

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The overall composition is clean and modern, with the text centered on a white background.

# Educating on the Human Person

How to Get Beyond Silos

Sr. Hanna Klaus, MMS, M.D.

Teen STAR Program

8400 Pine Road, Philadelphia,  
PA 19111

[teenstarprogram@mail.com](mailto:teenstarprogram@mail.com)

301-897-9323

Catholic education aims to teach youth to learn  
how to know, love and follow the Lord,

in order to live happily in eternity,  
and to achieve this,

to learn how to live and behave in the  
present to be made worthy to reach Heaven.

The human person has not changed.

We are still composed of aspects common to vegetable life - we need nutrition, air and water.

We also have many aspects in common with animals - we are mobile, we reproduce through direct action rather than being fertilized by wind-born pollens.

But we can make rational (and irrational) choices) directed by free will.

And, we have an immortal soul.

St. Paul already taught us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

He followed that with some very specific directions, as persons are concrete, not abstract.

Later, especially in the past three decades, the culture separated sexuality into silos -

only the body, or

only the emotions, or

only the moral/ethical aspects.

But the Incarnation redeemed the whole person and empowered us to love in a way transcending our human limitations, beautifully described by your Archbishop's recent pastoral letter,

“The Splendor of Love.”

“Not only are men and women images of God, but in forming a communion of persons in marriage we are called to image the bl. Trinity in Its never ending exchange of love and fruitfulness.”

What does it mean?



Where does one begin in instructing youth in their true identity and purpose?

Theology can be too advanced for middle and high school students.

Catechesis is more appropriate.

So, what is Teen STAR and  
how did it begin?

Teen STAR is a developmental curriculum which uses experiential learning of fertility biomarkers to help teens discover their inherent value and derive behavioral norms.

Teaches responsible decision making and communication skills in the area of sexual behavior.

Enhances teens' self-understanding and self-esteem and relationships with parents, whose permission is an entry requirement.

My own path...

As an obstetrician/gynecologist Roe-Wade challenged me to react.

I began by going to parishes to talk about embryonic and fetal development, progressed to offering the Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) of NFP in 1973.

At the second OM meeting in Melbourne in 1978, Dr. John Billings asked me to look at the teens, as no one was working in this area. This became a vocation within a vocation.

We began with a research grant from the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Fdn., who were concerned about reducing mental disabilities, chiefly from premature births to teen mothers.

The grant sought to determine how teaching fertility awareness to teens would affect their sexual behavior.

1. Identify pilot groups.
2. Parental consent for all minors - entails letters and parent meetings.
3. Identify control group - in our pilot in metro Washington ( suburban MD).

(Planned Parenthood had dispensed with parental permission!)

When I gave my very medical outline to Mary Lou Bryant-Reid to run a pilot group,

she said, “That’s not how kids learn!”

So, she went into the classroom (in Louisville, KY) and

said, “Do y’all want to talk woman talk?”

The questions asked, and their sequence became the high school girls’ curriculum. It is grass roots, not theoretically derived.

In retrospect, we were using the Socratic method, self-discovery via experiential learning, led to internalizing and owning one's sexuality and fertility.

While we were doing this, we were not thinking about educational theory - it just seemed the way the Lord proceeded to teach us.

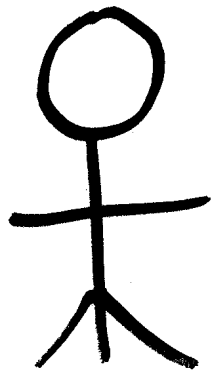
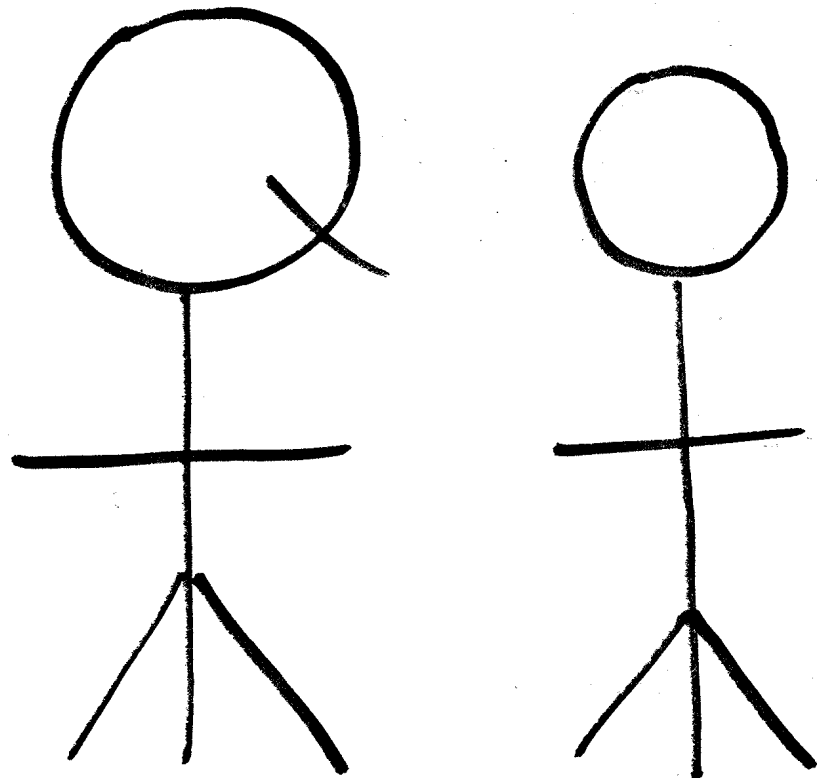
By asking questions, it helped the questioners to find their own answers.



As you well know, puberty replaces the security of childhood with new challenges and much doubt. The pubertal hormones change the body and the mind.

Children begin to separate from parents and begin to define themselves.

You also know that this is not a smooth path. It is not easy either for the teen, the parents, or their teachers.



You are only too familiar with Erickson's description of the adolescents' personal fable -

They're invulnerable.

It is mostly because they have not experienced real limitations. Therefore, home and school need to protect them.

And despite their protestations, they need boundaries.

## PUBERTY...

Teens now need to understand themselves  
in a new way.

Physically  
Emotionally  
Relationally to:      Parents  
   Peers  
   God

We engaged with the girls where they were:

the changes in their body,  
their physical origins,  
the implications on their feelings,  
their behavioral choices,  
and their possible consequences,

With their identity the ultimate goal.



AS THEY MATURE...

They also move from concrete to abstract thinking.

Their spirituality causes them to search for their own answers.

No matter how much time is spent on phones and other media, we still live in our skin envelopes.

Most girls need to experience their cycle three times before

they say, “This is me!”

Then, they begin to own their fertility,  
move away from peer pressure and  
begin to make their own decisions.

[Feedback from personal interviews and mothers at parent meetings.]



The mothers liked the program and asked to have a similar one for their sons.

Fr. Donald Heet, O.S.F.S., Ed.D. was the founding Principal of Paul VI High School in Fairfax, VA.

He had an excellent rapport with his students and designed the Young Men's curriculum, which we are still using.

## PEDAGOGY...

Directed to level of psychosexual maturity of participant

Discovery of the girls' biomarkers is key to internalizing and understanding their fertility and sexuality and understanding the implications of possessing these powers.

Boys learn to understand and master their body's reactions and value their fertility as well as sexuality.

Monitors behavioral outcomes.

As a physician I always need to know if what we are doing is effective.

My colleague, Dr. Pilar Vigil, a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University in Santiago, Chile conducted a Prospective Randomized Control Study in a very poor school in Santiago.

Here are the outcomes.

# Comparative Study, Chile



## ► Behavioral Outcomes

	Study	Controls	Sig
▶ N males	251	195	
▶ N females	147	147	
▶ % transitions virgin - non-virgin			
▶ Males	8.8	17.6	p =<0.004
▶ Females	3.4	12.4	p= <0.001
▶ Discontinuation of intercourse *	20%	9%	p =<0.03
▶ Resumption of intercourse	0	11%	p=<0.04

▶ \* No intercourse within the last three months of the program

▶ Vigil P et al. J Ped & Adol. Gyn 2005:212

Because Teen STAR was able to show support for 'primary and secondary abstinence' the program was funded for Uganda and Ethiopia by PEPFAR - the Presidents' Emergency Program for AIDS relief - in 2006.

# Teen STAR PROGRAM 2006 - 2012

	Ethiopia	Uganda
N Volunteer teachers trained	355	774
N students graduated	29,733	27, 238
N gen. reached	97,980	39,357

# TWO AND THREE YEAR POST PROGRAM

## Follow-up of Accessible Students

	<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Uganda</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of Participants</b>			
Total	115	137	252
Female	74	124	198
Male	41	10	51
Sex not registered	-	3	3
Age not registered	3	2	5
Age over 21		10	10
<b>Within age limits (13-21)</b>			
Female	73	116	189
Male	39	6	45
<b>Total used in study</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>234</b>

Here are the behavioral outcomes of students still in school 2-3 years later:

Sexual activity prior to entry	3.5%
Initiated during program	4%
Discontinued > 1 year ago:	33.3%
> 7-12 months ago:	16.7%

Median age at first intercourse in Ethiopia and Uganda - 16.8 years old.



## Reasons for abstaining in order of frequency:

- Prevent HIV/AIDS
- Morally wrong
- Don't want to be used
- Don't want to disappoint my parents
- Against my religious beliefs
- Prevent unwanted pregnancy

## PROGRAM SPECIFICS...

- Teen STAR 1 is the basic human program
- Teen STAR 2 adds the theology of the body

Behavioral outcomes for both programs are comparable.

Experiential learning allows teens to own their sexuality and fertility and behave appropriately.

## AVAILABLE CURRICULA...

- Grade School  
(early adolescence)
- Teen STAR for young women  
(middle adolescence)
- Teen STAR for young men  
(middle adolescence)
- Holistic Sexuality for women, for men  
(late adolescence - young adults)
- Post-partum - teen mothers and fathers

## INTRODUCTORY SEQUENCE FOR COURSE...

- Selection of target group
- Letter to parents & first parent meeting
- Invitation to students. Consent from student, then parent or guardian.
- Class meets weekly or biweekly. Gender separated for anatomy and physiology, co-ed for social and spiritual components (second semester).

## COURSE SEQUENCE (cont')...

- Individual follow-up meetings with each student every 2 months.
- Women need to teach girls, men to teach boys.
- Second parent meeting after three months.
- Last parent meeting at end of course, with evaluation.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY'S CULTURE WARS...

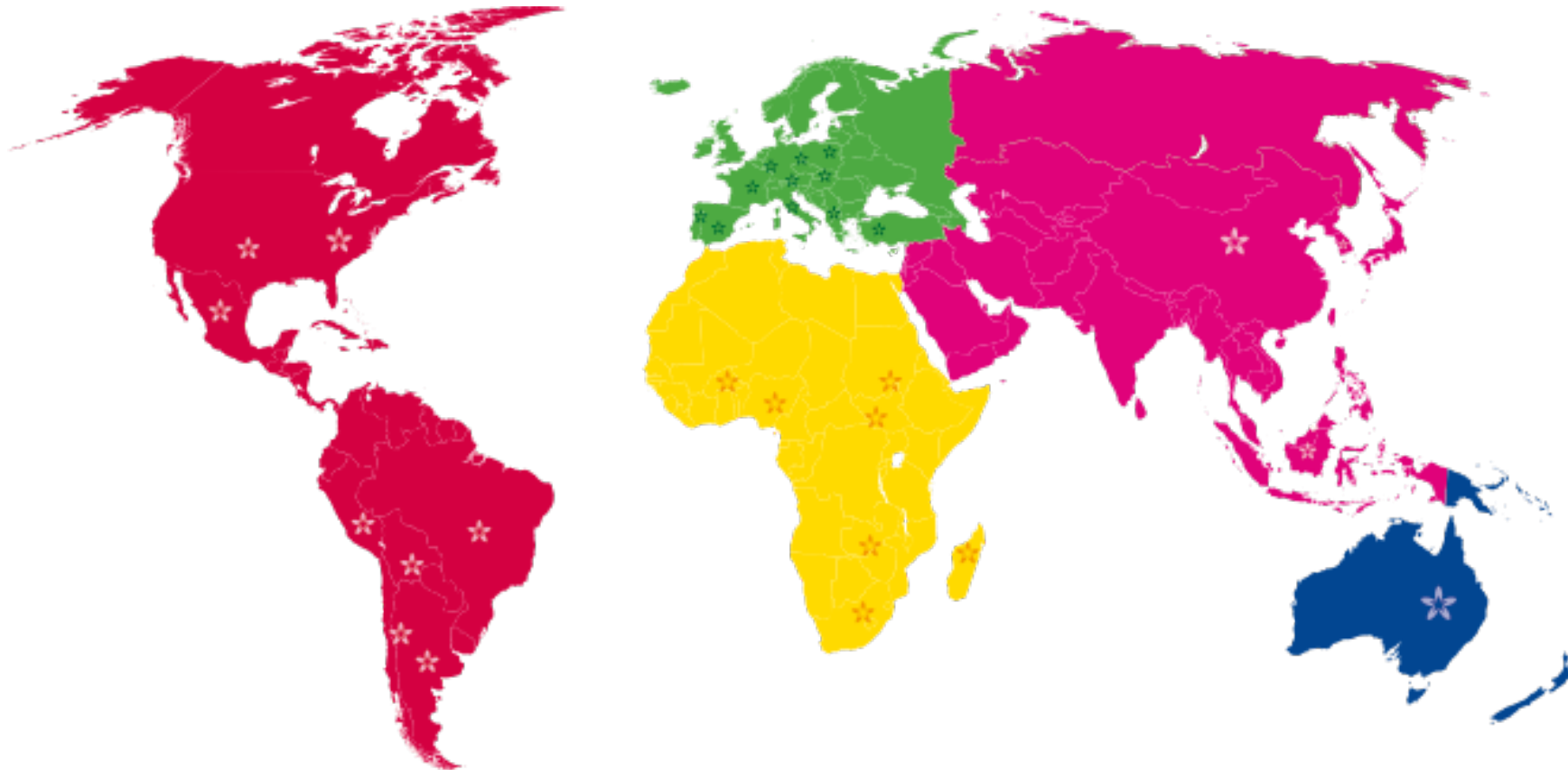
Acceptance of one's now present fertility and sexuality moves teens from peer pressure to making their own decisions.

This undergirds not only chastity, but their biological sexual identity.

Teacher background materials include guidelines on:

- Sexting and cyberbullying
- Pornography
- Encountering gender dysphoria

# Teen STAR in the World 2014 - 2016



**4.502**  
trained  
monitors

**48.329**  
trained  
students