

About *Fully Alive*

Fully Alive is a Family Life Education program sponsored by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (OCCB). The OCCB is one of the four regional conferences of Catholic bishops in Canada, and is made up of all of the Catholic bishops in Ontario.

Catholic Family Life Education is closely associated with Religious Education. In Ontario Catholic schools, it accounts for 20% of the Religious Education program, and is usually taught once a week.

Family Life Education, as it is represented in *Fully Alive*, is intended to pass on a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage, and family. Its goal is to complement the efforts of families and to support what parents are doing at home. The entire program, from Grade 1 through Grade 8 is designed to encourage children to become the people God wants them to be – to be fully alive.

A Brief History of *Fully Alive*

During the late 60s and 70s, Family Life Education was introduced into the curriculum of many Catholic school boards in Ontario. Since this area includes subjects such as

marriage, family, and sexuality, Catholic school trustees and parents approached the Bishops of Ontario and asked them to prepare guidelines for these programs.

After consulting with educators and parents, the Ontario [Conference of Catholic Bishops \(OCCB\)](#) published *Guidelines for Family Life Education* in 1978. This document explained the Church's teaching on issues related to marriage and sexuality and highlighted the roles of the home, the school, and the parish in Family Life Education. Two revisions of these guidelines [have](#) followed, the first in 1983, and the second in 1987.

In 1983 the OCCB Family Life Committee, which became the OCCB Family Life Editorial Board, took the next step, and began the long process of preparing resources for Ontario's Catholic schools. The decision was made to develop separate programs in English and in French.

To ensure that Family Life Education was well rooted in Catholic teaching, and met the needs of parents, children, and teachers, a large-scale consultation was organized. Writing teams prepared drafts for the various grade levels, which were then evaluated, revised, and approved for classroom testing under the direction of the Editorial Board. These pilot texts were evaluated by teachers,

parents, and interested members of the parish-school community. As well, the Bishops of Ontario undertook a direct consultation on the program in their dioceses, and encouraged response to the pilot texts from all interested Catholics.

After this broad consultation and careful evaluation of the material, the texts were revised, and presented to all of the bishops of Ontario for their approval. The texts were then made ready for publication. It was a long, but necessary process, with the goal of ensuring that *Fully Alive*, as the OCCB's English-language program is known, was a true reflection of the Catholic community of Ontario.

The first edition of *Fully Alive* was published between 1988 and 1992. In 2006, the OCCB decided to renew and update their program. In the spring of 2007, Grades 1 and 2 of the series were published. The remaining grades will follow over the next several years.