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# TEACHING HUMAN DIGNITY

## *Formed by the Senses: The Impact of Pornography on the Individual, Relationships, and Society*

### CENTRAL QUESTIONS:

- ◆ What role does sense perception play in one's understanding of the world and oneself?
- ◆ How does pornography impact the individual, vulnerable persons, community members, and society?
- ◆ What does pornography portray as the meaning, purpose, and value of the human person? How does this differ from theological anthropology?



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# *Unit Overview*

## Unit-at-a-Glance

### Curriculum Area:

Health/Science, Religion/Theology

### Time Requirement:

One to two weeks of instruction, depending on student readiness and pacing

### Descriptors:

Human Anthropology, Relationships, Pornography, Mental Health, Human Sexuality, Human Flourishing

## Unit Objectives

### Students will be able to:

- ◆ Articulate how sense perception impacts our understanding of the world and ourselves.
- ◆ Conduct research on how the use of pornography affects the individual, relationships, and society.
- ◆ Describe the impacts of pornography on the individual, vulnerable persons, community (friends, future spouse, children, etc.), and society.
- ◆ Explain how pornography portrays the meaning and worth of the human person.
- ◆ Compare and contrast the operative anthropology in pornography with Catholic anthropology.
- ◆ Develop an argument using scientific research and theological insight to defend the viewpoint that pornography is harmful to the human person.

## Rationale

Participation in this unit allows students to explore the multidimensional effects of pornography. Although pornography has been identified both as a serious ethical issue and a public health crisis, many remain unaware of the negative effects it has on individuals, relationships, and society as a whole. In this unit, students begin by considering the impact that sensory experiences have on their perception, their understanding of the world, and themselves. Then students turn directly to the issue of pornography, researching the harm pornography use and its production has on individual persons, relationships, and society at large. Drawing upon sociological research and the wisdom of Catholic anthropology, students learn to articulate their own arguments about the ways that pornography harms the human person, relationships, and communities.

# USCCB Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework

## III. The Mission of Jesus Christ (The Paschal Mystery)

### V. Moral Implications for the Life of a Believer

- C. Living as a disciple of Jesus.
  1. Adherence to Jesus and acceptance of his teaching (CCC, nos. 520, 618, 767, 1693).
  2. Conversion of heart and life, and the formation of conscience (CCC, no. 1248).

## VI. Life in Jesus Christ

### II. God has Taught Us How to Live a New Life in Christ

- A. God rules the universe with wisdom and directs its divine fulfillment (CCC, no. 1719).
  1. Eternal law (CCC, nos. 1950-1951).
  2. Divine Providence (CCC, no. 1975).
  3. Natural moral law.
    - a. Reason participating in eternal law (CCC, nos. 1954-1955).
    - b. Basis for human rights and duties (CCC, no. 1956).
    - c. Found in all cultures, basis for moral rules and civil law (CCC, nos. 1958-1960).
- B. Revelation
  1. Teachings revealed by God under the Old Covenant
    - a. Ten Commandments
      - 9). Ninth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
        - a. Respect the sanctity of marriage vows (CCC, nos. 2364-2365).
        - b. Practice modesty and purity of heart in thought, words, actions, and appearance (CCC, nos. 2517-2527).
        - c. Sins to avoid: lust and pornography (CCC, nos. 2351, 2354).

## Option C: Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in Society

### IV. Sin and its Social Dimensions

- A. Concept of social sin.
  1. Difference between “social sin” and personal sin (CCC, nos. 1868-1869).
    - a. Personal sin at the root of social sin.
    - b. Social sin stems from collective personal sins.
      1. Personal sin that contributes to social injustice.
      2. Personal choices in response to social injustice.
  2. Foundations for social sin.
    - a. Attitudes that foster unjust treatment.
    - b. Social structures which foster unjust treatment of others.
    - c. Social sin can be passed onto future generations.
- B. The social dimension of the Commandments.
  1. First three Commandments—relationship with God (CCC, nos. 2084-2195).
    - a. Duty and the right to freely worship God.
    - b. Societal authorities should ensure freedom of worship.
  2. The last seven Commandments focus on our relationship with others: the moral teaching of our faith must be brought into people's interaction with each other (N.B. [1] positive aspects of commandment, [2] failures to live it).
    - c. Sixth Commandment (CCC, nos. 2331-2400).
      1. Promote chaste life and love in society, marriage, family.
      2. Adultery, fornication, masturbation, homosexual acts, rape, prostitution, pornography (CCC, nos. 2351-2356).
    - f. Ninth Commandment (CCC, nos. 2514-2533).
      1. Create conditions for chaste life and love.
      2. Media, advertising, and exploitation of lust; “adult” bookstores, Internet pornography.

# NHES National Health Education Standards

**STANDARD 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.**

**Rationale:**

The acquisition of basic health concepts and functional health knowledge provides a foundation for promoting health-enhancing behaviors among youth. This standard includes essential concepts that are based on established health behavior theories and models. Concepts that focus on both health promotion and risk reduction are included in the performance indicators.

Grades 9-12

**1.12.2**

Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.

**1.12.3**

Analyze how the environment and personal health are interrelated.

**STANDARD 2: Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.**

**Rationale:**

Health is affected by a variety of positive and negative influences within society. This standard focuses on identifying and understanding the diverse internal and external factors that influence health practices and behaviors among youth, including personal values, beliefs, and perceived norms.

Grades 9-12

**2.12.2**

Analyze how the culture supports and challenges health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.

**2.12.5**

Evaluate the effect of media on personal and family health.

**2.12.6**

Evaluate the impact of technology on personal, family, and community health.

## Unit Summary

<i>Lesson Title</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Learning Objectives</i>
<b>Unit Pre-assessment</b>	Prior to the unit, students complete a pre-assessment. Teacher uses gathered data to establish a safe classroom environment and modify instructional plans in response to students' existing knowledge.	
<b>Lesson #1: Popular Understandings of Love</b>  <i>One 50 minute class period</i>	Students evaluate the lyrics of popular songs in order to glean the operative understandings of romantic relationships and the roles of men and women in those relationships. This will prepare students to develop a greater awareness of what they consume through media and how it impacts their ideas about human relationships.	<p>Students will be able to reflect on how the media they consume affects them at conscious and subconscious levels.</p> <p>Students will be able to study the lyrics of popular songs and identify dominant cultural ideas about human anthropology such as the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ role of women</li> <li>◆ role of men</li> <li>◆ longevity of relationship</li> <li>◆ role of sex</li> <li>◆ purpose of romantic relationships</li> </ul>



## Unit Summary cont.

<i>Lesson Title</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Learning Objectives</i>
<p><b>Lesson #2: Formed by the Senses</b></p> <p><i>Two 50 minute class periods</i></p>	<p>Building on the previous lesson and the homework assignment, students explore the role the senses play in forming who we are, how we take in the world around us, and the interpersonal nature of sensory intake. The teacher guides students through an interactive PowerPoint presentation, helping them build the capacity to analyze the effects of pornography in the following lesson.</p>	<p>Students will be able to understand that a human person is distinct among creatures because they have an integrated nature — that they are both body and soul — and, because of this, they are “formed by the senses” (i.e., what is experienced through the senses affects the whole person).</p> <p>Students will be able to explain the role of the senses in perceiving the world and give examples of how a human person is formed by the senses.</p> <p>Students will be able to recognize the transformation that occurs through reception of the Eucharist.</p> <p>Students will be able to reflect back on the songs analyzed in Lesson #1, especially in terms of how the music students listen to forms attitudes about relationships and sex.</p>

## Unit Summary cont.

<i>Lesson Title</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Learning Objectives</i>
<p><b>Lesson #3: Impacts of Pornography</b></p> <p><i>Two 50 minute class periods</i></p>	<p>Students will explore pornography's impact on the individual, relationships, and society as a whole, considering how pornography habituates the human person towards use rather than love. This will occur mainly through a guided exploration of materials from "Fight the New Drug."</p>	<p>Students will be able to summarize the negative impacts pornography use has on individuals, relationships, and society at large.</p> <p>Students will be able to articulate the ways in which pornography consumption habituates the human person towards use rather than love.</p> <p>Students will be able to develop compassion for those struggling with the impact of pornography in their life.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe where hope might be found in the conversation surrounding pornography.</p> <p>Students will be able to recognize the power of the visual image (over written description) in forming the imagination.</p>

## Unit Summary cont.

<i>Lesson Title</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Learning Objectives</i>
<p><b>Lesson #4: Pornography and Catholic Anthropology</b></p> <p><i>Two-three 50 minute class periods</i></p>	<p>Students begin by considering St. John Paul II's statement: "The problem with pornography is not that it shows too much but that it shows too little." They are then introduced to three fundamental insights of Catholic anthropology: (1) Human beings are made for intimate relationship with God and others; (2) There is a unity between body and soul; and (3) Sexual intimacy represents a complete gift of self, both body and soul. This prepares students to complete the final assessment which requires them to summarize how pornography is harmful to individuals, relationships, and society using "Fight the New Drug" research and theological sources.</p>	<p>Students will be able to correctly reflect on and respond to St. John Paul II's statement: "The problem with pornography is not that it shows too much but that it shows too little."</p> <p>Students will be able to name and describe the three fundamental insights of Catholic anthropology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Human beings are made for intimate relationship with God and others.</li> <li>◆ There is a unity between body and soul.</li> <li>◆ Sexual intimacy represents a complete gift of self, both body and soul.</li> </ul> <p>Students will be able to explain why pornography is harmful to the individual, relationships, and society using "Fight the New Drug" research and theological sources.</p>
<p><b>Lesson #5: The Problems of Pornography</b></p> <p><i>One 50 minute class period</i></p>	<p>Working with their teacher, the students revisit the previous lessons in the unit. Working in small groups, they identify the many problems related to pornography. As a class, they debrief and include them in an attribute chart. Once they have done this, they will consider how problems with pornography affect individuals, relationships, and society as a whole. Lastly, they will recognize that these problems are all affirmed by the Catholic Church.</p>	<p>Students will be able to identify the many and varied problems related to pornography.</p> <p>Students will be able to recognize that a Catholic anthropology takes in all the insights of science and adds to it.</p>

The McGrath Institute for Church Life partners with Catholic dioceses, parishes, and schools to address pastoral challenges with theological depth and rigor. By connecting the Catholic intellectual life to the life of the Church, we form faithful Catholic leaders for service to the Church and the world.



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