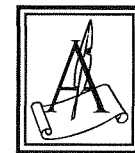


5.00

Mother's Little Helper

Twelve Heart-to-Heart Talks
of a Mother to Her Daughter



ANGELUS PRESS

2915 FOREST AVENUE,

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64109

Nihil Obstat
Rev. John J. Clifford, S.J.
Censor Dept.
July 29, 1952

Imprimatur
† Samuel Cardinal Stritch
Archbishop of Chicago
July 30, 1952

Cover image by Petra Eschenlohr

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval systems without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

ANGELUS PRESS

2915 FOREST AVENUE
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64109
PHONE (816) 753-3150
FAX (816) 753-3557
ORDER LINE 1-800-966-7337
www.angeluspress.org

ISBN: 978-1-892331-45-8
Revised Edition: February 2007

Printed in the United States of America

This Little Work
is placed under the gracious patronage
of
THE IMMACULATE MOTHER
and lovingly dedicated to
A. and D.H.,
for whom it was originally written

Contents

Foreword.....1

Part One:

To be discussed with girls ages 9-12

Instruction 1.....8

Instruction 2.....12

Instruction 3.....16

Instruction 4.....20

Part Two:

To be discussed with girls ages 12-14

Instruction 5.....26

Instruction 6.....32

Instruction 7.....37

Instruction 8.....44

Part Three:

To be discussed with young women ages 14-16

Instruction 9.....52

Instruction 10.....56

Instruction 11.....61

Instruction 12.....68

Foreword

Though Catholic educators are agreed that it is the duty of a mother to give her growing daughters timely instruction on what are called the facts of life, mothers may still be found who either neglect this duty or perform it in a very imperfect manner. One reason for this neglect, no doubt, is the tendency to shift most of the responsibility for the child's training to the Church and the school, despite the fact that the parents, and especially the mother, are the child's chief educators and the most efficient of all schools is a truly Christian home. Yet probably the most common reason why even some conscientious mothers fail in this particular duty is that they realize the extreme delicacy of the task and simply do not know how to go about it.

It is hoped that the present little work will prove to be just what such mothers want—a little helper in the difficult task of instructing and training their growing daughters, since it places on the mother's lips the exact words to use in imparting the necessary information. There is the more reason for this hope inasmuch as these instructions have actually been used by a mother over a period of years, with most satisfactory results, in instructing her two daughters; and many other women who were permitted to read them—single women and mothers as well as nuns—have expressed the wish that they would soon be published and made available for the use of mothers everywhere.

It should be carefully noted, however, that the purpose of publishing these instructions is not to relieve the mother of her task but to help her in fulfilling it; and, therefore, that they are not intended to be given to a girl to read but to be discussed with her by her mother. The very delicacy and seriousness of the information contained in these instructions require that it be imparted under favorable circumstances and with proper precautions; and no situation could be more propitious for the purpose than a heart-to-heart chat between mother and daughter. It is precisely the building up of a loving mutual understanding between mother and daughter that is so necessary for the proper guidance of the latter during the years of adolescence; and nothing contributes more to this understanding than the mother's readiness to lend a willing ear to her daughter's problems and an equal readiness on the part of the daughter to place her entire confidence in her mother.

To further this desirable end, the mother should discuss these instructions with each daughter separately in a private interview at which there will be ample opportunity for reviewing certain issues, clarifying anything obscure, and answering questions. Yet, though permitted to ask questions, the daughter should also be made to understand that she must restrain inordinate curiosity. Hence, if her mother defers the answers to certain questions, she must be content and trust her mother implicitly to give her all the information that will be useful to her in due time.

It may seem to some that the information imparted in this little booklet, and especially in Part One of it, is inadequate, and that the girl of twelve or thirteen might

just as well be told the whole truth with all details. It may be true, indeed, that many, possibly even most, girls of sixteen in our day have acquired more information about sex than is given in this entire treatise. Yet it is more than likely that the reason why they obtained so much information (usually from all kinds of improper sources) was that their mothers did not instruct them and, by gradually satisfying their legitimate curiosity and retaining their confidence, did not preclude the uneasy desire to find out more.

At all events, the mother who used these instructions found them to be perfectly adequate for her two daughters. Though living in a large city, attending a large school, and leading the normal life of other girls, her daughters never sought nor obtained information from other sources, because they knew that their mother would give it to them in due time.

The chief reason, however, why so little biological information was included in this work is that it seemed desirable to keep the subject on as high a plane as possible; and that could not be done by approaching the subject from a biological or botanical angle, as if man were merely a somewhat more perfect animal and not rather just a little below the angels. Only by constantly referring to the fact that man is the work of God, and that every detail of his origin and development has been ordained by God's infinite wisdom, can one succeed in making the child realize that God alone is the author and master of life and therefore that all the processes of life are as sacred as they are mysterious and admirable.

Unless a girl acquires the supernatural attitude toward this subject right in the beginning, there will be danger of her having a wrong attitude toward it all through life. But if the subject is introduced and unfolded to her by her own mother in a delicate and reverent manner, with constant reference to God and a minimum of physical details, the first impression she receives will be sacred, deep, and lasting; and she will then be well prepared to acquire more detailed information from other Catholic sources when her age or circumstances require it.

The age at which the first instruction may best be read to individual girls, as well as how long an interval should elapse before the reading of each successive instruction, will naturally depend upon the type of girl and each one's peculiar circumstances. Experience proves that too early initiation into the mysteries of life does not make a child truly wise, but produces rather that unlovely and preposterous thing—the sophisticated child.

As a rule, the first three instructions should be given before puberty, or, at the latest, at puberty. The remaining ones can easily be distributed over a period of five or six years, at longer or shorter intervals, according as a prudent mother deems it most advisable. All the instructions, also those found in Part Three, should be discussed by the mother with her daughter and not simply given to her to read; because this practice will foster that feeling of filial confidence in her mother that is so important to a girl.

Important as it is, especially in this enlightened and irreverent age, to arm girls in due time with a sufficient knowledge of the facts of life, it cannot be overemphasized that knowledge alone will never suffice to prevent

moral lapses. Far more important, then, for the mother than the task of instructing her daughter, is the task of helping her to develop a strong Christian character by gently yet firmly training her to control her passions, to avoid dangerous occasions of sin, and to make constant use of the supernatural aids of the sacraments and prayer. This must be done from childhood on, yes, from very infancy on; and the main part of this task should be accomplished before the task of imparting the truths contained in this booklet is begun.

From what has been said, it should be evident that these instructions are not intended to be placed in pamphlets racks or sold to the general public, but entrusted only to parents, priests, and other mature persons endowed with the necessary prudence to use them according to the author's intentions.

Part One

To be discussed with girls
ages 9-12 years

Instruction 1

My dear Daughter,

One of the very first things you learned in Catechism class was the answer to the question: "Who made you?" You were taught that God made you; that He made heaven and earth, the land and the sea, plants and animals, and all things. Later on you were told *how* God made the first man and the first woman. The first man, Adam, God made by making a body of the slime of the earth and breathing into it an immortal soul. And Eve, the first woman, God made out of a rib which He took from Adam's side while he was asleep.

You were never told how God made all other men and women; but you know that they must be made in a different way than Adam and Eve, because God made Adam at once a full-grown man and Eve a full-grown woman; and all other men and women came into the world as babies.

Now, have you never wondered how God makes babies, and where they came from? Perhaps at some point you asked me where babies come from. I told you that they come from God, which is true. But things come from God in different ways.

You see, my dear, when we say that God made all things, or that He is the Creator of all things, we do not mean that He made everything directly out of nothing. God made the peaches and the apples, which you like to eat, and the roses, which you love to see; but you know that they are not made directly out of nothing, because you have seen them growing on trees or bushes. At first

the peach tree produced buds; the buds grew into blossoms, and the blossoms into peaches. And even the tree itself was not made out of nothing; because you know very well that trees, like plants and flowers, grow up out of seeds. Yet it is entirely correct to say that God made them; because in the beginning, thousands of years ago, God created the first trees and plants and flowers and made them so that each one would produce seed from which other trees and plants would develop.

Thus God is the Creator of all things, since He made everything, either directly out of nothing, or indirectly by making certain things produce other things of the same kind. This shows the greatness of God's power. Men can make flowers, too, that is, artificial ones; and they can make them so perfect that you can hardly distinguish them from natural ones. But no man can make a flower that will grow and have seed and produce other flowers.

This is all very interesting to you, I am sure; but the most interesting thing is how God makes man. Every day thousands of new children come into the world. Do they just drop into their cradles out of the air like the lovely snowflakes that fall from the sky? Or do their Guardian Angels bring them down from heaven and place them in the arms of their mothers? No. God could create them in that way, if He wanted to, but He doesn't. There are hundreds of ways in which God could bring children into the world; but He chose only one way: and since He is infinitely wise and holy, the way He chose must surely be the best. But what is that way? When God creates a new human being, instead of making its body, as He did Adam's out of the slime of the earth, He makes it out of a

substance which He prepares in the body of its mother. In the very same instant that the tiny body is formed, God makes an immortal soul directly out of nothing, and unites it to the body, which is then nourished and developed inside its mother's body until the time comes for it to be born.

It was in this way that the Son of God Himself became man, as you can see from the Gospel that is read on the feast of the Annunciation. "The Angel Gabriel," so we read there, "was sent by God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said to her: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women....Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High....' And Mary said: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word.'"

As soon as Mary uttered these words, she conceived by the Holy Ghost, as we say in the Angelus; that means: by the action of the Holy Ghost, the body and soul of Jesus were made in Mary's womb and united to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. So you see that the sublime mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God was accomplished in the chaste womb of the immaculate virgin Mary. The womb, you must know, is that wonderful organ inside a woman's body in which a child is conceived, that is, brought into existence, then nourished, just as its mother is nourished by the food she takes, and from which it is finally brought forth or born and then nourished at

its mother's breast. And as Jesus was formed in the womb of His blessed Mother, so every child that comes into the world was also formed in its mother's womb.

So now you know how God creates little children; and you can now understand, too, why a mother loves her child so much; since the child's body was formed out of her own substance and fed with milk at its mother's breast. But now listen, my dear. You were never told about this before, because the creation of a child is something so wonderful that a girl is usually not told about it until she is old enough to appreciate it. Then, too, it is a very mysterious and sacred subject which girls should not talk about among themselves. You are now old enough and wise enough to keep this information to yourself and to speak about it with no one but me. As time goes on, I will tell you more about these things and other subjects; and you should not hesitate to ask me any questions that come to your mind. I know you and I love you; therefore trust me absolutely, and I will tell you all that you should know at the proper time.

Instruction 2

My dear Daughter,

In the instruction I gave you some time ago, I explained to you that our Lord was conceived in His Blessed Mother's womb on the day of the Annunciation. From that day until He was born, Jesus lay hidden away beneath His Mother's heart. If you recall how happy you were the first time you received Jesus in Holy Communion, you can imagine how much greater must have been the joy that Mary felt. For when you receive Jesus in Holy Communion, He remains with you only a short time; but He remained with Mary for nine months, so that during all that time Mary knew that, no matter where she went or what she did, whether working or praying, waking or sleeping, she had little Jesus within Her.

As the Incarnation took place on March 25, you will now understand why the birth or the Nativity of our Lord is celebrated on December 25—just nine months later. Nine months is the usual time that elapses between the conception and the birth of a child, and during that time the mother is said to be “with child” or to be an expectant mother. As the Blessed Virgin knew by the announcement of the angel the exact day that Jesus was conceived, she also knew when He was to be born, and she accordingly took with her the necessary infant clothing when she had to journey to Bethlehem. Other women are not so fortunate as to know at once when God has given them a child; but after a few weeks it is indicated

by certain physical signs, and they can then figure out approximately when the child will be born.

It is to these facts of nature that the evangelist St. Luke refers when he says in the Gospel of the first Mass on Christmas Day: “And Joseph also went up from Galilee... to Bethlehem to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.”

As Mary carried Jesus under her heart for nine months, so Mary, too, had been carried in like manner for the same length of time by St. Ann. You will find, therefore, if you count the months, that also exactly nine months elapsed between the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and her Nativity, since the former is celebrated on December 8, and the latter on September 8. It may be well to remind you here what is meant by the Immaculate Conception. When other children are conceived, their souls are stained with original sin; but because God created Mary's soul in the state of sanctifying grace, we say that she was conceived without sin, or that her Conception was immaculate. It was to honor the great privilege of Mary's Immaculate Conception that the Church attached an indulgence of three hundred days to the little prayer: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”

Since you learned about the origin of children, perhaps the thought has come to you: but I wonder how it comes that only married women have children? There

are several things that must be told you in answer to that question, but the most important thing is this. Bringing up children, taking proper care of them, obtaining food and shelter for them, training and instructing them is by no means an easy task. For this reason, and no doubt for other wise reasons, God in His infinite wisdom and fatherly care for His children, ordained that every child should have also a father, who should love it, labor for the support of both mother and child, provide a home for them, and form with them that society that we call the family. And that the parents might not separate and deprive the child of the loving care that it needs, God also ordained that the parents must be united in marriage and be bound by the marriage contract to live together until separated by death.

Another thing that you may have wondered about is why a doctor is usually called when a baby is born. You may even have heard people say: "The doctor brought us a new baby." This does not mean that the doctor brought the baby into the house, but that he helped the mother to bring it into the world. You see, my dear, a mother usually suffers great pain and sometimes has great difficulty in giving birth to a child, and a new born baby is a very delicate creature; and for that reason it is advisable and sometimes even necessary to have a doctor to assist the mother and give her and her infant the best of care. That is why it is very common nowadays for women to go to a hospital when they expect the birth of a child. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, giving birth to a child would have been easy and painless; but in punishment for their sin, God addressed to Eve the words: "In sorrow shalt thou bring

forth children." And that is also what our Lord referred to when He said to His apostles in the Gospel that is read on the third Sunday after Easter: "A woman when she is in labor, hath sorrow because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world."