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Building Faith Editors’ note:

Looking for a program to teach about sexuality in a faith context? Church Publishing, Inc. recently published [These Are Our Bodies](#). With a foundation book that provides a systematic overview, plus leader, participant and parent guides for each age group, this is an adaptable program for faith communities.

Grounded in the Baptismal Covenant, and written with a “progressive, inclusive point of view,” *These Are Our Bodies* was created for an Episcopal context, but it may be fruitful for other denominations.

To learn more and find out if this program might fit your church, read the article below by Sharon Ely Pearson, Christian educator and editor at Church Publishing.

These Are Our Bodies

[These Are Our Bodies](#) is a comprehensive faith and sexuality program that can be used in a variety of settings including Sunday morning classes, evening events, or seminars taught over a Friday afternoon and Saturday. It can also be used in home or school settings. The program is based on the universal needs of young people *and* their parents. In order to honor and lift up parents as the primary sexuality educators to their children, parents are an integral part of the program.

Each age level of *These Are Our Bodies* provide church leaders and parents with proper information and current language to create a safe space for talking about human sexuality from a faith perspective and a progressive, inclusive point of view. Just as there are seasons

to our faith (such as birth, baptism, and reaffirmation), there are seasons to our sexuality (birth, awareness, growth, change, and transformation).

The Foundation Book (Leslie Choplin & Jenny Beaumont) uses the lens of the Baptismal Covenant to explore the creative nature of sexuality, the goodness of desire, and the concept of honoring the body, including the role of the church in the area of sexuality. Its purpose is to provide the catalyst for conversations that will challenge and expand our thinking about the ethical demands that call us to love our neighbor as ourselves. In light of the changing and evolving view of sexuality, we reflect on the role of responsible behavior and models of decision-making.

Church leaders will be able to use this book as a general resource in linking faith and sexuality. The concepts around sexuality can inform the conversation in churches around how to implement ministries that are inclusive all of persons. Youth leaders and Christian educators can use the book as a way to inform their personal ministry, as well as when questions of concern arise. Parents will find useful information in for raising their children. At the end of each chapter are discussion questions, ideal for using in adult formation settings. This book also serves as the adult module to the program.

A Curriculum for Every Age Group

Preschool & Elementary (Jenny Beaumont & Abbi Long) offers three age levels (Preschool, Primary, Intermediate) for children ages 3-11 and their parents on topics such as *We Are . . . Wonderfully Made ... Complex ... Changing ... Knowledgeable ... Equipped ... Called ... Growing Up*.

Middle School (Jenny Beaumont & Abbi Long) begins the deeper work, when questions arise and when parents seek help. Topics include: self image, love, friendship, biological sex, gender identity and expression, refusal skills, cyber bullying, sexually transmitted infections, abstinence and birth control, facts and fiction around sexuality, decision making, listening skills, and value clarification.

High School (Samantha Haycock & Caren Miles) understands that this is a time when youth are community oriented and are taking responsibility for themselves in deeper ways. Nine sessions include language, value systems, self-image, relationships, health, dignity, and theology.

Young Adults (Heidi J.A. Carter & Marcus Halley) understands that those who are 18-30-years-old are attempting to find their place in the world as adults. A faith

community is a safe place to have discussions on topics such as *The World Yearns for: Assurance ... Connection ... Covenant in Community ... Empowerment ... Mutuality ... Respect ... Love ... Pleasure ... Wholeness ... Mystery*. The age module offers a Leader Guide and Participant Journal, but no Parent Book, understanding that these are adults now making their own decisions.

Why a Faith-Based Discussion of Sexuality?

Our responsibility as Christians to seek Christ in all persons, showing dignity and mercy to all, is rooted in our Baptismal Covenant. Our churches and communities can assist us to hear and follow our call. Families and church communities are ideal places to practice intentionally living into these promises we made at baptism and to examine our human tendencies to ignore that call. The authors' hope is to provide church leaders and parents with proper information and current language to create a safe space for talking about human sexuality from a faith perspective and a progressive, inclusive point of view.

*Sharon Ely Pearson has been involved in Christian formation with all ages for 40 years on the local, diocesan, and church-wide level. She edited the complete *These Are Our Bodies* series for Church Publishing Incorporated, where she is an editor and the Christian Formation Specialist.*