

# MATTER OF THE HEART

## ABSTINENCE PROGRAM



**Matter of the Heart** is an abstinence until marriage program designed to provide knowledge and skills to teens so they will make a decision to postpone sex until marriage. The program targets youth group organizations in Guilford County who have the highest poverty and teen pregnancy levels. Matter of the Heart helps teens to realize that many of their peers desire a sex free lifestyle, uncomplicated by fear of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and damage to themselves emotionally. Sessions involve open discussion and skill building activities that address the following topics:

### ♥ **Introduction**

Participants are given an overview and purpose of the program, and an introduction exercise. An opportunity to express concerns and feelings about what they hope to gain is provided. Also part of the introduction is the first of three evaluations. A survey will be administered that measures knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding sexual abstinence of the participants. By surveying the participants, we are better able to judge the effectiveness of the program.

### ♥ **Abstinence, You're Worth the Wait?**

Participants will discuss the definition of abstinence and what they perceive it to be. Students will learn that not everyone views abstinence the same way.

### ♥ **In The Heat of the Moment**

This session deals with the area of self-esteem and self-control. Participants will learn how they feel about themselves is more important than what others think and the effects their self esteem has on their decision to be abstinent. Participants will understand they have control over what happens to their bodies.

### ♥ **It's Getting Hot In Here**

This session will cover the importance of setting limits and making smart choices and decisions regarding sexual health. Participants will discuss reasons why young people become sexually involved outside the context of marriage and why these reasons are not worth them losing their virginity.

### ♥ **Achy Breaky Heart**

Participants will discuss the physical, psychological and social consequences of early sexual involvement, alcohol and drug use, and reasons that abstinence until marriage is the best protection from out-of-wedlock pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

### ♥ **Who Do You Listen To?**

Participants will discuss the positive and negative influences on their sexual decision making. Participants will list the things they hope to accomplish in life and look at how becoming sexually active prior to a mutually monogamous within the context of marriage could jeopardize their future.

### ♥ **Abstinence, It's The Right Choice**

Students will learn that they have the right to say NO, when responding to peer pressure situations, without making excuses and feeling guilty about their decision.

### ♥ **Building Assets to Encourage Confidence**

This two-session part consists of teaching the 40 developmental assets to participants. Participants will be surveyed to areas of asset deficiency. Upon completion of these two sessions, participants will be encouraged to participate in asset development activities as an individual and youth leaders will be instructed to implement activities as a group.

### ♥ **Closure**

This last session consists of final questions and answers, closure and a post- survey to determine how much information the participants have retained and whether knowledge, confidence levels, attitudes and behaviors have changed.