaching



- 1) There are persons with a stable homosexual orientation.
 - There are indeed “homosexuals who are definitively such.” (*Declaration*, #8)
- 2) Being homosexual is not a sin.
 - “The particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin.” (*Letter*, #3)
- 3) Homosexual persons have human dignity and human rights.
 - “Homosexual persons, as human persons, have the same rights as all persons, including the right of not being treated in a manner which offends their personal dignity.” (*Non-Discrimination*, #12)

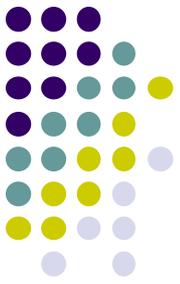
Other Catholic Teaching (cont'd)



- 4) The Catholic Church opposes homophobia (and transphobia).
 - “It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church’s pastors whenever it occurs.” (*Letter*, #10)

- 5) The Catholic Church commits itself to the pastoral care of homosexual persons.
 - “The phenomenon of homosexuality... is a proper focus for the Church’s pastoral activity. It thus requires of her ministers attentive study, active concern and honest, theologically well-balanced counsel.” (*Letter*, #2)

Some questions for discussion



- Which if any of these ideas appeal to you?
- What other good ideas can you suggest?
- Can we provide a respectful space for respectful disagreement with the teaching? How can we do this?
- Should we as teacher reveal if and when we respectfully disagree with the teaching?
- How do we support teachers who are asked to present Church teaching with which they really disagree?

Presenter



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