

PARENT COMMUNICATION



Dear Junior High Parents,

Your child will be learning Theology of the Body (TOB) this year. These foundational lessons will be taught alongside our standard religious curriculum. TOB is an understanding of what it means to be human. Together, we will discover the very foundations of our authentic identity as human persons created in the image and likeness of God, male and female. After all, identity precedes activity. We must know who we are, before we know how we are to act.

Why are we here? What does it mean to love? How do we find real happiness?

Through prayer, stories, thought-provoking questions, and activities we will begin to explore the wonderful answers to life's questions through the lens of God's design, plan and purpose.

WHAT TOB IS...

TOB is an integral understanding of the human person explained by Pope St. John Paul II, published under the title ***Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body***. These Scripture-based reflections about God's original design for the human person provide a needed Christian anthropology for our confusing times. TOB conveys the inestimable worth and dignity of the human person and the road to happiness, which involves a gift-of-self, communion with others, as well as, with the Blessed Trinity.

WHAT TOB IS NOT...

- A chastity program
- Sex education
- Only focused on human sexuality
- A bunch of rules
- Just for married people
- Just for young people



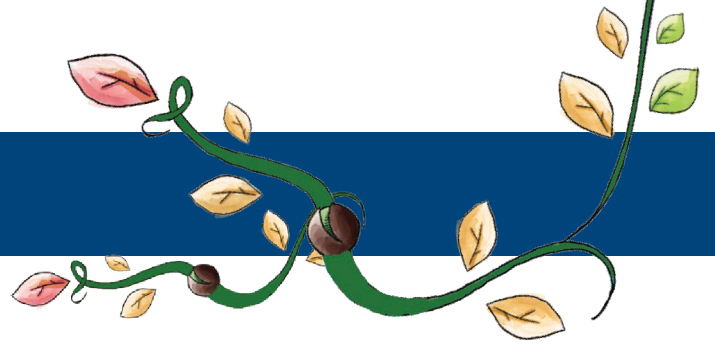
The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. TOB 19:4

It is the hope that these TOB lessons will cultivate a deeper understanding of God, truth, love, goodness, and reality, including the tasks and gifts of being created male or female. Your child will bring home a "Common Place Book" that contains beautiful lessons and thought-provoking discussion questions. This engaging "workbook" also includes holy scripture passages related to TOB themes, direct Pope St. John Paul II quotes, saint stories and sacred art — truth, beauty and goodness that all point to God! Ask your child if he/she will share some of it with you!

Want to learn more? Visit RuahWoodsInstitute.org/Parents to view a TOB parent presentation.



INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS THE THEOLOGY OF THE BODY?

The *Theology of the Body* (TOB) refers to the collection of 129 Wednesday Audiences, or short public speeches, given by St. John Paul II during the first five years of his papacy. TOB helps us to understand the very foundation of our identity created in God's image as male or female.

WHY DID ST. JOHN PAUL II WRITE TOB?

In 1968, Pope St. Paul VI wrote a letter to the world reaffirming the Catholic Church's understanding on married love and the role of the family in the world (*Humanae Vitae*).

It was clear that in order for people to understand God's plan on such a fundamental topic, we would need to approach it in light of a total vision of what it means to be a human person. St. John Paul II took it upon himself to give us this vision through TOB, derived directly from Holy Scripture.

WHO AM I?

From his divine love, God intentionally created you as a unique and immortal human person in his image and likeness. You are made of both body and soul united intimately together.

WHO IS GOD?

God is a Trinity. In the Trinity, we see God's secret revealed. "God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange." (CCC 221)

WHY DID GOD GIVE ME A BODY?

Your body isn't a worthless clump of cells or a cage for your soul. Your body is you and you are a gift! God invites you to share the gift of yourself with the world and all who live in it. By making an authentic gift-of-self to others, out of love, you make God's love visible here on Earth.

This is possible because you have a body. Your body reveals the call to holy union and communion and thus bears the mark of God's eternal love story!

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

The purpose of your life is to make a loving gift of yourself to others and God. We struggle to give an authentic gift-of-self because sin has entered the world.

The good news is that God became man, so that you can be restored, redeemed, and one day divinized. The Eucharist is the taste of your heavenly future. Your body will be glorified and you will live in eternal union in heaven with other persons and God. So now, we push away sin and anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the second coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

*We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures;
we are the sum of the Father's love for us.*

—Pope St. John Paul II World Youth Day 2002

