

He, She, We and God -- Frequently-Asked Questions

How does the facilitator deal with controversial topics?

In keeping with the goal of empowering parents as the primary educators of their children, our facilitator Jenny Beaumont shares age-appropriate information about controversial topics, and encourages children to direct difficult questions to their parents. So, for example, if a child is wondering what homosexuality is, Jenny will give a definition and talk about values that we all share, such as Christ's call to love all people, and the Christian obligation to avoid name-calling and demeaning others. We recognize that there is a wide range of beliefs and opinions about some controversial topics at St. Paul's, and we seek to empower *all parents* to effectively teach their children about faith and sexuality. A portion of the parent program is devoted to helping parents clarify values and communicate those to their children, as they answer questions about difficult or sensitive topics.

Keep in mind that the questions parents and other adults raise about sexuality are usually *not* the questions that our fifth graders will ask.

Can people sign up who are not St. Paul's members?

Yes. Jenny has facilitated *He, She, We and God* at churches of many denominations, including Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, etc. Christians from many different backgrounds will be comfortable at "He, She, We and God." Registration forms are on the church website at www.stpauls-ws.org under "Christian Education." **The deadline for registration is Friday, January 9, 2009.**

What does the registration fee cover?

About half of what St. Paul's will pay to host this event, including meals and books for each participant.

How are St. Paul's volunteer leaders selected?

Volunteer leaders are trained to help facilitate the weekend's activities, and they are a crucial part of the *He, She, We and God* weekend. They help connect the program to our parish, and demonstrate to our fifth graders that there are people at St. Paul's who care about them enough to lead and guide them as they grow and develop. We look for leaders who feel comfortable with their own sexuality and who feel comfortable talking to kids. Leaders need to be able to put aside any personal and/or political agendas where sexuality is concerned. We hope that our parish leaders will come from varied age groups. None of our leaders can be parents of kids who are participating in the program.

Do boys and girls hear all information together, or separately?

Most of the teaching and learning in *He, She, We and God* takes place with boys and girls, together. There are some opportunities to separate to deal with gender-specific issues, but most of the learning is in a co-educational setting because a key skill for kids at this age is learning to respect what the other gender is going through.

I've already talked to my child about sex. Why would I want to sign up for "He, She, We and God?"

He, She, We and God aims to go far beyond just a basic sharing of information about sex. We hope to demonstrate to kids that their faith community is a proper and trustworthy place to grow into their developing sexuality. The best way to do this is by inviting kids and parents to learn and share at church.

As a parent, it can be very difficult to adequately address issues around puberty, development, and sexuality in a few conversations. The issues kids face and the questions they have are biological, social, spiritual, and ethical. The weekend context gives kids and parents time and space to explore a range of issues together.

Why is parent participation required?

A key goal of *He, She, We and God* is to empower parents as the primary educators of their children, and parents consistently learn as much or more from the program as their kids do. It's great family bonding time: the weekend includes opportunities for listening and talking to each other, laughing together, playing together, and worshipping together. This can also be a good opportunity for parents to get to know each other and strengthen bonds within the St. Paul's community.

What about children who are shy or easily embarrassed?

A major goal of *He, She, We and God* is teaching careful respect for others, and Jenny does a fantastic job of assisting kids who are shy or easily embarrassed. Before the weekend, kids will receive a postcard from Jenny to help them prepare for the program. During the weekend, group norms are established that ensure that all members of the group are cherished and respected. Activities like the question box, where kids can submit their questions anonymously, help those who might be uncomfortable.

Why aren't sixth graders participating in 2009?

He, She, We and God works best with fifth graders. The Christian Education Committee hoped to offer the program in 2007, but we did not have sufficient signups to do so. We "grandfathered in" our sixth graders in 2008 since we had several families who signed up in 2007 and were disappointed when we had to cancel. In 2009, the program is only offered to fifth graders and their parents.

How can I find out more?

Contact me: Stacy Holley, St. Paul's Director of Christian Education at 336-723-4391 or sholley@stpauls-ws.org. A member of the Christian Education Committee would also be happy to share information with you. They are:

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