

## **G. THE PASTORAL RESPONSE OVERVIEW**

### **RATIONALE**

God created us in His image and likeness (Gen 1: 27). The inherent dignity of each person is founded on this truth; it guides us, challenges us and supports us. The foundation of Catholic teaching about life and relationships is respect for the human person. “The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it” (CCC 1935).

Human growth and development, as it pertains to the high school student, has many gifts and many challenges. For Catholic educators who seek to “give an account of the hope that is within” (1 Peter 3:15), understanding issues and responding faithfully and pastorally to the young people in their care is essential.

### **G.1 THE GOOD NEWS: FOUNDATION**

To be authentically pastoral with our students regarding human growth and development, Catholic educators are called to embrace the dignity and worth of each person created in God’s image. Such a belief is the foundation for all relationships uniquely expressed by those called ‘teachers.’ The Church’s teachings on sexuality help educators to support students and should be understood as ‘Good News’ “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)

The Catholic teacher... cannot be content simply to present Christian values as a set of abstract objectives to be admired, even if this is done positively and with imagination; they must be presented as values which generate human attitudes, and these attitudes must be encouraged in the students. Examples of such attitudes would be these: a freedom which includes respect for others; conscientious responsibility; a sincere and constant search for truth; a calm and peaceful critical spirit; a spirit of solidarity with and service toward all other persons; a sensitivity for justice; a special awareness of being called to be positive agents of change in a society that is undergoing continuous transformation.

*Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.*

Our identity at its deepest level is that of a beloved son or daughter of God. It is in God's heart that we discover our origin, our identity, and our destiny as human persons.

These truths provide guiding principles for us as we seek to provide a pastoral response for our students. We begin always with a profound respect for the person before us; a respect that recognizes their inherent dignity and worth. When properly understood and implemented, we respect the teaching of Church as life-giving. Ultimately, we are invited to have hope as we journey in faith with students who are facing significant, authentic human relationship and sexuality challenges.