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The Perception Of Religion Teachers Regarding The Effect Of Religious Education Curriculum On The Self-Esteem Of Adolescent Girls

Florence S. Pisano
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**THE PERCEPTION OF RELIGION TEACHERS REGARDING THE EFFECT OF
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM ON THE SELF-ESTEEM OF
ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

BY

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University**

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ABSTRACT

The Perception of Religion Teachers Regarding the Effect of Religious Education Curriculum on the Self-Esteem of Adolescent Girls

This study has examined the perception of religion teachers regarding the effect of religious education curriculum on the self-esteem of adolescent girls. The research fell within the paradigm of qualitative research, and it was designed as a case study, based on feminist research methods. The twelve subjects involved in this study were teachers of religion in Catholic high schools that were both co-educational and all girls high schools. The schools were located within the diocese of Paterson, Trenton, and the Archdiocese of Newark. Their backgrounds were varied; some were laypeople, some were vowed religious women, and others were ordained men. The teachers participated in a one-time, one-hour interview. There were four sets of open-ended questions that explored the topics of self-esteem, non-inclusive versus inclusive language, metaphors for God, and women in the curriculum. The participants' responses were analyzed with the specific purpose of seeking evidence regarding certain themes and categories related to self-esteem in adolescent girls and religious education curriculum. Religious education is an influencing factor in the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. Based on an analysis of the teachers' perceptions, the researcher concluded that there is a direct relationship between the use of non-inclusive versus inclusive language, metaphors for God, women in the curriculum and the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. Although the participants were aware of the importance of inclusive language, metaphors for God, and women in the curriculum, their responses led the researcher to conclude that

not nearly enough is being done to help young women grow in self-esteem, and in some cases, what is being taught could hinder the development of self-esteem in young women. Religious education needs to be transformed so that curriculum is inclusive of women and their experiences. Unless our education responds to writing curriculum is experience-based, young women will not be exposed to a religious education experience that will allow them to grow in self-esteem.

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CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

This research investigated the perception of religion teachers regarding how self-esteem in adolescent girls might be affected by the religious education curriculum in a Catholic high school. The researcher was exposed to a body of literature which indicated that adolescence is increasingly a time of psychological crisis for girls. The literature also suggested that women's self-esteem is affected by religion, particularly, non-inclusive language, predominate use of male metaphors for God, and the absence of women in the telling of the Christian story.

Various schools of psychology have omitted the truth of women's experience thereby excluding the reality and truth of women's experience. Carol Gilligan (1982) claims in, In A Different Voice:

The disparity between women's experience and the representation of human development, noted throughout the psychological literature, has generally been seen to signify a problem in women's development. Instead, the failure of women to fit existing models of human growth may point to a problem in the representation, a limitation in the conception of human condition, an omission of certain truths about life (p.1-2).

Religious education curriculum based on patriarchal theology and worship is

also responsible for omitting the experiences and voices of women. In discussing patriarchal theology and worship Jann Aldredge-Clanton (2001) writes in In Whose Image? “They have contributed to low self-esteem in women by presenting the Ideal in masculine terms. If God, the Ultimate Norm, is clothed in masculine language, it is inevitable that women will feel somehow deviant” (p.78).

The Statement of the Problem

A person who exhibits self-esteem has a sense of pride and believes they are capable of obtaining increased personal satisfaction. Charles Shelton (1991) in, Morality And The Adolescent, states self-esteem depends on two things, ample parental care, and the child’s mastery of their surroundings. He goes on to state, however, that the advent of adolescence is a period in which self-esteem is threatened, because during this period the adolescent evaluates and questions who they are.

Thomas Groome (1998) claims that to be fully human, one must ask the ultimate human question, “Who are we—really?” and “Who is the real me?” Thomas Groome (1998) in Education For Life, claims that the manner in which we answer this question leads us to “our anthropology, literally, our ‘understanding’ (logos) of the ‘human person’ (anthropos)—what we think of the ‘the condition’ we are in” (p.72). Groome (1998) states that the manner in which educators understand what it means to be a human “being” will influence all facets of their curriculum—“what, how, and where they teach, and what they are teaching for” (1998). Groome (1998) proposes that the answer to the vital “what-for” question is so that “learners might become fully alive human beings who contribute to a society of the common good” (1998). Based on the writings of Aldredge-Clanton and Shelton, (2001), (1998) it is critical to the self-esteem of women that

religious education be inclusive of women's experience in answering the question of "Who is the real me?" as proposed by Groome.

Anne Carr (1986) makes a direct connection between the question of what it means to be human and how women address that question. She suggests that one of the most important issues in feminist theology is the question of what it means to be human as defined within Christian theology. She argues that certain humans have defined the "nature" of being human, and in the past that has been white, western, males. In order for women to grow in self-esteem they must answer the question "Who are we—really?" through the experiences that have meaning in their lives (Carr, 1986, p.51). The writings and works of Aldredge-Clanton (2001), Shelton (1998) and Carr (1986) are examples among the many theologians and psychologists who help us understand the need for religious education to be inclusive of women's experience, so that women may better answer the question of "Who is the real me?"

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the perception of religion teachers regarding how self-esteem in adolescent girls might be affected by the religious education curriculum in a Catholic high school. The specific areas regarding self-esteem and curriculum that the researcher was concerned with were: non-inclusive versus inclusive language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women in the curriculum.

The Research Question

Does a relationship exist between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the religious education curriculum offered in a Catholic high school?

Subsidiary Questions

1. Is there a relationship between self-esteem in female students and the use of non-inclusive versus inclusive language in religious education curriculum?
2. Is there a relationship between self-esteem in female students and the use of predominantly male imagery used as metaphors for God in religious education curriculum?
3. Is there a relationship between self-esteem in female students and the “telling of the story” when female role models from church history are included?

Limitations of the Study

The research of this study was limited due to the following reasons. First, the participants selected were from Catholic high schools located in three dioceses of the State of New Jersey. Second, the participants had a variety of backgrounds regarding their qualifications for teaching religion. Third, the study took place within one semester. Fourth, the religious education curriculums taught by the participants' varied. Fifth, the research is based on the work of white, western, middle class feminist thinkers. Sixth, some of the data was collected at the participants schools. Finally, other factors may contribute to the students self-esteem.

The Definition of Terms

1. Feminist: A feminist is one who is concerned with issues that lead to an understanding of ways to eliminate the oppression of women. In terms of mainstream curriculum, feminists ask questions such as: “For whom? According to whom?” The feminist contends with “malesteam” curriculum by disclosing how it is oppressive to women and abolishing that oppression (Warren, 1998, p.47).

2. Inclusive language: Some other terms used to refer to inclusive language are: non-sexist language, gender-fair language, gender neutral language, or non-gender specific language. Inclusive language is language that represents gender in a fair manner. It minimizes concern about gender in the subject matter, and allows one to focus on what the person is doing rather than on whether the person is male or female (Redfern, 1999).

3. Non-inclusive language: Included among the many forms of non-inclusive language is language that ignores women, language that defines women narrowly, and language that depreciates women (Weatherall, 1998). Non-inclusive language is also referred to as sexist language. For the purposes of the research, non-inclusive language and sexist language were used interchangeably.

4. Religious education curriculum: Throughout this study, the term religious education curriculum was based on Thomas Groome's (1998) definition. Groome proposes three guidelines for religious curriculum:

Guideline #1: The intended learning outcome is nurturing disciples of Jesus Christ, people who follow his "way" through a community of disciples—the Church—in the midst of the world.

Guideline #2: Christian faith is to be lived and living, whole and wholesome.

Guideline #3: The full scope of Christian religious education is to inform, form, and transform people in such lived and living, whole and wholesome Christian faith (pp.252-253).

5. Self-esteem: Coopersmith (as cited in Mullin, 1997) believes that self-esteem refers to self-evaluation. The concept of self results from the image one maintains of oneself founded on the perception of others. Coopersmith (as cited in Mullin, 1997)

identifies four aspects of self-esteem, namely, capability, significance, powerfulness and worth.

6. Women's studies: Sylvia Stalker (1998) in, "Women and Education: Women as Students and Teachers, and in the Curriculum" refers to Ashcraft defining women's studies as:

the field that studies women (e.g., their place in society, their behavior), that studies the accomplishments of women (e.g., the literature they have written, the art they have created), and that studies the world from a different perspective, using sometimes different methods than those typically used... (1998, p.222).

For the purposes of this study, women's studies and feminist studies will be used interchangeably.

The Importance of the Study

Sister Rosine Hammett, Sister Carroll Julian, and Brother Loughlan Sofield (1990) in, Design For Wholeness, refer to self-esteem as a major issue in determining whether one will find the experiences of living and working with others as life giving experiences. They claim that self-esteem is a basic need, and refer to the work of Abraham Maslow (as cited in Hammett, Julian, and Sofield, 1990) who placed self-esteem at the top of his hierarchical pyramid. Self-esteem must be achieved before one can arrive at self-actualization (1990).

The authors go on to claim that human needs are critical for life and existence. Sickness or death results when one's needs are not met. A person "cannot continue to exist, to grow, or to be life-giving," (Hammett, Julian, and Sofield, 1990, p.83) if they do not receive the minimum requirements of various needs, including self-esteem.

Although self-esteem in boys is a concern, it has been generally accepted that girls typically have lower self-esteem than boys. The landmark study conducted by the American Association of University Women (1995) and the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, How Schools Shortchange Girls: A Study of Major Findings on Girls and Education, indicates that some problems related to girls and self-esteem may be linked to schools. The report states that boys and girls enter school roughly equal in abilities that can be measured. There are some measured areas that show girls are ahead of boys. However, twelve years after entering school, girls have fallen behind boys in various areas, including self-esteem (1995).

The AAUW report stresses the power of curriculum. The report states that the curriculum is the instrument used by schools to deliver a central message. It is responsible for the motivation and engagement, effort, growth, and development of students. Curriculum can provide incomplete and inaccurate messages by not reflecting the personal experience and diversity of student lives and cultures. The report claims that the information provided will be incomplete and inaccurate if the curricular materials do not reflect the diversity of students' lives and cultures. According to this report, girls have been shortchanged by our educational institutions due to school texts that have omitted women, their experiences and stories (1995). Although the report does not address the problem of religious education curriculum, many of the issues concerned in the report can be applied to religious education.

One concern regarding self-esteem and young women within religious education curriculum is the use of non-inclusive language. Feminist theologians have been essential to disclosing non-inclusive language found throughout religion. There is

agreement among feminist theologians regarding non-inclusive language, however, they are not in agreement that language reform is necessary, or how to deal with the problem. This study will focus on the group that believes there is a relationship between language and reality. Among those who support this view is Anne Pauwels (1998). She concludes that "language influences, or even stronger, determines, how an individual constructs and views reality" (p.83). Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf landmark study of languages, (as cited in Pauwels, 1998) claims, the primary way one thinks occurs through language (Pauwels, 1998). The work of Sapir and Whorf (as cited in Chandler, 2000) also states that one views both the physical and social world through the language they hear and use. (Chandler, 2000). Those who believe in the importance of inclusive language, see the use of non-inclusive language as leading to sexist attitudes and behavior.

During the course of the last century, feminism was the cause of several paradigm shifts in society. Language reform was one of many feminist issues that was responsible for a paradigm shift. Feminist language reform involves "the efforts, the initiatives and actions of feminists around the world to change the biased representations of the sexes in language. The bias concerns the portrayal of men as the norm and women as the appendage or as the exception in language" (Pauwels, 1998, p.92). Feminist language reform is critical in religious language because one finds biased representations of the sexes throughout religious language. This bias is harmful in many areas, such as the mistranslation of scripture, predominantly male imagery used for God, and the exclusion of women from religious stories. Some problems found in the mistranslation of scripture include: the exclusive use of the pronoun "he" to refer to men and women, "brothers" referring to men and women, and the use of "man" when referring to humankind.

Perhaps one of the greatest problems in religious language is the exclusive portrayal of God as male. This imagery leads to the assumption that being male is the norm, and therefore superior to being female. Women and men both need to believe that all people reflect the imago Dei. Until this happens, women's self-esteem will be in jeopardy and women will remain subservient, not only in the Catholic Church but also in society.

While the church teaches that the home and the primary caretakers of a child are the first religious educators, the Catholic school and or church may be the second. If in fact language influences, and therefore may determine how an individual constructs and views reality, language used in religious education curriculum will then influence and determine how women come to answer the ultimate human question "Who am I?" In order to help women grow in self-esteem and take their place in church and society, we must make all curriculums inclusive.

Although research has been done in the area of curriculum and self-esteem in adolescent girls, there is no well developed research which examines the effect of religious education on the self-esteem of adolescent girls. In addition, the previous research was conducted in either private (non-Catholic) or public schools. The following research was developed in order to fill in the gap regarding religious education curriculum and self-esteem in adolescent girls. The goal of this research was to gain an understanding of religion teachers' perspective of how religious education affects self-esteem in adolescent girls. The three questions regarding religious education that this research was concerned with answering were: (1) does sexist language used in religious education affect the self-esteem in adolescent girls? (2) does the predominant use of male

metaphors for God affect the self-esteem of adolescent girls? (3) does the absence of women in the telling of the story affect the self-esteem in adolescent girls?

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The literature review used for this research was divided into two main areas: (1) the concept of self-esteem, and (2) religious education curriculum. Within the topic of religious education there were four specific issues reviewed; the use of non-inclusive language, metaphors for God, women in the telling of the story, and the transformation of the curriculum. The literature reviewed was predominantly from the writings of white, western, feminist thinkers, encompassing areas of psychology, linguistics, theology, and education.

Studies have shown that students are deeply affected by classes they have taken in women's studies (Macalister, 1999). Heather Macalister (1999) in, "Women's Studies Classes and Their Influence on Student Development," asserts that students who take courses in women's studies exhibit changes as a result of these classes, including changes in:

self-expression, sense of commitment and responsibility, critical thinking, empowerment, and acknowledgment of diversity. Students have been found to become more liberal in their attitudes toward women, and their feminist identity, job motivation, job certainty, and self-esteem to increase, after taking a women's studies class (p. 283).

Macalister (1999) points out that women's studies classes are found in the same subject areas as traditional classes, including psychology, history, and philosophy.

Although she does not mention theology, one will also find women's studies listed among theology classes. The difference between women's studies and the traditional course is that gender is the core focus of the course.

Macalister (1999) points out that relatively little research has investigated the psychological changes in students who took part in women studies. However, there have been some studies done in this area. Stake and Gerner (as cited in Macalister, 1999) explored changes in the self-esteem of students who took women's studies courses. The result of their study showed that students had higher posttest scores on the Performance Self-Esteem Scale and that these students showed greater increases in self-esteem over time than did the controls.

Macalister (1999) concludes by stating that the literature regarding the effect of women's studies classes on student development is fairly limited, and there have been weaknesses in the qualitative methods used. However, it has been argued that women's studies classes provide students with knowledge well beyond just a mere set of facts regarding women. Students who partake in women studies classes are guided to finding and using their own voices. Lueke, Reille, and Musil, (as cited in Macalister, 1999), claim that feminist teaching allows students to convey their point of view in their own words. Musil (as cited in Macalister, 1999) also asserts that women's studies students also receive assistance in developing critical thinking skills, and they gain insight into ways to work and communicate in more effective ways with others.

Concept of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is an issue that influences the lives of all people. Carrol Saussy (1991) on pages 18-20 in, God Images and Self Esteem, refers to self-esteem as a

multifaceted quality that is associated with at least six major experiences: "(1) parental acceptance, (2) an ideology (an understanding of human life and one's place in it) that fosters self-esteem, (3) satisfying relationships, (4) competence, (5) passion for life, and (6) self-acceptance."

Saussy (1991) states that the first of these, parental acceptance is the most critical. If parents do not give adequate care, love, acceptance, and respect, the child will have a difficult time understanding their inherent worth. The work of Ana-Maria Rizzuto (1991) states the importance of the home and the primary caretaker, because this is where and how the child forms their first image of God.

After parental acceptance the child needs to create an ideology that will cultivate self-esteem. Although the parent helps the child understand the world and the child's connection to it, the child must learn to live beyond the home environment. Everything and everyone the child encounters will influence the child's ideology, including school and church.

The third element of self-esteem is the ability to form and maintain relationships that are pleasing to all involved. Feminists claim that self cannot exist unless it is in relationships. They insist that "identity is found in community" (Christ, 1989, p. 173).

Competence, the fourth aspect of self-esteem, is defined as a person's experience of success in attaining their goals. The women's movement has redefined the areas women can become competent in today. This includes new career opportunities, and ways of being in the world.

The fifth element of self-esteem is passion for life. As an individual goes through the different life stages, the passions will change. Typically one's passion comes from discovering something valuable, something one aspires to achieve.

The last component of self-esteem is self-acceptance. Self-acceptance encompasses the physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and all else that constitutes an individual. Self-acceptance is perhaps the biggest problem among adolescent girls. Young women are inundated with societal standards, especially as portrayed by the media. The authors of Mother Daughter Revolution claim that it is during adolescence that "a negotiation takes place where girls trade in parts of themselves in order to become women within this culture" (Debold, Malave, and Wilson, 1993).

Saussy (1991) states that the many tasks and developmental elements will be part of a lifelong journey. She points out that over the course of history and including today women's education has taken place within a patriarchal society. It is within this patriarchal society that women have had to learn to survive as second-class citizens. They were led to believe that their only option was nurturing others. It has not been until recently that women have begun to expose the harmful effects of patriarchal society.

The AAUW (1995) study, How Schools Shortchange Girls, reported results that indicated significant declines in girls' self-esteem and self-confidence as they move from childhood to early adolescence. A survey conducted by the AAUW in 1990, found that 69 percent of boys in elementary schools and 60 percent of girls in elementary school claimed that they were "happy the way I am," the percent in high school was 46 percent for boys and only 29 percent for girls (p.19).

It is important to note that the AAUW survey discovered differences in self-esteem among girls from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In asking high school girls to respond to the statement "happy as I am," only 22 percent of white girls and 30 percent of Hispanic girls, compared to 58 percent of the black girls agreed with the statement. The report goes on to state however, that the black girls had a low level of self-esteem in academic areas.

Self-esteem declines in young women as they grow older. The AAUW (1995) report states that research traced depression in twelfth grade young women to earlier life experiences and to the stressful events associated with being young adults. Once in high school, adolescent girls are directly confronted with the conflicting expectations placed on women by society.

Self-esteem is a complex concept which requires on going studies. Educational programs need to be designed so as to consider the various backgrounds, strengths, and perspectives of young women. As many religious education programs now stand, rather than help raise self-esteem in young women, the curriculum may be detrimental to their self-esteem.

Religious Education

Archbishop Rembert Weakland in the Foreword of Maureen Gallagher's (1998), The Art of Catechesis, speaks of the difficult aspects of religious education in our day. He states that a catechist must reconcile revelation, on the one hand, and human experience, on the other. He goes on to say that revelation is given to us by God, whereas experience begins with the individual. Weakland emphasizes that faith must be lived out, it cannot remain an abstract theory (Gallagher, 1998).

In The Art of Catechesis, Maureen Gallagher (1998) refers to the catechist, the religious education teacher, as an artist. She believes this person must have the ability to combine human experiences to biblical and liturgical themes. They also must make a connection between these experiences and the saints and the church. Gallagher points out that to catechize it is imperative that one understands the patterns of growth and human development. St. Thomas Aquinas claimed, "Grace builds on nature" (as cited in Gallagher, 1998). So that a catechist can help others grow in faith, they need to understand "their natural stages of physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual growth" (p. 18).

As children enter puberty they will experience intense emotions. Frequently they will experience periods of moodiness and self-consciousness. Adolescents' faith growth is connected to the new knowledge they gain regarding religious beliefs. Adolescents are particularly attracted to new information regarding religious heroes (Gallagher, 1998). In the past, the female heroes have been absent or in the minority. The female heroes adolescent girls had to emulate were virgins and/or martyrs. Women who followed in the footsteps of virgins and/or martyrs are the exception to the rule. Women would come to sense they were inadequate since they could not or would not adhere to the model of woman offered them by their church.

Mary John Mananzan discusses in her 1991 book, The Special Nature of Women ways that the church's teachings have harmed women. Some of these teachings related to women include: the assertion that as a wife a woman is to be subordinate to her husband, identifying the worth of an unmarried woman with virginity, and then shifting her importance to her ability to reproduce once she is married. Theology often has been

based on the dichotomy of body and soul and this theology has attributed sex and sin to women. This theology has embedded a deep sense of guilt in women, so that even if raped, women feel guilty; they experience guilt if they are abused; they feel guilt if their marriage fails; and they blame themselves when their children fail. In religious teachings regarding women and role models, the church has portrayed the paradigmatic female hero, the Blessed Virgin, as passive and submissive. Not until recently has Mary come to be understood as an assertive woman of courage who accepted the role as Mother of God and who had the courage to stand at the foot of the cross (1991).

Non-Inclusive Language

Anne Pauwels in her 1998 book, Women Changing Language, discusses the necessity and types of reform required in the planning of changing language. In the section "Is linguistic action necessary or desirable?" Pauwels refers to the work of Dale Spender. Spender (as cited in Pauwels, 1998) expresses a determinist view towards language and its correlation to women's oppression:

Language helps form the limits of our reality. It is our means of ordering, classifying and manipulating the world. It is through language that we become members of a human community, that the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful, that we bring into existence the world in which we live (p.87).

Spender along with others who support the determinist view, believe that men have control of language in a patriarchal society. She states that men "name, define, encode and change meanings" (p.87). Spender (as cited in Pauwels, 1998), goes on to say that language is "man-made" (p.87) thereby creating a reality from the men's perspective.

Determinists believe the key to women's liberation is language reform. Language can create oppression or liberation. Spender believes that women need to refuse a language created by men. She encourages women to create their own meanings, and to recognize their experiences as valid.

Maria Harris (1998) writes in, Reshaping Religious Education, that human language has many purposes. In regards to teaching and language, she distinguishes three groups or families of language. She describes each family as follows:

In the first family, language is used to show someone how to get to an end that is known and can be chosen. Storytelling and preaching are two of these languages.

In the second family, language is used to heal a fragmented self so that choices are possible. Languages in this set include praise, thanks, confession, and mourning. In the third family, language is used to reflect back on the other two families. This family of language includes dialectical discussion...and academic criticism (p.34).

Harris (1998) discusses how language distinguishes human from nonhuman learning. It is with language that humans can imagine new worlds but can also coldly create violence. If the language of theology and worship is steeped in sexist language, it will be a language foreign to women's ways of understanding. Harris' explanation of the importance of language stresses the need for inclusive language in both theology and worship.

Metaphors for God

Because the Christian God has been imaged as male, Christian women have had difficulty naming who they are and the meaning of being human. Mary Catherine

Hilkert's article, "Cry Beloved Image," found in Ann O'Hara Graff's 1995 book, The Embrace of God, states that women have found it difficult to see themselves as the imago Dei because of the patriarchal interpretation of God. In the article she claims that this interpretation has legitimized men dominating women, as well as human domination of the earth. Lisa Cahill (as cited by Hilkert, 1995) states that the "image of God is the primary Christian category or symbol of interpretation of personal value" (p. 19). Cahill's theory leads one to believe that, if one can see themselves in the imago Dei, then one will have a greater ability to grow in self worth.

The church's teachings as to the basic human dignity of all persons come from the belief in the imago Dei. This teaching should challenge us as to how we think about ourselves, others, and how we are in relationship to others. David Tracy (as cited by Hilkert, 1995) writes of the implications for church and society if we believe that all people are created in the imago Dei:

Christians continue to believe that all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. They have become far more sensitive, however, to the fact that this theological indicative, in the present world, must also function as an imperative. The task of human beings, on this newer reading, is to actualize what they are potentially, and to actualize that reality in the struggle for a *not-yet* acknowledged dignity of every human person: for the need, in sum for human rights in their full social, economic, cultural, political, civic, and religious dimensions (p. 195).

Perhaps it is the social, economic, cultural, political, civic, and religious implications that keep the church and society from imaging God as female. If our imagery for God is

permitted to change from exclusively masculine to include feminine images, this change could be responsible for the fall of patriarchy. This change could also have positive implications for women and how they view themselves. Perhaps self-esteem in women would increase if women could believe that they are created in the image and likeness of God.

In the article "An image of God beyond violence," found in the December 13, 1999 edition of the National Catholic Reporter, Kathleen Fischer writes that solely male imagery for God is detrimental to the world. She states:

We are in the midst of a revolution in our understanding of what it means to be woman and man in the image of God. In the old way we were two incomplete parts of a whole. And the parts were not created equal. As father became the primary metaphor for God, patriarchy became the pattern for the universe. There were two modes of human nature, one superior and the other inferior (p.38).

Because of this belief in a dual human nature, one superior, the other inferior, men believed they had the right to "lord" over women. Fisher (1999) claims that although remote, domestic violence has vital roots in the exclusively male imaging of God. Fisher (1999) draws the same conclusion as Hilkert (1995) in connecting the exploitation of the earth to such exclusive imagery. Fisher (1999) asserts that our culture would be one of equality and mutuality if we imaged the divine as both male and female.

Anne Carr in (1988), Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience, points out that the roots of misogyny lie in the idol of a male God in heaven. This idolatry gives men on earth "authority, responsibility, power, and holiness"

(p. 138). She goes on to discuss the deeply rooted symbolism found in Christian theology, the structure of the church, and the liturgical rituals that the Christian imagination absorbs through its unconscious. From the time of childhood we receive these messages which can both harm and ostracize women. Carr (1988) believes that the consequences help no one:

Boys grow up believing that they really do – or should – represent God on earth in roles of authority, knowledge, dignity, and power. If they succeed, they reinforce structures of male superiority, both socially and privately. And if they are unable to actualize these superior roles, they consider themselves failures and succumb to aggression or depression. Girls internalize images of themselves as inferior, wrong, incomplete, guilty, unsure, incapable. The negative self-images endure, even in the wake of the contemporary women's movement with its new messages (p. 140).

Carr (1988) writes of women who report a sense of powerlessness, feeling like children, and distrustful of their own experiences and knowledge. She claims that while this male image of God may be helpful in the continuance of patriarchy, it is harmful to women in the journey toward "adult autonomy, interdependence, freedom, responsibility, bodily and sexual integrity, and self-respect – characteristics necessary for an adult and fully Christian life" (p.140).

Another area of concern due to the use of male imagery for God is the issue of ordination. Certainly women's self-esteem must be affected if the church they have membership in claims women do not have the qualifications for ordination. Although the church believes it has several reasons to exclude women from ordination, I will focus on

the issue of God as male, and Jesus the second person of the Trinity as male. Anne Carr (1988) states:

The arguments given for the exclusion of women from the ordained ministry, as for their inferior status in the life of the church – that God is revealed in predominantly masculine imagery as father in the Scriptures... God is not sexual (p.140).

The focus on the maleness of Jesus, second person of the Trinity, is also connected to the prohibition of women's ordination. According to Sandra Schneiders (1986) in, Women And The Word, the maleness of Jesus is "theologically, christologically, soteriologically, and sacramentally irrelevant" (p.3). On page 4, Schneiders (1986) states that the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith forbiddance of women's ordination, was "theologically confused if not strictly heretical." The assembly based its teaching on the fact that there was significance to the gender of Jesus. This belief precluded women from ordination; as the Congregation claimed, women as females do not resemble Christ. The patristic scholar R.A. Norris, (as cited in Schneiders, 1988) states:

The argument [against the ordination of women on the grounds that male sex is required for likeness to Christ] is virtually unprecedented. It does not in fact state any of the traditional grounds on which ordination to the presbyterate or episcopate has been denied to women. To accept this argument and its practical consequences, therefore, is not to maintain tradition but to alter it by altering its meaning (p.4).

Carr (1988) points out that most Christians come to image God by forming an analogy with the human person so that this person assumes the highest form of spiritual existence known to their experience. If we are taught that priests represent God, and if all priests are male, then the priesthood reinforces an understanding of God as being male. We can also use Carr's logic then, if Jesus' gender as male is critical, and Jesus and God are one, then God must be male. The point that the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith ignored is that it is the incarnation of Jesus that is significant, not his maleness. Young women may sit in religion classes and churches hearing about and praying to a God that they cannot relate to their life experiences. These young women are told that because they are female, unlike men they cannot represent God.

The Absence of Women

Sylvia Stalker in Donna Ashcraft's 1998 book, Women and Education: Women as Students and Teachers, and in the Curriculum, discusses how girls and women frequently are not offered the same opportunities as boys and men within the field of education. Stalker (1998) specifically mentions women being denied or limited access in particular areas of study. This point proves true in the area of theology, and women being denied the opportunity to study for ordination in the Roman Catholic Church.

Stalker (1998) discusses the "null curriculum" (p.232) as a useful concept for understanding women's place within the curriculum. We can consider the depiction of women as an "empty set" (232) when they are excluded from curriculum. Stalker (1998) gives the example of how history books that focus on leaders in politics and the military tend to place women and their stories in the null curriculum. An area of religious education curriculum which illustrates Stalker's null curriculum theory is that of

Scripture. Although women may be mentioned in scripture stories, the focus is on the male leader. An example would be the story of Moses found in the Book of Exodus. The typical religion curriculum would emphasize Moses as being the hero and leader, however, little if anything would be said about the heroes who were responsible for saving Moses' life. The two midwives Siphrah and Puah, his mother, Miriam, his sister, and the Pharaoh's daughter all make a decision to go against the Pharaoh's order to kill all the male Jewish babies. The true heroes in this story are the five women who saved Moses, yet few students know their names or story.

Transforming the Curriculum

Religious education needs to be transformed so that curriculum is inclusive of women and their experiences. Maria Harris (1998) writes in, Reshaping Religious Education, that our educational responses to writing curriculum needs to be experience-based. She states:

Our starting point is no longer some fixed and immutable list of "truths" that everyone must learn, and (especially) learn in the same way. Our starting point, instead, is a reverence for the many ways human beings approach and have been approached by the Sacred, the Divine, and the Holy, and as a result of that reverence have learned to name and to celebrate the diverse forms of teaching and learning that are ours as human beings (p.5).

A framework to develop an inclusive curriculum is described by Karen Warren (1998) in The Feminist Teaching Anthology. Warren (1998) proposes Peggy McIntosh's model, which consists of five interactive phases. McIntosh names "five phases of perception" (p.48) to consider in the development of an inclusive curriculum. Although

McIntosh uses history and biology as examples, her model can also be applied to religion.

The Five Interactive Phases are as follows:

Phase 1 Womanless _____ (history, biology)

Phase 2 Woman in _____ (history, biology)

Phase 3 Women as a problem, anomaly, or absence in _____
(history, biology)

Phase 4 Woman as _____ (history, biology)

Phase 5 _____ (history, biology) redefined/reconstructed to
include us all (p.48).

There are some limitations to McIntosh's model, particularly Phase 5. This model assumes that a goal of feminists is the eradication of all oppressive gender, race, class, age, etc., categories. Warren (1998) also mentions the obstacles to curriculum transformation. Sociologist Victor Rios (as cited by Warren, 1998) claims that there are three circumstances that oppose social change: "The change is not understood; the proposed change threatens basic security; and the proposed change is viewed by those it is intended to benefit as imposed on them" (p.49).

In spite of the limitations and obstacles one will encounter in curriculum transformation, Warren (1998) speaks of hope for a genuinely inclusive curriculum, one that will benefit all, men, women, teachers, and students. Warren ends the article by sharing her belief: "If we do so the feminist challenge to the mainstream curriculum will accomplish a philosophical miracle: It will rewrite the future" (p.56).

Summary

The literature review has depicted an understanding of self-esteem, along with problematic elements embedded within traditional religious education curriculum. Although adolescent girls may not consciously react to the problems found within traditional religious education curriculum, this study will explore the perception of religion teachers as to whether there is a relationship between religious education curriculum and the development of students' self-esteem.

CHAPTER III

Research Design

This research fell within the paradigm of qualitative research. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and religious education curriculum. The components of this research were constructed using the texts The Basics of Social Research (Babbie, 1999), Successful Dissertations and Theses (Madsen, 1992), Practical Research, Planning and Design (Leedy, 1997), Educational & Social Science Research (Kratwohl, 1998), and Feminist Methods in Social Research, (Reinharz, 1992).

Creswell (as cited in Leedy, 1997) states a qualitative study is an “inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 157). Leedy (1997) goes on to state that “qualitative research is a broad term that encompasses a variety of approaches to interpretive research” (p.157). He includes in his definition four common qualitative designs; case study, ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory (p.156).

This research was designed as a case study. Creswell (as cited in Leedy, 1997), defines a case study as a type of qualitative research in which the researcher “explores a single entity or phenomenon (‘the case’) bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time” (p. 157).

Since the purpose of this study involved female adolescents, the literature and research was based on feminist thinking. This study therefore, incorporated feminist research methods as suggested by Shulamit Reinharz (1992) in, Feminist Methods in Social Research. Shulamit Reinharz (1992) argues that there is no “politically correct” feminist method, however, there is a wide range of perspectives employed by feminists. Reinharz opens chapter one of her book by quoting Roslyn Bologh, an U.S. sociologist, as stating,

The question of difference is one with the question of identity. It is becoming the critical question for feminist theorizing in all the disciplines including social science research methods as feminists begin to question and challenge the implicit male perspective of the dominant paradigms, methodological strictures, and theoretical assumptions of the various disciplines (p.3).

In this quote, Bologh (as cited in Reinharz, 1992) suggests that there is a difference in the research methods adhered to by feminists. Reinharz (1992) claims that feminists have used existing methods, of research, but have also invented new methods. She states “Rather than there being a ‘woman’s way of knowing,’ or a ‘feminist way of doing research,’ there are women's ways of knowing” (p.4).

Because there are various definitions for feminist and feminist research methods, Reinharz (1992) suggests three straightforward definitions of feminist research methods:

1. Feminist research methods are methods used in research projects by people who identify themselves as feminist or as part of the women’s movement.
2. Feminist research methods are methods used in research published in journals that publish only feminist research, or in books that identify themselves as such.

3. Feminist research methods are methods used in research that has received awards from organizations that give awards to people who do feminist research (p.6).

Since this study was concerned with young women, and as someone who identifies herself as a feminist, along with the fact that the research involved with this study is based upon feminist thinkers, the methods employed included feminist research methodology.

The research design for this study was based on a model chain of reasoning as described by David Krathwohl (1998) in, Educational & Social Science Research.

Subjects

The subjects involved in this study were teachers of religion in Catholic high schools found in the State of New Jersey. Number of years teaching religion varied among the subjects. Teachers were both male and female. The teachers had a variety of qualifications in regard to teaching religion. Teachers were from both co-educational and all girl high schools. Teachers were laypeople, vowed religious women, and ordained men.

Situation

This study involved the researcher interviewing individual teachers of religion from both co-educational and all girl high schools. The majority of the interviews occurred at places other than the teachers' schools (i.e. parish centers) so as to protect the anonymity of the teachers. The researcher intended to interview twelve teachers from Catholic dioceses in the state of New Jersey. Prior to the interviews, the researcher met with a panel of experts. The panel of experts were not the actual subjects for the

purposes of this research. Their role was to judge the appropriateness of specific questions in the interview schedule.

In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, the researcher coded each school and teacher used in the research. The coding system identified each school by a number (1-10), and each subject by a letter (A-J).

Treatment

At the time of the interview, prior to the personal interview, the subjects was given a questionnaire asking for information regarding their personal background and experience. The questionnaire also asked them to list in order of importance, five topics in a religious education curriculum that they perceived to be beneficial or increase self-esteem in adolescent girls, and five topics they perceived to be harmful or decrease or harm self-esteem in adolescent girls.

After the subjects answered the questionnaire, the researcher asked a series of questions regarding the subject's perception of how a religious education curriculum affects a student's self-esteem. The focus of the questionnaire addressed issues of non-inclusive language, predominant use of male metaphors for God, and the absence of women in the telling of the Christian story.

Questions used for all participants were the same; however, questions were open-ended so that the response might lead to questions not originally intended by the researcher. Respondents had the opportunity for clarification and elaboration regarding their answers. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed as soon as possible.

Data Collection

Prior to the 2001 fall semester, the researcher wrote letters to the five superintendents of each Catholic diocese in the State of New Jersey (Appendix A). The superintendents were asked if they would agree to let the researcher contact the principal of high schools that were either co-educational or all girls. Two superintendents responded yes, granting permission for the study. Three superintendents did not respond, therefore, the researcher called the remaining three superintendents. One of the three superintendents granted permission for the research; two superintendents did not grant permission. The superintendents who granted permission wrote letters stating that the researcher could do research in their diocese. Data was collected over the period of the 2001 fall semester.

During the fall of 2001, letters were mailed to principals asking for permission to have a teacher in their school take part in the study (Appendix B). Principals were asked to return a form to the researcher stating whether or not they would grant permission for the study (Appendix C). If the principal agreed, they were asked to place envelopes regarding the study in two religion teachers' mailboxes (Appendix D). The envelopes placed in the teachers' mailboxes contained information that explained the purpose of the study. The teachers were asked to return form letters to the researcher indicating whether or not they were willing to participate in the study (Appendix E). During the interviews the primary interest was in the participants' perceptions of the effect religious education has on the self-esteem of adolescent girls.

Once the researcher received the teacher's responses, the researcher selected the teachers for the study. It was the intention of the researcher to have teachers represented

from each diocese in the State of New Jersey. The researcher selected the teachers so as to have a mix of teachers from both co-educational and all girl high schools, along with both male and female, lay, religious, and ordained.

The researcher met with the subjects and explained to them in verbal and written form the purpose of the study. The significance of the study, and the rationale for their selection was also explained to the teachers.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the data gathered in the investigation of the relationship between self-esteem in adolescent girls and religious education curriculum. The findings are based on the recordings and transcripts from qualitative interviews with twelve religion teachers from Catholic high schools. The discussion of the findings presents religion teachers' perceptions in regard to how self-esteem in adolescent girls is affected by, the use of inclusive versus non-inclusive language, metaphors for God, and women in the curriculum.

Sample

The study focused on 12 Catholic high schools located in the State of New Jersey. The high schools were from three of the five dioceses. Six of the high schools were all girls' and six of the high schools were co-educational.

The researcher wrote letters to the five superintendents of each Catholic diocese in the State of New Jersey (Appendix A). The superintendents were asked if they would agree to let the researcher contact the principal of high schools that were either co-educational or all girl. Two superintendents responded yes, granting permission for the study. Three of the superintendents did not respond, therefore, the researcher called the remaining three superintendents. One of the three superintendents granted permission for the research; two superintendents did not grant permission. The superintendents who

granted permission wrote letters stating that the researcher could do research in their diocese.

If permission was granted by the superintendent, the researcher then sent letters to principals asking the principals' permission to have a religion teacher from their school participate in the research (Appendix B). Principals were asked to return a form to the researcher stating whether or not they would grant permission (Appendix C). If principals agreed to have their teacher participate, the principal was asked to place envelopes in the mailboxes of two teachers (Appendix D). Letters were mailed to 45 principals. 23 principals replied, 20 principals granted permission, three principals did not grant permission.

Teachers were asked to return a form stating whether or not they were willing to participate, and if so when and where they could meet with the researcher (Appendix E). 20 teachers responded yes, one teacher responded no. Four schools had two teachers respond, however, the researcher chose only one teacher from each school.

The respondents are labeled (A1) through (L12). The researcher is labeled as (FP). The respondents labeled (A1) through (F6) are from co-educational high schools. The respondents labeled (G7) through (L12) are from all girl high schools. Information regarding the respondents and their schools is found in the tables listed below.

Respondents

1. Lifestyle: The respondents were as follows: seven were Catholic laywoman, one was a Catholic layman, two were religious sisters, one was an ordained priest, and one was an ordained deacon.

2. Age of Respondents: The age of the respondents were as follows: two were within the 30-39 category, three were within the 40-49 category, four were within the 50-59 category, and three were within the 60-69 category.

3. Number of Years Teaching Religion: The number of years teaching for the respondents were as follows: two taught between three and five years, one taught between six and ten years, three taught between 11 and 15 years, and six taught 15 or more years.

4. Holds a Degree in Religion or Theology: Nine of the respondents held a degree in theology, and three held degrees in other subjects.

5. Type of School (Co-educational): The make-up of the co-educational schools were as follows: one school was suburban diocesan, one was a suburban parish school, two were urban diocesan schools, one was a private urban school, and one was an urban parish school.

6. Type of School (All Girls): The make-up of the all girls schools were as follows: one was a suburban diocesan school, two were private suburban schools, and three were private urban schools.

7. Number of Teachers Who Taught Each Course: 11 respondents had taught a course in New Testament, ten had taught the Hebrew Scriptures, five had taught Church History, ten had taught Morality, nine had taught Christian Lifestyles, Sacraments and Peace and Justice, seven had taught World Religions, six had taught Death and Dying, four had taught a course on Prayer, two had taught Women and Religion, and ten had taught courses not listed above.

The following tables, 1 through 5, present information regarding the teachers' experience of teaching religion to adolescent girls. The tables refer to courses the teachers believe to be either beneficial or harmful to the self-esteem of adolescent girls. The final table is in reference to their school's mission and its' alignment to their religion curriculum.

Table 1

Courses Individual Teachers Enjoyed Teaching to Adolescent Girls

Respondent	Responses of Individual Teachers
(A1)	
New Testament, Lifestyles	The girls have a tendency not to appreciate themselves, through sharing they have the opportunity to grow as people.
(B2)	
Scriptures Morality	I enjoy teaching about the women in religion because you open the world to girls, especially regarding religion.
(C3)	The girls love learning about what is love, commitment, dating.
Lifestyles	The girls want to explore, what it means to be committed.
(D4)	I was able to bring in people that they knew in modern life like
Peace and Justice	Dorothy Day.
(E5)	The girls had tremendous sense of accomplishment and leadership
Service	and sharing.
(F6)	The girls are looking forward to marriage in the future more than
Marriage	the guys are.

- (G7) These courses touch their life issues, and it is easy to put in the
 Morality, roles or the effects of women in those courses.
 Social Justice
 Lifestyles
- (H8) In Social Justice they like learning about things that are happening
 Social Justice in the world now. In Women of Faith I like to see them read
 Women of Faith stories they haven't read before.
- (I9)
- Morality All adolescents have great interest in morality.
- (J10) I enjoy teaching it. The girls go into it expecting it to be very
 Old Testament boring, their expectations are lower and they find it very exciting.
- (K11)
- Church History I enjoy teaching it.
- Morality Morality brings up very controversial issues.
- (L12)
- Lifestyles It gives them a broader base for making choices.
-

Table 2

Courses Individual Teachers Did Not Enjoy Teaching To Adolescent Girls

Respondent	Responses of Individual Teachers
(A1) Hebrew Scriptures Church History	Women were not part of that particular era of church history. It is very difficult to spark a positive image when it is obvious your sex is being discriminated against.
(B2) Not a specific course	When you teach coed it is very difficult to just address the girls because the boys are stronger in the opinions.
(C3) There isn't one	I can't think about any course that I would feel uncomfortable teaching.
(D4) World Religions	They are not interested in other religions.
(E5) There isn't one	I never felt any kind of uncomfortableness
(F6) Hebrew Scriptures	The lack of feminine reference.
(G7) Church History	I just don't like the course. I would rather put in World Religions.
(H8) Not really	There are courses that I just like teaching less.
(I9) Morality	The problem is more in teaching to students from mixed backgrounds.

(J10)

I can't think of any.

(K11)

No

(L12)

It was hard to create enthusiasm.

Scriptures

Table 3

Topics Perceived to be Beneficial to Building Self-Esteem

Respondents	Responses from Individual Teachers
(A1)	A girl's identity with Christ; Christ as a role model of being fully man and woman; appreciation of masculinity and femininity; appreciation of various types of lifestyles.
(B2)	Leader of prayer; leaders who were religious women; women who minister in the church; women who head peace
(C3)	They are not sex objects: self-knowledge, self-awareness
(D4)	Women in Scripture, justice issues, morality, sexism and Jesus of Nazareth
(E5)	Scripture, women as leaders and heroes; role of men and women in society; role of women in church and society
(F6)	Self-esteem, an individual's personality, who they are as a person;

	Social Justice, women in the work force, morality, how we treat others
(G7)	Sexuality, stresses dignity; what it means to be a woman; role of women in creation, salvation, scripture; freedom in relationships; women in Scripture
(H8)	Prayer, self-esteem, one's relationship with God, communication, Social Justice, they can make a difference Death and Dying, they can make a difference
(I9)	You are a child of God, loved, and unique; your talents and gifts; Called to be a Christian leader; Being Christ-like
(J10)	Wise judgment; morality, decision making, Scriptures, compassion and constancy of God
(K11)	Morality, identity, self-esteem, Christian Lifestyles, choices
(L12)	Sexuality, relationships, morality, Lifestyles, the women's course, it creates and empowers young women to live in their church

Table 4

Topics Perceived to be Harmful to Building Self-Esteem

Respondent	Responses of Individual Teachers
(A1)	There are no topics. It is how we approach various topics.
(B2)	Exclusive language, Church leadership, the absence of women

- (C3) The topics are not harmful, but the boys are so vocal that the girls simply give up. World Religions, Scriptures, and Social Justice shows them that other women have less than they do.
- (D4) Abortion, a lot of them do not believe in abortion.
- (E5) Individual Scripture passages
- (F6) All the male references in Scripture
- (G7) There isn't any. We have all girls. Everything is presented in light of the audience.
- (H8) Scripture, the poor inclusion of women's studies.
- (I9) Nothing. It is how they present the topic. The texts are male orientated, they focus on male characters in the Bible. You have to push in the other direction.
- (J10) I can't think of any, but I teach Death and Dying.
- (K11) I can't think of any.
- (L12) There aren't any.
-

Table 5

Teachers' Reaction to Alignment of Religion Curriculum to School's Mission

Respondent	Responses of Individual Teachers
(A1)	Yes
(B2)	Verbally, but not actuality. The chaplain's teachings go back to the 1940's.
(C3)	Yes. The main mission is respect for each other and service and reaching out to each other.
(D4)	Yes. The mission is to reach out to the poorest of poorest and to try to teach them and to educate anyone regardless of race or creed.
(E5)	Yes, and we also reflect the mission of the diocese.
(F6)	Yes, I am revamping some of the curriculum to bring it more in line.
(G7)	Yes, the mission is to give a Catholic Christian foundation for life choices and vision.
(H8)	Yes, our philosophy is involved in the whole development of the person, and we try to do that in religion.
(I9)	Yes, the key point of the mission is to build self-esteem in adolescent girls.
(J10)	No, the mission is to look to the future. I believe the way you get to where you are going is more important than where you arrive.

- (K11) Yes, it is to teach young women to be independent and confident young women.
- (L12) Yes, who we are comes from our mission. Integrity is specific to our mission, and it is part of the Lifestyles course.

Research Questions - Transcription

A transcription of each interview is presented in order to allow for conclusions concerning certain trends. The first six participants are from co-educational high schools, and the last six participants are from all girl high schools. The interview questions are divided into four sets of questions (Appendix F) The interview questions were established as a result of the literature review found in Chapter II, and the validation of the questions by a panel of experts. The interviews are analyzed in Chapter V. The analysis will identify religious education issues that the religion teachers perceive as either beneficial or harmful to the self-esteem of adolescent girls. Finally, the analysis will include recommendations and suggestions for further study.

Each participant was asked the same four sets of questions as listed below. The four categories of questions were; self-esteem, non-inclusive versus inclusive language, metaphors for God, and women in the curriculum. Appropriate probes and follow-up questions were initiated by the researcher whenever clarification was needed. All 12 participants were tape recorded. The tapes were used as a reference during the research and will be destroyed within six months of the taping.

Self-Esteem

1. (FP): What are the topics in your religion curriculum, that might instill in young women a sense that they are capable of accomplishing their life goals? Explain why you think this.

(A1): Prayer, role of women in Jewish history, role of women in time of Christ, modern day disciples, women who have done an awful lot, positive role models, sexuality, some topics within World Religion, Social Justices

(FP): What within these courses help these young women

(A1): They help women understand that regardless of who they are that for all women success in life is available to them. We all have a common central point that we can go back to, whether it be prayer or their relationship with Christ. What they choose to do with that is their business.

(B2): The fact that women have gone before them, they have to try and listen to those women.

(C3): Anything that deals with their self image that changes the way they see themselves. So many of them have this feeling that they are not OK. They might have a false front on about it, but deep inside they really believe they are not much good. And anything at all, I can't pick a particular topic, the topics that have them examine themselves, and look at themselves, versus other people's impressions, the rest of the class' impressions. You have to be really careful though, because if you have somebody who isn't that much, you've got to be careful that they don't get knocked down. If anything that will build up, it has to

be very carefully orchestrated. You have to be able to judge when it is not possible to do in a class.

(D4): I think some of the... one of the topics I am thinking about right now is when we talk about personal dignity and the church's teaching on social issues. The Catholic church's stance on social issues, and I think that helps build a lot of personal self-esteem. I show a movie on Ghandi, and I show them how one person could really do something. I have another movie that I show, The Power of One...you can see how one person can effect the entire society in a way because if I learn to read I can teach someone else to read. In many of my students I try to instill the fact that you are the future and, as a leader of tomorrow how would you handle this question or that question. So I think these are the things that would build personal self-esteem as well as let them realize that tomorrow I am going to be in leadership position and this is the way I will handle it.

(E5): When we are talking in Morality about moral decision making and how one needs to be in control of their our life and assertive. We can't be children in the sense of allowing people to make decisions for us, nor should we feel pressured to have decisions made for us, regarding our lifestyle or commitments...that they are encouraged to use their own gifts, and to actively discern what the Lord is calling them to do. But also to assume positions in which they are not going to be passive listeners but active leaders in the community. I think that helps, when you take it into the community service aspect. And to encourage them in a full variety of the program of the schools, I think in the religion curriculum it is in Social Justice, Marriage, and of course the Hebrew and New Testaments.

(F6): I would have to go to Social Justice first, and I think in the Social Justice arena when we do cover women and women in society we look at how women throughout the ages had to take a back seat to the men in society. That is not the case today and that especially in the 20th century all the advances that had taken place and because of those advances that have taken place, women have rightly taken their places in society. However, some women are still being limited by their preconceived notion of where they can go. A real good example of this happened in my Marriage course. Believe it or not, we talked about drawing up a marriage contract. I allowed them to come up with a group of five items that they were going to include on the marriage contract that would be the responsibility of the women, and five that would be the responsibilities of the men. Then I brought them together in small groups and then out of everybody's five they were to come up with five for the group and then we boarded the five. I was really shocked. All the women, all the jobs relegated to women and you got to understand that these are, mixed groups, these are not just male groups or female groups, these were co-educational groups, all the jobs were the traditional role jobs for women. Do the wash, buy the food, take care of the children, it was all of the traditional jobs.

(FP): Did they explain why?

(F6): Because they feel that women are best suited for those jobs, like cooking and things like that, and I'd say excuse me do you recognize that you have the opportunity now to fulfill your full potential, and it may not be doing that, and it

may be, but it may not be as well. Yeh but we also have to do that work and they recognize the fact that there is still that inequality in as much as the women are in the work force but the women are also still expected to do everything at home as well. So they actually have to do both jobs when you come right down to it. Many of them felt comfortable with that and I felt uncomfortable with their statement that they need to do double the work. So Social Justice I think is one place where I personally emphasize the role. I had this opportunity in religion class this year in the Marriage class for the very first time that I tried that. I usually handle contract and covenant in a different way and this was the first time I handled contract that way. I was really surprised at their answers. I would have thought that that answer would have felt good with my generation, but not their generation generations removed from them. But I would have to say that there are two areas right there, the Marriage course and the Social Justice course. And also going again right back to the Relationship course where we tell them that their limitations are up to them, up to what they want to limit themselves to. No one should be putting them in a lesser category. So those are the three areas that I could talk about.

(G7): I teach Juniors and Seniors so I will be looking primarily at that grade level. In Social Justice we look at their role in transforming society, and how they are fundamental and that change starts with them, and the empowerment that they already have to do it. These kids will go out, find a project and do it. In the Christian Lifestyles again it is you have this role in society and church and God has gifted you and you have to use those talents. It is very much on the fact that

you are capable. You don't have to accept abuse, we have lots of Hispanics, you don't succumb to abuse, what is abusive relationships, and what are some of the signs, and what to do if they are in one that could potentially become abusive and your right to say no. We focused last month on rights and responsibilities. It culminated in having a woman speak from Several Sources.

(H8): We do a lot of Self-esteem in the Prayer course. They do not so much in terms of the future but in terms of who they are and all the pieces that they bring to being who they are. They make spider webs showing all the connections of who has helped them to create who they are. I think that is good for them because then they have clearly articulated where they can go for help and direction. Our Morality course in terms of helping them to make decisions, helping them to be conscious of the process that one uses to make decisions, helping them to prioritize things. Looking at their goal and seeing and how real those possibilities are without saying you can't do those things. Letting them know what they need to consider if they are going to try and do those things.

(FP): Do you find that the girls consider things that they may not be able to do?

(H8): Yes, we are coming to the generation that is starting to say, maybe you can't do it all, or maybe if you are going to try and do it all you need to have a partner that is also trying to do it all. I would not say that is the majority, but I think there is somewhat of a sense.

(I9): When we do the Hebrew Scriptures we focus on the great women of the Old Testament, Deborah, Ruth, Miriam, not as much Esther and Judith. In the New Testament Book of Luke, the non-Jew writing, the non-chauvinist, I link them in

my mind. Things that are limited, anything that breaks that down helps. He stresses role of women and Matthew seldom stresses women.

(J10): Strong character makes it easier to achieve those goals, if you are confident. So in a sense the curriculum has to give them that confidence in their faith, understanding what God wants for them. In Death and Dying it shows them death in other people can give you strength also...or that God gives you enough strength.

(K11): The curriculum in the Morality class. We talk about taking responsibility for our choices, and I really gear that to how these girls are going to live the rest of their lives. It is the juniors who take the Morality course. It is kind of continued in the Lifestyles class that the seniors take. In the Lifestyles class too we talk a lot about choices...how do you feel if you make this choice in your life...how are you going to feel about that? So I kind of try to bring it to right now for them.

(L12): I think in the Lifestyles course they do do that, there are topics in there dealing with communications, work, lifelong learning, those kind of topics, they, it brings them this integrity thing runs throughout the course too...and that they have to take responsibility for themselves and their own lives, regardless of what their goals in life are, they have to be responsible human beings. Whether you are going to be a scientist, a teacher, or a mom, you have responsibility for what is to come. You have to develop those gifts that you have because now as an adult you are no longer a taker, now you have to give. To be able to give appropriately

you have to know what you got to give, and work at developing it so that we can all benefit.

2. (FP): What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as capable of accomplishing their life goals?

Explain why you think this.

(A1): I don't think there are any.

(B2): You can inculcate that they can go after their goals, but if their goals are toward religion, which most are not, that would I feel be a negative. Women have to show themselves but it is difficult at times.

(C3): The idea of topics is a problem. Not being able to complete stuff, I can't think of a topic...anything that they feel inadequate as. I can't answer that.

(D4): I don't think any.

(E5): There may be but I am not aware of it, nor has anyone expressed it to me. We have very positive wonderful direction from our administration, and they are all three ladies so it is a very powerful thing for them to see that.

(F6): About the only thing that might be, would be is if a woman is looking to go to a position in the church other than a lay person. That might be the only time that they could not fulfill their goal. That would probably come into our freshmen class when they are teaching, it's not Sacraments, it's Introduction to Catholicism, that might be the only place that might be picked up. The senior course which I teach, and we call it Marriage and you call it Christian Lifestyles...there is a section in that course about other vocations. And of course that is one of the topics that comes up right away, the fact that women can not be ordained. I tell

them things do change in time and that there is always possibility that the church will see things differently at a later time but that there are many many roles that they can take in leadership when it comes to all of the different ministries that we have in the church. Rightly so, here I could probably go down the list and seven out of ten of our different ministry groups here are led by a woman. I think we would have no trouble with the clergy shortage if we had women clergy.

(G7): I don't know of any, if I knew any I would take them out. You do have to be gentle when presenting certain issues like abortion for example. Because you don't want to...or something as simple as not going to church, because that came up in Church History and someone said I've committed a mortal sin God is going to be mad at me.

(H8): I don't know if I would say it hinders them, it might help them to ask questions that ...I wouldn't say that we don't want them to be idealistic because they should be idealistic, that is the age, but we also want them to be somewhat realistic.

(I9): I would hope there are none. We are an all girls school with a predominately female faculty.

(J10): Some might say that the Old Testament is all about men but I'm not a feminist in that way that I think women can not relate to male characters.

(K11): The only thing I could think of that might hinder them is in the area of perhaps Peace and Justice, maybe current events stuff going on in the world. The seniors who are taking Peace and Justice when the terrorist acts occurred, we did a lot of talking about the role of women in Afghanistan and so on. That is the

only thing I can think of, having the mindset of well they couldn't, so maybe I couldn't either.

(L12): There is none. I think when the topics of woman's priesthood and ordination, when those topics come up, they are not taught directly that you can't and what now, because we are all girls it doesn't come up a lot except peripherally. When those topics come up, the more vocal of them are wild, they are enormously wild. They object to it and they feel they are hindered, and they are angry that it exists. It is not a large percentage that are angry about things like that. They are also again when the sexuality issues come up some of them are very angry, I should say they express anger, at the church, at their really ill informed view of how the church views homosexuality, they really are ill informed. Their ultimate objection then comes to the fact that homosexual can't marry formally and so that inhibits their sexual activity. They feel a lot of conflict with that. I think for any of the young girls who might know or believe that they may be homosexuals that may interfere or may make them take a step back, in what they think they could accomplish or how they stay within the church or among the church or how they might live successfully if they did partner with someone. When those issues come up, they are not taught specifically, we don't teach them that you can't, when it comes up, you teach them about marriage it comes up that way, you teach about sacraments, it will come that way, the priesthood, it is certainly addressed, and what the Church teaches is clearly taught, but they are allowed to say what they think. Because they are...especially with the homosexuality, they are largely ill informed about what the Church, the

bottom line is, there is a bottom line, but they think that the Church hates them all, which is not true. There is a lot of educating about where the Church is on that, on all those different levels, not just the one thing that ticks them off. I think sometimes they feel, they do, they feel a bit removed, or maybe feel they are going to keep themselves removed because of it.

3. (FP): What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might instill in young women a sense of their significance as human beings? Explain why you think this.

(A1): Same as first question

(B2): That they know as a woman they are needed. I pray that all their dreams come true.

(C3): Anything that manages to make them see that they are capable... that the opinion they have can be cited because it is going to have some value provided it is based on reality. The Morality course is a good one for that. It helps them clarify where they are coming from and it helps them see why they are holding this particular viewpoint. It makes them move away from just a parental structure to a personal involvement in this decision that this is right and this is what I hold because of whatever the reason are. That is a good class for them to increase their significance. The Christian Lifestyle class is a good one too but they usually are already at that point, it is usually just a confirmation of where they are at although some of them are not.

(D4): Morality...because we try to show them you don't have to...your body is a temple, something very precious you don't want to give away something precious

without... before you get married. We also try to instill in them that a life is very important and that is why many of them, even when I give them a situation with incest...they say well I still don't believe in abortion...I would not have my daughter have an abortion regardless of whatever. I think that's girls and again I am only speaking of as a coed school because that is where I am.

(FP): Do you find that girls have a different stand on abortion than the boys?

(D4): Ah yes, because when I give the situation...if you have a daughter and your husband impregnated her what would you do? The girls think hard about it and right away they say I wouldn't want her to have an abortion and I don't know what I would do, but I would give away the baby, rather than abort it...or if someone rapes them they would have the baby. The boys would say I will kill him and she will never have anyone else's baby. Yes there is a big difference.

(E5): I think when we talk about the on going role and development of the human personality and lifestyles and how we all mature and grow. That there are distinctions among us as individuals, not just because of our sex, but because of our personality character, environment and so forth. That they get a deeper appreciation for their own self worth and value as an individual who happens to be a man or woman.

(F6): I definitely have to say the freshmen course which is the Relating course because they do an awful lot about self in that religion course. Then I would definitely have to say New Testament and Scripture. Because we, and I know most of my teachers, go out of the way to show how Jesus went out of his way to treat women differently showing that he went against the norms of his times so I

think that is a definite plus. Then again I would have to say the Peace and Justice course.

(G7): I think almost the whole curriculum because it is founded on we are created in the image and likeness of God. From Hebrew Scriptures, God created you in the image and likeness, Jesus in the New Testament, Jesus saved you, the Ten Commandments, God gave you these rules because He loved you, Social Justice, the basic dignity of the human person. I think basically all of them focus on the personal love of Jesus Christ and the image and likeness of God.

(H8): The Prayer course, I think a lot in the Social Justice course because we do a lot of talking about the dignity of the human person and the power of the human person...not only the problems in the world, but this is what you can do, and even though it is a little piece, you can do it. We had girls e-mail their representatives today for World AIDS days, today is the National call-in day to Congress for funding. We try to give them a sense of that power that they do have.

(I9): It is the ground on which we all stand. Why would I teach religion? All over the place, these things are so basic.

(J10): In Morality you have the view of life as created in God's image, that is the starting stone for all morality. In Scripture every person there. The most significant characters in Scriptures are the least likely people, youngest in family get in trouble all the time. They are the ones God chooses, the one with the stutter...I think teenagers are always feeling like they are imperfect, everybody else looks better than they are or acts better, so it might get them to view that the weaker people are the greater.

(K11) Morality, in the Morality classes all of the current issues we discuss absolutely. The right to life issue, the sanctity of life issue, the seamless garment, all of those areas I think really do instill that.

(L12) I think the life issues, the way we teach life issues. The way we certainly teach the sexuality issues, the way even when they look through Scriptures, I know what they do in the Hebrew Scripture and the Christian they really do tend to bring out where the women have significance and prominence in there. In the Women and Prayer course they do the feminine images, more female prayer styles and things like that, those kinds of things they instill in them. Even in the Lifestyle course where we focus on living life as a single adult and religious life for women. How different that is than even than it was for me, so I think they look at that differently.

4. (FP): What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as significant human beings? Explain why you think this.

(A1): Same as second question

(B2): The whole way that the church faces women. We have different priests come on Saturday night to say mass and I walked in the sacristy "oh boys we need you in the priesthood" and not even a hello to you. After a while you have to analyze it. When Bishop ____ was here he use to do it at the cathedral. He used to do it at big gatherings, women were way at the bottom. It hurts.

(C3): I don't teach Church History but I imagine that would. I would refuse to teach it, if they want to put it into the curriculum but go ahead, but I will not teach it. I imagine that would be very damaging because it just pushes women to the side.

(D4): None

(E5): I really don't think so, but I have not really thought about that question. I think by this time it would have been weeded out because our teachers and administration would be very alert.

(F6): I can't think of any.

(G7): The closest one is possibly the question of Holy Orders.

(FP): Do the girls ever question you on that?

(G7): Oh all the time.

(FP): How do you answer them?

(G7): I explain to them what the church's teaching is. I am not for the ordination of women, but I understand where they are coming from. I explain when we teach ordination we also do lay ecclesial ministry which is what is the role of women in the church? We also take the notion of priest not as power of priest but as servant and we look at them as people for service in the church.

(H8): I don't know about significant human being, but the more they learn about the world, sometimes the less powerful they feel, what can I do about it? Even if we all stopped doing this, what if no one ever bought from the GAP anymore, would the GAP still use sweatshops? So there is something to that.

(I9): Why would I be here unless I had respect for young women and I considered them significant. I can't think of things that hinder in our curriculum, I can't think of things that hinder in our curriculum. Some people have suggested that the service program can, if extended without explanation, can get into that it is the role of women or students are people who are less powerful so they are to serve. I think we get beyond that.

(J10): A lot of issues out there that are very hard for them to understand like stem cell technology. If somebody is pregnant giving a child up for adoption, they are hearing that from the outside and the topics in the curriculum are difficult. Issues they really find hard to understand, how to get rid of problems, very many things in advertising, don't get involved, hearing that from everybody outside...the curriculum doesn't help them bridge that gap.

(K11): I really can't think of any.

(L12): I can't think of anything except again those particular issues I mentioned earlier that are specifically relevant to Catholicism, homosexuality and the priesthood, maybe those things but again they not taught in the curriculum, they come up as peripherals, They are not taught that they can not be priests.

5. (FP): What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might help young women see themselves as powerful human beings? Explain why you think this.

(A1): Same as first question

(B2): You try to put into them a pride for being a woman, not to degrade themselves, to be proud of women and not to step down. Some of the fellows

think I am against them. They say you are a feminist, you are an angry woman, that is not true, we are all feminists.

(C3): The Prayer course because they see they have God at their back and that is exactly what they say, I've got God at my back, I've got God there for me and that's what gives me power. They might not use that word as such, but they will say that. God's there, I can do anything. I think the Prayer course will help them a lot.

(D4): The stories of women in Scripture because they can read Esther, read the story of Ruth, the story of Dorothy Day...the boys called her a whore and she turned out...and I say yes but she might be up for canonization—girls didn't see her that way. The boys say oh there she go again.

(E5): I think the topics that come up, maybe sometimes they just spring out of newspapers when you are doing Social Justice issues. You hear the stories of the valor of the heroism of the widows of these men who died in Twin Towers. Their commitment to their families, and the struggle they're under going, and the faith that they have their ability to receive the love and support, their tremendous courage. The parish I am in residence in, we had four or five people who died, we had a man and a wife who lost a son, and they had just two children, and I told about the wake and the funeral and the family, and what it was like. Only one of our youngsters from the whole school had a cousin who was lost. Someone asked me from the parish, did any of our children lose parents, and I said no, our children's' parents work for the parents who were from the Towers. But they were made more aware of it. The quality of leadership and women going over to

the site and trying to be of service in a variety of capacities, via the medical arts, the social services, assisting people with meals, just wonderful gifts of the human spirit, and being received as equals. Out of a terrible tragedy they could still see those things or reading a newspaper account written by a woman or TV broadcast and it was by a woman who was there, and previously you would think it was just a lot of guys running around.

(F6): That's a tough one to put a hand around. I would think that the Marriage course and probably our Spirituality and the Arts course. The Spirituality and the Arts course takes a look at contemporary media and especially videos, films and music and tries to have every body look at what they are telling us and then talk about what their real role is and how can you overcome this. So that gives power to a person when they know that they do not have to follow the stereotype that is being given to them. I guess the other one I would have to say would be the Marriage course because the Marriage course tells them that they are equal partners and equal gives you just as much power. It does not give you more but it gives you just as much.

(G7): I think looking at significant women in the Bible, in church history, emphasizing their role as people who can change, and I think we do a lot of giving them empowerment even here at school, we build them up and see what they can do. I think our kids are just phenomenal in taking a project and taking an idea, they do it all from start to finish.

(FP): What kind of projects?

(G7): Service projects or school wide projects. They will come and say they will like to start a Gospel Choir. They have a sense of this is my school this is my thing. And I think that sets them up to go out into the community.

(H8): Same as number four.

(I9): We teach, and I think we all teach that love is more powerful than hate, and that although violence solves immediate problems only some kind of non violent perspective, including a Christian perspective gets at the heart of the problems, it gets at the root of problems. I think we all suggest, I suggest to the students, I think we all do, to be a genuine Christian is very difficult but it is very important and it is very meaningful. We use the example, it is not a female example, we use the example of Martin Luther King. Of all the civil rights leaders of the sixties, why did this man emerge as powerful literally? Literally he is the most powerful because he was Christian based. You are here to share in this.

(J10): I can't think of anything because they are women. The course is not gender specific and I don't care because I am dealing only with girls. I could say Sexuality but I don't teach it.

(FP): Why would you say Sexuality?

(J10): It would be telling them your body is a temple of God or I would presume that is what they would be doing.

(FP): Could explain why seeing their bodies, as temples would help them see themselves as powerful?

(J10): If you feel like your body is not like your property but it is a temple in the sense it is you it reflects your personality in how you dress or how you act, it reflects your inner self and your sexuality is particularly important, then your power is with that, that is where the power of the women is in society. That is where the power comes, all down to your body. I am not a strong feminist, maybe if I had boys in the classroom, but I have never had that.

(K11): In the Lifestyles course that issue of making your own choices, of being in charge of what you do with your life. I teach a lesson on the issues of independence interdependence, and dependence and that often brings it to the forefront for them. They place themselves on that continuum. It is just showing them, they are going to make those choices, and they are not always going to be in the same position all the time. There might be a time in their lives that they are truly dependent say on mother and dad, on finances. However, they might also be interdependent in terms of mom and dad still making the car payment even though they are in college making their own curriculum choices or their social life choices or whatever. There might come a time when they're totally independent, and if that is the right place to be, because we often do need people to help us. So I think that kind of gets them thinking in that mode of how powerful am I in terms of making choices?

(L12): I think the examples of religious women that are offered. I know in my course there is Dorothy Day, Mother Theresa, and yesterday Jean Donovan, so those kinds of images come up all the time.

(FP): Yesterday was the day they were killed?

(L12): Yes and I just hit it dead on with the course, with the chapter yesterday, she came up yesterday. So just talking about those things and the death of those four women changed global policy. To look at the difference between a religious woman and a lay woman and the impact, we were talking about exactly that yesterday. So I think those things they think differently about it overall. Especially at that age too, by the time they are eighteen, you start to see, I start to see in the seniors, a lot of what they have been taught all along, by the time they get to me, it will start to come together. I think they feel empowered through that, but there is a whole concept of that in the entire school.

6. (FP): What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as powerful human beings? Explain why you think this.

(A1): Possible going back again to the history of whole Jewish nation, early church history, Spanish Inquisition, anything in terms of the role of women in the church.

(B2): They can read. Our kids take Scripture sophomore year, and they can read the whole Bible and sometimes even in the New Testament there is some kind of putting us where we belong. And I am always afraid they will follow into that and not being proud to be a woman. Sometimes as a religion teacher it is very hard to explain to them. Recently someone said to me, but God said it, it was all right to have a few wives because they put that into God. It is very difficult to get them to understand that they lived that culture, they evaluated it, God said it was

all right to take this woman. They talk about Jacob and all his wives. I say they had to people the earth. I say we are not sure that God wants that that way.

(C3): I would say the Church History course.

(D4): I'd like to say it is the way you approach the subject. Someone might see Death and Dying as something like that, but we all have to die, and it is an important course. A lot of the hindrance depends on the teacher and how they put it over.

(E5): I really don't think of any right now.

(F6): I guess if I had to say any it would probably be the Old Testament Scripture again, Hebrew Scriptures simply because there isn't...there is if you really dig into it there really is a lot of powerful women in the Old Testament. However that is not the way the books are written, so I would have to say that is probably...it is so patriarchal the way the books are written we don't even hear about the Ruths and all the women that did have power or the judges, the female judges.

(G7): I can't think of any other than what we already discussed.

(H8): I don't think so, except the sense of being overwhelmed.

(FP): The sense of being overwhelmed, do you think it is harder for the girls in high school today than when you and I were in high school?

(H8): We didn't know. I had, my sophomore in Social Justice for two weeks, they already know about the world from what we did in two weeks than I found out until I was in graduate school.

(I9): Now the problem the hindering of that of course in the Catholic church is that women are, girls, women are excluded from the leadership position of the

Catholic church. More than 45% of our students are Catholics, we have no majority religion wise. That is definitely a hindrance to me in my mind, although it does not seem to bother the girls, but it bothers me. You can suggest to the girls in history class that they can run for President but you can't suggest to the girls in religion class that they run for leadership in the church and yet we have to focus on self-esteem in adolescent girls.

(J10): Saint Paul, I don't like reading Saint Paul, really I don't. His language is definitely not open. They don't like reading Saint Paul at all, like when he says don't dress yourself up as peacocks.

(K11): It is hard for me to think of something. We teach so much from that other place, that place of self-esteem, and you are in charge of your life and these are the choices you need to think about, you're taking responsibility, so it is very difficult to say. I don't think it ever comes up that they wouldn't be powerful. I think it is because we are making a conscious effort to teach from a certain perspective. If this were not a single sex school, I am sure the dynamic would be different, obvious the dynamic would be different. I would teach my lesson differently

(L12): No.

7. (FP): Is there anything specific you have done in your classes to focus on self-esteem and adolescent girls? If so, what?

(A1) Every single time a topic is addressed, whether prayer, human sexuality, roles and lifestyles, it is always approached from both the male and female standpoint, to the point that the kids will always laugh at me, because I will say,

guys think this way, girls think this way. They laugh hysterically because I really know where they are coming from. I really make it a focal point of everything I do.

(B2): Every time I have a chance I do raise up women, I always do talk about women.

(C3): Everything that I said for the freshmen and the senior class.

(D4): I think showing the various movies where they can see themselves and where I tell them they are in leadership position and therefore this is what we as leaders, you as leaders of tomorrow will be doing. And I think building that leadership point by the time they are sixteen or seventeen and putting in their head yes you can be a president, you can be whatever you want to be...and it is about time we break the glass ceiling. I think that is the positive. And giving them role model that they could...I throw in even a few saints that could be role model. Elizabeth Seton, people who are married, who do very good work afterwards, I tell them about their grandmother because most of them say their grandmothers are saints.

(E5): Well kind of like in a back way I have done that. I start off all my classes by saying everybody has a hundred, nobody has a zero, you have to hold on to it, so must do everything you can to keep it. I use it as a positive hopeful thing. There are few other things rules and regulations in the classroom, I don't want to hear he did this, he did that, and I especially don't want to hear she did it, because I am telling you right now she is right and you're wrong. The guys look and me and they say, "what did you say?" and I say, she's right and you're wrong, and

they say father "you don't make any sense." I say I don't want to hear people say she did this she did that. And they say, "what if she did?" and I say I know she didn't. And they say, "you are a sexist." It is usually the other way, so I just change it. Everything is geared to give the image of favoring ladies in the classroom. In a co-educational school I learned a long time ago that you have to do a lot of things to get girls to participate because they tend to be somewhat more passive than if they had been in an all girls' school. Maybe some of that leadership, or other styles of assertiveness or aggressiveness, what is complimentary to boys becomes bossy or negative in girls, so I try to do a variety of things to shift it, to shift the playing field a little bit, I make a conscious effort. The girls protest, "no father don't do that", and I ask why? The fellows say, "why do you really do that?" and I say, well look around, the girls are much prettier than you are, and the guys say "that's sexist." So when you get the guy to say it, than you have made the most important step because they think all the girls are getting noticed, guys just haven't thought about it. Just today during detention someone walked by and called a girl a very unflattering name. I said anyone who would say that to any girl is saying that about his mother. If you say that about any women, the woman that you know best is your mom, how else would you know, so anyone who says that says that about their mother, their grandmother, their sister, their girlfriend. You don't want to have any part of that person. It is very frequent you hear the word bitch.

(F6): Probably only in my Social... well I do it in my Marriage class to in telling them that they can be anything they want to be but they have to choose. If the want to be a mother that is great. I mean if they want to choose to be a mother and a wife and stay home and be a homemaker there is nothing wrong with that. However, if they choose to go to work they can do that too and that is OK too but they have to make the decisions. That is one of the points I try to make in the Marriage course. I try to encourage the kids because most marriages in the Catholic church right now aren't taking place until about twenty-seven. I am telling them they have a ten year period to try to figure it out. They should not just to jump into it haphazardly. They should make that decision over the period of time. The other one I know I've used was Social Justice course and a lot of it has to do with my background in corporate America. I worked for _____, for thirty three years before coming over here. I saw a lot changes in the corporate world for the thirty three years I was there. It was to the point where several of my general managers were women, and some of the vice presidents were women. There never was a president that was a woman, but there is no reason that they can't. As long as they recognize the fact that they have the potential to do it, and there is nothing holding them back legally and they just have to learn how to get through the glass ceiling.

(FP): Do the students believe there is a glass ceiling?

(F6): No and that is scary. That is scary that they don't believe it exists and there is one I will be the first one to tell you.

(G7): We do most of it in the freshmen, sophomore year. We do what are my gifts, what has God given me, who am I, who is my personality, how am I gifted? When we do sexuality, we do it both in freshmen year and then again quite a bit in junior and senior years. I think it is very much that you are a person that someone has an obligation to love and love means what is for your good not just for theirs. Love is a choice not just a feeling and you have the right to demand, demand in a good sense, demand the respect. I tell the girls if a guy wants to marry a virgin, all of you have the same right as they do. And that always strikes them, because they are highly Hispanic and they say "but Sister," and I say no it is not a double standard and I think in an all girls school it makes it much easier to do all this, but they learn they can do it. I think even just looking at key women; most of the role models who I will hold up are women of the church.

(H8): One of the things that I am constantly doing is trying not to put them in a situation where they have all this information and their primary reason is guilt. There always has to be the awareness and then how do you deal with it or what do you do with it? So whether it is Social Justice kids, or the Search for Meaning kids, just finished this section on consumerism and stuff. I think one of things is to help them articulate what they are thinking and feeling, hearing that from one another, they get a sense of self-esteem from that ...from seeing, I do a lot of reflections. One of the things I will do especially in the heavier discussions, like in the Search for Meaning course, I will propose everyone writes before they speak, so that by the time we get to the discussion even the introverts also have

something to say is then the pattern of the whole discussion is not led by the extroverts.

(I9): All of these questions is stuff we do on a regular basis, focus on self-esteem, in faculty meetings. We live and breathe self-esteem. Naturally we pick leadership roles in organizations, but that is not specifically in religion class. Certainly when I am doing dating and courtship, I am very very strong that they are no way ever in dating, in courtship, or marriage ever to take a subservient role. There is a section in Christian Lifestyles on work, money and possessions, and uh, I tell them there are no limitations.

(FP): Do they all accept that?

(I9): I think so, it's college prep, it's like here, it's a college prep school.

(FP): Do their cultural differences make a difference?

(I9): Yes I was just going to mention that. Yes they have to fight their own families and their own cultures and sub-cultures on the issue of different rules for boys and girls in terms of you know simple things, curfews, or uh experience of the world.

(J10): No, it has never been an issue because it is an all girls' school. They are very confident. I have been in all girls' schools all my life and I think it is this generation.

(K11): I am not teaching those courses now. I am going to teach them in spring. We do a lot of self-esteem measures, those personality kind of surveys; those speak a lot to their self-esteem. I talk to them about in the field of psychology

how typically self-esteem is measured, that there are measures for it, I try to keep it in the forefront that way.

(L12): In the senior course I deal with issues in advertising. We dealt with issues in magazines, I ask them how it is different for them now than when they were fourteen, has that changed, are you still that sucked in? We talked about that a few weeks ago. We talked about the food issues that come up. They come up as a topic within a topic that they are the symptoms, the food is a symptom, not the real problem. It is an esteem issue, They do know that, they are conscious of that when they get to me but we explore it differently where it is possible for men too. The advertising, the sexuality issues, those things we focus on.

Non-inclusive Language

8. (FP): What type of language (non-inclusive versus. inclusive) is used in your religion curriculum?

(A1) I will use the words in Scriptures, and I will turn to them and say for anybody that may find offense to the word brethren understand, that it is brothers and sisters in Christ. I will explain to them why sometimes some priests will stick with the old traditional way, others are sensitive to the all-inclusive.

(B2): Most of it is sexist language, but we try to clear it up and I tell them to write women every time. We use the modern English translation but it is still sexist. You can't just order books. I try to point it out to them.

(C3): I suppose it is sexist.

(D4): I try to use inclusive even when we say mass I use inclusive.

(E5): I imagine a combination of both we are aware of the beauty of the English language and at same time don't want to use language that is going to depict one sex as superior to the other with an understanding that we are all God's creatures. We still pray in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. We don't say in the name of the Creator, and of the Offspring, but we show the beauty of it and also the relationship and what that implies...to be aware of opportunities to use other forms of language if it seems it would be minimizing gifts women can give.

(F6): I would think that with the exception of the Scripture courses most of it is all-inclusive language, I don't recall any of our books that are sexist in any way shape or form, not with the courses that we are teaching right now.

(G7): We refer to God always in the male, very rarely mother/father and when I did the kids hated it. They do not like it. Even the feminine aspect of God, when we went over how Jesus is like a mother hen, that did not sit well with them.

They were not comfortable with God being anything other than father.

(FP): Do you have any idea why?

(G7): Well we talked about it and a lot of it has to do with that is how they have always thought about God, that is their picture of God.

(FP): You said before that you have a big Hispanic population, do you think that is connected to this?

(G7): Maybe, but I really don't think so, the resolution of their class was that they like God just the way he is. I think especially when you are working with urban kids they like the security of what is familiar. As much as they are rebellious, even if you change the schedule, it is about security, and so that is their image.

(H8): Anything we write we go out of our way to be inclusive. The textbooks that we use, we are using pretty much the latest edition of everything, so it is clearly inclusive. The ninth grade teachers like the New American translation of the Bible, so all the students buy that, but those of us who use Scripture on upper levels have NRSVs in our classrooms. Publicly for prayers and liturgies it is inclusive absolutely. We evaluate to the nth degree here, so parents come to parent nights and they evaluate. The last couple of things we had somebody who put why don't start prayer with "In the name of the Father..." I know some teachers in classroom do it. Occasionally if we are having some kind of service we start with another Trinitarian formula...like In the name of the God who created us...we do use a lot of feminine images in prayer.

(I9): We changed the Bible to get inclusive language in the Bible. The clearest example I could think of immediately is 1 Corinthians 13, when Paul says when I was a child...now that I have become a man. Then we specially look for certain passages like that when we changed that Bible about three years ago to say now that I am an adult. We use it over the girls objections, they always bring it up when we do Genesis, Genesis 1, I don't know how familiar you are with the Scriptures, there are two creation accounts Genesis 1 and 2. So we try our best, we are aware of the problem school wide, and try to use inclusive language. We have one teacher, not me, one teacher who constantly uses She for God, and it is interesting because she gets a reaction every time from students and faculty which is a combination of you know, like you know give me a break. That's not an

issue, but she continues to do it and this has been going on for thirteen years. I have tried to do things but I have been unsuccessful to find a substitute word for he, a common word for he or she. All the prayers we do, whenever we have prayer services for the kids and everyone we do that. Instead of putting God in the first sentence and He in the second, we use it again. I was thinking more of things like she and he, rather than he and she. In the examples that I use, I try even in the quizzes to use female examples, or to just use as a matter of course she rather than he if it could be either. I feel that I am probably so old fashion and traditional that I am probably ninety nine per cent not aware of it.

(J10): The textbooks don't use he, she, or try to feminize words, I don't watch my words either.

(K11): I would say inclusive. I will shake them up refer to God as she, and they will all look up. I get their attention that way. We may refer to God as he, but I think it is understood as... he is not understood to be male, but he is understood to be an all-encompassing God.

(L12): Inclusive is used as much as possible.

9. (FP): What might be some of your concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to God?

(A1): That someone feels that they are not included, that they are actually excluded.

(B2): That the image of God is male, which many of them do have.

(FP): Do you see that as a problem?

(B2): I try to do an exercise that I have not done yet, I have a paper with all the images of God on it, and I hope that when I use that they realize that they are all authentic.

(C3): I tried to talk with them about it today they just do not what I mean. I tend to think about the Spirit as female. I try to convey that to the students but it is such a foreign concept that I just drop it rather than push it because it does not fit in with anything they have, heard, thought, or conceived of. It bewilders them too much. It just bewilders them. Every now and then I will do it, but I don't ever prolong it, I don't ever sustain it, I just drop it in and then let it go.

(FP): Do you find any difference in the way the boys or the girls react to it?

(C3): The boys are more dogmatic, it's got to be male. The females are more receptive to it, but it puzzles them too.

(D4): With God, God is a spirit so God is neither he nor she. My only concern is that they realize we have a God there is God.

(E5): It might just continue to hold back people from a greater development and understanding of the greatness of God. We use language, language is limited to being with, it is a limited tool. There is no reason why we should use language to limit ourselves even more; we have to try to find ways to express the great wonderment we have for God and the great love that God has for us. That concept of creator and power and all that have been so heavily male. When you say God our father and God our mother, the dimensions of concern...when Jesus said how we yearn to be as a mother hen who gathers...it is strange and unusual kind of

community, but he was also expressing I guess you would say a kind of feminist or inclusive nature. I think we just continue to be made aware.

(F6): I guess the way I would answer that deals with modern day English and the fact that all references to he and him, wait a minute....let me go back here....When the Scriptures were written they absolutely knew that the references were to a male, to a patriarchal male. With today's languages the point is they still are male references. However, I don't think people look at after the two thousand years of this. I don't think people look at it so much in the respect that the reference is only for God, I mean only for a male God. I think there is more of an understanding that it is inclusive, but it is not written that way. My thought here is that for the few people who mistake and believe that it is only a male image that we are looking at, and what I try to do is I try to show the feminine qualities that are right there in front of them, but it doesn't say female. So I bring that out. Just to say that the only reason that it is not said as a female quality is because it was a patriarchal society and so therefore the male form dominated. That is why the male form went there even though it was a female quality being shown. That is my only concern, that somebody misunderstands and thinks that it is only male.

(G7): That they only think of God in what they see as masculine, protection instead of the tenderness of God. But then I think then that is why the Catholics at least turn to Mary and they kind of put that image on Mary, but my Protestant students have no...because Jesus is male, Jesus is brother, Jesus is friend, so the feminine aspect could be missing then.

(H8): It is unfaithful to God, using non-inclusive language is creating God in someone else's image, not in God's image. It also limits the students understanding of God.

(I9): It is just perpetuating the incorrect image of God as male as old, I guess non-Catholics would say our problem is we try to anthropomorphize God in the first place, to begin with, and once you do that you got to make Him something. And um the Israelites wouldn't say the name of God, and once you name Him or Her what do we say? I think it just perpetuates the status quo.

(J10): Like calling God a Him?

(FP): Yes.

(J10): I have no concerns, because He is the father figure image all the time.

(K11): The fact that God has this specific image of being a male, and especially in World Religions class, in the Church History class, we try to get away from that label. We talk a lot about the images of God in a lot of the courses. What I try to get the girls to hear is that we all have our own image of God. For someone that might be a forest of evergreen trees with the wind blowing through and for someone else it might be that typical portrait, or clouds, or light streaming through, things of that nature. I try to get them away, it is almost stereotypes images, so I try to keep them away from that.

(L12): I don't have any concerns about it. By the time the kids get to me we have a nice breath of people in my department from people like me who never felt that impact growing up as Catholic, I never felt the impact of that.

(FP): When you say impact you mean?

(L12): Yes, it never occurred to me that I never couldn't do anything I wanted anywhere I wanted, in or out of the Church, it just never occurred to me. Thinking about being a priest just wasn't...it just never hindered me... I was always able to do everything I wanted to do. There are women in my department who are ...they have been emotionally and psychologically maimed because of it. There is that level of variety in my department. Some of those teachers teach lower level than I, when the girls get to me some of them had been inundated and are quite tired, some of them are on the soap box, most of them are tired, there are a few on the soap box leading the charge, most could just take a leap, they have just had it, some of them feel just almost brow beaten. It has been such a focus of some of the other, so when they get to me I try to even the keel. I do recognize that it is important and valid to use inclusive language, I do recognize that but I also don't want to interfere with their spirituality because of that. If they are feeling brow beaten by it they are not going to tend to it at all. So I know it is used, it is used in our curriculum, it is used in our liturgy here, we focus on it when we do liturgy in the school, I recognize how important it is, and valid it is, but I try to focus on it in a non aggressive way.

10. (FP): What might be some of your concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to humans?

(A1): It makes some people more important than others.

(B2): That they are just not there, women are not there, women are absent.

(C3): I try to obviate it, I try not to use words like mankind. I make sure that I am talking about all men and women. I find that I am very careful about that, I didn't realize how careful I really am. I will use the word human, but I will make sure we are talking about human beings as opposed to man. I have become more attuned to that over the years. In the beginning I just didn't worry at all, but over the years I have become more attuned, so something has definitely has got through.

(D4): I think we should refer to humankind or person, I don't like the male images because I think the girls have to realize that God created female and male.

(FP) Do you think that if they don't use inclusive language when referring to humans that they might not realize it?

(D4): I think that they might realize it, but I grew up hearing male, male, male, and he, he, he, I grew up also thinking I could only be a nurse or something like that...and I think teenagers now the world is open to them. The women's struggle will be eternal but I think we should start someplace. Language is a powerful thing...because if I said black you'd think evil. You know language is a powerful thing and I think even a little thing like he versus she is powerful.

(E5): I think those words are fine but I think we shouldn't limit them. There should be a variety of ways of expressing them, any more than just having a true false test, there has to be the essay question. To find ways in which students themselves can make reference to that. If you ask youngsters in our school, who is the most significant person in their life, the majority will always say their mother. What are the aspects of your mother? She is determined, she is loving

and she is kind and she is firm and she's got a lot of authority behind her. And I say all of those things could you say if you had a father could he have the same virtues? They say yes, so a mother and a father could share the same virtues, characteristics and attributes.

(F6): My concern there would be that a female would feel left out. For example Jesus fed five thousand men, how many women were there? How many children were there? Was there not a woman represented? That is where I would think the problem comes in, heh wasn't there really a woman represented because they thought there was only men.

(G7): I really don't think that is an issue. Even if we refer to men I think they understand it is all and I think most of the time because they are all girls we usually do refer to them as girls. And in the textbook I think if it says men, they know it means both.

(H8): That it is non-inclusive and humans are inclusive and that it becomes acceptable.

(FP): Why might that be a problem?

(H8): Because it shouldn't be. If somewhere people don't begin to become aware of their exclusions in their language then it is never going to be inclusive. The kids know they know another teacher and I could say the exact same thing but use entirely different words.

(FP): Is inclusive language an issue throughout the school?

(H8): We try, to get other people to do it. We do pretty well most of the time, although it depends who it on the PA. The biggest offenders are the kids, in talking to one another they will say "guys," and I am constantly telling them that there are no guys here.

(I9): I haven't much thought about that.

(J10): I don't have problems with words like that. I think it is whatever you say behind it that matters, not the word itself. I can call the mail carrier mailman, mailwoman, but if I say hey look at the mailwoman, that's what makes the difference.

(K11): I think the same thing, it is very stereotyping. Especially in the Morals class we do talk about stereotyping, a lot of these issues come up there, other times as well, but especially there. I think it might give some of the girls maybe who don't have a strong self-esteem, kind of push them in one direction of the male being dominate in our society. That is what would concern me the most.

(L12): I don't have any concerns. I try to be inclusive when I say that, if I feel I am going to referring to...I try to...when referring to sexuality I am careful to identify that we are different but equal, things like that. One of the nice things is that we are different, we are equal, but we are different.

11. (FP): What might be the implications for your students if non-inclusive language changes to inclusive language?

(A1): I go out of my way to make sure it is inclusive. I don't see it changing from non-inclusive.

(FP): What about the textbooks?

(A1): I have found that what we have been working with has been sensitive to many of the issues. They give so much background. They will go back and say, but remember women such and such. They seem to be very very sensitive.

(B2): I think they are going to feel more a part of...they are going to identify more with God.

(C3): It will open their minds to the concept. Right now they...it just doesn't register. Whether it works on the unconscious level, that unconsciously serves to make women feel, to make girls feel lower than the guys. That could well be happening, I haven't investigated it. I try to bring it to a conscious level and like I said bewilderment is the main reaction. It is not around enough in their lives. I have been around for eleven years and I haven't seen any change, I've been more careful. I always write he/she if I am writing notes up on the board. I don't think it is a conscious matter.

(D4): I think my students would love it.

(FP): Both the boys and girls?

(D4): The boys don't care, some of the boys are not impressed with that. Of course if you use God as female, then they get excited.

(FP): In a positive or negative way?

(D4) In a negative way.

(FP): Both the boys and girls?

(D4): Oh no just the boys. But if you just say God, and you say God is a spirit it is ok. But if I overplay the female aspect, boys will get bent out of shape.

(FP): How will the girls react to it?

(D4): The girls love it...because when I say God, she, or something like that, the girls love it, the boys get all upset.

(E5): First we try to get them to stop using street language. There is an iron gate that runs around the property and I say that is street language and you have to leave that behind you out there. Some of that street language has sexist, more than sexist, it is very debasing and dehumanizing language about women and that is something we have to confront. We have brought that to a traditional high regard for women but yet not quite inclusive we are on our step toward that. We have to work toward that step by step.

(F6): I think we are only doing it because we want to be politically correct instead of doing it because it is the right thing to do. This whole idea, especially with a lot of the young men in class, who think that when you do change something, that you are only doing it for politics versus the fact that it really should be that. I think that would be my only fear, that there is no other reason, you only want to stroke somebody else, be a good politician about it.

(G7): They are uncomfortable with it at first if it refers to God, if it just refers to human beings they will be fine, men and women, that part doesn't bother them but I know for a fact the God part bothers them.

(H8): There has been a certain level of awareness. They are still very unaware of language and that language functions to use the theological jargon. Language is one of the things that we spend a lot of time in Women of Faith course we talk about language and impact on themselves as a result of language.

(FP): How do the girls accept this?

(H8): It is OK for what it is but "don't get carried away."

(I9): Hopefully it would get the kids to focus on the idea that God is unique and different and can't be put into language and understood.

(J10): I think you might focus on the language instead of focusing on the teaching behind it.

(K11): Certainly the implication would certainly illustrate more equality between the sexes. I think it would help self-esteem too. So often I hear, it's not fair, it's not fair. But again because it is a single sex we don't tackle those issues every single day and I think that makes a big difference.

(L12): To our kids, nothing, they wouldn't even notice, they are used to it here, I think they are used to it here. I think a lot of parishes in this area, a lot of them tend toward it.

(FP): Is that because it is already inclusive?

(L12): Here it is already inclusive for the most part, a lot have parishes here, pastors are using it, permission or not, they are using it. So I think a lot of them are having experience of it and I don't think they recognize it is happening.

12. (FP): Have you addressed the issue of non-inclusive language in your classes? If you have, how have you done so and why?

(A1): Oh, definitely, by pointing out to them that the words within scriptures, within standard prayer may appear to be non-inclusive. Asking if it bothers anyone. Would they prefer me to use slightly different words. Or to use the words as printed just as a sign of reverence but being sensitive to the fact that some people could be bothered by it.

(B2): Yes I do every time we read from Scripture. They will stop me, if I forget they will tell me you have to put women there. They are conscious of it.

(C3): I have occasionally I make sure...I will be corrected if I put up a he. They will say she, but not specially relating to God. If I am talking about people and I say he, sometimes the kids will say what about she. They themselves if reading a piece will put it in. Like I say, it just hasn't surfaced enough yet, we are still working on the unconscious. Don't forget the machismo is so colossal with the Hispanics and Haitians and the others too. Last week we had a discussion that dealt with how are you going to treat your wife, and one boy said I am the head of the household and that is the end of the matter. And I get this repeatedly. These boys think they are going to be totally in charge when they make a decision it is made. The girls say what about 50/50 and they will say, if they are back in the corner they will say yes, but then they will still come back and say but I am the man of the household. That is what we are dealing with all the time on a conscious level. I try to shoot it down, but you are shooting down the whole of their family traditions.

(D4): No, I just do it. I never even say anything about inclusive, I just use it.

(FP): Would you object if students are not using inclusive language.

(D4): I truly I have not done that.

(E5): I have not used that for aforementioned reasons, first we are trying to clean the language up to begin with, but it does give me pause for thought.

(F6): I do so, in as much as trying to showing them the root and where it came from and especially in Scripture and what was the status of women at the time it

was a totally male dominated society, very patriarchal. The references that are there while they are correct for the time are not correct for now. However, I show them the same references to some of the history books where there are references in the history books that were OK for the time, but right now we would be appalled at it. There are history books that refer to the Japanese as Japs, etc etc, and you can go to that, but that is how society thought at the time. Things have changed because people have stepped back and taken another look at the broad picture and recognize the fact that it isn't correct, it isn't correct. I try to tell them that and I try to use as much inclusive language as I can in the class. That is when I get, oh you are just being politically correct.

(FP): Have you used inclusive language in prayer?

(F6): I will be quit honest, no. I am not thoroughly comfortable doing that, changing words to do that. However, I took many of my religion courses over at _____ college, and there is a very feminist...I am not going to say religion department, but there is a very feminist group of professors over, let me put it that way, who took the liberty to change everything to female. It was God our mother, and would not use God our father, but would use God our mother. I could live with it, I could understand it, or if they said God our parent, or God our mother and father, I would feel more comfortable with it, but what they did was reverse discrimination as far as I am concerned. And the kids understand reverse discrimination only too well because ninety-nine, ninety-eight percent of them are white and so they understand reverse discrimination.

(G7): I think we only did the one time when I referred to God in the feminine, but other than that we have not discussed it because it really is not an issue.

(H8): In Social Justice we do a thing on language...just to identify the language, they will watch a television show or a newscast and see what kind of language was used about people. Most of the specific non-inclusive language work gets done in Women of Faith.

(I9): Changes in the Bibles, specifically when we write prayers we use inclusive language, the kids write them we review them-

(J10): No it is not an issue, maybe if there were boys in the class and I had to say he or she, but I don't have to worry about it.

(K11): Perhaps during a lesson if it comes up either I'll make a distinction. I teach a lesson where in the Nicene Creed we change all the hims to hers, so I have addressed it that way just to show them the difference... and to get them to come to that different place. Because I do have the older girls I try to get them away from the very elementary images, the elementary stories, the things they've heard since they were little girls...to a more mature outlook, to be able to discuss their faith in a more mature way. I think that by doing that I am bringing it to their attention and it helps.

(L12): Specifically no. It comes up now when I taught the Women's course that one year it did and I did address it. In my particular course it doesn't come up, I know it does come up in some of the other courses.

13. (FP): If you have addressed non-inclusive language in your classes, how have the students reacted to the issue?

(A1): Some of them told me I was crazy about being concerned about it. Both boys and girls, they told me that they did not even recognize it. I was making more of an issue out of it than there was to be made in the first place, and that the only reason I address it is because I am supposed to.

(FP): You are supposed to?

(A1): Well if we are supposed to as a classroom teacher being very very sensitive to the needs of both males and females in the classroom, we have to make sure we reach the needs of all students that are out there. So that is what I mean by supposed to. And dealing with all the different nationalities that are in a classroom knowing that Hispanic females will be much more sensitive to something that is said than Italian guys.

(B2): I kind of hope they are positive. The boys are sensitive, they think I favor the girls.

(C3): Mostly they don't even notice it. Sometimes it is a bewilderment that sets in, what are you talking about God as She.

(D4): I have not addressed it.

(E5): I haven't used it.

(F6): I think for the most part OK, except for the chiding of some of the boys again, with the politically correct thing. That doesn't come from the girls, I do not hear the girls saying that. It's the guys who chide in with that but I think the girls are comfortable with the explanation.

(FP): You said the boys chide in, and the girls don't say anything, do you perceive the girls to be intimidated to say what they are thinking because there are boys in the class, is that a problem?

(F6): Not when they are in the same...I am talking about a freshmen, sophomore, junior class...if there are all juniors in my class or if they are all seniors in my class I don't think they do. However, I've got some mixed classes where I've got half juniors and half seniors. My Marriage class right now unfortunately is half juniors and half seniors. I think my junior girls are very intimidated by the senior boys. And it is a constant struggle for me to try to not let that happen.

(G7): It bothers them.

(H8): Different classes have different levels of objection...sometimes they think you are making a mountain out of a mole hill like this is really not important, we know we are included, so it is OK. They understand the principle, that this is a good principle, but they are not necessarily always interested in changing their own speech patterns. I figure we have them for five hours a day and the rest of the time they are hearing everybody else.

(I9): They agree with that. They agree that it all should be changed. These kids are very much into their femininity. We have a very strong freshman team; they call it boot camp. They stress femininity, women's issues, by the time we get them they are pumped up on that. We do as much as we can in that area but the world outside impacts on them and we can't do anything about that either.

Sister.... goes nuts on MTV, it doesn't drive me as nuts, I had two teenage boys who went through it but I can see her point. We are very counter cultural in all of

this stuff. It is out there, certainly I have seen it in the black community, certainly I have seen it in the Portuguese community, and certainly I have seen it in the Hispanic community. I don't know that much about the Haitian community. The way they talk about them, they just hit on the girls, they are bitches, they go along with it, you see them outside school, you see the way boys treat them. I am not sure how effective we are. To a certain extent they are teenagers.

(J10): I have not addressed the issue.

(K11): In the Nicene Creed half of them can't handle it, because it sounds so foreign to them. The other half, there is almost no happy medium, it is either or. The other half of the class is yes this is great I like that a lot better. It is kind of like two extremes.

(L12): I think because they are adolescents they leap on the controversial aspects of it, because they are kids. Other than that, they...it is not that they don't pay attention, but I think they have had enough exposure earlier so they wouldn't necessarily notice. If it comes up as a topic many will jump on and deal with the controversial aspects of it, but that is because they are adolescent girls. They do react.

Metaphors for God

14. (FP): How is God portrayed in your religion curriculum?

(A1) As creator, best friend, role model, and compassionate father.

(B2): I would say as Spirit who abides within you.

(C3): Father no doubt about it, but a loving father. They don't even think about God as a super being, they don't even think of God as God, God is like a

superman, and that is how they think of Him. It doesn't matter how much I try to change that image. It is how they think of Him. It is very hard.

(D4): With teaching Peace and Justice He is really not portrayed. I think when I taught World Religions last year and I said give me an image of God, I had several images that I will show you they put down as an image of God. Some people said that they thought he was just light, some just said he was the Son, another portrayed him as a baby. And I said why would he portray him as a baby, he had a baby in a carriage... and I said why would you portray him as a baby in a carriage? And the boy said because a baby is innocent and God is innocent. Some people said he is just the wind so I have several images of God that I could show you.

(E5): Heavenly father I would say is the image, the traditional father, son, Holy Spirit. Father seen as creator, but he is portrayed as father because we have so many children who don't have a father so we try to give the image of a father, of loving and kind. The stern and just is tempered by the loving and kind, so we have the concept of hessed, loving, kind and compassionate. How Jesus taught us how to pray, using this affectionate term father, and this is how we should pray, this is how we should relate to God. Most of our kids do not have a father figure.

(F6): I think probably all the traditional ways, as father, but as the parent figure as well. As creator and I think as creator as neutral and left at that. Again spirit being neutral as well and that is not a problem either. I think the only one that might even cause any problem is when you talk about father - son. We use all the traditional ways, we use the traditional terms, father son and spirit and like I said

creator and savior and lord. I think I would have to say we use the traditional references.

(G7): Usually father, father in the sense of one of love and tenderness, not just protection and judgment.

(FP): Is that something that you bring in?

(G7): We really don't use textbooks. Textbooks at some point we don't even have them, if we have them they are secondary references, maybe we use them once a week.

(H8): If you asked students after they have been through a lot they will say unconditional love. I guess that they hear that a lot along the way. In terms of gender portrayal, certainly the language is of the New American Bible because it gives God a very specific gender. I wouldn't say that the students in Scriptures courses deal with that question but the question is dealt with in other places. They all do a guided meditation in ninth grade called Mother Eagle so they are introduced the feminine image.

(FP): What is the ninth grade curriculum that they use the guided meditation called Mother Eagle?

(H8): It is part of the Prayer course.

(I9): From the Bible in as many different ways as He is presented, creator God, father God, I do use father God, I don't say mother God. In the Book of Joshua, the God of battle, judge, merciful God, faithful God, who keeps His promises, generous God who gives His son. And also sometimes mysterious God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son I think the metaphors just tumble out of the Bible. A

major problem that the kids have is the concept of the Trinity, God the father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, we have to bring Saint Patrick back with the shamrock, kids get very confused on that.

(J10): In scripture He is the God of the covenant people, He has made a relationship with humans and He takes care of those people. He is a God that we ask what is the right thing to do, the good thing, the personal God. In the New Testament Jesus has gone the final step. In Morality not God per se, God is the good rather than the person of God.

(K11): As a father figure I think would be the best way to describe it.

(L12): Inclusively, plenty numerous opportunities throughout the four years where they see both the parental images of God, the female images of God, the male images of God, I know it is there so I think there is a very broad breath of images, pictures, different things, it is quite broad.

15. (FP): What areas if any of your curriculum uses varied images for God?

(A1): The entire curriculum. It just depends what we are studying at the time as to how we see him or her. I asked a question last week that was part of a journal entry, what was the student's image of God? And we had a good laugh because who saw God as male, female, old, young, with a face, without a face, what kind of clothes, and for some people there was no person, there was just a presence.

(FP): What class was that in?

(A1): Jesus and the adolescent, the sophomore curriculum which is three marking periods of New Testament and one marking period of Human Sexuality.

(B2): Well I do a study on that...I wait until they do the Scriptures.

(FP): How do the students react to that lesson with the paper and the different images of God?

(B2): In the past they have been very open.

(C3): I don't think we do.

(D4): In the course when we did Prayer, we did a course on prayer. We said who is God and what is your image of God...that was part of our meditation...that was the only time I used that, in the Prayer course.

(FP): Do you think any of the other teachers here are teaching varied images of God?

(D4): No.

(E5): In most of the curriculum I think it is basically the Trinity and Jesus the son of god, taking human nature, in that sense it is traditional. It may be traditional, but not intending to be sexist. I think it is trying to have a positive adult figure of the man.

(F6): I think probably it comes out mostly in our World Religions classes when they see what reference other religions have. I can't think of any other class where I might say that is being used right now.

(G7): Maybe the Scripture courses. That is probably it, because it is kind of built into the Old Testament. El Shaddai which is really a feminine form of God, but these kids just said "no."

(H8): The one that would certainly most strongly do that is Women of Faith. We talk about it a little in the Gospels course when we look at the parables, and we

talk about Jesus' use of... the women baking bread, the women looking for the coin....the kingdom of God is like so God is like.

(I9): Scriptures, I have them do at various times during the year, first marking period they do posters of Bible stories. They have then a creative way of portraying God. I don't tell them how to do it. I have seen big lights from the sky, bearded old men, I've seen triangles. Sometimes some of the more creative girls will mix colors I don't know if they get this from the art class. And they will have something up, it will always be something up in the air someplace, but there will be bright flashes of color. I will say what is that? And they will say that is God. They don't want to put a face on Him. God is out there, He is up in the sky.

(J10): Scriptures, Moses, where God wanted to punish the people for building the golden calf and Moses had to kill all the worshipers. They were a bite confused about this how He could kill four thousand people. And Joshua how could you have this God of seemingly wrath who was having people killed rather versus the God compassion or of love for the Israelites in desert, the constancy of God with Moses and the Israelites.

(K11): As I said in the Nicene Creed. In one of my courses, it might be Peace and Justice, we do the female images of God. I also have the students do art work, I have them draw their image of God and what that means. What I find is that it is often not a person, it is often just an entity.

(L12): Scriptures, the Scripture courses do, the Women's course does, the freshmen, I think the freshmen teachers start it in there. I think that is primarily where it is used.

16. (FP): Describe the primary metaphor used for God in your religion curriculum?

(A1): There isn't a primary metaphor.

(B2): The patriarchal symbol. I try to explain that God would never look that way. We don't have too many Catholics in our school and sometimes I think they get confused but I just feel they have to hear it. They are not getting exposed to it, Some have women in leadership.

(C3): Father

(D4) I would say...that's kind of hard...I think everyone just refers to him as God...Father.

(E5): Same as stated before.

(F6): Father

(G7): God the Father—God as love, tenderness, judge, a judge who cares for you that is why he does it.

(H8): The one that kids would come up, what have people been pounding into your head they would say God is love. But I know who they hear unconditional love from and apparently it must stick. When they are seniors we have them do a four-year evaluation of the religion curriculum the last question is "of the four years what do you think you are going to remember ten years from now? A lot of them will say, "God loves me unconditionally."

(I9): Father, creator.

(J10): Father

(K11): Like a loving parent.

(L12): various images

17. (FP): What might be the implications for your students regarding the primary metaphor used for God in your religion curriculum?

(A1): I think if there was one then we are putting God in the box.

(B2): I think it is going to raise their consciousness to a deeper relationship with God if they realize he is not a man.

(C3): Well then I think they will see God more as a nurturer. I don't think they view God at all as nurturing. They view him as caring but on the masculine aspect of caring, like a father will take care of his family. They do not see it all like God as a mother in the wanting to solicit the best from you, they see that but they don't see it in the maternal side of God at all.

(D4): Before I answer that...I would say that about 75% of our students are not Catholic. Because they are not Catholic many of them come from a different background. We have in our school Hindus and of course it is a little different. They have many many gods, as they tell me, over 125. I have Muslims and for them it is Allah. So when we pray they will put their head down so I will say Father instead of God I use the word father a lot with them because of that. I use between Father and God because the Protestant people seem to like Father and they do a lot of singing and a lot of "praise God, oh praise God" that sort of thing. The few Roman Catholics that we have are not very cognizant of God and who he

really is...or who she really is, whatever...they are not. So that is a tough question because of that, we have so many different varieties here. It makes it very interesting and it also makes it very difficult to teach religion the way I taught it 20 years ago. If you were asking me this question when I was teaching at a suburban school in River Forest Illinois, I'd say, it was all girls, and it was all Catholic girls. It was so much easier to relate and do whatever you had to do because we understood what the whole thing was all about. Truly I don't enjoy teaching Religion as much now as I did in the past. Of course Peace and Justice is easy. You don't have to worry about...they understand justice issues.

(E5): I would image positive, image of the strong parent being the father but a positive image of that word itself. The absence of strong male leadership in the community is a very woeful thing, very woeful. He may show up on graduation. I did the Jesse Tree here, my first year here; I'd never did it again. They know their mother's name, but they don't know their father's name, and they don't know their father's either. That made such an impact on me. It was one of those days when what you have didn't work and I didn't have plan B, so I talked about my family and where they came from. They asked if I knew all those people, and I said well I've heard about them. We talked about oral history of family, in the gospels; there are no connections. I ask if their mom or grandmothers told them about growing up, they know a little bit, but they don't have that wealth.

(F6): That God is male. That might be the implication I would get, for the students to get. If we are still using God as father that the students accept that and understand that we have a male God, a male image for God, let me put it that way.

(G7): I guess there is always the fear because so many of our kids come from broken homes that they could associate God the father with a negative personal childhood image of God, I have not seen it but it could happen.

(H8): Hopefully it would give them especially when things are not good even if they would be scared, an easy entry into a relationship with God rather than if there were a judgmental God, God should not be that for them.

(I9): I am saying father I am not saying mother, they have a sense that God cares for them listen to their prayers, concerns. They are very upset about the idea that evil people are in neighborhoods, they live in ferrible conflict. They do believe that God will draw good out of evil, they really believe that. They believe that there is some kind of a lesson. They were able to take this September 11 thing a lot better than I was I think. None of their parents or uncles were killed in it, they took it more like a volcano eruption.

(J10): If they have a good relationship with their father they might have a positive image of God, someone who they can follow, who is there for them all the time and if they have bad relationship it may have not have the same depth of meaning.

(K11): I think the main implication would be for them to hear the loving portion. The fact that it is a loving God. Again that came up with the terrorist attacks, a lot of students asked, how could God be punishing us? So that metaphor came up again. That God is a loving God, to be able to hear that, to be able to sit back and go, that is true, he is not a punishing God, as father or parent. I think parents tend to nurture. I think that in terms of these older girls questioning their faith, they do

a lot of questioning their faith at this age I notice, I think that it brings it closer to them to think of God as that metaphor. They can identify with parent, they can identify with nurturing. Maybe some of them can't and they need that in their lives so it kind of works out.

(L12): I think they do it to broaden the view and they do understand the nature of God is not human. God is a spiritual entity that is all, every human characteristic, every good human characteristic and within that nature of God, broaden that image and to bring it to the next, by the time they get to me they think a little more theologically, they can follow more of the theology of that and so I do think it does broaden their understanding a little bit.

(FP): Why might that be important for them?

(L12): I think it would be important so that they wouldn't find a place to feel left out or rejected or not included themselves. I think it might be important to those who might be struggling with sexuality issues, and some of the other areas. I think it might be important to those kids.

18. (FP): What might be the implications for your students if images for God include both masculine and feminine?

(A1): That we are all created in God's image.

(B2): I think they might see the worse of both sexes.

(FP): Do you think anything will happen differently with young people?

(B2): I think gradually their whole attitude is going to change. When they think within themselves I think it will be a great help. They are very helpful.

(C3): Well then I think they will see God more as a nurturer. I don't think they view God at all as nurturing. They view him as caring but on the masculine aspect of caring, like a father will take care of his family. They do not see it at all like God as a mother in the wanting to solicit the best from you. They see that, but they don't see it in the maternal side of God at all.

(D4): I don't know I would like to try it out and see. For a woman who was abused it would make a big difference to have a female image of God. It would make a big difference for boys too because many boys don't have a good concept of their father, and that is why many boys go to Jesus.

(E5): Positive, I think there would be quite a good revelation. Because they already have a strong mother role at home, and for God to be seen as without sex, as a spirit, and that these are just terms that are used to help us understand relationships, and the term of the male person would be head of the household. I think they would probably be appreciative of that, especially those from homes run by a loving mom.

(F6): I think that we would have a...this may sound like a weird way of putting it, we would have a balanced God, a God that is in sync with both male and female. A God that both male and female can relate to... and understanding that if we talk about creation and we talk about being created in the image of God, well if I am a woman and God is a man, well then how do I fit into all of this? Am I a lesser being because I am not a man? So I think that if we use, if we were able to somehow infuse into the curriculum and into the books, the idea that God is both, has both male and female qualities, that he is not both man and woman, that God

has both male and female qualities. See the reference that I just made again, it's a slip, it's not a slip, it is actually after umpteen years that he has both male and female qualities. I would imagine that as much as I am conscious

(G7): I think they would have a better relationship with God as the father figure because it is very easy for them to identify it in Jesus, Jesus as friend, Jesus as my personal savior, but if you wish, God as father for lack of a better word is kind of a person up there and I think if they understood more in totality that he is neither male nor female that would help them be able to relate to him instead of the one who if I commit a mortal sin he is going to send me to hell.

(H8): One of the implications is that they ask questions that they are not allowed to ask by the Catholic church like the issue of ordination. They do ask the questions.

(I9): Well I guess that I would have to do a lot more work. I would have to talk about maternal instincts rather than paternal. I think it might change the view of the creation story because creation, new life comes from females not males in the human experience in the animal world. It would have significant implications, which I never thought about before. When I teach I tend to assume that God is in control from on high perhaps in a masculine way. I don't think of life coming from God's own body. I imagine it would have significance if I started thinking that way, and frankly I don't think that way I go out of my way to try to use inclusive language etc, but my own mindset from the way I was trained and the way I go through life is not that. It is not male, female. God is father, God is

creator, that is the way I look at it. Judge at some point and hopefully He will forgive me.

(FP): Can you explain what you mean by God as creator?

(I9): Making things, outside of Himself, not like coming from Him.

(J10) Depending on their main figurehead, how they view it as motherly, if it is annoying, or antagonizing, it will effect their relationship.

(K11): I think to be able to put aside the stereotypes we have of male and female. I think if they are able to see God as both, I just think that that is a more well rounded way to look at the world. The other thing is because of these students backgrounds, a lot are first generation in this country. There are very strict ideas at home about a masculine role and a feminine role. In the area of religion to not have those, at least referring to God, that is a positive thing.

(L12): I think our kids would be OK with that. I think when they leave here I think they had a good enough, significant I would say, of both. They can discuss the female and male images, we discuss female and male characteristics, even of Jesus, and the scriptural that identify them, and so that they know.

19. (FP): If different images have been used for God in your classes, how have your students reacted to the varied images?

(A1): Depending on the grade level of the student, ninth through twelve, their religious affiliation, their own spiritual maturity or immaturity, their own intensity with their own prayer life and the practice of their faith, as different as there are students.

(B2): I would say...we have a picture of a black Christ and they ask for that picture, both the girls and boys...then I try to explain to them how we don't have an authentic picture of Jesus. But whatever Jesus is to us is all right. It is hard to say don't get hung up on color.

(FP): Why do you think they react to that black Christ the way they do?

(B2): Because they can identify with him.

(C3): They are interested in it. They like different ways but on the whole they will veer right back to original.

(D4): I take them to chapel and I did the chapel based on different images of Jesus and I have Mary on the other wall. Because we have so much multi-cultural I have every image... I have a Muslim Jesus with the white on, an African Jesus, an African-American Jesus, a white Jesus, a Russian icon, Indian, I have him portrayed in all the different...in many aspects, but I don't have Mexican. But of course we have the Mexican in the Blessed Mother and that is the main reason I will take them to the chapel and show them the many images of Jesus and they respond very well. They know Jesus, but God is out there and some of them they will say Jesus is "my dog" because that is supposed to be my best friend...but God is never in the picture. Every now and then they will say "Father God." The students also like the image the boy drew of the baby in the carriage for an image of God.

(E5): I have not done it.

(F6): I think some would be surprised to hear the feminine qualities that are being expressed and understanding that as God also. I think on the part of women in the

class it probably has made her feel better and as much as she recognizes that if God has female qualities and I am made in image of God therefore that is OK, I am OK. Again mostly on the boys side you are just trying to be politically correct. They beat that up, they really do.

(G7): They are fine except when you want to say female. They are fine with different images, God as rock, God as whatever, it came up with the Holy Spirit, God as a feminine form of wisdom always being referred to in the feminine, that is where they did not like it. And they were very vocally reluctant.

(H8): Very accepting. If you tell them you are doing it to try it on, they will try absolutely anything, they really are pretty good that, if we say we are just trying to see if this works for you and if it doesn't work you can throw it out. But basically if they are church goers, this is not what they hear so I feel like we are making them schizophrenic like there is a school God and a church God and rarely do the two meet.

(I9): I don't think it has been an issue in our classes. They are accepting of one another's images, they get into a lot more than I would. We also do oral presentations and it is an all girls' school. They take characters from the Old Testament, they work in teams of two. One of the more creative ones was talk show interview King Heziciah seeing his psychiatrist. It is interesting when the girls of course play the male roles and how they interpret, they have to be able to portray basic story but they don't have to be ancient times, if they want to do it in a modern setting, they can use slang. They interpret Old Testament male characters from a 2001 how a female would look at it. They feminize the male

character in the Old Testament from a female point of view. I taught summer school in an all boys' school and it was very different. When we were doing morality they saw almost immediately you cannot solve complex problems to a single person and destroying the person. They understood that. Boys never saw that. Partially is because of their physical size, physical power, they have to think of a different way. They have to be able to reach power without using weapons, very few of them of them go along with what we doing in Afghanistan. One hundred percent of boys would be for Afghanistan, they killed us, we kill them.

(J10): That is a very subjective question, because I could be using different images or they could it is just...we don't even realize we are doing it.

(FP): When you were talking about Moses how did they react to that God?

(J10): That would be an image of God as the army general really.

(FP): How did the girls react to that image?

(J10): They thought that it was gross, terrible, that's not fair, not right, couldn't justify it. A lot of them are angry about Afghanistan they want to go out and get them, and I ask, why is it OK sometimes to go kill people? Why would God say it is OK to go and kill people? And I say God knows that the Jews would go away from Him and start to pick up pagans idols and if you have evil around you, you have to stop it and sometimes it's not nice but sometimes you have to. That doesn't mean you go and kill twenty thousand people to get back four thousand, that's not the point. It's like Hitler has to be stopped. So sometimes it seems God is doing something that seems to be cruel but it has to be done.

(K11): Some of the students have a very difficult time with it and others take it and run with it. When I have the students do the art work, draw your image, how do you see God, some of them have come back with a picture of a beautiful flower, some sort of a nature kind of image. Other students will react to that, and they can't seem to...that doesn't fit for them. And again, it is very much one way or the other, they feel very strongly one way or the other, there is no middle ground for that.

(FP): Do you find students still portraying God as the old man?

(K11): Absolutely, they still see the old man with a long beard.

(L12): They're good with it. In my classes they are OK, they are open to that, they are comfortable with it.

Women in the Curriculum

20. (FP): Where in your religion curriculum do you find stories of women?

(A1): Hebrew Scriptures definitely, New Testament, Church History, I guess more a case of the absence of them rather than of the presence of them. Within conscience formation, Morality, Social Justice, a lot of case studies deal with the trials and tribulations that women have to face, not that men are being excluded, but women are really in there. Maybe it is because a lot of the controversial topics that get covered.

(FP): Can you give me an example?

(A1): Abortion, birth control, divorce, premarital sex, pick a topic.

(B2): I don't find it in the curriculum itself. I use the Scriptures but I also I have my own magazines and I cut out articles. I did more when I had Morality, it was easier.

(C3): Bible, first of all I take whatever stories of women I can find. World Religions, any women we can find anywhere, but it is very rare because the Hindu religion and the Buddha religion you are not going to find women apart from the goddesses. In the other classes that I teach, I try whenever possible to find examples of women. Peace and Justice, there is a wonderful English woman who worked in Peru. She went there on vacation. When she came back to England she was haunted by the sight of the abandoned children. She sold her business, she was unmarried and went back to Peru and became an English teacher, then shifted and had taken care of over three hundred children who would have otherwise have died. I can't remember her name. I take any example like that of women making a difference. I find stories in my reading and insert it wherever I can to make whatever lesson we are doing. So the Peace and Justice, Death and Dying, Lifestyles...I am for both, equal emphasis...I try to balance it. Actually I probably put more emphasis on the female and the guys don't like it too much they feel outnumbered because they think I am on the side of the girls. But it needs to be because they have so much power. Occasionally we will talk about how little women there are in the Bible. Today we did Joshua and at the end of the class I gave a project to eighty-seven sophomores, Bad Leader/Good Leader. We talked about the differences, described them. They had to give me examples, living or dead, you could look anywhere, Bible, you could use anybody,

anywhere, that you know about. Every single example I got was masculine. Because how many female leaders can you come up with? They came up with public figures, Martin Luther King, Bin Laden for bad, the Pope, which I was very surprised about, Clinton, Bush, Hitler as bad. A whole load of people from different angles, but every one of them was male.

(D4): We don't. I have to put them in. We don't have any.

(E5): Well of course you know they always give us those pictures of the famous Mother Theresa, and God bless her, but there are wonderful women in the church, Dorothy Day, she was fantastic woman, I would have loved to have met her, something about her, her keen brightness, her strong faith, her tremendous obedience to the church, how they talk about in New York and the Catholic Worker and the money secretly being sent to her, not supposedly coming from Cardinal Spellman's office, what if she really is a saint. Mother Theresa and Katherine Drexel but we need images of women today, and sometimes the women images of women in the church you hear of today are women having problems with church authority, the sister who spoke recently at a conference in Dublin about women being ordained, Joan Chittister, she is wonderful. If you have something to say, say it and let's discuss it.

(F6): There are stories in the Old Testament but I am not going to say that they're dwelled upon. The stories in the New Testament mostly of Mary, mostly of the three Marys, are the main stories that are being told in the New Testament; Mary his mother, Mary Magdalene and Mary Lazarus' sister. I think they are the three main stories told in the New Testament Scriptures. Although I haven't read the

book personally myself, there is a new reader they are using in the Relationship course. I know it has feminine stories in it. The Marriage book I use has a few short stories about women. I guess that is basically it. The Marriage book, some of the references are in the area where we were talking about Christian service, there is a section in there that talks about Christian service, and there is a list of several contemporary who have been involved in Christian service like Dorothy Day, Mother Theresa, so there are female stories that we talk about. That is in the Marriage course. Also in the Social Justice course they're coming up there too, but they are also in my Marriage course, along with Ceasear Chavez and Martin Luther King.

(G7): Old Testament, New Testament, Ten Commandments we take are saints, L.L. and Mother _____ as key figures. Sexuality does not highlight women in particular I don't believe, but it is a women's course. Church History to a certain extent because you have the great women like Catherine of Siena, Theresa of Avila, Clare of Assisi, Mother Theresa, Jean Donovan. Social Justice we take Dorothy Day and Mother Theresa again. Christian Lifestyles, I don't think any woman is highlighted. For the Old Testament we will take women of the Old Testament and do a project on it, for the Social Justice one they have an option of doing women.

(H8): We have mandated that the Old Testament must deal with Ruth. They have to use the Book of Ruth. Jesus in the gospels we make an effort to introduce the real Mary Magdalene. Women of Faith absolutely the whole course. What we have been trying to do, we are not there yet, is write into each course some

women, we are not there yet. So in the Prophets course we have Mother Caroline Freeze so they learn about her, Dorothy Day of course, Helen Prejan are definitely in the curriculum.

(I9): I look for them and find them. I went to a seminar at Seton Hall years ago on Women in the Bible. I went to another one, Blacks in the Bible, Africans in the Bible. I read the Bible myself of course, and I try to pull out not all individuals but also read around it...to see the implication of why Miriam was praised...the songs after the battle... Deborah and Barruk and the song of praise. Simply reading the story of a woman is not good enough, that is not helpful. I think it is done quite a bit, political parties do it, name a woman, it is like Uncle Tom. So I try to teach it a different way.

(J10): Throughout the Morality area, you have people like Dorothy Day, Seton, or in Church History, but I am not familiar with that curriculum in the school. In the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament you have very strong women.

(K11): In Church History we take a lot of the saints, women saints, the early nuns, the monastic women. This is the first year I am teaching World Religions and I plan on bringing it in, in some of the eastern religions, there are in the polytheistic religions there were women gods, female gods, so I am going to bring it in them. Obviously in the Morality class and the Lifestyles class, the issue of stereotyping women, prejudice, domestic violence. We often have domestic violence speakers come in during the morality portion. I actually do have a skit that someone gave me that talks about the women that the male religious figures left behind, Augustine's mistress, Peter's mother-in-law.

(L12): Everywhere, oh everywhere. The textbooks not only point to areas of scripture in all the different courses, but almost all the textbooks will bring in a woman of the time, Sojourner Truth from the 1800s right up to Mother Theresa, Jean Donovan, religious women, social women, who had an impact here, Dorothy Day, women who are significant in that particular topic, they are brought in, the textbooks do a nice job of including that. These textbooks are written really to be used for co-ed, so the textbooks do a nice job with that. Of course in the Women's course she does focus on that too. There are lots of places.

21. (FP): How are women portrayed in your religion curriculum?

(A1): As images of God and co-creators of life, which gives them an equal share in their responsibility in what is happening to civilization. There is also another side that needs to be mentioned, the practical side to religion. There are so many single parent families, whether the student is male or female they have to be held accountable by a female parent. This also lends for a problem in schools when the majority of catholic school teachers are women, while the student is in school they don't have opportunity to have a male point of view.

(B2): They really are not in the curriculum itself, except in the book.

(C3): Second class citizens always. I try to counter that; I don't present them as second class citizens. I think if you do you read stuff, just general everything comes across that you are not as important as the men. They don't take it on a verbal level, and I don't know what is going on inside, this constant wearing down.

(D4): Oh as brave women like Ruth and Esther, even the story of Bathsheba, I tell the story of Sara, I tell the story of Hagar and how she suffered, and of course Mary.

(E5): In a positive way I think. When incidents happen I try to garner them from issues that are taking place today. Like when we talk about something like abortion and they say it is a woman's right to choose, and I say why can't we upgrade the question? Why is all this responsibility placed on her? Why does her partner call her life an "it?" What are you going to do about it? The decisions that are reached, is it a it, is it cells, is it life, is it human life? Depending on how you view this, is how you may act. What is available for women? What services are available and what is a man's responsibility in this situation? I remember a couple of years ago someone saying, she can't mess up her whole life, she is a teenager having a baby, and someone said but she is a teenager who had three abortions. I raise the issue when a girl is pregnant in a catholic high school, why does she leave? I am waiting to have a satisfactory answer to this. If a girl is asked in a catholic high to leave and it is co-ed, and the father of baby is known is he still in the school and why is he still in the school? Then there is no equality, why should there be punishment? It is not for us to condone behavior, but there is a lot of behavior we don't condone. I can't imagine a girl leaving the school if the father doesn't leave. I say they both have to go. They say why should that be. I say you guys have never been confronted with this. That has to do with the image of being equal. They say you always favor the girls, yes I do. That kind of image that they are equal, from the marriage ceremony, one of the prayers I use is that

he, the groom will always recognize his wife as an equal before God. So I say if you are falling in love with somebody it should never always 50 50, it should be forty, thirty-five, and it changes back and forth and I say girls it is hard to believe but he is yours too. I think it is through the Marriage course, the Social Justice course, through all our classes I try to give that sense, that there is a responsibility and there is a respect that a girl is chosen to bring life and not to end it.

(F6): I would have to say in a very positive way. I do not have any recollect of any of the course material that does not put women in good light.

(G7): As people of God, instruments of God, women capable of social change.

We take a lot of women martyrs. We do a whole study on martyrs. They can take male or female but some of the women stories they just can't imagine what they had done to them.

(H8): The scriptural women we try to portray especially in their cultural context, actually I guess I can say that across the board. All women are portrayed in their cultural context. Even in World Religions, most of the teachers who teach that in some of the religions make an extra effort to look at the role of women in religion and this year, Islam is the top story. So in terms of their cultural context and in terms of the contributions that they have been able to make, sometimes with very significant obstacles in their way.

(I9): Taking it right from Eve all the way on and pointing out both sides and pointing out the great women and the great contributions that were made. I think the clearest example is what gospel are you going to teach and why. If you choose exclusively Matthew, you have by making that choice excluded those

passages in Luke, which focus on women. So part of it is simple competence and having a point of view when you go in what you are trying to do. Teaching girls, you want to take a look at where you are going and why. I don't make it deliberately masculine or feminine but I try by understanding the time and the age and pointing it out and because they are young ladies I bring out all the richness of the female people in the culture and what they did and what they contributed. Another thing is with Paul, you could pull out what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13, it is beautiful, and shortly thereafter it is women cover your heads obey your husbands. I think that should not be avoided those passages we hit them head on those passages and then we discuss to what extent Paul was a victim of his own prejudices because he was a man of his time. But then to go the next step and to point out in various other stages and other places where women were extremely important. By Paul's time Judaism had gotten chauvinistic.

(J10): As very strong, the power behind the throne.

(K11) They are portrayed as strong, confident, fighters, holding their own ground especially the early monastic women, what they were able to accomplish at that time. I try to bring out; can you image being a woman at that time and all of these things that they accomplished? I like to tell them a lot about the monastic women, Hildegard of Bingen, she spent lots of time in solitude, and I talk to them of those stories and other monastic women. They like hearing those stories.

(L12): I think fairly and positively. The reason I say fairly is because now I know Dorothy Day has been nominated for canonization, and there is a lot of discussion there because of her colorful early life and that is really how I phrase it to them.

The seniors want to know and they recount to me other saints who had colorful early lives. They know and they are open to that, that a colorful early life is not an inhibitor for something like that. So I think they feel comfortable with an honest portrayal of all the sides, and that the heroism that often brings a woman to our attention is not all that there is to her. Maybe from an earlier colorful life you can be extraordinary.

22. (FP): What are some of the stories of women found in your religion curriculum that might be beneficial to the development of young women?

(A1): Any story of men or women that can help someone develop a strong moral fiber, a sense of right or wrong, an understanding of decision making process which will improve someone's relationship with God is beneficial, not just women.

(FP): Can you think of any specific stories?

(A1): The lives of saints, I don't particularly care male or female there is something for everyone in everyone's life. I think it is too sexist to say it has to be a woman who has to influence a woman, just as to say it has to be a man who influences a man.

(FP): Do you find in your religion curriculum that the lives of the saints are incorporated into the curriculum, or do you just make a point to incorporate them into your curriculum.

(A1): We go out of our way to bring them in, they are always mentioned within textbooks. Sometimes depending upon students backgrounds, coming from nine years in a Hispanic parish there are certain saints and certain references that the

rest of the class has no clue. Especially holiday times, attempting to dealing with customs, students themselves will bring forth the names of certain people.

(B2): Women in the Scriptures, Judith, Esther, in the New Testament, all the references of Mary, I try to explain the difficult Mary.

(FP): Why did you mention Judith and Esther.

(B2): Because they are powerful.

(C3): Anything that shows them with strength and the ability to be themselves and to grow and become the best that they can. Anything that shows them the nurturing side of women is important, what you can achieve.

(D4): We don't have any stories and we are going to try to incorporate that I am putting that down for a suggestion for next year is to have women in Scripture...so that we can at least have something that the girls can relate to girls....other than movie stars. And of course we have so many fantastic women that they could study about.

(E5): Mary Magdalene in the Scripture who she was singularly taken for judgment. I have always understood that adultery was committed by two, where is the guy in adultery, why isn't he there, you know the Scarlet Letter, how many things are we going to keep on blaming on Eve? It is like grade school, I didn't do it, she made me. It is a great cop out. It is the same; it is the rejection of personal responsibility. We have to assume responsibility and we have to be better informed of the heroic role of women. I never heard until I was in college even of Harriet Tubman. Mother Hale in New York, and that is great because that goes into the minorities and it talks of people who have done wonderful

things, and if they have a faith commitment there, or if they don't have a faith commitment, it is about the human spirit and leadership. They fill the vacuum.

(F6): When I go back and look at some of those stories, however, you have the obedient nun who went out on her own and did her own thing. There is someone there who went to her full potential and in a very spiritual and religious way in helping others, Mother Theresa. Whereas the kids might look at that in a different respect, in order for me to become a fully realized individual, do I have to be a religious individual? And then we start talking about the story of Dorothy Day. For example, when kids look at her background and then go forward with it, and find out that she is up for sainthood, then that one might give them the idea that no matter what happens to them they could overcome it and reach their full potential. What I am trying to find in relation to this is a story that starts good and ends well and I am not finding anything except when you go into the New Testament Scriptures, you have one who is just a friend of Jesus and then you have one who was a sinner who becomes a friend of Jesus, and then you have the other who is a perfect woman.

(G7): A lot of them in the Old Testament: Deborah, Delilah, Esther, Eve, Hagar, Hannah, Jael, Judith, Miriam, Naomi/Ruth/Orpah, Raahab, Susanna. They study them and then they answer how do these women teach me something I can do in my life? The kids do projects and presentations on them. We look at the role of women like, Jesus appeared to women first, Mary Magdalene. In Church History, we look at Helena, Constantine's mother, Claire, women in the gospels.

(H8): In any scriptural stories that they read, if they understand them, if they are helped to understand they are beneficial. Because the story is always told with the cultural context as its' cover. But if you understand what these women were doing that was way out of the culturally accepted thing, whether it is Ruth, she is the God figure in that whole story, everybody else isn't, or whether it is Mary Magdalene who is the apostle to the apostles, or the woman who Jesus said healed herself because she knew what to do and she went for it even though it was totally against the law to do, by touching his clothes. Dorothy Day, the radicalness of what she did because she was taking the Gospel seriously. It is interesting when you ask them who their models are, it is very often their mothers and grandmothers.

(I9): The textbook in Lifestyles is pretty good. Besides the Scriptures, the Lifestyles book does the whole thing on religious life and they do the Mother Cabrini, Jean Donovan being down in El Salvador, a lot on the religious orders of women who have not abandoned the cities. Many of the current problems were addressed by the sisters, many orders were either founded because of the sisters who came to the U.S. We talk about how the sisters didn't leave the city after the riots, who stayed and cared. The kids are not inclined to join religious communities but they have respect for them.

_____ the founder of the community is stressed school wide. Every junior goes out for a full day too and they get a tour of the facilities from the sisters.

(J10): The women in Morality who stood up for justice and rights, the women in the Bible who followed, even when the men went one way they followed what

they thought God was choosing, like Rachel, she followed what she found was the right to do.

(K11): The bravery, the women very early on, the very first saints, the women who underwent such horrible persecution in early Christian history, those kinds of stories they just take it all in.

(L12): Again I think all these women that I mention so far. They come from a varied background, Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day, Jean Donovan all those different women I think come from such a variety of backgrounds. Now the last couple years I haven't really used this specifically, but I have alluded to Maya Angelou, and I know Sojourner Truth is in there, we have young women of color here as well. So we find different cultural women to bring in to give as broad a breath as we can. We have different women of different backgrounds.

23. (FP) What are some of the stories of women found in your religion curriculum that might hinder the development of young women?

(A1): They will only hinder the development of young women if they are not properly taught.

(FP): Can you give me an example?

(A1): In the senior curriculum on Lifestyles, there is an activity that deals with fairy tales. If we do the psychology analysis of the family unit that is portrayed in fairy tales that is the actual basis of most little kids lives. We begin to realize that they are totally dysfunctional. Where is the father? Where is the mother? For so many little kids all of these little fairy tales are their experiences of family and they play and they mimic and yet you look at today's dysfunctional families and

they are a mere image of a lot of the fairy tales. To be able to make kids more conscious of what is in the world around them, not to burst their bubble, and to have them lose the beauty and joy of the fairy tales. But to realize even Walt Disney and what is presented in terms of the family unit, and the strong characters, everything needs to be taken with a grain of salt because you just don't know what impact any of that will have on a small child. So we look at our teenagers and we say let's look at this with our eyes open.

(B2): I think it is the way you interpret the stories. There are certain passages where women are looked at very negatively. The way they treat the Adulterous Woman.... Mary Magdalene the first person that you know who really shows who she is, the whole sexuality of women is still considered the woman does wrong, and if she couldn't have children it was her fault to be barren.

(C3): Where women are shown as not being allowed to make decisions.

(FP): Can you think of any specific stories?

(C3): No because I try not to use them.

(D4): I don't think so...because even Mary Magdalen, she was a prostitute, but she loved Jesus and she quit what she was doing.

(E5): I don't know.

(F6): I am at a total loss for that. I can't think of any stories that are written that would hinder the development.

(G7): If you present any of the women, you could say Hagar, Sarah, it is all how you present it, the woman caught in adultery, it is all how you present it.

(H8): If when the story is taught, if you don't understand it then I can understand if that is the case. I understand that not everybody on this faculty have the where with all to do that.

(I9): If there are any I don't know if I would use them for the development of young women. My negative story is not really about our curriculum, I was looking at PBS at a special about women in the Bible and I was appalled at the inaccuracies. It says women in the Bible are deceptive, they trick men.

(J10): The curriculum portrays them very well, even if... their favorite word is concubines, they know them all, all the concubines. Hagar, how they stood up for their family, all the women are very positive.

(K11): As a matter of fact we were doing a little bit of Old Testament work, kind of prefacing Islam, we started the section on Islam yesterday. They are extremely bothered by these women who appeared to be mistresses, it really bothers them. How could they do that, I can't understand how she could do that? I try to get them to see that at the time it was customary, it wasn't unusual, it wasn't unusual for a man in Mohammed's days to have more than one, Mohammed had more than one wife, and it really bothers them. I think those piece of history, those pieces of World Religions, that hinders them because they can't believe that.

(L12): None that I can think of.

24. (FP): Not including the Blessed Mother, list three women that you think are important to incorporate into a religious education curriculum and explain why.

(A1): Martha, Mary, and Mary Magdalene. Magdalene to allow every single young women to recognize she may not be perfect but Jesus loved the sinner. When something goes wrong there is always hope. Martha and Mary because there is the delicate balance that appears in every woman. One is to be the people person, and the other is to be the busy person. And to figure out a way to balance the two because that is what womanhood is all about.

(B2): I think there are a lot of black women, Maya Angelu, the first women doctor, a black woman, I forget her name...Elizabeth... it slips my mind. Last year they did a whole list of black women, I had a whole list of them, I can't think of them now but uh they really enjoyed doing them, and they could take white or...or they list the saints, some picked Joan of Arc, some pick universal women which I was happy about.

(FP): Do you find if you were doing a study of powerful women, that the other issue that is important is color?

(B2): Yes they identify with them.

(C3): That's hard. Dorothy Day in Peace and Justice. I tend to use the examples from their own families. I'll ask them and then I will use them. That is where they are at. The introduction course that I do we talk about what is success and I ask them to name someone who is successful. Nearly always they will talk about their mothers, or father, but mostly mother, or grandmother. We talk about why, what is success, and they will say because they came here as immigrants, they are working hard, she is a single mother raising us, we are all turning out well, and she put us in catholic school. They will give me all the reasons so I tend to use

those examples. I can give them others, but they don't know them. They will say the person I give them was back in the day, they need someone who is immediate this is the one thing, coming from England to here, my biggest lesson I had to learn for them when I taught in the inner city, I've only taught in the inner city, is to begin where they are. When I first taught the Social Justice I was hopeless because I was out here. I have learned over the years to start exactly where they are and then take it from that point and to take it up. And try to expand their concept out. So for instance war, I start with how do you handle your anger? And then we talk about anger management and what happens when you don't handle your anger properly? And we talk about abused women. I keep cutting out snippets from the paper. Just last week a father killed his daughter. Going through that to talking about street violence and gun violence, and all the rest of it, then leading to war. Prejudice, the name calling to the genocide. We start right down here, name calling, gossip, back biting. The only way to get them is to start where they are. It took me three years to get to that point. In teaching Scriptures I tell stories the whole time. If I am in the Old Testament and the story is about the stoning of a girl who had sex before marriage, I immediately bring it to Mary, because that was what she risked by accepting the angel's invitation. She risked that Joseph would refuse her which he nearly did, and then that she would be stoned to death. So it's not, oh isn't it wonderful, it is oh my God, this is my life. And then we go straight to the story of the woman caught in adultery and act it out, writing on the floor. Always connect it through. Take them where they are at, grab the moment, and any question that they ask, like one child asked me, why

is the Catholic church so hyped up about Mary when all she did was open her legs and give birth. I said OK this is what she did, and we went back to the story of women and girls and what she risked.

(D4): The first woman I would pick would be Ruth, and the reason why was because I feel she was very loyal to her mother-in-law. She also was the bearer of descendent of Jesus, she also worked hard in the field of Boaz, so I think she could teach us a lot. I guess the other one I would pick would be Martha...because Martha is very much...you know a lot I feel like a Martha—you get yourself busy about so many things...I got to get this done, I got to get that done... and you forget to smell the roses...because that is exactly what Jesus said to her. So I would look at Martha and when the kids say I have to go to basketball practice, I have to do this, I have to do the other, I don't have time to pray, I say look at Martha. And I guess I would look at Queen Esther because she was brave enough to stand up to put her life on the line, to save her people and how many of us would do that? At the end of *The Power of One*, a kid said I would never give up a scholarship to help someone out, I would go to school, and then I 'd come back as a professor and help them. But we saw how so many people in the course of history have given up so much and sacrificed so much, so I would use her. I feel that if the women of tomorrow, if we have more women who are sacrificing we will have a powerful nation, because we are the nation builders. The men plant the seed, but many times the women will nurture it.

(E5): As I said before, Dorothy Day is an example. I think the widows of the recent tragedies; their stories make them truly heroines. And then their moms, and grandmothers, the qualities they have.

(F6): The other ones I forgot to tell you about was the El Salvador martyrs. There are several that I would probably put in here but they are not in the curriculum that I know of.

(FP): These would be women that you would like to incorporate, they do not have to be in your curriculum now?

(F6): I definitely think that Mother Theresa needs to be included regardless. I think in today's understanding everybody recognizes the goodness of the women and how she got to where she was and her persistence. Not including the Blessed Mother, if I had to pick one out of the three Marys, I would pick Magdalene because the strength she showed in recognizing Christ and recognizing her own sinfulness and be able to rise above it with her relationship with Christ, and that she loved him with a passion, she loved him with a passion. I really think Dorothy Day needs to be included too. Because we are talking about a contemporary society and we are talking about a women that only died fifteen, twenty years ago, 1980 something, 88, something like that. You are talking about a woman who stood up to the church, stood up to society. I think that shows a very strong woman and I think that is a woman who needs to be included in here. Most of the other women that I can think of right off the top of my head, without grabbing book in front of me to look at, all were religious women. Your Mother Seton, your Mother Drexel, and the contemporary Americans, I should say Americans,

they're not contemporary, they're Americans who showed great faith, and not only did they show great faith but did great works for society in their time. Giving up their fortunes and turning to a life of giving service to others.

(G7): Dorothy Day and I think if you are teaching inner city kids she would be even better because of what she did. Theresa of Avila or Catherine of Siena, one from that time period, maybe other Theresa just because they know her.

(H8): Dorothy Day, no contest there. I think Mary Magdalene because of the role she played. I think women who were the founders of schools, Caroline Freeze, Sr. Nona who came across the Atlantic with a little bag of money to buy the land, they know these stories. Depending on the kids, they have a fascination of saints, especially the more modern ones, Frances Cabrini, Elizabeth Seton, Theo Bowman.

(I9): I would not necessarily narrow it down to any one, but I think any founder of a religious group, whether it would be Seton, Mother Theresa, Cabrini,. I think it is important to note that historically since the early days of Judaism there were extremely significant and important women, whomever, Miriam, Deborah, or Ruth. Part of the significance of Ruth for me is that she was not Jewish she was a Moabite. There are separate books in the Bible about women, when has the Catholic church done that?

(J10): Mother Theresa of Calcutta because they know her, she is very near to their time. Rachel because she followed what she felt what God wanted. Deborah, is one of the leaders, one of the judges. She is up there with Samson—more positive character than Samson who they all know about.

(K11): Augustine's mistress, Hildegard of Bingen absolutely, like I said the very very early saints. Perptua, was one who was horribly persecuted, those women in those places at those times.

(FP): Why did you pick Augustine's mistress?

(K11): I think it actually was one of the student's who a couple of years ago when we were studying Church History, raised her hand and said, how do you think she felt? She said I don't know if I would have been able to handle that? That keeps coming up for me, after that comment I always bring her up

(L12): I think Mother Theresa is very important, she is not your typical woman who is put forth by feminism in this Church so I think it is important to put her forth because she is a valid image. She doesn't get a lot of credit for being feminist, she gets slammed occasionally for not doing more for women, but that was not her call. When I talk about her I do, I make that point, you have to follow your call, you cant always submit to what the pressure is, even from women groups...so that they get a fair picture. I do think Dorothy Day is relevant and I do think the other women I mentioned, Jean Donovan...there was something significant about a young woman who chose to follow her heart and ultimately gave her life for it...went back there knowing how dangerous it was, that is an important image for them.

25. (FP): What if any resources have you used to discuss women and church history

(A1): Ann Landers, Erma Bomback, and Dear Abbey on a daily basis will present something that can be used to teach an entire class. Granted that it may

not be rich in Catholic tradition, but it surely is rich in personal skills and sensitivity to mankind. You can relate anything to Catholicism if you understand what you are doing.

(B2): I never taught Church History, I do incorporate the women saints, but I feel sometimes that they can not identify with them. Their own black women they really enjoy that, I try to incorporate the women in the Scriptures.

(C3): Newspapers, anything and everything I read. Whatever it is if it applies, whether it is scriptural, scriptural commentaries, magazines, the magazine the Economist it gives a lot of stories from around the world, lots of magazines, biblical review magazines. The Methodist press is very good, but you have to cut out the fundamentalist side.

(D4): I have not. We don't have any curriculum... I simply bring it in when I teach Scripture. I bring in Scripture so I can teach about women. But like I said, I proposed we have a course in women in Scripture so we can take so many because there are so many women of renown.

(E5): Newspapers.

(F6): No I can't think of anything where I personally have used an outside resource to discuss these women in church history other than the women I have talked to you about. I will bring in outside resources from them. For example, every year in my Christian Service class, I get the kids to do a paper on Dorothy Day. When the kids do the research on her, and learn her background they are shocked that she is up for canonization. They say look at her past, look at some of the horrible things she did, I say yeh, what are you saying? Did you ever hear

of Saint Francis' past, Did you ever hear of Saint Augustine's past? These people weren't born in baptismal fonts. So why not? It just shows the great mercy God has for us and the great drawing that we have going to God.

(G7): Women and the Church, it is a study guide, it is not a textbook, it is made for a study group. Another book With Minds Of Their Own is a book with Catholic Women.

(H8): Various books, Women Shaping Church History is not bad,. All kinds of books on women in church history. My own personal readings, the Catholic Update has done a really good one on inclusive language and one on images of God. There is a package put out by Prism Collective, God and Women in History.

(I9): Books, read commentaries, the Internet, seminars. I subscribe to some Catholic magazines, I like America.

(J10): We use things like the story of the Siamese twins last year in Morality, it was in the paper every day. It was the story of the mother who was against splitting the twins because she believed it was God's wish for them to be like that. Last year they had to choose any character from the Old Testament, any single character and do a biography on that character. A few chose Ruth, Deborah, or Hagar, but no more or no less than those who chose Abraham, or Joseph. They could pick any character at all; it was done at the end of the Old Testament section they had to pick their favorite character. It was an equal share; it was not heavy male or female. A lot liked Hagar, I think it is the age group, they like

anything that has two wives or concubines, they like words they shouldn't be saying.

(K11): That book about the women left behind. I have the girls do research projects for the middle ages, and one of choices is what would it have been like to be a lady during that time, or what would it have been like to have been a female peasant at that time. They write journals for me and do things of that nature. They try to get a woman's point of view through those projects.

(L12): We don't teach Church History specifically here but there is a textbook I like it because I read it for me. We all tried it, within the curriculum itself; we know the stories, when I talk about Vatican II, how they look for men and women. Specific resources I can't think of anything. I use a video about Thea Bowman in the Death and Resurrection course.

Summary

This chapter included the transcripts from the qualitative interviews with the twelve religion teachers from both co-educational and all girl Catholic high schools located within three dioceses of the State of New Jersey.

In Chapter V the researcher will analyze the interviews with the twelve participants to identify issues that the religion teachers perceived to be either beneficial or harmful to the self-esteem of adolescent girls. The researcher will examine the areas of: self-esteem, non-inclusive versus inclusive language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women in curriculum. The researcher will then summarize the interviews, draw conclusions, and make recommendations for religion teachers and for further research.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Research Problem

One of the purposes of this study was to investigate and analyze the perception of religion teachers regarding how self-esteem in adolescent girls might be affected by the religious education curriculum in a Catholic high school. In this chapter, the researcher analyzes interviews with twelve religion teachers to identify issues found in a religion curriculum that might show whether or not a relationship existed between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the religious education curriculum offered in a Catholic high school. The specific areas regarding self-esteem and curriculum that the researcher was concerned with were: non-inclusive versus inclusive language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women in the curriculum.

In Chapter V, the researcher summarizes and draws conclusions based on an analysis of the interviews. Finally, the researcher makes recommendations for further study regarding the topic of religious education and self-esteem.

Although six participants were male and six participants were female, the researcher used the female pronoun in reference to the participants. The researcher's decision to use a specific gender for pronoun use, was to protect the anonymity of the participants. The female pronoun was used as this research is based on feminist research methods. According to Shulamit Reinharz (1992) in, Feminist Methods In Social Research, "... feminist researchers ... create new qualitative or quantitative methods (or

use old methods in new ways) because the knowledge they seek requires it" (p. 219). Although the exclusive use of "she" for pronoun use might appear non-inclusive, the researcher deemed for the purposes of this research, "she" is more appropriate than "he."

Analysis of the Interview Questions

The purpose of this section was to analyze the 12 religion teachers' responses based on their perceptions of certain issues regarding religious education curriculum that might affect self-esteem in adolescent girls. The questions were developed from the review of literature in Chapter II, and the validation of the questions by a panel of educational experts. The participants' responses were analyzed with the specific purpose of seeking evidence regarding certain themes and categories related to self-esteem in adolescent girls and religious education curriculum.

Four sets of open-ended questions were presented to each participant. Appropriate follow-up questions were initiated by the researcher during the interviews. The interviews were taped recorded and then transcribed. After the researcher transcribed the tape, the researcher checked for accuracy by reading the transcription and listening to the tape recording.

Harry Wolcott (1994) in, Transforming Qualitative Data, states that "analysis refers quite specifically and narrowly to systematic procedures followed in order to identify essential features and relationships..." (p.24). He goes on to state that "Analysis rests, ultimately, on agreed-upon knowledge, the recognition of mutually recognized properties or standards" (p.25).

First, the researcher de-contextualized the interviews. David Krathwohl (1998) in, Methods of Educational and Social Science Research, refers to analysis as a data

reduction process, "whereby the amount of data is winnowed out to those directly relevant to the study's focus " (p. 325). Next, the researcher used analytical induction and the constant comparison process. According to Krathwohl (1998), "These processes are used to clarify the concepts and constructs developed to describe and explain the phenomena being studied (p. 260). "Analytic induction calls for finding commonalities in the data which lead first to a description and then to an explanation of that regularity" (p. 260). Finally, the researcher developed "an understanding of the phenomenon and a theory, or explanation, of how the phenomena are grounded:" (p. 260).

The researcher examined each participant's responses from the transcriptions for key words, or topics that reappeared in the participant's responses. In order to do this, the researcher "winnowed out" data so as to find commonalities in the participants responses. The researcher designed tables where the key words or topics were listed. The topics were listed according to the commonalities of the response. The results were recorded on Tables 5 through 30 (Appendix F). In the summary and analysis, the researcher used only the participants' responses that the researcher found to be relevant to the study's focus.

First, the researcher made comparisons from the responses of the 12 participants who were from the Diocese of Paterson, Trenton, and the Archdiocese of Newark. Next, the researcher discusses the key topics mentioned by the participants and their relationship to self-esteem. Finally, the researcher presents her conclusions.

Analysis of questions – set one (self-esteem)

Coopersmith (as cited in Mullin, 1997), identifies four aspects of self-esteem, namely, capability, significance, powerfulness and worth. The first set of questions were intended to gather information concerning topics taught in religious education curriculum that might be either beneficial or harmful to self-esteem in adolescent girls. The aspects of self-esteem questioned were, capability, significance and powerfulness.

(1) What are the topics in your religion curriculum, that might instill in young women a sense that they are capable of accomplishing their life goals? Explain why you think this.

Among the twelve participants, four topics emerged as important in regards to instilling in young women a sense that they are capable of accomplishing their life goals. Three of the topics were each mentioned five times, and the fourth topic was mentioned three times. The topics that were mentioned five times were: women in the Scriptures (Hebrew and Christian), Social Justice, and Christian Lifestyles/Marriage. The topic that was mentioned three times was Morality.

Participant (A1) referred to the women in the Scriptures as offering young women positive role models. She also stated that the women in the scriptures were great women who accomplished a lot. (I9) listed some of the important women in the Hebrew Scriptures to be; Deborah, Ruth, Miriam, Esther and Judith. She went on to cite the Gospel according to Luke as non-chauvinist.

The Social Justice course was a place where (D4) perceived the Catholic Church's stance on social issues, particularly in regards to personal dignity, as helpful to building self-esteem. (E5) listed noteworthy topics in the Social Justice course as: community

service, women in society, women's fundamental role in transforming society, and empowerment.

The terms *Marriage and Lifestyles* were used interchangeably by participants. Within this course (G7) pointed out how students learn to define their gifts and capabilities. She also mentioned how in this course it was important to stress that the young women did not have to succumb to abuse, regardless of their ethnic traditions or culture. A woman's rights and responsibilities were a focus of this course. (K11) listed topics included in the *Lifestyles* as: decision-making, choices in life, and reactions to those choices. (L12) discussed communication skills, work, and lifelong learning. She also referred to integrity as a theme that ran throughout the course, along with the importance of taking responsibility for themselves and their lives.

Morality was mentioned three times as a course where the participants perceive students gained a sense of their capabilities in terms of accomplishing their life goals. (E5) referred to the *Morality* course as a place where students discussed the topics of moral decision making, being in control of one's life, being assertive, and assuming responsibility. (H8) stated that this course helped the young women prioritize things, look at their goals and understand the reality of the possibilities without losing faith in accomplishing those goals.

(2) What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as capable of accomplishing their life goals? Explain why you think this.

(A1), (C3), (D4), (E5), (G7), (H8), (I9) and (L12) perceived their religion curriculum as not having any topics that might hinder young women from regarding

themselves as capable of accomplishing their life goals. (E5) claimed the administration was all female. The all female administration leads in a positive direction, which allowed the young women powerful role models. (G7) stated that if any topic was harmful the topic would be removed.

(B2), (F6), and (L12) referred to the topic of leadership in the church, and ordination as topics that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as capable of accomplishing their life goals. (K11) mentioned the Social Justice course might lead the young women to feel helpless with what is going on in society today, such as the role of women in Afghanistan.

(3) What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might instill in young women a sense of their significance as human beings? Explain why you think this.

In response to question three, the 12 participants cited the same four topics as in question one. However, four participants cited women in Scripture, four cited Morality, two cited Lifestyles, and one mentioned Social Justice. One participant stated the importance of knowing that they are needed as women.

In reference to women in Scripture, (A1) referred to the importance of women as role models, and the accomplishments made by the women in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Two participants stated that teachers in their departments stressed the role of women in the Scriptures. (E5) noted that she stressed how "Jesus went out of his way to treat women differently..." (L12) stated that the teachers in the department stressed where the women in the Scriptures have "significance and prominence." (G7) perceived the whole curriculum instilled a sense of significance in young women because the foundation of curriculum "is that we are created in the image and likeness of God."

She specifically mentioned how in the Hebrew Scriptures, "God created you in the image and likeness... Jesus in the New Testament, Jesus saved you..."

(C3) stated Morality was an important topic in regards to instilling a sense of significance in young women as the course helped clarify "where they are coming from and it helps them see why they are holding this particular viewpoint." The Morality course helped the young women move away from "a parental structure to a personal involvement" in making decisions. (D4) perceived Morality as important because part of this course taught the young women that "your body is a temple, something very precious..." (G7) perceived the Morality course as giving the view of life being created in God's image. (K11) stated the right to life issue as important.

(E5) and (L12) cited the Lifestyles course as a place where students discussed the on going role and development of the human personality and different lifestyles. (E5) stated students discussed how one matures and grows, and the distinctions among individuals, regarding sex, personality, and character. (L12) stated the focus in this course was on the choices in different lifestyles such as single or religious.

(G7) and (H8) cited Social Justice as important in instilling a sense of significance in young women. (G7) stated the Social Justice course taught the basic dignity of the human person. (H8) also referred to the Social Justice course as stressing the dignity of the human person and the power of the human person.

4. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as significant human beings? Explain why you think this.

(A1), (D4), (E5), (F6), (I9), (K11), (L12) perceived their religion curriculum as not having any topics that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as significant human beings. (E5) stated the teachers and administration would be very alert to such topics and would have “weeded out” anything harmful. (I9) claimed she would not be teaching at her particular school if she didn’t consider the students as significant. However, she stated that some teachers have suggested that the service program could be problematic as it suggests that a woman’s place is to serve.

Although (L12) initially stated there were no such topics, however, she then went on to mention issues “specifically relevant to Catholicism, homosexuality and the priesthood.” (B2) referred to the way the “church faces women.” (C3) asserted Church History could be problematic, however, she never taught the course. (C3) also stated that she would refuse to teach it as she imagined that it “would be very damaging because it just pushes women to the side.” (G7) believed that the closest topic would be Holy Orders, however, she said that whenever Holy Orders would come up, she would stress the notion of “priest not as power of priest but as servant.” (H8) purported that “the more they learn about the world, sometimes the less powerful they feel...” (J10) referred to issues that were difficult to understand such as stem cell technology.

5. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might help young women see themselves as powerful human beings?

Stories of women found in various parts of the curriculum were cited with the most frequency in regards to question five. The participants referred to stories of women found in the Scriptures, Church History, and Social Justice. (A1) again referred to the positive role model women of the Scriptures served for young women today. (D4)

specifically mentioned the stories of Esther, Ruth, and Dorothy Day. She also discussed how the boys in her class judged Dorothy Day to be a whore, whereas the girls did not see Day in that light. (E5) spoke of her Social Justice class and the valorous women that sprung out of newspaper stories, such as the widows of the men who died in the Twin Towers. (G7) referred to the significant women in the Bible and Church history. She emphasized the importance of stressing with the young women, their role as people who can bring forth change. (L12) gave examples of religious women that are offered in her curriculum such as: Dorothy Day, Mother Theresa, and Jean Donovan.

Other courses mentioned were Spirituality and the Arts and Marriage/Lifestyles. Spirituality and the Arts was a course offered only at (F6)'s school. Within this course students looked at contemporary media and especially videos, films and music. By examining the media, and understanding the messages portrayed through the media, the students gained power so as not to follow the stereotypes given to them. (F6) stated the Marriage course was important because in this course students learned "that they are an equal partner and equal gives you just as much power." The Lifestyles course was the topic given by (K11). She stated that in this course, "the issue of making your own choices, of being in charge of what you do with your life," gives the young women a sense of power. She continued that the students come to understand how powerful they are in terms of making choices.

6. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as powerful human beings?

Six of the participants referred to the way women were portrayed in the curriculum as something that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as

powerful human beings. (A1) said anything in terms of the role of women in the church, along with how women were portrayed in the history of the whole Jewish nation. (B2) claimed that the students have the ability to read the stories in the Scriptures, and they will find stories where women are treated negatively. Her fear is that the young women will follow that negative pattern. (C3) suggested the Church History course was problematic because of the way women were portrayed. (F6) said the Hebrew Scriptures does not have stories of powerful women unless "you really dig into it." She went on to say that the textbooks are written in a patriarchal fashion, and seldom do we hear stories of powerful women such as Ruth. (I9) claimed the problem stems from the exclusion of women from the leadership positions of the Catholic church. (J10) referred to the writings of Saint Paul, stating the young women do not like reading Paul, "his language is definitely not open."

The perception of (E5), (G7), (K11) and (L12) was that there were no topics in their religion curriculums that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as powerful. (K12) stressed that her department taught "so much from that other place, the place of self-esteem, and you are in charge of your life..." She didn't think that it ever came up that the young women wouldn't be powerful. However, she attributed that to teaching in an all girl school.

7. Is there anything specific you have done in your classes to focus on self-esteem and adolescent girls? If so, what?

The twelve participants in this research study used a variety of methods to focus on self-esteem in adolescent girls. Every participant included something in their classroom procedures or curriculum to make sure that the issue of self-esteem was

addressed. The method mentioned with the most frequency was incorporating women into the curriculum.

The following is a list of comments made by each participant in reference to methods used in their classrooms to focus on self-esteem and adolescent girls. (A1) made a point to address topics from both the male and female standpoint. (B2) used every opportunity to raise up women. (C3) claimed everything taught in both the freshmen and senior curriculum. (D4) showed movies where women were in leadership positions, along with giving them role models such as their grandmothers or the saints. (E5) geared everything to give the image of favoring ladies in the classroom. (F6) told them they can be anything they want to be. (G7) helped the young women examine what their gifts were, what God had given them, and to answer the question who am I? (H8) helped the young women articulate what they were thinking and feeling. She taught the importance of listening to one another, and reflection. The introspection she claimed, gave them a sense of self-esteem. (I9) claimed that focusing on self-esteem was done on a regular basis. She particularly emphasized that the young women were never to take a subservient role, along with telling them that there were no limitations in what they may accomplish. (J10) stated that nothing specific was addressed as the school was an all girls' school, therefore the students were very confident. (K11) used a lot of self-esteem measures, such as personality surveys. She claimed that the surveys spoke to the young women's self-esteem. (L12) addressed the media and advertising. She particularly mentioned food, and stated that food was a real problem in regards to self-esteem.

A Discussion of the relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the religious education curriculum offered in a Catholic high school.

The purpose of this section is to discuss the relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the religious education curriculum offered in a Catholic high school.

The power of the curriculum is stressed in the AAUW (1995) report, How Schools Shortchange Girls: A Study of Major Findings on Girls and Education . If in fact, the curriculum is the instrument used by schools to deliver a central message, it is also responsible for the motivation and engagement, effort, growth, and development of students. The participants' consistently cited four topics which they perceived as being helpful to the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. These topics were women in the Scriptures, Social Justice, Lifestyles and Morality. Within the topic of women in the curriculum, it was the stories of powerful and heroic women that the participants perceived to be important in the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. The majority of the participants did not perceive topics within their curriculum that might hinder the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. However, few of the participants did mention some topics. The researcher discussed the harmful topics after the discussion of the topics that were perceived as beneficial.

The participants stated it was critical for young women to understand and learn the roles women played throughout history. The women of the Scriptures were cited several times. Within the Hebrew Scriptures, the participants tended to mention the same women such as; Miriam, Deborah, Ruth and Esther. (F6) mentioned the need to "really dig" to find powerful women in the Hebrew Scriptures. (F6) also mentioned, that the

textbooks were patriarchal, and one does not hear stories about the women who had power or the judges. The researcher noticed that none of the participants mentioned women whose names are infrequently heard, women who were nameless, or voiceless, such as Hagar, Shiphrah, Puah, Moses' mother, or Leah. Also mentioned by participants was the significance of Jesus' relationship with women. However, in this section of questions, the participants did not name specific women who were in relationship with Jesus.

According to Carol Gilligan (1982), a struggle women have faced, is being heard, having a voice. Gilligan (1982) states in, A Different Voice:

From Erik Erikson, I learned that you cannot take a life out of history, that life-history and history, psychology and politics, are deeply entwined. Listening to women, I heard a difference and discovered that bringing in women's lives changes both psychology and history. It literally changes the voice: how the human story is told, and also who tells it (p. xi).

Although the participants recognized the importance of women's stories as part of the religion curriculum, the researcher determined that there were not enough stories being told. As Gilligan (1982) stated, as long as some stories are being left out, life-history, psychology and politics will be affected, as all are deeply entwined.

The second topic the participants felt was important in developing self-esteem in adolescent girls was Social Justice. It was within the Social Justice curriculum that young women were taught issues such as personal dignity, the power of the human person, and their responsibility in transforming society and empowerment. (G7) stated that almost the whole curriculum, including Social Justice, was founded on "we are

created in the image and likeness of God.” (H8) was concerned however, that the Social Justice course might give the young women a sense of being overwhelmed. (K11) also shared concerns with the Social Justice course claiming that the young women might feel helplessness with what is going on in society today, such as the situation of women in Afghanistan.

Lisa Cahill (as cited in Hilkert, 1995) states that the “image of God is the primary Christian category or symbol of interpretation of personal value” (p.194). Cahill’s (as cited in Hilkert, 1995) theory leads one to believe that, if one can see themselves in the imago Dei, then one will have a greater ability to grow in self worth.

Although the topic of personal dignity based on the imago Dei, is of paramount importance to the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls, it is a concept that is relatively new to religious education, and perhaps, not yet espoused by all. Mary John Mananzan (1991) discusses in, The Special Nature of Women, ways that the church’s teachings have harmed women. Theology she claims, has often been based on the dichotomy of body and soul and this theology has attributed sex and sin to women. Along the same line, Regina Coll (1994) in, Christianity Feminism in Conversation, tells of the catechism used in years past. She states:

Chapter one asks, “What is man?” “Man,” we are told, “is a creature composed of body and soul and made in the image and likeness of God.” The follow-up question asks, “Is this likeness in the body or the soul?” And the answer is, “This likeness is chiefly in the soul.” Even though the word “chiefly” somewhat qualifies the answer, the series of questions that follows focus on how the soul is

like God. There are no questions about how the body may be in the image and likeness of God (p. 72).

Coll (1994) goes on to explain that the catechism questions were a way of explaining the existing attitude toward the body, and women.

The sense of being overwhelmed and helplessness as discussed by (H8) and (K11) could also be connected to imago Dei, symbolized by a male God. Anne Carr (1988) in, Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience, claims this is a form of idolatry that gives men on earth "authority, responsibility, power, and holiness." Carr (1988) goes on to state that because of this, "Girls internalize images of themselves as inferior, wrong, incomplete, guilty, unsure, incapable" (p.135) Finally, Carr states that "negative self-images endure, even in the wake of the contemporary women's movement with its new messages" (p.135).

This attitude was held for centuries. The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church based on theologians such as Augustine and Aquinas, and their perception of women, will not disappear overnight. It will take a conscientious effort by religion teachers to turn this old theology, into a theology which will free women to develop self-esteem.

Morality was the third topic that reoccurred in the interviews regarding the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. Morality was where the young women came to understand why they believed what they did, and to learn to discern if these beliefs would hold true as they grew into adulthood.

(E5) claimed that it was within the Morality course that the participants claimed the young women acquired decision making skills, thereby gaining control of their lives.

(H8) stated that this course helped the young women prioritize things, thereby helping them set their goals and come to an understanding of what was truly possible.

Women being part of moral decision making is something new to the 20th century. Kaye Ashe (1997) in, The Feminization of the Church?, reminds us that women were excluded from “discerning what constitutes moral behavior, moral freedom and moral obligation...” (p.31). Ashe (1997) claims that justification for excluding women from this domain was based on the belief that women were deficient in a sense of justice, therefore they were confined to the home. Ashe (1997) mentions Freud’s attributing women’s deficient moral capacity to their sexuality, Rousseau believed women to be disordered, and Hegel was certain that women were the enemy. Christian ethicists joined in these views with its theory of Original Sin initiating with Eve. Finally in the 20th century, Ashe (1997)states, women received access to formalized education, thereby allowing them the opportunities “of constructing reality and, therefore, of envisaging human relationships and moral behavior” (p.31).

If the Morality course is a place where young women can learn to determine the definition of moral behavior, the status quo could be transformed. Since what determines moral behavior has been developed through the male perspective, it is time that women’s experience enters the definition. Dorothy Solle (1995) in, Creative Disobedience, questions whether the maintenance of the status quo is what the Gospel call us to. She suggests that “‘phantasy’ rather than obedience is at the center of the Christian ethical system.” Solle claims it is phantasy that enables us to envisage change and break through boundaries. It restores our spontaneity and sense of play; it unchains the powers that lie within us. She discusses “the phantasy of Jesus, a gift that allowed him to ignore rules

and prescriptions when they stood in the way of their needs.” His “...soaring phantasy,” writes Solle (1995), “really acknowledges but a single principle: the creation and the propagation of well-being” (p. 52).

Again, the teachings on morality have been taught for centuries, it will take time for the status quo to change. Kaye Ashe (1997) reminds us that women were excluded from “discerning what constitutes moral behavior...moral freedom and moral obligation...” (p.31). Women need to help define the morality that represents today’s status quo. If the morality that defines the present day status quo still gives credence to Original Sin initiating with a woman named Eve, then this thinking needs revision. However, it is possible if young women are encouraged to soar with their phantasies. The more young women develop self-esteem, the better the chance that they will challenge the status quo that hinders them from growing to be the women God calls them to be.

Lifestyles was the final topic that reoccurred in the interviews regarding religious education and the development of self-esteem in young women. This course was a place the participants claimed young women again learned to make choices, especially in regard to the various lifestyles, single, married or religious.

(G7) pointed out, that it was within the Lifestyles course that the young women came to define their gifts and capabilities. (L12) discussed how communications skills, work, and lifelong learning skills were part of this course, along with understanding what it meant to be a person of integrity. The Lifestyles course is a critical course in Catholic high schools as it is within this course that the young women will look at the major issues in determining what life experiences they might find as life giving experiences. In

Chapter II, the researcher referred to Sister Rosine Hammett, Sister Carroll Juliano and Brother Loughlan Sofield (1990) in, Design For Wholeness. They claim that self-esteem is critical in helping one make these lifestyle choices. It would stand to reason that as the students discern what is the best lifestyle choice, confidence in that choice, gained through the knowledge learned in the decision making process will lead to the development of self-esteem.

Young women can come to answer the question of what it means to be human in the Lifestyles course. Learning communication skills, and the importance of integrity, “learners might become fully alive human beings who contribute to a society of the common good” (Groome, 1998; p. 72).

Overall the participants did not perceive many topics within their curriculum that might hinder the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. However, certain topics were mentioned. Although the presence of stories of women found in the curriculum were perceived as beneficial, a few of the participants stated there were stories about women that could also be harmful. (B2) claimed the “whole way that the church faces women” was problematic. (C3) stated Church History would be a problem as the stories found would be “very damaging because it just pushed women to the side.” Other topics participants mentioned were Holy Orders, homosexuality, and the writings of Saint Paul.

Maureen Gallagher (1998) in, The Art of Catechesis, claims that the religion teacher must combine human experiences to biblical and liturgical themes. Gallagher (1998) also states that adolescents are particularly attracted to new information regarding religious heroes. If the women heroes are absent, who then could young women

emulate? Without these significant role models, the adolescent might sense that as women they were inferior.

Ann Carr (1988) addresses the issues of ordination by discussing the church's argument that the revelation of God is predominantly masculine imagery, therefore, women can not be ordained . Women's self-esteem must be affected if the church they have membership in claims that they do not have the qualifications for ordination, particularly when those qualification are based on gender. The suggestion is that the male gender is superior and the female inferior.

Anne Carr (1988) suggests that one of the most important issues in feminist theology is the question of what it means to be human as defined within Christian theology. Carr states that the definition of the "nature" of being human has been defined in the past by white, western, males. If women are to grow in self-esteem they must answer the question Who are we—really? through the experiences that have meaning in their lives (1988). The curriculum and how that curriculum is used has tremendous power. It is apparent from the participants' responses, that the place to find those experiences is through the stories of women found throughout Scripture, in Church History, and current events. Teachers also need to make sure that many more stories are told, including those of the voiceless and nameless women found throughout history.

Analysis of questions – set two (non-inclusive versus inclusive)

Inclusive language is language that represents gender in a fair manner. It minimizes concern about gender in the subject matter, and allows one to focus on what the person is doing rather than on whether the person is male or female (Redfern, 1999).

(8) What type of language (non-inclusive vs. inclusive) is used in your religion curriculum?

Among the twelve participants, six claimed to use inclusive language in their religion curriculum. Three stated that they used non-inclusive language, two used both inclusive and non-inclusive, and one participant stated they did not pay attention to the words used.

The participants who used inclusive language, made an intentional effort to be sensitive to language. These teachers claimed they made this effort due to the fact that the majority of prayers and religious writing use non-inclusive language. Teachers sought specific textbooks, Bibles, and prayers, and if necessary changed the language themselves. (H8) claimed that “anything we write we go out of our way to be inclusive... publicly for prayers and liturgies it is inclusive absolutely.” (I9) stated that her school changed the Bibles they were using so as to have Bibles with inclusive language. (I9) also stated that all prayers used inclusive language.

(B2) claimed she used non-inclusive language, she was aware of it, and tried to change it. (G7) stated God is always referred to in the male. Her reason for using the male gender for God, was that her students were uncomfortable with changing the gender of God. She claimed her students liked “God just the way he is.” She attributed this to the fact that the majority of her students were from the urban area, and “they like the security of what is familiar.”

(E5) used a combination of both non-inclusive and inclusive language, however, prayers were done with non-inclusive language. She claimed she was sensitive to language that might “depict one sex as superior to the other.”

(9) What might be some of your concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to God?

Six of the participants were concerned that if only the male gender was used when referring to God, then the young women would have an incorrect image of God, and think of God only as male. There were various concerns regarding language among four of the participants: one participant claimed the topic bewildered the students, one participant was concerned that some students might feel excluded, whereas another participant's concern was only that the students realized we had a God, and one participant stated it was unfaithful to God and limited the students understanding of God. Two participants had no concerns, one stated it was not a concern because inclusive language was used for God, one participant simply did not think it was an issue.

(B2) stated that seeing God as only male was a problem. Therefore, she taught a lesson where the students were exposed to various images of God, hoping the students would come to see all images as authentic. (E5) was concerned that using non-inclusive language for God will "continue to hold back people from a greater development and understanding of the greatness of God." (G7) was apprehensive about using non-inclusive language for God, because the students might "only think of God in what they see as masculine, protection instead of the tenderness of God." Although (G7) shared this concern, she continued to use male images for God due to the students need for security with what is familiar (see question number 8).

(10) What might be some of your concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to humans?

Participants' concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive-language when referring to humans centered around the problem of exclusion and stereotyping. Several participants did not have concerns with non-inclusive language, either because inclusive language was being used in their curriculum, language was not an important issue, they hadn't thought about it, or the all-female environment made it a non-issue. Participants who had concerns with the use of non-inclusive language made a conscientious effort to use words such as humankind as opposed to mankind.

(D4) thought we should refer to "humankind or person...because ...the girls have to realize that God created female and male." She went on to say that the "women's struggle will be eternal but...we should start someplace. Language is a powerful thing...if I said black you'd think evil." (F6) was concerned that "a female would be left out." She gave the example of people referring to Jesus as feeding five thousand men. She went on to ask "how many women were there, how many children were there?" (K11) was concerned that girls who had a low self-esteem might believe that the male should be dominant in society.

(L12) claimed this issue was not a concern because inclusive language was used in her curriculum and throughout her school. (J10) expressed having no problem with non-inclusive words, however she thought it was "whatever you say behind it that matters, not the word itself."

(11) What might be the implications for your students if non-inclusive language changes to inclusive language?

The overall reaction to question eleven was that there would be positive implications for the students if non-inclusive language changed to inclusive language.

Participants stated it would help self-esteem, illustrate more equality, and open up the minds of the students. The participants who felt there would be negative implications associated with changing non-inclusive language to inclusive language were concerned that students would not understand why the language changed, the students might be uncomfortable with the change, or the focus might be on the language rather than the teaching.

(C3) wondered if language was something that worked on the unconscious level, and if so, it could “make girls feel lower than the guys.” She tried to bring language to a conscious level with her students, however, their main reaction was bewilderment. (D4) stated that although the girls loved the use of inclusive language, the boys were not concerned, unless it was used for God, then the boys reacted negatively. (H8) referred to the theological phrase “language functions” whereby implying that language impacts their lives. Her students accepted the use of inclusive language, but she quoted her students as saying “don’t get carried away.” (I9) would like to see students understand that God cannot be defined by language, thereby coming to understand that God is “unique and different.”

(E5) was concerned about non-inclusive language, however, her concerns were directed toward “street language” that was “debasing and dehumanizing language about women.” (E5) believed that it needed to be a process, and the place to start was with the everyday language used by the students. (J10) questioned whether changing the language from non-inclusive to inclusive language might make the students focus more on the language than what was behind the teaching.

(12) Have you addressed the issue of non-inclusive language in your classes? If you have, how have you done so and why?

Scriptures and prayers were the two topics mentioned with the most frequency by the participants who addressed non-inclusive language in their classes. Two of the participants stated non-inclusive language was addressed in their course on women, however, only these two participants offered courses on women as part of their religion curriculum. One participant used inclusive language when referring to people, however, not when referring to God. Another participant addressed the issue in the Social Justice class by having the students examine the language in the media.

(A1) was emphatic that she pointed out to the students the words within Scripture and prayers that were non-inclusive. She also discussed with the students their reactions and feelings when inclusive language was used. (B2) stated that whenever they read from Scripture she would change the language, and if she forgot to do so, the students would correct her. (C3) also stated that the students would correct her if she was using non-inclusive language. However, the students mainly did this when she referred to people as opposed to when she referred to God. (C3) claimed that the level of "machismo" is strong among the Hispanic and Haitian community of her school, and this made it difficult to be persistent with the issue of language. (E5) was more concerned with the street language the students used, however, she claimed this question gave her something to think about. (F6) addressed the issue by showing the students the root of non-inclusive language and where it came from, particularly within the Scriptures. She explained to the students the status of women at that time in history, teaching that society was male dominated and patriarchal. She also brought to the students' attention the fact

that at one time history books might have referred to the “Japanese as Japs...” (F6) pointed out for her students that when people come to realize something isn’t correct, it needs to be changed. (F6) however, was not comfortable changing the language within prayers. (K11) taught a lesson using the Nicene Creed, and changed all the male pronouns to female pronouns. The point of her lesson was “to get them to come to that different place.”

(J10) and (L12) said it was not an issue for them to address non-inclusive language in their classes. (J10) believed it was not an issue because there were no boys in the class. (L12) claimed that because of the nature of the courses she taught, it was not an issue, however, she was aware of it being an issue in other courses, and the issue was addressed.

(13) If you have addressed non-inclusive language in your classes, how have the students reacted to the issue?

According to the participants’ responses, it was apparent that students were not comfortable with the issue of inclusive language. The majority of the participants claimed that their students reacted in a negative way. Three of the participants did not address the issue of non-inclusive language. Some participants stated that their students had mixed reactions, whereas some students favored the use of inclusive language, and others did not.

When (A1) addressed the issue of non-inclusive language, her students referred to her as “crazy.” They felt she was making more of an issue out of it than there needed to be made. (B2) hoped her students to be positive, however, the boys perceived her as favoring the girls when she addressed the issue. (H8) stated that her students understood

the principle, and accepted it as good, however, they were not “always interested in changing their own speech patterns.” (H8) claimed that the students were only in school “five hours a day and the rest of the time they are hearing everybody else.” (I9) stated that her students were in agreement that the language should be changed. Her school stressed femininity, and women’s issues. (K11) claimed her students feel into two extremes; some of the students thought the concept of inclusive language was great, the other half found it as foreign. (L12) thought that perhaps her students agreed with the idea of inclusive language because it was a controversial issue, and as adolescents “they leap on the controversial aspects of it...”

A Discussion of the relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the use of non-inclusive versus inclusive language.

The purpose of this section is to discuss the relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the use of non-inclusive versus inclusive language in the religious education curriculum offered in a Catholic high school.

First, the researcher examined each participant’s response from the transcriptions for key words, or topics that reappeared throughout questions eight, nine, and ten. Then the researcher summarized and analyzed the participants’ responses that the researcher found to be relevant to the study. The researcher followed the same process for questions eleven, twelve, and thirteen.

Kaye Ashe (1997) in, The Feminization of the Church?, discusses how the women’s movement stirred up a revolution in the way women perceived themselves, their experiences and the language they used to express their awakening. The women’s movement affected many realms, linguistics being one. The issue of linguistics is critical

to feminists, because as sociolinguists point out, language is a powerful component in how one shapes their self-concept. One's thoughts will be limited by one's language.

In Chapter II, the researcher referred to the work of Anne Pauwels (1998), who speaks of those who adhere to the view that language reform is necessary. These people believe there is a relationship between language and reality. Their conclusion is, "language influences, or even stronger, determines, how an individual constructs and views reality" (p.87). This group tends to be associated with the thinking of Benjamin Whorf who conducted a landmark study of languages, claiming that the primary way one thinks occurs through language (Chandler, 2000).

Six of the twelve participants claimed to use inclusive language in the religion curriculum. Three participants used non-inclusive language, two used both, and one participant claimed she did not pay attention to the words used.

The majority of the participants who discussed their concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language in the religion curriculum, seemed to recognize how deeply rooted these issues of non-inclusive were in relationship to self-esteem in adolescent girls. The participants who used inclusive language claimed they made an intentional effort to do so, as the majority of prayers and religious writings tend to contain non-inclusive language. (H8) claimed "anything we write we go out of our way to be inclusive." (I9) stated that the religion department at her school made a decision to change the Bibles they were using, to Bibles that had inclusive language.

The participants who used both types of language were more likely to use non-inclusive language when referring to humanity. These participants, however, were uncomfortable with using inclusive language for prayer, or when referring to God. (E5)

stated that she used a combination of both non-inclusive and inclusive language, however, "we still pray in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit." (G7) declared "we refer to God always in the male, very rarely mother/father and when I did the kids hated it." (G7) in reference to her students said: "they were not comfortable with God being anything other than father." She attributed this to the fact that her students were from the urban area and they were comfortable with what was secure and familiar.

Ten of the participants believed the use of non-inclusive language for God was problematic. A concern was, if only non-inclusive language was used in reference to God, than their students would have an incorrect image of God. (B2) stated if the students were not exposed to hearing about various images of God, their God would not be authentic. (E5) was concerned that non-inclusive language would "continue to hold back people from a greater development and understanding of the greatness of God. One participant was not concerned as inclusive language was used in reference to God. (J10) stated she did not have concerns as "He is the father figure image all the time."

The participants had varied concerns in reference to the use of non-inclusive language when referring to humans. (A1) claimed "it makes some people more important than others," whereas (B2) was concerned that "women are not there, women are absent." (F6) was concerned that females would feel left out, and cited the example of Jesus feeding the five thousand. She goes on to ask, "how many women were there, how many children were there?" (D4) referred to the power of language stating "if I said black you'd think evil. You know language is a powerful thing and I think even a little thing like he versus she is powerful." (G7) and (J10) had no concerns regarding non-inclusive language.

The participants who used inclusive language, and who had concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language can be supported in their thinking by the work of various theologians, and linguists. Jann Aldredge-Clanton (2001) in, In Whose Image: God and Gender, states that “masculine God –language devalues femininity by ignoring it” (p. 77). She claims that if references for God are male, women come to believe that maleness is due more respect than femaleness. These women Aldredge-Clanton (2001) purports, will sacrifice a piece of their identity and desire male approval. If the language suggests that God is male, then women will give men more authority than they allow themselves or other women (p. 77).

The use of male language for God leads many women to the desire for male approval. These women do not look within themselves for answers, but rather they look to men in authority to sanction their worth. Aldredge-Clanton (2001) asserts: “It is easy to see how constant messages of God as male translate into messages of men as authorities in all areas of life (p. 77).

Concerns expressed by (B2) and (F6) regarding women being left out or absent due to the use of non-inclusive language, is addressed in the work of Dale Spender (as cited in Pauwels, 1998). According to Spender’s linguistic theory, the participants have a legitimate concern that women would feel excluded, or experience a sense of absence from the use of non-inclusive language. Spender correlates women’s oppression to language by stating: “Language helps form the limits of our reality....It is through language that we become members of a human community, that the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful...” (p.87).

Catherine Mowry LaCugna's (1993) article, "God In Communion With Us," found in Freeing Theology, discusses how the manner in which we address God has become both a pastoral and a theological problem. There are those who are not comfortable addressing God as Father, and there are those who are disturbed with any changes to the name of God or words in established prayers. LaCugna (1993) mentions the landmark work of Mary Daly regarding God language referring to Daly's statement: "If God is male, the male is God." The problem, LaCugna (1993) continues, is one-sided reference to God leads to the religious legitimization of patriarchy, thereby establishing the male and masculinity as the center, and normative for all humans (1993).

Young women will have difficulty developing self-esteem if the language they are exposed to is a language steeped in sexism. Women and men both need to believe that all people are created in the imago Dei. If the norm for the imago Dei continues to be male, then young women will have difficulty seeing themselves as created in the imago Dei. The development of their self-esteem will be in jeopardy, and women will continue to struggle for self-worth.

The participants by and large confirmed that the outcome would be positive for young women if non-inclusive language changed to inclusive language. The participants stated it would help self-esteem, illustrate more equality. The participants who felt it would be positive to change to inclusive language within the religion curriculum stated that when inclusive language was used, "the girls loved it." The participants who anticipated negative outcomes with changing non-inclusive language to inclusive language were concerned that the students might be uncomfortable with the change, or the focus might be on the language rather than the teaching.

(B2) stated that the students would "identify more with God," if the language changed from non-inclusive to inclusive. (C3) cited that non-inclusive language "makes the girls feel lower than the guys." (K11) claimed that "equality between the sexes" would be a result of changing to inclusive language.

Linda Tschirhart Sanford and Mary Ellen Donovan (as cited in Aldredge-Clanton, 2001), explore factors attributed to low self-image of women. Patriarchal religions were among the factors listed, among which Catholicism was one. Tschirhart Sanford and Donovan (as cited by Aldredge-Clanton, 2001) state "Every male is instantly, fundamentally affirmed by the belief that God is male, and also by the patriarchal practices that follow from it. By contrast, every female is negated" (p. 79). Aldredge-Clanton (2001) also claims that "A theology that explicitly or implicitly fosters the concept of God as masculine contributes to feelings of inadequacy in the female" (p. 79).

The majority of the participants who addressed the issue of inclusive language in the classroom, tended to do so mainly with the Scriptures and in prayers. Although participants believed in the value of using inclusive language in the religion curriculum, they did not use inclusive language in prayers or liturgies. Two participants offered classes in women and religion.

Ashe (1997) reminds us that it is during worship and prayer that the ordinary person comes into contact with religious language and the language of scripture. Ashe (1997) asserts that, "The language in which we couch the prayer and worship of an assembled community not only expresses but helps to shape our concept of God, the relationship of God to church, and our relationships with one another" (p. 75).

The reaction of students to the use of inclusive language was mixed. (A1) stated that her students told her she was making more of an issue than was necessary. Overall her students did not seem to fully understand the implications of changing the language (H8) claimed her students understood the principle, and that it was a good principle, however the students were not necessarily interested in changing their own speech patterns.

The issue of inclusive language has been a struggle in the Catholic Church. Those in authority apparently do not adhere to the determinist view that language determines reality. An example of this was in 1994, when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith rejected an inclusive English-language translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Although those involved in the translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church wanted to use inclusive language, their suggestions were rejected. The hierarchy that overrode the original translators seemed to be oblivious to the socio-linguistic evolution of inclusive language. Kathleen Hughes (1996) in, "Inclusive Language Revisited," found in the August 1996 issue of *Chicago Studies*, gives an example of this problem. Hughes cites the first article of the Catechism, which is under the rubric "The life of man - to know and love God." Hughes claims that the tone of this article suggests the whole:

God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the church. To accomplish this,

when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life (p 120-121).

One can see from the language used in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, that there are those who are oblivious to the impact non-inclusive language can have on not only adolescent women, but also all women. Although none of the participants claimed to use the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a textbook, all religion textbooks must be in alignment with the teachings set forth in the catechism. The majority of the participants' responses to the interview questions regarding inclusive language exemplified an understanding by them that language was important in the development of adolescent girls. Therefore, it will be imperative for the individual teachers to continually address the issue of language with their students. Kaye Ashe (1997) states that women have found their voices, and the result is "women are reshaping language and liturgy in ways that make their lives part of the ongoing story of redemption and salvation. (p. 87). Perhaps that the young women have mixed feelings regarding inclusive language is due to the fact that they are still discovering their voices. Although "language determines how an individual constructs and views reality," reality may be something that changes as one arrives at different life stages.

In order for religious educators to help young women come to answer the questions "Who are we—really? and "Who is the real me?" (Groome, 1998), and if language determines the view one has of oneself, then religious educators have a responsibility to incorporate inclusive language through all aspects of curriculum.

Analysis of questions – set three (metaphors for God)

Perhaps one of the greatest problems in religious language is the exclusive portrayal of God as male. This imagery leads to the assumption that being male is the norm, and therefore superior to being female. Feminist theologians have claimed that a patriarchal God has made it difficult for women to see themselves in the imago Dei.

14. How is God portrayed in your religion curriculum?

Among the twelve participants, eight claimed that God was portrayed as Father. Some of the other portrayals of God included: light, Spirit, Creator, Unconditional love, Mother, Eagle and Judge.

The participants who claimed God was portrayed as Father, described this father God in a diversity of ways. (C3) stated that there was “no doubt” that God was portrayed as Father, “but a loving father.” (E5) asserted that the image of God used in her class was “heavenly father... the traditional Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Father seen as creator.” (E5) went on to say that it was important to have the image of God be father for her students because so many of her students did not have a father. She claimed this image of father as “stern and just is tempered by the loving and kind.” (G7) stated the image of God was typically father, however, “in the sense of one of love and tenderness, not just protection and judgment.

(D4) discussed images of God within her World Religion class. Students in that class described God as “light,” “Son,” and a “baby.” The student who described God as a baby, did so because, “a baby is innocent and God is innocent.” (H8) implicated a conscious effort was made by her department to incorporate into the curriculum feminine images of God. While in ninth grade, all students did a guided meditation called Mother

Eagle to introduce the students to a feminine image of God. (J10) referred to God as a covenantal God, however, this coventanal God was also referred to by (J10) as a male God. (L12) claimed her department made a conscious effort to incorporate a broad breath of images and pictures of God throughout the religion curriculum.

15. What areas if any of your curriculum uses varied images for God?

Five of the participants stated that various images for God were found in the Scriptures course. Two participants claimed there was a diversity of images for God throughout the curriculum, and two participants mentioned their women's course. The remaining responses were mixed: one participant refered to the Prayer course, One referred to Peace and Justice, and one World Religions. One participant stated that images of God was not specifically addressed in the curriculum.

(G7) stated the Scripture course built in various images of God. She particularly mentioned the Old Testament, making reference to El Shaddai. (I9) had her Scripture students work on posters portraying the God they read about in Bible stories. (H8) claimed the course that stressed images of God the most was the women's course; however, it was also addressed in the study of the Gospels when the parables were being studied.

16. Describe the primary metaphor used for God in your religion curriculum?

Eight of the participants stated that the primary metaphor used for God in their religion curriculum was "father." Two participants used various images, one claimed the primary image was "loving parent," and one said it was "love."

Two of the participants qualified the term "father." (G7) said, "God the Father, God as love, tenderness, judge, a judge who cares for you that is why he does it." (I9)

stated, "Father, creator." (H8) felt that God as love is stressed throughout the four years the students are at school. She claimed that at the end of four years the students are asked to answer the question "Of the four years what do you think you are going to remember ten years from now?" Many of the students will reply, "God loves me unconditionally." (K11) said the primary image is "a loving parent."

17. What might be the implications for your students regarding the primary metaphor used for God in your religion curriculum?

The twelve participants had an assortment of responses in regards to the implications associated with the primary image used for God in their curriculum. Some of the participants perceived the implications to be positive, others negative.

There were various reasons why the participant thought there might be negative implications with the primary image of God used in their curriculum. (A1) thought that using a primary image for God, might be "putting God in the box." (B2) who claimed the primary image her students were exposed to was patriarchal, needed to have their consciousness raised so they could be in a deeper relationship with God. In order for this to happen, the students needed to realize that "he is not a man." (C3) was concerned that the primary image, which she stated was "father," would keep the students from understanding God as a nurturer. Although her students viewed God as caring, she stated it was "on the masculine aspect of caring, like a father will take care of his family." (G7) was concerned that the primary image of father could be problematic for students who "could associate God the father with a negative personal childhood image of God;" however she had not seen that happen.

(E5) imagined that “father” was a positive image for her students. She claimed, “The absence of strong male leadership in the community is a very woeful thing, very woeful.” (H8) stated the image used was “unconditional love.” She perceived this image would allow for “an easy entry into a relationship with God rather than if there were a judgmental God...” (K11) claimed it was important for the students to hear father as a loving parent. She claimed as the adolescent girls questioned their faith, it was helpful to the students to believe in a God who was not a punishing God, but a loving father. (L12) stated her curriculum had various images as opposed to a primary image for God. This made God more inclusive, and helped the students understand that God is not human. The broader image of God (L12) claimed, “would be important so that they wouldn’t find a place to feel left out or rejected or not included themselves.” She felt the issue of inclusiveness was important to students who might be struggling with sexuality issues.

18. What might be the implications for your students if images for God included both masculine and feminine?

Eleven of the twelve participants responded favorably towards the idea of including both masculine and feminine images for God in their religion curriculum. Overall the participants perceive the change would be beneficial for their students.

(A1) responded that the change would allow the students to understand that “we are all created in God’s image.” (B2) commented that for women who had been abused, “it would make a big difference to have a female image of God.” (F6) claimed that “we would have a balanced God, a God that is in sync with both male and female.” The result would be a God that “both male and female can relate to...”(H8) stated that this could lead the students to question why the Catholic Church does not allow ordination of

women. (I9) admitted that she “would have to do a lot more work,” as she did not tend to focus on the maternal instincts, but rather the paternal instincts of God. She went on to state that “it might change the view of the creation story...new life comes from females not males...”(I9) believed there would be significant implications, and acknowledged that she had never thought of those implication prior to the interview. She also discussed that she had never considered “life coming from God’s own body...I imagine it would have significance if I started thinking that way.” (J10) responded to the question in terms of negative implications, stating that if the students view of motherly was “annoying, or antagonizing, it will affect their relationship.”

19. If different images have been used for God in your classes, how have your students reacted to the varied images?

According to the participants, the students had mixed reactions when varied images for God were introduced into the curriculum. According to the participants, issues such as grade level, ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds affected the students’ reactions.

(A1) stated the students reactions were “as different as there are students.” (B2) referred to using an image of a black Christ in her classroom, and claiming as her students were of African American descent, they identified with him. (D4) addressed the issue of multi-cultural students, claiming she had images of Jesus and Mary represented in many ethnic cultures. She received a good response from the students on these different images. (G7) claimed her students were fine with the different images until she used a female image for God. They were willing to accept the image of “God as rock,” however, they did not like God in the feminine form. (I9) who taught at a multi-cultural

school, stated her students responded well to the variety of images, as they were “accepting of one another’s images.” (K11) stated her students’ reactions were mixed, “some of the students have a very difficult time with it and others take it and run with it.”

A Discussion of the relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the use of predominantly female imagery used as metaphors for God in religious education curriculum

The purpose of this section is to discuss the relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the use of predominantly male imagery as metaphors for God in religious education curriculum.

First, the researcher examined each participant’s response from the transcriptions for key words, or topics that reappeared throughout questions fourteen through nineteen. Then the researcher summarized and analyzed the participants’ responses that the researcher found to be relevant to the study.

In Chapter II, the researcher referred to Mary Catherine Hilker’s (1995) article, “Cry Beloved Image,” found in The Embrace of God. In this article, Hilker (1995) states that the patriarchal interpretation of God has legitimized men dominating women, as well as human domination of the earth. Lisa Cahill (as cited in Hilker, 1995) states that the “image of God is the primary Christian category or symbol of interpretation of person value” (p. 194). Hilker (1995) goes on to claim, “Creation in the image of God serves as a root metaphor for the Christian understanding of the human person that grounds further claims to human rights (p. 194). In order for young women to grow in self-esteem they must come to see themselves in the image of God. In line with Hilker’s (1995) discussion are the remarks stated in Chapter II by Anne Carr (1988). Carr (1988) asserts

that unless girls are exposed to female imagery of God, they will experience a sense of “powerlessness, feeling like children, and distrustful of their own experiences and knowledge” (p. 140).

Sallie McFague (1982) in, Metaphorical Theology, discusses two criteria regarding significant theological models. McFague (1982) states first it is critical for several corresponding models to suggest the wealth and complexity of the divine-human relationship. When this principle is not adhered to, the consequence will be idolatry. Second, the major models must have the capacity to handle abnormalities. If this criteria is not accomplished, the outcome will be irrelevance. McFague (1982) claims that the topics of idolatry and irrelevance meet in the image of God as father. The problem is that this model, more than any other “has been both absolutized by some and, in recent times, found meaningless by others” (p. 145). McFague’s (1982) discussion helps one to understand why there needs to be concern regarding the metaphors used for God in the religious education of adolescent girls. As stated in Chapter II, both Archbishop Rembert Weakland and Maureen Gallagher (1998) claim that the religious educator must have the ability to relate human experiences to biblical and liturgical themes. Revelation, on the one hand, and human experience on the other must be related. Unless the religious educator is capable of doing so, the image of God will be met as idolatrous and irrelevant to the lives of young women.

Eight participants stated that God was primarily portrayed as father in their religion curriculum. Although some of the participants attributed positive paternal qualities to this father image, some simply stated the word “father,” and offered no description of what qualities that father might have. (A1) referred to the portrayal of God

as a "compassionate father," and (C3) stated "a loving father." (E5) and (F6) both referred to God as a "traditional father." (E5) felt this image was important because of the students who had no father. (E5) stated "he is portrayed as father because we have so many children who don't have a father so we try to give the image of a father, of loving and kind... most of our kids do not have a father figure." Although (E5) perceived it was beneficial for students who were fatherless to have an image of God as father, the possibility also exists that God the father may abandon them, as did their biological father. As McFague (1982) discussed, the complexities of the divine-human relationship is complex; therefore religious educators must be careful not to simplify or limit the metaphors for God.

The majority of the participants stated that it was in the Scripture course where various images of God were found. (G7) stated "it is kind of built into the Old Testament. El Shaddai which is really a feminine form of God, but these kids just said "no." (I9) had her students portray God in creative posters, based on the images of God found in Bible stories. (J10) spoke of the image of God found in the Exodus story, however this God was still a male God. This God was a source of confusion, as the students questioned "how He could kill four thousand people."

The Scriptures, if not introduced properly could be a very dangerous source used in religious education. Sandra Schneiders (1993) discusses in, "The Bible and Feminism," found in Freeing Theology, how after Vatican II, when women began to study Scripture, they came to realize that it was "an androcentric text that arose in and from a patriarchal culture" (p.36). She goes on to state that the text contains explicit sexist and misogynist depictions of women. A major problem women were concerned

with regarding the Scriptures was the biblical portrayal of God in “overwhelmingly male terms” (p.36). Schneiders (1993) reminds us that the biblical metaphors for God are commonly patriarchal: “father, lord, king, landowner, slave master, leader of armies.” Although there are feminine metaphors for God in Scripture, the masculine manifestation is so recurrent that the church has in effect excluded the feminine form of God from liturgies and prayers (p.37).

Schneiders (1993) concludes by stressing that there are motives for making an effort to develop an understanding of the Bible that will enable women to use it as a revelatory source. Schneiders (1993) asserts, if the Bible is to function “salvifically for women,” then the “text must be understood as text,” that is:

as human witness in human language to the human experience of divine event, then all the flexibility and power of the process of interpretation can be mobilized to liberate the text from its own limitations and women from the oppressiveness of the text. If it is true that the word of God is not bound ...and that all Scripture is written for our instruction and edification..., then there is still hope that Christian women will be able to affirm both themselves and this text as revelatory (p. 51).

The young women who (J10) referred to as “confused” by a God who could kill four thousand people, are prime examples of the problems Schneiders refers to in regards to women reading the Scriptures. Again, if the religious educators do not make the God of the Scriptures relevant to young women, they will not be able to turn to this God when discerning the answer to the questions “Who are we—really?” and “Who is the real me?” (Groome, 1998).

The participants were aware of the implications involved regarding the primary metaphor for God, along with the implications if images for God included both male and female imagery. (A1) recognized if the images for God were limited the result would be “we are putting God in a box,” and (B2) stated by expanding the students’ images of God she would help them be in “a deeper relationship with God...”

The students reactions to the various images of God varied, perhaps for several reasons. (G7) claimed her students needed the familiar to feel secure, while (H8) claimed her students tended to show a willingness to try something new. (H8)’s students, unlike the students of (G7) however, were not urban students. The students of (H8) were from an affluent area, and therefore, change may not have been as threatening to these young women.

It is obvious from the writing of various feminist theologians, that a theology that cultivates the concept of a male God is dangerous to the self-esteem of women. Jann Aldredge-Clanton (2001) in, In Whose Image?, states that when God is only imaged as male, women will have experienced a sense of inadequacy (2001). The curriculum delivers a central message. As stated in the AAUW report, the curriculum will motivate and engage the development of students (AAUW, 1995). Religious educators need to consider what is the primary metaphor used for God in their curriculum, and ask the question if this metaphor is aiding the young women to answer the question who am I?

Analysis of questions – set four (women in the curriculum)

Religious education curriculum needs to be transformed, so that the curriculum is inclusive of women and their experiences. In Chapter II, the researcher referred to the work of Maria Harris who states that curriculum needs to be experience-based (Harris,

1998). It is critical that the stories of women incorporated into the religion curriculum, are stories that will speak to the experiences of the young women. For some students this may mean stories of saints, for others it may be the matriarchs found in the Scriptures. It is also important that stories include modern day women, and women of various ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Colette Hall (1988) in, "Integrating Gender into the Curriculum: The Ursinus Model," quotes Professor McIntoch as warning us, "The integration of gender is not 'just adding women and stirring,' ... but involves a transformation of the disciplines and of the ways they are taught" (p. 2). Not only do stories of women need to be incorporated into curriculum, but the manner in which these stories are taught is critical.

20. Where in your religion curriculum do you find stories of women?

The Scripture course was reported with most frequency as the place where students find stories of women. The other responses were varied: three participants reported Church History, two Morality, two Social Justice, and two participants said in their women's course. Two said there were no stories, you needed to look for them. One participant said stories of women were found everywhere in the curriculum.

(A1) stated it was apparent that within the Scriptures there was more of an "absence of women rather than of the presence of them." (B2) claimed that she used stories about women from the Scriptures, however, the textbooks were not sufficient and she needed to look elsewhere for resources. (H8) claimed "We have mandated that the Old Testament must deal with Ruth. They have to use the Book of Ruth."

(G7) claimed that to a certain extent one will find stories of great women such as: Catherine of Siena, and Theresa of Avila. Within the Social Justice course, the students

learned of Dorothy Day and Mother Theresa. (K11) stated "In Church History we take a lot of the saints, women saints, the early nuns, the monastic women. (A1) reported that the Morality course gave a lot of case studies of women who have dealt with the trials and tribulations that "women have to face." Both (H8) and (L12) had specific courses in women and religion.

21. How are women portrayed in your religion curriculum"

All participants, with the exception of one, reported that women were portrayed in a positive manner. The attribute these women possessed that was mentioned the most was strength, and confidence. Several participants mentioned that these women were women who made contributions to the world. The one participant who stated the women were portrayed in a negative manner, stated they were portrayed as second class citizens.

(A1) claimed the women were portrayed "As images of God and co-creators of life, which gives them an equal share in their responsibility in what is happening to civilization." (G7) referred to women in her curriculum as "people of God, instruments of God, women capable of social change." (H8) said the women are looked at "in their cultural context." She went on to say that the religion teachers made "an extra effort to look at the role of women in religion and this year, Islam is the top story." (I9) discussed how it depended on what Gospel you were teaching in terms of how the women were portrayed. (K11) went on to state the difference between the cultural context of Matthew's Gospel as opposed to Luke's Gospel. (K11) stated the importance of understanding the cultural context within which the women were living. (J10) referred to the women "as very strong, the power behind the throne."

22. What are some of the stories of women found in your religion curriculum that might be beneficial to the development of young women?

Over twenty-five different women's stories were mentioned as being beneficial to the development of young women. Among the women of the Old Testament, some of the stories cited were Ruth, Esther and Rachel, while in the New Testament, Mary Magdalene was mentioned most frequently. However, when Mary Magdalene was mentioned, there were some teachers who still referred to her as the woman caught in adultery, or a prostitute. Three of the participants who taught at schools founded by a member of religious community believed it was critical for the young women to learn the story of their founder. Among the various saints mentioned, Mother Seton and Mother Cabrini were mentioned with the most frequency. The three modern day women mentioned most often were, Dorothy Day, Mother Theresa and Jean Donovan.

(A1) stated the lives of the saints were important; however, she stated that it did not matter whether those stories were about men or women. (B2) mentioned Judith and Esther because they were powerful women. (F6) spoke of the importance of Dorothy Day because her story helps the students understand that "no matter what happens to them they could overcome it and reach their full potential." (G7) listed several women from the Old Testament such as Deborah, Delilah, Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah. She claimed that the students "study them and then they answer how do these women teach me something I can do in my life." (H8) claimed that the stories about the women were always told within the cultural context. It was important to stress to the students that these women were doing things that "was way out of the culturally accepted thing, whether it is Ruth, she is the God figure in the whole story..., or whether it is Mary Magdalene who is the

apostle to the apostles... or Dorothy Day, the radicalness of what she did because she was taking the Gospel seriously.”

23. What are some of the stories of women found in your religion curriculum that might hinder the development of young women?

Five of the participants stated it was not necessarily the stories themselves that might hinder the development of young women, but, how the story was taught could be problematic. Two participants mentioned stories in the Old Testament concerning mistresses or concubines. These stories the participants claimed, if not understood within the cultural context, could be harmful to young women. Two participants mentioned the story of Mary Magdalene as possibly being misunderstood if not told accurately. Three participants claimed they could not think of any stories in their curriculum that might hinder the development of young women.

(B2) stated it is the “way you interpret the stories.” She also discussed “the whole sexuality of women is still considered the woman does wrong, and if she couldn’t have children it was her fault to be barren.” (C3) referred to stories where women were not allowed to make decisions, however, she claimed she did not use these stories. (J10) claimed her students favorite word was concubines, “they know them all, all the concubines.” She went on to talk of Hagar, and how she could be seen in a negative manner as she was a concubine. However, (J10) stated Hagar needed to be understood as a woman who stood up for her family, thereby being a positive model. (K12) also mentioned the issue of women as mistresses, stating, “it really bothers them.” (K12) stressed the importance of helping the students understand the stories and the women within the time and culture.

24. Not including the Blessed Mother, list three women that you think are important to incorporate into a religious education curriculum and explain why.

Ten women were mentioned at least twice each. The woman with the most response was Dorothy Day. The other women mentioned at least twice were: Deborah, Ruth, Martha, Mary Magdalene, the El Salvador martyrs, Mother Theresa, Elizabeth Seton, Frances Cabrini, the women founders of their particular schools, and their mothers and grandmothers.

(A1) referred to the story of Martha and Mary as a story where women could gain an understanding for balance in one's life. (C3) discussed their mothers and grandmothers. She stated "We talk about why, what is success, and they will say because they came here as immigrants, they are working hard, she is a single mother raising us, we are all turning out well, and she put us in catholic school." (D4) chose Ruth because she was "very loyal to her mother-in-law." (D4) also choose Martha as someone who could help them understand the importance of balance in life. (D4) stated that when the students speak of their busy schedules, she tells them to look at the story of Martha, and how Jesus told Martha to slow down. (F6) believed it was important to include Dorothy Day for several reasons, one being that she lived in the twentieth century. She went on to say "You are talking about a woman who stood up to the church, stood up to society." (F6) also felt including Mary Magdalene was important as she recognized who Christ was, and "she loved him with a passion..." (H8) stated the students had a fascination with the saints, especially the more modern ones such as Frances Cabrini and Elizabeth Seton. (J10) believed Mother Theresa of Caluctta was important, because she lived very near to their time. (K11) mentioned Augustine's mistress; (K11) believed it was

important for the students to examine how Augustine's mistress might have felt, and to consider how they would have handled being in that situation. (L12) claimed Jean Donovan, one of the Salvadorian martyrs was important because "there was something significant about a young woman who chose to follow her heart and ultimately gave her life for it... went back there knowing how dangerous it was, that is an important image for them."

25. What if any resources have you used to discuss women and church history?

Four of the participants stated that they used outside literature, particularly books as resources to discuss women. Three of the participants used the daily newspapers. Other resources were : videos, magazines, the Internet and Catholic Update.

A Discussion of the relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and the "telling of the story" when female role models from church history are included.

The purpose of this section is to discuss the relationship between self-esteem in adolescent girls and the "telling of the story" when female role models from church history are included.

First, the researcher examined each participant's response from the transcriptions for key words, or topics that reappeared throughout questions twenty through twenty-five. The researcher then summarized and analyzed the participants' responses that the researcher found to be relevant to the study.

As stated in Chapter I, the AAUW (1995) report, How Schools Shortchange Girls, girls have been shortchanged by our educational institutions due to school texts that have omitted women, their experiences and stories. The basic feminist challenge to

curriculum, is to make the curriculum inclusive of women. An inclusive curriculum which includes women will allow young girls to study in an environment where they can grow in self-esteem, and come to answer the question "Who am I?"

In Chapter II, Stalker (1998) mentioned the "null curriculum" as a useful concept for understanding women's place within the curriculum. She states that women are considered the "empty set" if and when they are excluded from curriculum. Just as Stalker mentioned history books that focus on the male leaders in politics and the military similar problems exist within many religious education textbooks. The women, who were portrayed in the Scriptures and textbooks, might have played an important role, but that role was in relationship to and subordinate to men. Women in the past have not been considered as pivotal to the history of Israel or Christianity. However, Coll (1994) claims, these same women, if studied through a feminist lens, become significant human beings who contributed to the history of Israel, the life of Jesus, and the early church.

The primary place mentioned by the participants where one finds stories about women in their curriculum, was in the Scriptures. Although (A1) mentioned the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, she also said "I guess more a case of the absence of them rather than of the presence of them." (F6) referred to "The stories in the New Testament mostly of Mary, mostly of the three Marys, are the main stories that are being told in the New Testament... I think they are the three main stories told in the New Testament Scriptures." (H8) claimed it was necessary to mandate that the Book of Ruth be taught as part of the Old Testament class. (J10) stated that the women in her curriculum were regarded as very strong, however, they were "the power behind the

throne." (J10) implicated that this was a good thing, she emphasized that the female had power, however, (J10) did seem to think it an issue that the power was from "behind."

Margaret Anderson (1998) in, "Toward a More Inclusive Curriculum, An Agenda for the 90s," claims that the crisis in education is "the deep alienation of our students and sometimes ourselves, from that which we ask them to learn" (p. 9). She goes on to state that if students do not feel connected to the subject area they are learning, they will not see themselves connected to others. Andersen (1988) said that this, "is breeding increased racism, homophobia, sexism and ethnocentrism on campuses across the country" (p. 9). The question then is, do adolescent girls feel connected to the women they learn about in their religion curriculum?

All but one of the participants claimed that the women were portrayed in a positive way. Several of the participants mentioned that the women were depicted as people who were capable of social change and made great contributions to society. These stories can help the young women understand that even with obstacles in their way, they can still make contributions to society.

(G7) referred to the women "as people of God, instruments of God, women capable of social change." The women mentioned by the various participants were truly women with great strength, and women who accomplished great things. Dorothy Day, the woman mentioned with the most frequency, is perhaps the best model for young women today. (F6) in referring to Dorothy Day stated that students learn from her life that "no matter what happens to them they could over come it and reach their full potential." (H8) stated that Dorothy Day lived a radical life due to the fact that she took the Gospel seriously. (G7) claimed that in studying women such as Deborah, Delilah, or

Ruth, the students were challenged to answer “how do these women teach me something I can do in my life?” (H8) referred to Ruth as being the God figure in the Book of Ruth. (L12) stated that she incorporated women such as Maya Angelou and Sojourner Truth into the curriculum so that the students have exposure to a broader breadth of stories.

In regards to stories that hinder the development of young women, the majority of the participants claimed the issue was not the story, but how the story was taught. (J10) and (K11) mentioned the “concubines” and the “mistresses” of the Old Testament. If the teacher did not help the student understand the role these women played in the time and culture that these women lived, the young women could become “extremely bothered” as stated by (K11). Other participants claimed they would not teach any story that might be harmful. Two participants mentioned Mary Magdalene, one referring to her as a prostitute, the other as the woman caught in adultery. The two teachers who referred to Magdalene in this light are perfect examples of how a woman with wonderful attributes can be turned into someone with negative qualities. No where in the Scriptures is Magdalene ever referred to as either a prostitute or the woman caught in adultery, yet teachers in Catholic schools are still teaching this misinformation about Mary Magdalene.

The Scriptures need to be relearned and reexamined. Kaye Ashe (1997) asserts that if we look at the Scriptures with fresh eyes, we will come to understand that there are similarities between the early church and the church today. There is an abundance of stories in the Scriptures that tell of women who were active in ministry to the early Christian community. Not only were men leaders, but women also were called to “lead prayer, prophesy, teach, preach, heal and evangelize. Their call to service was rooted in their baptism...” (p.92). These stories, and the women who were active participants in

the early church, are the stories that young women need to hear today. As the women of the early church contributed to society, so too can the young women of today.

When asked to name three women other than the Blessed Mother that were important to include in a religion curriculum, eleven of the women were mentioned several times. Dorothy Day was mentioned the most, perhaps because as stated by (H8) "Dorothy Day lived a radical life due to the fact that she took the Gospel seriously." The same could be said of the other women mentioned; Deborah, Ruth, Martha, Magdalene, The Salvadorian martyrs, Mother Theresa, Elizabeth Seton, Frances Cabrini, the founders of their schools, or their mothers and grandmothers, the trait they all share in common, was that they took the Gospel seriously. These women are prime examples for adolescent girls, because these women were not afraid to use the voice given to them by God, particularly when it came to building the Reign of God.

Ann Graff (1995) in, "Strategies for Life," speaks of Carol Gilligan's work regarding adolescent girls and the loss of voice. Graff (1995) tells us that the core of Gilligan's findings was, "girls giving up clear relationship with themselves and others based on what they know of feelings and interactions in favor of 'relationships' maintained by being nice and silencing what they know and feel." She goes on to say that girls experience "loss of connection to self and others through a process of self-silencing, shaped by our patriarchal culture, which gradually causes a diminution of authentic voice in order to accommodate oneself to the needs and feelings of others, especially, men" (p. 125).

The stories of the women mentioned by the participants, are stories that will instill in young women the importance of voice. In many cases, these women were the voices

of the voiceless. Not one of these women were silent women. They were women who stood up and spoke out against injustices, and for causes they believed in.

Several of the participants stated that they had to look for the stories elsewhere because the stories of heroic women were not part of the textbooks or the curriculum. Four of the participants referred to books other than the textbooks as important resources. Some of the participants used the daily newspapers, using stories of heroic women found in current events. The one resource that no one mentioned was networking with other religion teachers. Each of the participants had a wealth of information regarding teaching religion to adolescent girls, their information could multiply tenfold if they could find a way to share their information with each other.

Conclusions

The conclusions and recommendations stated in this dissertation flow from the perceptions of religion teachers. The teachers' perceptions changed during the data collection of the process. Although originally several of the teachers perceived that there was nothing harmful or missing from their curriculum, as they further explored the issues their perceptions regarding their curriculum changed. Religious education is an influencing factor in the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. As a result of the analysis of the interviews, the researcher concluded that there appears to be a relationship between the use of non-inclusive versus inclusive language, metaphors for God, women in the curriculum and the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. The majority of the participants recognized that each of these issues affected self-esteem and adolescent girls. The courses within a religious education curriculum that were

mentioned with the most frequency in regards to the development of adolescent girls' self-esteem were: Scriptures, Social Justice, Lifestyles and Morality.

As stated by the AAUW (1995) report, How Schools Shortchange Girls, the basic feminist challenge to curriculum is to make the curriculum inclusive of women. As stated by Hall (1988), including women in the curriculum means more than "just adding women and stirring" (p.2). It will mean a "transformation of the disciplines and of the ways they are taught (p.2).

The Scriptures are filled with women's stories that have not been brought to light. As more and more women's stories are added to curriculum, there will be a change both psychologically and historically to women's lives (Gilligan, 1982). (F6) mentioned the need to "really dig" to find powerful women in the Hebrew Scriptures. Adolescent girls are still being taught about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These young women need to hear about the God of Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel. Dorothy Solle (1995) speaks of the "fathers of the faith" as being represented in the idea of a father in heaven, whereas the "mothers of the faith" were left out, "unremembered, forgotten - in fact, repressed" (p.xvi). It is time to give voices, and faces to these honorable women.

The Social Justice course was a place within religious education curriculum that young women were offered the opportunity to learn the power of the human person, the meaning of personal dignity, and that each person has a responsibility in transforming society. (G7) claimed that almost the whole of the curriculum was founded on "we are created in the image and likeness of God." As stated by Graff (1995)the "image of God is the primary Christian category or symbol of interpretation of personal value" (p.19), then it is critical for this concept to be foundational in a religious education curriculum.

This concept, however, can be problematic if the primary image of God is based solely on a male God. Dorothy Solle (1995) discusses the difficulties with “the image of God as father, begetter, ruler, and manager of history...” (p.xviii). This concept of power, Solle (1995) states, was not something that she wanted to be the main characteristic of her life, and she states “how could I worship a God who was only a male?” (p.xviii). Within a Social Justice curriculum, the topic of power is fundamental. How power is interpreted is linked to how one will understand personal dignity, along with the manner one will be involved in the transformation of society.

The Morality course was a place for the students to learn how to discern what they believe and why. It was in the Morality course that (E5) claimed the young women acquired skills for making decisions, thereby gaining control of their lives. (H8) stated that within the Morality course young women learned how to prioritize their life issues, which aided them in setting goals, and understanding what was possible.

Although several of the participants perceived the Morality course as a place for young women to grow in self-esteem, the question remains as to whether what constitutes morality is based on the determination of moral behavior through a male perspective, a female perspective, or both. The authors of Women's Ways of Knowing remind us that “women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority differently than men” (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1997, p. 3). The authors claim, “that conceptions of knowledge and truth that are accepted and articulated today have been shaped throughout history by the male-dominated majority culture”(p. 5). In line with this thinking, Solle (1995) asserts that tremendous damage has been done to the Gospel by ignoring the “female component of the soul” (p. xvii). So that young

women can develop self-esteem during their adolescent years, their experience, and their ways of knowing must be included in the religious education curriculum.

The Lifestyles course is a critical course in Catholic high schools, as it is within this course that the young women will learn to consider major life choices. (G7) pointed out that it was within this course that the young women came to define their gifts and capabilities. Also within this course young women are exposed to the various lifestyles such as married, single, or vowed religious. Difficult topics that may arise in this class are the Church's teachings on homosexuality and ordination. This could be a course where young women may question their sexuality and their worth. When referring to topics that might be harmful to self-esteem in adolescent girls, (L12) stated "specifically relevant to Catholicism, homosexuality and the priesthood." (B2) and (F6) referred to the topic of leadership in the church, and ordination as topics that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as capable of accomplishing their life goals.

In a church where the topic of women's ordination is not to even be discussed, this can be a difficult area for religion teachers to approach. Somehow, however, it is imperative that young women are taught to honor their perspective. Thomas Groome (1998) states that "feminist epistemologists" are the "most constructive in humanizing our ways of knowing..." (p. 286). Groome (1998) refers here to the manner in which one comes to understand what it means to be human. One aspect that Groome (1998) mentions is a "standpoint epistemology" which includes "appreciating one's perspective as an asset" (p. 256). Regardless of the Church's teachings on topics such as homosexuality and women's ordination, teachers must help the young come to honor their individual perspective.

Although the majority of the participants claimed to use inclusive language in their curriculum, they claimed to do so primarily when referring to human beings. The majority also understood the problems with using non-inclusive language for God, however, they still tended to refer to God as male. Language is a powerful component in how one shapes their self-concept, therefore teachers need to be aware of the words they use whether referring to humans, or to God, because these words will affect how young women come to answer the question who am I? If in fact as stated by Spender (as cited in Pauwels, 1998) "language determines how an individual constructs and views reality," (p.87), and God is referred to as he, young women then will have difficulty seeing themselves as created in the image of God.

Ten of the participants believed the use of non-inclusive language for God was problematic. (B2) stated if the students were not exposed to a variety of ways of hearing about God, their God would not be authentic. Rosemary Radford Ruether (1983) in, Sexism and God-Talk, asserts it is necessary not to simply make God abstract, that is genderless. She states, "Abstractions often conceal androcentric assumptions and prevent the shattering of male monopoly on God-language, as in 'God is not male. He is Spirit'" (p. 67). This is in fact what people frequently tend to do when referring to God. When the participants were asked their concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to God, (D4) stated, "With God, God is spirit so God is neither he nor she." (L12) responded "God is a spiritual entity that is all..." Assuming there is validity in the point Ruether makes in regards to the use of abstracts when referring to God, then what is in fact happening, is the concealment of androcentric assumptions regarding God.

A system that continues as androcentric, will only continue to hinder the development of self-esteem in young women.

The researcher concluded that the metaphors used in a religious education curriculum affect the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. The majority of the participants responded that father was the primary metaphor used for God within their curriculum. The effect of father as the primary metaphor is problematic in terms of young women. As Graff (1988) stated, the notion that one is created in the image of God represents the core Christian understanding of what it means to be human, and this understanding extends to an understanding regarding human rights. Adolescent girls who can not identify with the *imago Dei*, will experience what Carr (1988) referred to as a sense of "powerlessness, feeling like children, and distrustful of their own experiences and knowledge" (p.140). Religious educators need to make an effort to incorporate various images of God into their curriculum, keeping in mind that those images should not be assigned simply to abstract concepts.

Although the participants primarily used father as the metaphor for God, they also understood the implications in doing so. (A1) stated that by using a primary metaphor for God, "we are putting God in the box." (F6) claimed that if God were only understood as father, then the students would assume that God must be male.

The participants also understood the benefits if God would be portrayed with male and female images. In regards to this issue, (A1) stated the students would understand "that we are all created in God' image." (F6) claimed "we would have a balanced God, a God that is in sync with both male and female."

The participants who incorporated various images of God into their curriculum received a variety of responses from the students. Generally, if the students did not respond well, the teacher let the topic go. (G7) was concerned because anything that deviated from the norm was upsetting to her students, and she did not want to create distress in her students. All educators, including religious educators are called to push their students to new and different levels of understanding. However, it is critical that the teacher remains a guide as the student grows into newer and deeper relationship with their God.

Feminist theologians have asserted that a theology that cultivates the concept of a male God, is dangerous to the self-esteem of women. Aldredge-Clanton's (2001) claim that the sole image of a masculine God will continue to contribute to a sense of inadequacy in females will continue to hold true. Religious educators have a responsibility to use various images of God, not only in their curriculum, but also in their prayers and liturgies. Unless this is done, young women will have difficulty seeing the God within them.

Stories of heroic women found in the religion curriculum have an effect on the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. Some of these stories were found in the religious education curriculum of the various participants. The stories were found particularly in the Scriptures, Church History, Morality, and Social Justice courses. The participants asserted it was critical for young women to understand and learn the roles women played throughout history. They spoke of these women as people who made contributions to society, in light of the difficulties, the times and cultures within which they lived. It is critical that young women feel connected to the women they learn about

in their religion curriculum. If this is not done, as stated by Anderson (1988) a crisis in education is the alienation of students from what they are learning. Educators need to take the stories of the heroic women and connect them to the lives of young women today. In regards to the women in the curriculum, (G7) claimed "they study them and then they answer how do these women teach me something I can do in my life?"

Throughout the various courses, the same women tended to be mentioned such as: Ruth, Mary Magdalene, Elizabeth Seton, Frances Cabrini, Mother Theresa and Dorothy Day. These women listed were incredible women, who certainly accomplished great deeds. However, the history of Israel, Christianity, and the Church are filled with stories of many other heroics. These sometimes nameless women also need to be given a voice. As many participants stated, the stories found of women in the curriculum, if not taught properly, could hinder the development of self-esteem in young women. Women who were mistresses or concubines were mentioned. A few of the participants were still teaching that Mary Magdalene was the woman caught in adultery, or referred to her as a prostitute, whereas nowhere in the Scriptures is she associated with either title. Young women are offered so few heroic women as role models today. It is imperative that religious educators seek out these women, and are careful about how and what is taught regarding these women.

Charles Shelton (1991) claims that adolescence is a period in which self-esteem is threatened, because it is during this period adolescents evaluate and question who they are. During this developmental period in young women's lives, Groome (1998) states they are learning to answer the question "Who are we really?" and "Who is the real me?" (Groome, 1998). Critical for these young women when coming to an understanding of these

answers, is that women's experiences enter the process of questioning (Aldredge-Clanton, 2001, Conn, 1986, Shelton, 1991).

Although the participants were aware of the importance of inclusive language, metaphors for God, and women in the curriculum, their responses led the researcher to conclude that not nearly enough is being done to help young women grow in self-esteem, and in some cases, what is being taught could hinder the development of self-esteem in young women. Religious education needs to be transformed so that curriculum is inclusive of women and their experiences. Unless our educational responses to writing curriculum is experience-based, young women will not be exposed to a religious education experience that will allow them to grow in self-esteem.

Recommendations from the Study

This study used a qualitative design based on the perceptions of religious teachers to determine if there was a relationship between the development of self-esteem in adolescent girls and a religious education curriculum. If, in fact, the foundation of a religious education curriculum is that we are all created in the imago Dei, then religious educators, need to have their language, metaphors, and stories flow from that foundation.

1. Religious educators use inclusive language throughout their curriculum, including prayers and liturgies.
2. Religious educators expose students to various images of God. These images should not only be abstract, such as Spirit, but should also include feminine forms for God.

3. Religious educators need to make sure that the stories they are re-telling are in fact accurate. These stories need to be understood within the culture and the time that the women lived.

4. Religious educators need to include stories of women whose lives have not been told as frequently as some others.

5. Religious educators need to use stories that will speak to the experiences of young women today.

6. Schools incorporate a women's studies course into their religious education curriculum.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further research are presented for consideration as a result of this study.

1. A more comprehensive study could include a larger representative sample, or a more in-depth study could involve fewer schools. An in-depth study could include interviews with students, and alumnae.

2. A combination of a qualitative and quantitative study could be conducted. Students could be given a self-esteem measure pre and post them taking a women's studies course in religion. The researcher could interview the students who were involved in the study.

3. A combination of a qualitative and quantitative study could be conducted. Students could be given a self-esteem measure after taking a women's studies course in religion. Another group of students, who did not take the women's studies course in

religion, could be given the same self-esteem measure. The results of the students would then be compared. Both groups of students could be interviewed.

4. Nine of the participants in this study were female, three were male. Research could be conducted to see if adolescent girls' self-esteem is affected by the gender of the religious teacher.

5. Six of the participants were from co-educational schools, and six were from all girls' schools. Research could be conducted to see whether there was a difference in self-esteem in students attending one type of Catholic school over the other.

6. Seven of the participants were from urban schools, and four were from suburban schools. Research could be conducted to see if there were a difference in self-esteem in students attending a Catholic urban school versus a Catholic suburban school.

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Appendix A

Letter to the Superintendents of Schools



Benedictine Academy

840 North Broad Street • Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208-2599
(908) 352-0670

July 25, 2001

Dr. Thomas E. Hart
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Metuchen
John Paul II Center
103 Center Street
Perth Amboy, New Jersey 08861

Dear Dr. Hart,

I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration at Seton Hall University and am presently working on my dissertation. I am requesting permission to conduct research in your diocese. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding as to whether certain areas of religion curriculum affect the self-esteem in adolescent girls. The topics I will be investigating are: inclusive/sexist language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women as role models in church history.

If permission is granted, I will contact principals and teachers of Catholic high schools in your diocese. In order to conduct my research, I will interview religion teachers who volunteer to participate in the research. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, I will meet with them at a location other than their school and at whatever time is convenient for the teacher. I will spend approximately one hour conducting an interview with the teacher. During the interview I will ask questions regarding the teacher's perception and how the above named topics might affect self-esteem in adolescent girls. If the teacher agrees, I will audio-tape the interview. Once I have transcribed the tapes, they will be destroyed within six months of the transcription. I will code each school and teacher used in the research, so as to assure both the school and the teacher confidentiality. Both the principal and/or teacher may withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice.

I am submitting for your approval the materials required according to section 0308 of the Administrative Manual for the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Newark. Enclosed you will find a copy of my proposal, letters to the principals and teachers, and the questions which will be used during the interview. Although the Administrative Manual requires a copy of the full research study upon completion, so as to protect the anonymity of the participants, I would be happy to provide you with a copy of the abstract containing the aggregate results of this study.

Please be advised that since 1993, I have been associated with Benedictine Academy. Prior to my position as the Assistant Principal at Benedictine Academy, I served as the Campus Minister and teacher of religion. For the past ten years, I have also been employed by Our Lady of the Valley Parish, Wayne, New Jersey, where I am the Pastoral Associate/Director of Confirmation. I am the product of over twenty-two years of Catholic education. I am committed to our Catholic educational system and hope to do whatever I can, to help our schools as they continue to empower and educate students.

In order to begin my research, the Internal Revenue Board requires that I submit letters of permission from all Superintendents whose diocese are involved in the study. The IRB will grant permission for the study once they are assured that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

Please indicate your decision to participate by forwarding a letter of permission on your letter head in the stamped self addressed envelope provided. I would greatly appreciate a return within the next three weeks so that I might begin the fieldwork. I am available to meet or speak with you at your request concerning any aspects of this study.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and anticipated participation. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, **FLORENCE PISANO**, Assistant Principal at Benedictine Academy, 840 North Broad Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey, 07208. My work telephone number is (908) 352-0670.

Sincerely,

Florence Pisano
Assistant Principal, Benedictine Academy
Pastoral Associate, Our Lady of the Valley Parish

enc: proposal
letter to principal
letter to teacher
questions for interview

Appendix B
Letter to Principals



Benedictine Academy

840 North Broad Street • Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208-2599
(908) 352-0670

November 1, 2001

Joseph R. Lemme, Principal
Mc Corristin Catholic High School
175 Leonard Avenue
Hamilton, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Lemme,

I am writing to you to ask for your voluntary cooperation with a research study that I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of religion teachers/perception regarding religion curriculum and the affects it might have on the self-esteem of adolescent girls. The topics I will be investigating are: inclusive/non-inclusive language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women as role models in church history. This research project titled: "The Perception of Religion Teachers Regarding the Effect of Religious Education Curriculum on the Self-Esteem of Adolescent Girls" is taking place under the supervision of Seton Hall University where I am a student in the Executive Doctoral Program.

I would appreciate it if you could return the enclosed letter stating whether or not you are willing to have your teacher(s) participate in the research. If you are willing to participate in this study, I ask that you place the enclosed letters in the mailboxes of your religion teacher(s). I will spend approximately one hour conducting an interview with your teacher(s) off school property and not during school time. I will code each school and teacher used in the research, so as to assure both your school and the teacher anonymity and confidentiality. If either you or the teacher(s) are interested in the aggregated results of the research, I will be happy to share them with you.

Please be advised that since 1993, I have been associated with Benedictine Academy. Prior to my position as the Assistant Principal at Benedictine Academy, I served as the Campus Minister and teacher of religion. I am also employed by Our Lady of the Valley Parish, Wayne, New Jersey, where I am a Pastoral Associate/Director of Confirmation. I am the product of over twenty-two years of Catholic education. I am committed to our Catholic educational system and hope to do whatever I can, to help our schools as they continue to empower and educate students.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, FLORENCE PISANO, Assistant Principal at Benedictine Academy, 840 North Broad Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208. My work telephone is (908) 352-0670.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

I remain grateful to you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Florence Pisano
Assistant Principal, Benedictine Academy
Pastoral Associate, Our Lady of the Valley Parish

Appendix C

Return Form from Principals

Dear Florence,

My name is: _____

I am a Principal at _____

Yes _____ I am willing to place the information regarding your research in my religion teacher's mailboxes.

I will place the information in their mailboxes on _____ (date placed in teachers' mailboxes)

No _____ I am willing to have my religion teachers participate in your research.

Signature of Principal

Date

Appendix D
Letter to Religion Teachers



Benedictine Academy

840 North Broad Street • Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208-2599
(908) 352-0670

November 1, 2001

Dear Religion Teacher,

I am writing to you to ask for your voluntary cooperation in a research project that is important to the teaching of religion in Catholic high schools. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding as to whether certain areas of religion curriculum affect the self-esteem in adolescent girls. The topics I will be investigating are: inclusive/non-inclusive language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women as role models in church history. This research project titled "The Perception of Religion Teachers Regarding the Effect of Religious Education Curriculum on the Self-Esteem of Adolescent Girls," is taking place under the supervision of Seton Hall University where I am a student in the Executive Doctoral Program.

If you are willing to participate in this study, I ask that you return the enclosed letter. Once I receive the letter, I will contact you. I will spend approximately one hour conducting an interview with you off school property and not during school time. During the interview I will ask questions regarding your perception of how the above named topics might affect self-esteem in adolescent girls. If you agree, I will audio-tape the interview. Once I have transcribed the tapes, they will be destroyed within six months of the transcription. I will code each school and teacher used in the research, so as to assure both your school and you confidentiality. You may withdraw from the research at any time. If you are interested in the aggregate results of the research, I will be happy to share them with you.

Please be advised that since 1993, I have been associated with Benedictine Academy. Prior to my position as the Assistant Principal at Benedictine Academy, I served as the Campus Minister and teacher of religion. I am also employed by Our Lady of the Valley Parish, Wayne, New Jersey where I am the Pastoral Associate/Director of Confirmation. I am the product of over twenty-two years of Catholic education. I am committed to our Catholic education system and hope to do whatever I can to help our schools as they continue to empower and educate students.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, FLORENCE PISANO, Assistant Principal at Benedictine Academy, 840 North Broad Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208. My work telephone number is (908) 352-0670.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

I remain grateful to you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Florence Pisano
Assistant Principal, Benedictine Academy
Pastoral Associate, Our Lady of the Valley Parish

Appendix E

Return Form from Religion Teacher

Dear Florence,

My name is: _____

I am a religion teacher at _____

Yes _____ I am willing to participate in your research.

I can be contacted the following ways:

Phone number _____

Time to contact _____

E-mail address _____

Mail address _____

Possible places we can meet:

Best times I am available to meet:

(Signature of Teacher

Date)

Appendix F
Analysis Tables 1-25

Interview Analysis

Self-esteem

Table 6

Topics that might instill in young women a sense that they are capable of accomplishing their life goals.

Women in Jewish history

Hebrew Scriptures—women

Women in the New Testament

Women in time of Christ

Women who have done a lot

Social justice—personal dignity

Social issues—women in society throughout the ages

Social justice—women transforming society

Social justice

Social Justice

Morality—decision making—control of life

Morality—decision making

Morality—responsibility of choices

Marriage—choices

Marriage—lifelong learning, communication, integrity

Lifestyles—choices

Lifestyle

Lifestyle

Table 7

Topics that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as capable of accomplishing their life goals.

There aren't any

There aren't any

There aren't any

There aren't any

If she wanted a position in the church

There aren't any

There aren't any--

There aren't any – how you teach it

There aren't any –all girl school

Social Justice, might feel helpless with what is going on today

There aren't any—ordination

Table 8**Topics that might instill in young women a sense of their significance as human beings.****Women in the Scriptures and history****Women in New Testament****Women in the Scripture—least likely people are most significant****Women in Scriptures—were significant and prominent****Women are needed****Women and prayer—prayer style, feminine images****Morality—helps give them clarity on their viewpoints****Morality—life is important****Morality—life as created in God's image****Morality—right to life issues, sanctity of life****Lifestyles—human personality and lifestyle, distinctions among us****Lifestyle—focus life as a single or religious****Whole curriculum founded on we are created in image of God****Social Justice—dignity of human person—power of human person**

Table 9

Topics that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as significant human beings.

None

Way the church faces women

Church History—it pushes women to the side

None

None—it would be weeded out by teachers

None

Holy Orders

More learn about world, less powerful they feel

None

Issues today like stem cell technology, advertising

None

Priesthood, teaching on homosexuality

Table 10

Topics that might help young women see themselves as powerful human beings.

Women in Scripture

Women in Scripture—stories of women Esther, Ruth

Women in the Bible

Women in Church History

Women—Dorothy Day, Mother Theresa, Jean Donovan

Service project empower them

Dorothy Day

Prayer—God is at their back

Prayer

Social Justice—stories of heroic women

Social Justice—power of the human person

Spirituality and the Arts—looks at media & video

Marriage

Sexuality—the power of women

Lifestyles—making your own choices—being in charge

Table 11

Topics that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as powerful human beings.

Women in Hebrew Scriptures-history of Jewish nation

Women in Hebrew Scriptures

Women in Scriptures

New Testament—Saint Paul's writings

Church history course

Early Church

Women in the Church

Women in the Church; being excluded from leadership

None

None

None –we make a conscious effort to teach from a certain perspective

None

Social Justice-- give them a sense of being overwhelmed

Table 12

What teachers have done to focus on self-esteem

Approach topics from male/female perspective

Raise up women

Show movies with women as leaders

Giving them role models

Tell them they all have 100

Gear everything to favoring the girls

Tell them they can be anything they want to be

Focus on what their gifts are, what God has given the, Who am I

Try not to make them feel guilty;

Help them articulate what they are thinking and feeling

Focus on self-esteem at faculty meetings, we live and breath self-esteem

Stress they are never to take a subservient role

They have no limitation

Self-esteem measures, personality kind of surveys

Look at issues in advertising, food

Interview Analysis

Non-inclusive versus Inclusive Language

Table 13

Types of language used in the religion curriculum

Words in Scriptures with an explanation

Non-inclusive

Non-inclusive

Combination—pray is non-inclusive

Non-inclusive—refer to God in the male

I don't watch my words

Inclusive

Inclusive—with exception of Scripture

Inclusive—prayers, liturgies

Inclusive—changed Bibles for better language—prayers

Inclusive

Inclusive

Table 14

Concerns regarding the use on non-inclusive language when referring to God

Someone feels excluded

That the image of God is only male

Only concern is that the realize we have a God

Think God is only male

They think of God only as masculine

Unfaithful to God—limits their understanding of God.

Perpetuating the incorrect image of God as male as old

No concerns

Think God is only male, it stereotypes God

Don't have any concerns, we use inclusive language

Table 15

Concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to humans

Makes some people more important than others

Women are there, women are absent

Try to obviate it

Girls have to realize God created female and male

We shouldn't limit—should be a variety of ways of expressing

Female would feel left out—

Not an issue, all girls here

That it is non-inclusive, humans are inclusive

Haven't much thought about that

Don't have a problem with words like that—it is what is behind it

Very stereotyping

I am not concerned because I am inclusive

Table 16

Implications for students if non-inclusive language changes to inclusive language

They will identify more with God

They will feel more a part of things

Their minds will open up

My students would love it

Stop debasing and dehumanizing language about women

Fear that understand why we do it

Uncomfortable when it refers to God, ok with humans

Language functions—they are unaware

Get them to focus that God is unique and different

Might focus on language instead of the teaching

Illustrate more equality

Would help self-esteem

Wouldn't notice, it is a part of us

Table 17

Ways the issue of non-inclusive language has been addressed in the classroom

Pointing out words in Scriptures

Pointing out words in prayers

When we read from Scripture

When talking about people, machismo is colossal—difficult

I just odd it without addressing it

I have not, but you give me pause for thought

Try to show them the root and where it came from—Scripture

Only once with referred to God in the feminine

Social Justice—identify the language in media

Women of Faith

Bibles, prayer

Not an issue, maybe if boys were in the class

Nicene Creed—changed the hims to hers

Women's course

Table 18

The students reaction to the use of non-inclusive language

Told me:

I was crazy

I address it because I am suppose to

Making more of an issue than needed to be made

Making mountain out of a molehill

Don't even notice it—bewilders them

I have not addressed it

I have not addressed it

I have not address it

Most part OK,

Girls accept it

Boys say only politically correct

Boys are sensitive, think I favor the girls

It bother them

Different classes different levels of objection

Half can't handle it/half accept it

Leap on the controversial aspects

Agree with it

Interview Analysis

Metaphors for God

Table 19

How is God portrayed in the religion curriculum

Father (compassionate)

Father

Father (heavenly)

Father (Trinitarian, traditional)

Father (traditional)

Father (love, tenderness)

Father (creator)

Father

Parent (male and female)

Creator

Creator

Best Friend

Spirit

Spirit

Light

Unconditional love

Mother eagle

Battle judge

Table 20

Areas of the curriculum that use varied images of God

Entire curriculum

Most of it

Scripture

Scripture

Scripture

Scripture

Scripture

Don't specifically addressed

Prayer

Peace and Justice

World Religions

Women's course

Women's course

Table 21

The primary metaphor used for God in the religion curriculum.

Patriarchal

Father

Father

Father

Father

Father

Father

Father

Loving parent

Love

Various

Various

Table 22

Implications regarding the primary metaphor used for God

Putting God in a box

Raise their consciousness

Will see God more as nurturer

Tuff, many religions

Positive

Think God is male

If their father is negative, God will be negative

If their father is negative, God will be negative

Easy relationship with God

God cares for them

God loves them

Understand God's nature is not human

Feel included, sexuality issues

Table 23**Implications if images for God includes both masculine and feminine images**

We are all created in God's image

Their whole attitude will change

Women who were abused it will make big difference

Good revelation

A Balanced God, in sync with both male and female

Relate more to God if understood more in totality

Ask questions like ordination issue

Change the view of creation, more maternal

If mother annoying, not good

Put aside stereotypes—look at world more well rounded

They would be fine, they have had good exposure already

Table 24**Students reactions to various images of God**

Varies on grade level, religious affiliation, prayer life

Positive if they identify with the image

Show interest

Respond very well, but God is out there

Have not done it

For women makes her feel better

Fine except with female image, rock ok

Very accepting

Has not been an issue

Don't realize we are doing it

Some students find it difficult, other run with it

Good with it

Interview Analysis**Women in the Curriculum****Table 25****Where stories of women are found in the religion curriculum.****Social Justice****Women's course****Women's course****Scriptures****Scriptures****Scriptures****Scriptures****Scriptures****Scriptures****Church History****Church History****Church History****Morality****Morality****Social Justice****Everywhere****There isn't, - have to add them****Have to look for them**

Table 26

How women are portrayed in the religion curriculum

Co-creators of life

Second class citizens

Brave women

Positive way

Positive way

People of God,

Capable of social change

Their contributions

Made great contributions

Strong, power behind the throne

Strong, confident, fighters

Fairly and positively

Table 27**Beneficial stories of women found in the curriculum**

Judith

Esther

Ruth

Rachel

O/T women:

Mary (mother of Jesus)

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene

Friends of Jesus

Women in the Gospels

Saints

Saints

Founders of religious communities

Mother Cabrini

Mother Seton

Helena, Constantine's mother

Claire

Harriet Tubman

Sojourner Truth

Mother Hale

Table 27

Beneficial stories of women found in the curriculum

Jean Donovan

Jean Donovan

Mother Theresa

Mother Theresa

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day

Table 28

Stories that hinder the development of young women

How the story is taught

How the story is taught

How the story is taught-woman caught in adultery

How the story is taught

Women in the Bible—how it is taught

Old Testament women, mistresses

Hagar, concubines—how it is taught

Mary Magdalene—Adulterous woman

Mary Magdalene

Where can't make decisions

Don't know of any

Don't know of any

Don't know of any

Table 29

Important women in a religion curriculum (excluding Blessed Mother)

Deborah

Deborah

Ruth

Ruth

Martha

Martha

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day

El Salvador martyrs

El Salvador martyrs

Mother Theresa

Mother Theresa

Mother Theresa

Elizabeth Seton

Table 29

Important women in a religion curriculum (excluding Blessed Mother)

Elizabeth Seton

Elizabeth Seton

Frances Cabrini

Frances Cabrini

Founders of their schools

Founders of their schools

Founders of their school

Mothers/grandmothers

Table 30**Resources used in the curriculum to discuss women**

Videos

Newspapers

Newspapers

Newspapers

Magazines

Commentaries on Scriptures

Books about women

Books about women

Books about women

Books about women

Catholic Update

Internet

Appendix G
Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Personal Background & Experience

1. Which category best describes you?

- Catholic lay woman
- Catholic lay man
- Non-Catholic lay woman
- Non-Catholic lay man
- Brother
- Sister
- Priest

2. In which age range are you?

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-

3. In which type of school do you teach?

- Co-ed Private
- Co-ed Diocesan
- All Girl Private
- All Girl Diocesan

4. Indicate the category that describes your school.

- urban
- rural
- suburban

5. Please indicate the number of years (including the current year) that you have been teaching at least one section of religion

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 15 or more

6. Do you hold a degree in religion/theology?

- Yes
- No

7. Please mark the boxes that indicate which areas of religion you have taught.

New Testament	
Hebrew Scriptures	
Church History	
Morality	
Sacraments	
Peace and Justice	
World Religions	
Death and Dying	
Christian Lifestyles	
Prayer	
Women and Religion	
Other	

8. Based on the religion courses that you have taught, was there any course that you enjoyed or felt comfortable teaching to adolescent girls? Which one? Please explain why.

9. Based on the religion courses that you have taught, was there any course that you did not enjoy or were uncomfortable teaching to adolescent girls? Which one? Please explain why.

10. In order of importance, list five topics or issues in your religious education curriculum that you perceive to be beneficial to building self-esteem in adolescent girls.

11. In order of importance, list five topics or issues in your religious education curriculum that you perceive to be harmful to building self-esteem in adolescent girls.

12. Do you perceive your religion curriculum to be in line with your school's mission and philosophy? Explain your answer?

Interview Questions

Self-Esteem

1. What are the topics in your religion curriculum, that might instill in young women a sense that they are capable of accomplishing their life goals? Explain why.
2. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as capable of accomplishing their life goals? Explain why.
3. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might instill in young women a sense of their significance as human beings? Explain why.
4. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as significant human beings? Explain why.
5. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might help young women see themselves as powerful human beings? Explain why.
6. What are the topics in your religion curriculum that might hinder young women from regarding themselves as powerful human beings? Explain why.
7. Is there anything specific you have done in your classes to focus on self-esteem and adolescent girls? If so, what?

Non-Inclusive Language

8. What type of language (non-inclusive vs. inclusive) is used in your religion curriculum?
9. What might be some of your concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to God?
10. What might be some of your concerns regarding the use of non-inclusive language when referring to humans?
11. What might be the implications for your students if non-inclusive language changes to inclusive language?
12. Have you addressed the issue of non-inclusive language in your classes? If you have, how have you done so and why?
13. If you have addressed non-inclusive language in your classes, how have the students reacted to the issue?

Metaphors for God

14. How is God portrayed in your religion curriculum?
15. What areas if any of your curriculum uses various imagery for God?
16. Describe the primary metaphor used for God in your religion curriculum?
17. What might be the implications for your students regarding the primary metaphor used for God in your religion curriculum?
18. What might be the implications for your students if imagery for God includes both masculine and feminine?
19. If different imagery has been used for God in your classes, how have your students reacted to the various imagery?

Women in the Curriculum

20. Where in your religion curriculum do you find stories of women?
21. How are women portrayed in your religion curriculum?
22. What are some of the stories of women found in your religion curriculum that might be beneficial to the development of young women?
23. What are some of the stories of women found in your religion curriculum that might hinder the development of young women?
24. Not including the Blessed Mother, list three women that you think are important to incorporate into a religious education curriculum and explain why.
25. What if any resources have you used to discuss women and church history?

Appendix H
Informed Consent



Informed Consent Form

Researcher: Florence Pisano

This research is taking place under the supervision of Seton Hall University where the researcher is a doctoral student in the Executive Doctoral Program, Department of Educational Administration and Supervision.

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding as to whether certain areas of religion curriculum affect the self-esteem in adolescent girls. The topics investigated will be: inclusive/non-inclusive language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women from the telling of the Christian story. This research project is titled "The Perception of Religion Teachers Regarding the Effect of Religious Education Curriculum on the Self-Esteem of Adolescent Girls."

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. The subject may refuse to participate or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

The interview process will take approximately one hour. The interview will take place at a location other than the subject's school, at a time convenient for the subject. The interview questions will be open-ended questions. The interview questions will be divided into four sections: self-esteem, inclusive/non inclusive language, metaphors for God, and the absence of women from the telling of the Christian story.

In order to assure both the school and the subject anonymity, each school and subject will be coded. The coding system will identify each school by a number (1-10), and each subject by a letter (A-J). The individual diocese involved in the study will not be identified.

If the subject agrees, the researcher will audio-tape the interview. The researcher will transcribe the tape. The tape will be destroyed within six months of the transcription. The audio-tape will be kept in a locked boxed until they are destroyed. No one will have access to the audio-tape other than the researcher. The transcriptions will be done by the researcher.

The subject may encounter the following risks and discomforts during the interview: personal self-esteem issues, issues from their time as adolescents, spiritual issues regarding their relationship with God, or their relationship to the Church. The possibility that some or all of these issues may arise during the interview will depend on how and if the subject has resolved these issues in the past. If these issues should arise, the researcher recommends contacting either a member of the clergy, a spiritual director, or a counselor. The subject can contact these professionals through their local churches, or diocesan offices. Catholic Charities offers the above listed services. If the subject is a registered student at Seton Hall University, he/she may seek these services at the University. If the subject is a student at another college or university, his/her college or university may also offer such services. This project poses no medical risks to the subject.

The researcher will offer the results of this research project to the subject. The results will be offered in abstract form containing the aggregate results of the study. The results of this study could benefit the subject in the development of their religion curriculum. The subject's students could benefit from the results of the study. If religion teachers perceive that religion curriculum affects the self-esteem of adolescent girls, this study may be beneficial to the students if the teacher alters their curriculum so as to enhance a student's self-esteem.

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D. Program
Tel. 973.275.2728
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

Should the subject have any questions, they can contact the researcher, Florence Pisano, Assistant Principal at Benedictine Academy, 840 North Broad Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey, 07208. The work number is (908) 352-0670.

The subject will be given a copy of the signed and dated Consent Form before their participation begins. The researcher will also keep a copy of the consent form.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

I agree to have the interview audio-taped. _____ yes

If this interview is audio-taped, I understand that the tapes will be kept in a locked box. The transcriptions will be done by the researcher. No one will have access to these tapes other than the researcher. As the subject, I have the right to review all or any portion of the tape.

I do not agree to have the interview audio-taped. _____ no.

Subject or Authorized Representative

Date

Name of Teacher _____



Appendix I
IRB Approval



SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

1 8 5 6

October 29, 2001

Florence Pisano
42 Summer Hill Road
Wayne, NJ 07470

Dear Ms. Pisano,

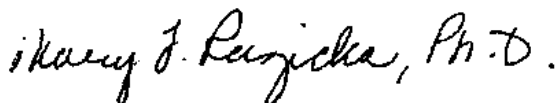
The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed the information you have submitted addressing the concerns noted for your proposal entitled "The Perception of Religion Teachers Regarding the Effect of Religious Education Curriculum on the Self-Esteem of Adolescent Girls". Your research protocol is hereby approved as amended. Enclosed for your records is the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Form. Make copies only of this stamped Consent Form.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Anthony Collela, Ph.D.