

*Education in Chastity
is about how and when
we hand over the astonishing gift of self.*

We choose the setting. We choose the timing.

*God gives us the choice.
The lies of the world disguise the true choices.*

*We can choose to live love to the fullest in all it's mystery, or
steal glimpses of it's pleasures while corrupting the greatest possibilities of the
gift.*

*We can have it all with God's plan or
We can settle for less with the world's plan:*

*A love life of grace with the
disappearance of shame
or
A sex life of sin with the accompanying
guilt and shame*

*Youth who have squandered their power to love
say they are
Disappointed
Lonely
Sad
Feeling a deep sense of loss-
but the loss is hard to describe in words.
Only the healing power of Christ can save.*

*Human beings desire a love relationship
That will last.
A sure thing.*

*To be Sure.
Be Pure.*

*The goal of dating and courtship is that we learn to love and trust
and believe enough in God's action through this person
that we can commit our whole self and our whole future to God
through uniting our life to theirs.*

*The Love and Life Program is for parents, schools and parishes that want to
educate today's teens*

In God's plan for human sexuality and chastity.

My name is Coleen Kelly Mast and I am the author of three books which are part of a Program called 'Love and Life: A Christian Sexual Morality Guide for Teens'. I have developed this program after years of experience as a teacher, mother and Educational Consultant, under the guidance of the Vatican Teachings on the *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, Familiaris Consortio, and Educational Guidance in Human Love.*

INTRODUCTION

How can the Love and Life Program help parents and educators?

Love and Life is a positive, confidence-building program designed to meet the spiritual and educational needs of teenagers or preteens who are maturing physically, emotionally and psychologically into young men and women. The student book focuses on the beauty and harmony of God's plan for love and life. It helps us to recognize and understand that plan and to understand why the practice of the virtue of chastity is integral to a happy, full and successful life.

What is Chastity?

The virtue of chastity can be defined as the use of our human sexuality within the beauty of God's plan for creation. Chastity is the virtue that frees love from selfishness and aggressiveness. Chastity includes sexual self-control, and is enriched by grace. The teachings in the Love and Life Program recognize that our sexuality was created by God and given to us by God. Sexuality, therefore, means more than our individual physical appearance. It is a part of our entire being and it pervades our thoughts, personalities and relationships for all of our lives. As a gift from God, sexuality as lived through the virtue of chastity can help your teen come to know the fullness of God's love. On the other hand, sexuality can also be used as a way of rejecting God's love. This course helps us to understand the difference between accepting God and rejecting Him. Chastity is part of God's plan for each person. Chastity allows us to be good stewards of God's precious gift of love, in view of giving ourselves back to Him through our vocation to marriage or celibacy.

What role do the parents and educators play?

The Love and Life Program encourages the parent to be the primary sexuality educator of your child, as has always been taught by the Catholic Church. Through the parish or school, the program assists parents in their role by providing proper catechesis as well as an atmosphere which supports Catholic family values. The parent is the one who is in the best position on a daily basis to show their child that the love of God and a life of virtue are the foundation of mature human sexuality. The Love and Life Program gives parishes, parents and schools a tool to communicate this with teens, whether or not the adults in their lives have ever learned this message from their own parents. The message of chastity gives teens the confidence to enjoy God's gift of life without all the sexual and romantic problems that can hinder emotional, psychological and spiritual growth.

What is the basic message of the text?

God is love. He loves us, created us in His image, and has a beautiful plan for our lives that we are free to live out or reject. The secular world has a different plan; that is, to keep us shallow, sensual and superficial. God's plan offers true freedom, growth and holiness that come through sacrifice. God's plan includes the joy of fulfillment. The world offers gratification now, but misery later. The family and the Church will help and guide us to live God's plan now and later.

The use of our sexual gifts as the physical expression of love is discussed in the context of the sacrament of marriage. Since marriage is a relatively distant future event for most teens, understanding the role of sexuality outside of marriage is more immediate. Love and Life focuses on healthy, wholesome attitudes toward personal growth; friendships, dating and activities that help teenagers grow into more mature and responsible adults.

Why and where should this program be used?

The education of youth and parents on the value of chastity has been strongly encouraged by the Church. In light of the culture's obsession with sexual pleasure and misuse of sexuality, education in chastity has become an urgent

need for one's soul, happiness and health. Love and Life meets this need in a positive and concrete way. The program can be used at home, in school, in parent-teen discussion groups, retreats or in a parish. It should always involve the parent of a teen. If someone outside the home administers the student discussions in the parish, school or study group, that person should believe, live and be able to defend the Church's teachings on sexual morality. The parents should read the student book before their teen, and then accompany their child through the course with this parent manual, the student workbook and home discussion questions.

The value of chastity is seriously challenged by our contemporary society. People are often treated as objects of pleasure. The exploitation of sex in television, film, advertising, internet and other media communicates casual values of sexual expression as simply a plaything or toy. By equating sex with pleasure and nothing more, the media loses sight of the beauty of our human sexuality as a means of expressing the commitment of lasting love through the sharing of life-giving powers. The culture reduces a sacred form of personal union to a common bodily activity. By presenting the joys and freedom of chastity as more meaningful and appealing than the empty fantasy of "free sex", we can help to prevent the problems created by sexual license and pass on to our youth the fullness of the gift of love and life. Because of the constant bombardment of the negative messages of the culture, parents must be watchful and diligent before and after this course for the sake of their child's future.

Why can't I we just let teens learn from their friends or school?

Parishes, Catholic Schools and parents cannot ignore education for chastity because we are not just talking about sexual information. What is at stake here is the truth of the human person and the meaning of human sexuality. Also at stake is the human dignity of your son or daughter, as well as their future vocation and their eternal happiness.

The responsibility to guide our youth in the full development of their human sexuality is clearly stated in the Encyclical of Pope John Paul II entitled Familiaris Consortio:

[CIT]In view of the close links between the sexual dimension of the person and his or her ethical values, education must bring the children to knowledge of and respect for the moral norms as the necessary and highly valuable guarantee for responsible personal growth in human sexuality.

For this reason the Church is firmly opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex in formation dissociated from moral principles. That would merely be an introduction to the experience of pleasure and a stimulus leading to the loss of serenity--while still in the years of innocence--by opening the way to vice (Familiaris Consortio, no. 37).[END]

A recent Church document by the Pontifical Council for the Family, The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality reminds us that “Parents are rich in an educative potential which no one else possesses.”

“The church has always affirmed that parents have the duty and the right to be the first and the principal educators of their children (p.4)

“In the framework of educating the young person for self-realization and self-giving, formation in chastity implies the collaboration first and foremost of the parents, as is the case with formation for the other virtues such as temperance, fortitude and prudence.”

In another church document, Educational Guidance in Human Love, the Church puts emphasis on a positive and prudent education:

[CIT]The harmonious development of the human person progressively reveals in each of us the image of a child of God. “True education aims at the formation of the human person with respect to his ultimate goal” (Vatican Council II: Gravissimum Educationis, no. 1). Treating Christian education, Vatican Council II drew attention to the necessity of offering “a positive and prudent sex education” to children and youth (Educational Guidance in Human Love, Art 1).[END]

The teachings of the Church remind us of our true nature, that we are created in the image of God. They urge us toward our ultimate goal of holiness, being more like God. A positive and prudent sex education helps us reflect on our true nature and helps each of us reach our ultimate goal, eternal ecstasy heaven! As parents, we have the responsibility to instill in our children the understanding of our true natures and our purpose in life.

Working through the Love and Life Program will help you to fulfill your responsibility to your teenagers, while communicating with them in a way that is open, genuine, truthful and even fun.

“The religious formation of the parents themselves, in particular solid catechetical preparation of adults in the truth of love, builds the foundations of a mature faith that can guide them in the formation of their own children. This adult catechesis enables them not only to deepen their understanding of the community of life and love in marriage, but also helps them learn how to communicate better with their own children.” Par. 134. *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*.

The Love and Life Student Workbook, Parent Guide and Teacher Manual are tools that can help Catholic adults fulfill their obligation to educate themselves, their children and the teens in the community for the fulfillment of self-giving love.

Parent SECTION I: INNOCENT BUT NOT IGNORANT

Quite often we hear from adults today,

“My parents never talked to me about sex, and I did just fine. Why can’t we just do the same? “

This question reflects the sentiments many feel when considering their own introduction to human sexuality. Somehow, without any formal instruction or counseling, people may have learned the biology they needed to know. However, adults who received their sex education from the culture have missed out on the truth and meaning behind human sexuality. They often have difficulty finding the words to explain or defend the teachings of the Church they had never been taught.

Unfortunately, in the time span of one or two generations, the attitudes of our society toward sex have been altered dramatically. The exploitation of sex for personal gain and pleasure has become all too common, as is evident every day on television, in movies, in popular music, in magazines, in advertising and

elsewhere. Here, sex is devoid of even the hint of the purpose of human love as a part of God's plan, and our children are subject to this exposure on an ongoing basis.

The Church has recognized this danger and tells us the following:
 [CIT]Silence is not a valid norm of conduct in this matter, above all when one thinks of the "hidden persuaders" which use insinuating language. Their influence today is undeniable: it is up to parents, therefore, to be alert not only to repair the harm caused by inappropriate and injurious interventions, but above all to inform opportunely their own children, offering them a positive and convincing education (Educational Guidance in Human Love, p. 106).[END]

Empower Teens with the Truth

As our children approach adolescence they are preparing to face the world of public school or even neighbors and co-workers with worldly views. One of the tasks of adolescent growth is to find your place in society. This is a frightening thought in a hedonistic and secular world. We need to empower our teens with the information in the *Love and Life Student Workbook*, and considerable doses of the information in the *Love and Life Parent Guide*. We want our children to be confident in knowing that they possess God's truth of human sexuality; whether it is biological, emotional, psychological, social or spiritual.

What a task in today's culture!

Parents today need to repair the harm done to their children by our promiscuous, self-indulgent culture. At the same time they must be positive and convincing in showing that sexuality is sacred and good when used in accord with God's plan. This isn't easy. However, it can be done, *with God's help*. It can be done by teaching our youth about God's plan and motivating them to be Christ-like in their expression of sexuality in accordance with their age, maturity and state in life. It can be God with God's grace, as we continue to pray with and for our children.

With this in mind, let's challenge ourselves to answer the following questions:

- What are our goals for education in human sexuality and chastity?
- What does it mean to educate in a positive and prudent way?

- What benefits does chastity education provide for the family?

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

Educating our youth in human sexuality could be done for many reasons, some better than others. Here are several:

- 1) To get them married before they get pregnant.
- 2) To make sure they know the correct names of each reproductive organ.
- 3) To know what is right or wrong in the use of their sexuality.
- 4) To have loving, healthy and holy attitudes about sex and its use throughout their lives.
- 5) To provide them with the freedom to answer God's call to their vocations, whether to the married, single or religious life.

If our goal is only avoiding unwed pregnancy, we've only just begun. With merely a superficial mindset, people would try to justify the use of harmful contraceptives. The trouble with this goal is that fornication, not pregnancy, is a sin. Protecting our teens from the consequences of their actions is not enough. As parents, we have an obligation to do more.

If number two is our goal, we can leave it up to the biology teacher. Since many of us don't remember the clinical names of our anatomy, we may think that a textbook can do a better job than we can. However, the simple study of anatomy does nothing to impart the values we hold as spiritual beings created in the image and likeness of God. The Church warns us to avoid sex education for the mechanics of sex that does not have truth and meaning in it. Discussing intimate topics at home – where they should be – can help us become closer to our teens during these important years of formation. These family bonds help us stay in touch and guide our teens toward a healthy and holy sexuality. Sociologists refer to these family bonds as “connectedness,” a secret weapon of parents trying to form their children in the faith.

Goal number three, knowing what is right and wrong, means that teens must have clear guidelines in order to be secure in their relationships. However, they also need to know why and how to choose God's plan, and need some

motivation to do so. It helps to have a higher purpose in mind, such as truly trying to please God, so that we can come to know the joy of His life-giving and life-saving love. Youth need the spiritual guidance of knowing they have God's love and grace to help them. They need the support of their parents to live out the guidelines of real love.

By going further and helping them to develop healthy and loving attitudes toward human sexuality and providing them with the freedom to answer God's call to their particular vocation, we can accomplish all of the aims we have discussed. In other words, by directing our efforts toward the higher, more spiritual and self-fulfilling goals, we will also satisfy the more basic needs of educating our teens.

The Vatican Document, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, teaches us these higher objectives:

“Educating Children for Chastity strives to achieve three objectives:

- a) to maintain in the family a positive atmosphere of love, virtue and respect for the gifts of God, in particular the gift of life;
- b) to help children to understand the value of sexuality and chastity in stages, sustaining their growth through enlightening word, example and prayer;
- c) to help them understand and discover their own vocation to marriage or to consecrated virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven in harmony with and respecting their attitudes and inclinations and the gifts of the spirit.” T & M par. 22

THE BENEFITS OF EDUCATION FOR CHASTITY

While educating our teens in the virtue of chastity, we can prepare them to love God for a lifetime and seek his will for their life. Positive steps toward reaching the goals of a healthy, holy sexuality include: a) helping them develop a personal relationship with God through prayer;

- b) teaching our children to understand and master their feelings and desires;
- c) challenging them to practice doing good for others, unselfishly
- d) guiding them in developing healthy friendships and

d) motivating them to save sexual pleasure until it can be experienced in the beauty of the commitment of Christian marriage.

We want our children to have the freedom to choose their vocation in life without the confusion, complications and bondage that teens get if they choose a self-centered life and/or participate in sexually arousing activity outside of marriage. We want them to know and live real self-giving love.

Chastity is freedom.

We want our children to enjoy the gift of their sexuality within marriage, if that is their vocation. In this way they can bring Christ with them to their marriage and reflect His unselfish love to their future spouse. If their call is to single or religious life, it is just as important to have an understanding of the meaning of human sexuality and chastity. Through the practice of chastity, they will come to appreciate their power to love and be loved in a fully human, though not physical, way. They will be free to focus their all their love on God and His people.

WHAT DOES A POSITIVE AND PRUDENT EDUCATION IN SEXUALITY REALLY MEAN?

Our Baptism as Catholics calls us to a deeper education in sexuality than teaching teens the mere facts about avoiding diseases and teen pregnancy.

“In a positive and prudent way parents will carry out what the fathers of the Second Vatican Council requested: ‘It is important to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise; in this way they will be able to engage in honorable courtship and enter upon marriage of their own.’” Par 94 of *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, and also in *Familiaris Consortio*,²⁸ and *Gaudium et Spes*, 16.

The words “positive” and “prudent” occur frequently in Church documents when describing sex education. Let’s examine what they mean.

Positive education affirms goodness and truth. God is Truth. His plan is truth. Our youth today are hungry for truth. In an age of incessant exaggeration and distortion in advertising, it is refreshing to hear the truth. Following God’s

plan of chastity frees us and enables us to develop the other skills needed in relationships and in successful marriages, such as the art of verbal communication. Our approach to moral teaching must be positive and affirmative, not merely defensive or apologetic. We need to tell our teens the truth, clearly and lovingly.

Our role is to teach faith, not doubt. By demonstrating to youth a positive attitude toward God and His loving plan for us, we will enable teens to grasp the strength of God's plan and our confidence in him, so that our teens can accept it as their own. By showing them the "whys" of living a virtuous life, we share with them the beauty of our Christian morality and the joy in living that Jesus taught us.

Prudent means "with good judgment". We need to use care and discretion in sharing sexual information with our children. As a gift of God, our sexuality must be respected and cherished as the beautiful gift that it is. Slang expressions or the language of the streets are inappropriate. If we want our children to respect their sexuality, we must speak of it with respect ourselves. It is our own good judgment in language, dress and behavior that show them that we are happiest when we accept and reflect God's love for us.

Introducing

The Love and Life Teacher, Parent and Student Guides

The Love and Life Teacher manual is designed for use by leaders in a church based program or by teachers in a religious education setting as they guide the teens and parents through an understanding of sexual morality. Parents who use the program at home may also want to use the teacher manual in addition to the Parent Guide. The Parent Guide is essential reading for teachers as well as parents. The background information on the role of parents and on Catholic morality is helpful to leaders, teachers and parents. All information on delicate personal, biological and moral matters is included in the Parent Guide for parents to teach at home, in accordance with recent instruction given by the Pontifical Council for the Family. The teacher manual also includes lesson plans, discussion questions and background in Catholic Teachings that will educate and form the teachers who form the students. As a parish based or school based program, the Love and Life: A Christian Sexual Morality Guide for Teens has four goals:

1. To present the virtue of chastity as possible, livable and good.
2. To educate and motivate teens to develop a life of Christian love and chastity with the help of God's grace.
3. To guide teens toward Christian maturity.
4. To provide a framework for parents of teens to share this information with their adolescent, forging a bond of communication regarding the issues of love and life.

Philosophy of Teacher Manual use in School Program

The sexual misinformation bombarding young people today has led to a greater need for true and clear programs in chastity formation. At the junior high and early high school levels, most students are still not adults psychologically, although many appear physically mature. This stage of life is just as confusing to the teens as it can be to the adults who are responsible for guiding them. Their delicate and still immature psyches need special prayer and guidance so that the individual's opportunities for growth as a whole person can be protected and encouraged.

Many young teens are extremely vulnerable to persuasion--whether positive or negative. The enthusiasm and sincerity of the instructor regarding our beautiful Church teachings is a key to acceptance by the student. At this sensitive stage of development, adolescents are readily able to recognize truth, but it is important to present it clearly and sincerely.

"Those who are called to help parents in educating their children for love must be disposed and prepared to teach in conformity with the authentic moral doctrine of the Catholic Church." The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, hereafter, T&M, no. 146.

[CIT]The mature personality of the teachers, their training and psychological balance strongly influence their pupils. An exact and complete vision of the meaning and value of sexuality and a peaceful integration within the personality itself are indispensable for teachers in constructive education (Educational Guidance in Human Love, hereafter EG, Art. 79). [END]

The Love and Life Parent Manual includes the following contents:

Introduction to Love and Life Parent Guide

Parent Section I: INNOCENT BUT NOT IGNORANT

Sex Education: What Are Our Goals?

A Positive and Prudent Education

Atmosphere in the Home for Teaching Chastity

Benefits for the Family

Parents Growing in Confidence to Represent Christ

Parent Section II: Unit by Unit

Love and Life--Themes and Concepts

Topics for Home Discussion

Family Activities

Parent Teen Questionnaires

Parent Section III: For Adults Only--X, R or PG-13?

Biology of the Reproductive System

Questions teens might ask

Abuses of Love and Life

Masturbation

Cohabitation

Pornography

Contraception

Voluntary Permanent Sterilization

Homosexual Activity

Technological Human Reproduction

Parent Section IV: Education for a Lifetime:

What We Can Do as Parents

The Ladies Room: Modesty, Mouthy-ness and Moodiness

Men of Honor: Manners, Macho and Impulsiveness (The Good, the Bad and the Ugly)

How Do You Know If Your Teen is Ready to Date?

Giving Directions for Dating

What to Do When Teens Fail

Suggestions for Parents' Further Reading

Love and Life Student Workbook

The Love and Life Student Guide is divided up into four units that covers the following themes:

Student Guide Themes and Concepts

UNIT ONE: A Plan for Our Happiness	<u>Chapters</u> 1 What's It All About?	<u>Key Concepts</u> Love, life and chastity
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<p>God created us in His image, male and female, with beauty and purpose. Although we are sinners, Jesus Christ has provides us with the means to be virtuous lovers of God and neighbor.</p>	<p>2 Putting Things in Order 3 The Great Break-Up 4 The Great Make-Up 5 The Real Source and the Real Force</p>	<p>God’s Plan vs. the Secular World Original sin and its effects Salvation through Jesus Christ Church: belonging, grace and guidance</p>
<p>UNIT TWO: GOD’S GIFTS God’s loving plan for us includes family, friends, and growing in the virtues. Our responsibility is to keep God in the center of our lives and to use our free will to do good. Chastity is a necessary virtue.</p>	<p>6 Male and Female He Created Them 7 A Life of Virtue 8 A Life of Love 9 A Life of Friendship 10 A Life of Emotional Maturity 11 Put Yourself in the Driver’s Seat – with Self-Mastery!</p>	<p>Complementarity of the sexes, appreciation of sex differences God-given dignity, our unique gifts and struggles Christian love in action Qualities of friendship, good clean fun Feelings, behavior, romance and attraction Sexual self-control; needs vs. desires</p>
<p>UNIT THREE: “THE GREAT RACE” The goal of our life is to be Christ-like. In order to truly enjoy our dating years, we must develop modesty, purity and virtue in thoughts and actions. Being set on our goal gives us courage to resist temptation, admit our failures, seek forgiveness and stay on the track to holiness.</p>	<p>12 The Starting Line 13 Hurdles on the Track to Holiness 14 Modesty: A Good “Put-On” 15 The Chastity Generation 16 Nature Never Forgives 17 Close Encounters of the Best Kind 18 The Saints Come Marching In</p>	<p>Freedom, conscience, laws and choices Temptation Modesty and purity Dating behavior, infatuation & love Natural consequences of sins against chastity Guilt, penance; Eucharist as nourishment The community of role models--saints</p>
<p>UNIT FOUR: THE CALL TO SERVE CHRIST IN LOVE The virtue of chastity provides real freedom to answer our life’s calling.</p>	<p>19 Let Me Get That Call 20 To Love and Honor . . . Till Death 21 Love and Life: The Heavenly Bond 22 God is Pro-Life and</p>	<p>Vocations Sacramentality of marriage God’s plan of Love-giving and Life-giving, Natural Family Planning Being pro-life</p>

<p>God provides the guidance and strength we need to live out His call with love.</p>	<p>Pro-Love 23 Do It for God; He's Done It for You 24 Take the Pledge for Purity</p>	<p>Challenge and review Public commitment to purity</p>
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Use of the Program

Parochial School

The twenty-four lessons of Love and Life can be implemented as a six- to eight-week program for junior high or early high school students. It can be placed within the religion curriculum because it is designed to help young people development the virtue of chastity in the context of the Catholic faith. The accompanying Parent Guide is made for use in the home, containing the personal information that is best taught in a private setting.

Parish Program with Parents and Teens

The division of the program into four units lends itself ideally to a four- or five-part program for parents and teens as a retreat, weekend event, or weekly meetings for a month.

Catechetical Instruction

With its twenty-four chapters, the program can easily fit in with Catechetical instruction or preparation for Confirmation. One chapter could be covered each week. The exercises and activities in each chapter alleviate the need for teachers to design their own exercises. The program could be implemented in eight weeks as well; covering one whole unit every two weeks and having students work at home with their parents during the time between.

Retreats

The material and some exercises are ideal for use on retreats or in youth groups. Since spiritual development is essential to the success of the program, retreats would offer valuable reinforcement. The actual practice of prayer and meditation should accompany the program throughout.

Home/Family

Love and Life should also be implemented on an individual basis, with parent and teen working together, utilizing the Student Guide and the Parent Guide.

How can I obtain the Program Materials and more information?

The Love and Life Program Materials are available from Ignatius Press at www.ignatius.com or at Coleen Kelly Mast's website, www.sexrespect.com or 1-877-6RESPECT (1-877-673-7732), where you can also find materials that teach

abstinence from a secular health perspective that does not offend the Catholic faith.

Let's go out and spread the good news about God's great plan for love!

Coleen Kelly Mast came to national prominence in the mid-1980s due to her pioneering work in chastity education, which began with a successful class on Christian sexual morality she taught at a local Catholic high school in Illinois. Her "Love and Life" published by Ignatius Press and "Sex Respect" education programs published by Respect Incorporated are available via her website www.sexrespect.com. She assisted with the writing of the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops document on Human Sexuality Education in 1990, and in 1996, Mast was invited to the Vatican by the Pontifical Council for the Family for an in-depth study of "Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality" Document when it was released. The U.S. federal government funded a pilot study of Mast's abstinence program in 1985, leading to debates on national television shows including "Oprah" and "Geraldo", with Planned Parenthood representatives and others. She has also appeared on "Mother Angelica Live". **Coleen Kelly Mast** currently hosts a call in Catholic advice radio show called "The Doctor Is In" produced by Ave Maria Radio. Mast is married and is the mother of five.