



Fertile Heart

# **CES Vision and Themes for KS3 and 4 and A Fertile Heart**

How A Fertile Heart meets the Catholic Education Services guidelines for implementing the Department of Education's statutory requirement to teach Relationships and Sex Education

## CES Vision and Themes for KS3 and 4 and A Fertile Heart

The CES puts Christian Virtue as the foundation of any Catholic RHSE curriculum. The Catechism speaks of conscience, formed by the faith and prayer and intellectual virtues of intellect, wisdom and understanding, in a spirit of 'interiority' (CCC 1776-1785). It then speaks of the human virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance (1804-1811) and the theological virtues of faith, hope and love (1812-1829). These virtues - and the process to them is at the heart of *A Fertile Heart*.

Furthermore, the CES calls outstanding RSE to:

- Be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness whilst recognising the contemporary context in which we live today;
- Involve parents as they are primary educators of their child;
- Provide a positive view of human sexuality and dignity of the human person;
- Equip young people with the ability to make practical judgments about the right thing to do in particular circumstances;
- Explore and promote virtues which are essential to promoting respect and dignity;
- Be delivered in an age appropriate way which reflects the development of the child;
- Be part of the cross-curricular work in both primary and secondary schools;
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and recognise the mix of pupils with different sexual orientations, genders and family backgrounds in each class;
- Be taken seriously by governors and teachers as an integrated part of the broad and balanced curriculum that Catholic schools offer;
- Be delivered by competent professionals who understand the Church's teaching.

Again, *A Fertile Heart* more than fulfils these. It is, uniquely, a coherent course from Reception to Y11 - which allows progress and development in the important and nuanced understanding of what it is to be human - integrating truth and love as Benedict XVI asks<sup>1</sup>. It leaves the more in-depth teaching of reproductive biology to science, whilst occasionally using well researched science to complement the truths of reason and faith. As Pope Francis makes clear to us, it is our personal encounter with God that is at the heart of self-understanding, self-giving and cooperation in our own growth<sup>2</sup>, and so all this is done in the light of this relationship. We believe this leads to an accessible, thought-provoking, life-giving curriculum that engages each student, whatever their academic ability, while still remaining a robust course that encourages the student to go past merely anecdotal representations of difficult moral situations to a real, practical understanding of personhood and relationship.

This life-giving, positive vision is the best place for then exploring all the many difficulties that can be encountered within relationships and sex that need to be addressed, but can so easily be distressing or detrimental to the student if encountered out of context. Hence, from the CES lists of themes to be covered, you will see we focus most on reflection, truth, virtue, growth, patience and sensitivity - which then sheds light on all the difficulties that can be encountered. Our focus on 'appropriate vulnerability' seeks to empower the student to grow in awareness of all that is good about relationship and sex, and then of the many dangers - without being panicked by them. This is also the reason why many sensitive areas are dealt with in the powerpoints, but less so in the pupil books - empowering the teacher to discern what, when and how issues are best raised. Alongside this, our gradually developed sense of complementarity - including initiating and receiving-responding, particularly in our relationship with God - does not detract at all from equality and dignity, but rather protects us from damaging extremes. Sexual complementarity is at the heart of the Church's vision on sex education<sup>3</sup>, and therefore needs to be clearly and sensitively taught and presented.

As the CES says, RHSE needs to 'be delivered by competent professionals who understand the Church's teaching'. The reality is that it will often be taught by form teachers who are already overloaded by their own subject demands and other responsibilities. Acknowledging both of these, *A Fertile Heart* offers full powerpoints for every module, so as to help the teacher with all the spadework, while entrusting to them the life-giving truth the Church offers. A real joy we have found is in the feedback from many teachers saying how much they themselves had been helped by the modules, sometimes after initially being sceptical. Several others simply commented that they wished they'd had this resource when they were at school.

<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 1, "The search for love and truth is purified and liberated by Jesus Christ from the impoverishment that our humanity brings to it, and he reveals to us in all its fullness the initiative of love and the plan for true life that God has prepared for us."

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 8, "Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God's love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being."

<sup>3</sup> CCC, 2333, "Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out". The CDF's document on RSE, *Male and Female He Created Them*, (2019), begins with the importance the complementarity between man and woman, adding, "The disorientation regarding anthropology which is a widespread feature of our cultural landscape has undoubtedly helped to destabilise the family as an institution, bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women, presenting them instead as merely the product of historical and cultural conditioning."