

# POWERED BY GOD: A PURE LIFE, YOUR TRUE IMAGE

## INTRODUCTION

In January 2012, the *Journal of School Health* published national sexuality education standards for kindergarten through 12th grade “to address the inconsistent implementation of sexuality education nationwide and the limited time allocated to teaching the topic” (<http://www.futureofsexed.org/documents/josh-fose-standards-web.pdf>).

The standards, now being evaluated by school districts across the country, were the work of 40 individuals, including representatives of organizations opposed to Christian teachings and ethics: Planned Parenthood; the National Education Association; the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network; and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

The writing of *Powered by God* was in process before the national standards were published. The forces that coalesced to craft these standards have, however, existed for many years and have been hard at work to firmly ensconce their agenda in our nation’s public schools. It’s helpful now to have a single resource to point to that reveals this long-range agenda.

Not all of the standards are controversial or objectionable but many, such as the following, would raise parental concerns as taught from a secular viewpoint.

### By the end of 2nd grade, students should be able to:

- Use proper names for body parts, including male and female anatomy
- Describe differences and similarities in how boys and girls may be expected to act
- Identify different kinds of family structures

### Building on the above, the standards recommend that by the end of the 5th grade students should be able to:

- Describe male and female reproductive systems including body parts and their functions and the process of human reproduction
- Define sexual orientation as the romantic attraction of an individual to someone of the same gender or a different gender
- Define HIV and identify some age-appropriate methods of transmission, as well as ways to prevent transmission
- Describe the characteristics of healthy relationships
- Define sexual harassment and sexual abuse

### By the end of the 8th grade, students should be able to:

- Differentiate between (and access accurate information about) gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation
- Explain the range of gender roles
- Define sexual intercourse and its relationship to human reproduction
- Define sexual abstinence as it relates to pregnancy prevention
- Explain the health benefits, risks and effectiveness rates of various methods of contraception, including abstinence and condoms
- Demonstrate the use of effective communication and negotiation skills about the use of contraception including abstinence and condoms
- Apply a decision-making model to various sexual health decisions
- Describe the steps of using a condom correctly
- Define emergency contraception and its use
- Identify medically accurate sources of pregnancy-related information and support, including pregnancy options [abortion], safe surrender policies, and prenatal care
- Define STDs, including HIV, and how they are and are not transmitted

- Compare and contrast behaviors, including abstinence, to determine the potential risk of STD/HIV transmission from each
- Describe a range of ways people express affection within various types of relationships

**In addition to the above, by the end of 12th grade, students should be able to:**

- Differentiate between biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression
- Advocate for school policies and programs that promote dignity and respect for all
- Distinguish between sexual orientation, sexual behavior, and sexual identity
- Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of abstinence and other contraceptive methods, including condoms
- Analyze influences that may have an impact on deciding whether or when to engage in sexual behaviors
- Analyze internal and external influences on decisions about pregnancy options
- Access medically accurate information about pregnancy and pregnancy options
- Compare and contrast the laws relating to pregnancy, adoption, abortion and parenting
- Demonstrate skills to communicate with a partner about STD and HIV prevention and testing
- Apply a decision-making model to choices about safer sex practices, including abstinence and condoms
- Evaluate the effectiveness of abstinence, condoms, and other safer sex methods in preventing the spread of STDs, including HIV
- Develop a plan to eliminate or reduce risk for STDs, including HIV, and advocate for sexually active youth to get STD/HIV testing and treatment
- Describe characteristics of healthy and unhealthy romantic and/or sexual relationships
- Demonstrate effective strategies to avoid or end an unhealthy relationship
- Describe a range of ways to express affection within healthy relationships
- Demonstrate effective ways to communicate personal boundaries as they relate to intimacy and sexual behavior
- Compare and contrast situations and behaviors that may constitute bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, rape and dating violence
- Explain why using tricks, threats or coercion in relationships is wrong

## Health vs. Holiness

It is interesting to find the word “wrong” used in the document, but only eight times and always in connection with personal safety violations (bullying, teasing, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, rape, dating violence, or tricks, threats and coercion in relationships). In this context, the prohibitions aim to protect students who identify with the homosexual lifestyle. Surely, such behaviors are wrong, but it’s odd that teachers are able to talk about morality in one sense, but not in others.

The document is more comfortable speaking of “health” in relationships, as though safety and freedom from disease were the only factors worth mentioning. Yes, physical, emotional, and mental health are important, but actions, thoughts, and feelings can’t fully be explained by chemical reactions and hormonal surges. By not addressing spiritual well-being, teachers miss a significant – if not the single most important – contributor to wholeness, which is holiness (or righteousness). The new national standards are necessarily limited (and limiting) in their scope.

Failure to address the fact we were created by a loving, sovereign God has serious repercussions. If human beings are not the product of creation but of evolution, we’re little more than animals behaving by instinct. There is no basis for “evil” or “wrong” in the national standards.

Coinciding with the fact of creation is God’s purpose in creating humanity: to bear His image. Because these teachings have been cut out of a public school education, students are left with no basis for morality, no recognition of our accountability to God, and no common ground on the sanctity of human life.

It is because we bear His image that we can have a deep and fulfilling relationship with God and with each other. But because of another key aspect of the biblical worldview – our fallenness – we’ve been separated from God and our relationships with others suffer. When a curriculum does not admit this problem, the potential for redemption through a sinless Savior is lost. In the secular, godless worldview there is no hope, only “survival of the fittest.”

Sadly, attacks on creation and *imago dei* are not only from outside Christendom, but within it as well. A book by Dr. Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, was recently published by Brazos Press, which bills itself as being within the mainstream of “classical, orthodox Christianity.” This book, however, calls into question the existence – let alone the special creation – of a real Adam (and Eve) and his role as our representative. Since Jesus Himself referenced our First Parents (Matthew 19:4-6), the implication is that Enns is saying Our Savior either erred or lied.

## Why this curriculum is needed

Abstinence education programs have been available in public schools for decades, and many teenagers have benefited from their positive reinforcement of values learned at home and church about saving sex for marriage. Thousands have made purity pledges and found encouragement from peers who have similarly committed to delay the onset of sexual activity.

There are, nonetheless, alarming statistics about never-married young adults ages 20-29. Those identifying themselves as having a faith tradition, attending services regularly, and for whom religion is important differ little in practice from secular peers. In some cases, unmarried churchgoers report having sex at a higher rate than those who never or rarely attend! (This study may be accessed at [http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/DCR/SectionJ/DCR\\_SectionJ.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/DCR/SectionJ/DCR_SectionJ.pdf))

Unmarried women of this age group are also more likely to abort unplanned pregnancies than other women. In 2008, as many as one in five abortion patients identified themselves as born-again, evangelical, charismatic, or fundamentalist (<http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/US-Abortion-Patients.pdf>). While evidence shows that women who attend church more often have fewer abortions, 15% of abortion patients say they attend once a week or more.

Statistics of this nature can be skewed by respondents who are Christian in name only (who do not follow the faith tradition into which they were born or baptized as infants). Christian young people today marry later in life and may face greater temptations than past generations. It also may be that many young pew-sitters have not heard biblical principles expounded, or been offered realistic appraisals of the temptations along with practical guidance for avoiding/withstanding them.

The *Powered by God* curriculum attempts to place human sexuality and the sanctity of human life solidly within a biblical framework. That is not to be confused with the so-called traditional morality that is often upheld as the antidote to secular morality. Very many otherwise good abstinence programs have left out a key component of the message of this curriculum: the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. We cannot be sexually pure without Him.

By teaching these principles at an age well before temptations will be faced, it is hoped students will be armed with crucial decision-making skills. It's not enough to teach that homosexuality, promiscuity, and abortion are abnormal, non-traditional, or wrong without upholding biblical principles for living that have stood the test of time and will be sufficient for whatever students face (2 Peter 1:3-4). It is certain they (and their friends) will face challenges and temptations that are currently unimagined by the best parents and teachers.

## What this curriculum is not

Primarily, this curriculum is not explicit. In the material for students, you will not find references to sex or sexual acts, genders, sexual orientation, body parts, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, or abortion. They will be covered in teacher preparation, and teachers may decide to cover the information if students raise the topic and discussion is deemed appropriate.

Exceptions would be lesson 10 (which compares the concepts of “reproduction” and “procreation”) and lesson 12 which explains various terms such as “sexual immorality,” “impurity,” “lust,” “evil desires,” and “filthy language” as found in the biblical text, Colossians 3:1-14. Lessons 3 and 4 reference fetal development in the womb, but without talking about how babies are conceived. It is highly recommended that teachers make these lessons (or the curriculum as a whole) available to parents for perusal before lessons commence.

*Powered by God* is not intended to replace godly instruction at home. Parents should be notified about the curriculum and their permission sought for a child's participation in the course. Parents should also be allowed to prepare themselves for questions that their children may have as the lessons proceed. Children with questions that the teacher is uncomfortable answering should be directed to their parents.

## HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

*Powered by God: A Pure Life, Your True Image* is designed for grades 4 through 6, boys and girls. It may be advantageous to separate the sexes, but is not necessary.

This curriculum contains comprehensive background material concerning biblical concepts and scientific information that teacher may or may not share with students. Teachers will need to exercise discernment about their students' maturity levels – which can vary greatly in this age group. Teachers are advised to exercise caution in their descriptions and demeanor.

The interactive *Powered by God* website ([www.PoweredByGod.org](http://www.PoweredByGod.org)) was designed for 4th through 6th graders and coincides with the curriculum. It reinforces and enhance each lesson with additional online activities. Teachers should encourage children to access it, with parental approval.

Elements of the *Powered by God* website could be used during class, if Internet access is available. Teachers should, therefore, familiarize themselves with the website.

Look for the symbol (at right), which indicates that a lesson plan item is covered in the corresponding web lesson (also numbered 1-13). Since the lesson plans in this curriculum offer abundant material, teachers may find the need to tailor them to fit allotted class time. By coordinating lesson plans with the *Powered by God* website, students won't miss anything. And if they get the same message in class and online, the lesson will be reinforced.



## OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTORY LESSONS

- Lesson 1: Decisions, Decisions, Decisions
- Lesson 2: The Big Picture
- Lesson 3: God Gives Life

### WHO AM I?

- Lesson 4: CREATION – Who Am I?
- Lesson 5: REBELLION – What's the Problem?
- Lesson 6: REDEMPTION – Jesus is the Only Way

### MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Lesson 7: CREATION – God and Me
- Lesson 8: REBELLION – Replacing God
- Lesson 9: REDEMPTION – Powered by God

### MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

- Lesson 10: CREATION – Role Play
- Lesson 11: REBELLION – Who's Who?
- Lesson 12: REDEMPTION – Take Off the Old, Put On the New

### SUMMARY

- Lesson 13: CONSUMMATION – What Are We Waiting For?

## LETTER TO PARENTS & PERMISSION FORM

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Sunday school program of [name of church] is writing to inform you that the following classes will be using the *Powered by God: A Pure Life, Your True Image* curriculum:

- 4th [teacher's name, classroom location]
- 5th [teacher's name, classroom location]
- 6th [teacher's name, classroom location]

Classes will begin on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the curriculum is to teach biblical principles concerning the sanctity of human life and sexual purity. *Powered by God* has been chosen as an age-appropriate lesson plan that is careful not to present material in an explicit manner. It is [name of church]'s intent to teach the whole counsel of God and not shy away from matters upon which the Word of God is clear, particularly in light of the challenges young people face at school and the onslaught of sexually explicit material through the media.

The curriculum that teachers will be using in class coincides with the *Powered by God* website – [PoweredByGod.org](http://PoweredByGod.org) – which is geared toward this age-group. It's a safe site that supplements what they'll be learning in class. They can work through lessons at their own pace and participate in activities that enhance the classroom lessons.

We do not intend to usurp your God-given role as the primary teacher of your children. We appreciate and respect your role and are here to support your family's values. As a teaching staff/Christian Education Committee, we are open to your questions and comments. Contact information is below.

In addition to the availability of classroom education, we also offer you and your child(ren) the following options:

1. If you would rather obtain a copy of the curriculum and use it with your student, we would be happy to assist you.
2. You are more than welcome to peruse the material ahead of time and you may elect to keep your child out of the classes. Alternative classes will be available in the following locations with [instructor name(s)].
3. Should you prefer to have your student go though *Powered by God* at a later time, the curriculum will be offered again on these future dates: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. You are welcome to observe lessons being taught.

Please use the attached form (one per child) to allow or disallow their participation in the *Powered by God* classes. Return it to your child's teacher by [date].

Sincerely,

Teacher/Christian Education Committee

Contact information [phone, email]

### *Powered by God* Permission Form

- I have read the above information about the *Powered by God* curriculum.
- I would like to see a copy of the *Powered by God* curriculum.
- I would like to observe the class.
- I will  will not  allow my child to participate in the *Powered by God* curriculum.
- I would like my child to attend an alternate class.
- I will allow my child to participate in the *Powered by God* curriculum, but I may want to opt my child out of certain portions (someone from the Christian Education Committee will contact you via the phone number provided below).
- My child has permission to use the *Powered by God* website.

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Authors:

- Tonya Delnay – wife of Paul (since 1984); mother of four young adults; educator for the Willing to Wait abstinence program of the Pregnancy Resource Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, serving private and public middle and high schools; directed a pregnancy care center (the Alpha Women’s Center of Wayland, MI) for three years; member of First Baptist Church of Middleville, MI.
- Michele Shoun – wife of R.C. (since 1991); Sunday school teacher (20+ years, 4th through 6th grades); author of many articles on the sanctity of human life as editor for Life Matters Worldwide (since 1984); member of Highland Hills Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Sonya Valentino – wife of Tim (since 1988); mother of two grown children; pastor’s wife (Fleetwood Bible Church, Fleetwood, PA); Director of Children’s Ministry; degree in education; public and Christian school teacher (music and Spanish, K-12); Sunday school teacher (elementary through adult).

### We thank the following individuals for invaluable resources and guidance:

- David Bailey, David Gower, Pastor Jeff Halsted, Valerie Huber, Jeff Mattner, Mel Walker, and Valerie Wilson – for serving on the original committee that initiated the process
- Tom Lothamer, president of Life Matters Worldwide - for inspiration and prodding the project to completion
- Kelly Haight, director of education at the Pregnancy Resource Center, Grand Rapids, MI – for being willing to share portions of the Willing to Wait abstinence program

### We are indebted to the following individuals for agreeing to read the material and offering helpful editorial suggestions:

- Elaine Williams, of Right Ideas
- Heather VanTimmeren - MA in historical theology, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary
- Marg Halka – elementary school teacher
- Valerie Wilson – retired editor, Regular Baptist Press