

# *Children are the living letters we send into a time we will never see...*

*Neal Postman*

Touch that makes a child feel uncomfortable needs to be disclosed to a trusted adult. When someone touches a child in private areas, shows them sexual pictures, uses sexual language or asks a child to touch them in private areas of their body – it is a violation against the child. Suspected child abuse always needs to be reported to the authorities.

## **Developmental Dimensions and Stages**

We have learned over the past several decades about how we develop. Human beings are complex, multi-dimensional creatures. Each person has his or her own unique journey toward God. There are six dimensions of development that are identifiable and seem to be reflected in some way in all of us.

- **Physical:** Who we are as gendered persons.
- **Cognitive:** Our beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions.
- **Emotional:** Our feelings and how those feelings affect our relationships.
- **Social:** How we relate to others and our capacity to share ourselves.
- **Moral:** What we value and how we make decisions based on our beliefs.
- **Spiritual:** Recognizing and acknowledging the presence of God in our relationships.

Psychosexual development is our personal journey toward integration as embodied human persons. It is a process of growth that embraces all aspects of our human reality.

There are five stages used to describe our journey:

- **Infancy:** Children learn about their world primarily through touch.
- **Toddler:** Children are totally delighted in their bodies and begin to recognize gender differences.
- **Pre-school to Puberty:** Children develop gender identity and a sense of privacy.
- **Adolescence:** Adolescents explore who they are in and through relationships as their bodies mature toward adulthood.
- **Adulthood:** Adults integrate self-knowledge, empathy, sensitivity, trust equality, spontaneity, and appropriate self-disclosure into their lives.

**“Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone.”**

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, 1997