

# New relationships resources for early learning at primary school

By Louise Kirk

If you are going to propose an approach to RSE which promotes chastity and marriage you have to do three things: go to the fundamentals of personality, make lessons fun, and start with the youngest children. These were the principles which guided Christine Vollmer in her creation of *Alive to the World* and we are now in the happy position of producing a new UK edition of Books 1, 2 and 3 to add to our existing Books 4 – 8.

*Alive to the World* is based on the thought of such luminaries as Viktor Frankl, Jean Piaget, David Isaacs, Thomas Likona, and many others, including Mrs Vollmer's own long years of pro-family work. Many FET readers will be familiar with its storytelling approach, whereby children in the classroom learn from the adventures of the children in the books, who grow up alongside them. There are windows of opportunity for learning social skills, such as friendship, confidence, tolerance, courage, leadership, decision-taking and so on, just as there are for academic subjects, particularly maths or a language. By pacing its lessons with the lives of imaginary children, *Alive to the World* is able to take full advantage of these.

In our new Books 1 and 2, *Getting to know myself* and *Happy and Healthy*. the children learn what human beings are, how they are different from animals, and how they fit into families and into wider communities, including their school and the local neighbourhood. They learn that every community has its own rules of behaviour which are necessary for the smooth functioning of society. They also learn about emotions, the difference between mastering and suppressing them, and how applying the Golden Rule of thoughtfulness makes for a happy society. Book 3 develops these themes and has preliminary lessons

on the safe use of electronic media and equipment tied into each lesson plan. This is early learning to lay the foundations for guarding against sexting and pornography.

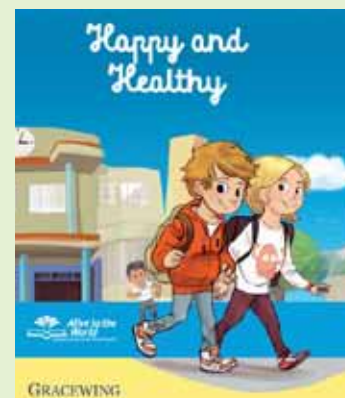


RSE is not a subject like any other in the school day and is best treated in a way that stands out. *Alive to the World* uses hard copy books which give the subject continuity and a special intimacy. Books 1 to 3 are in Big Book format for shared reading, and these are accompanied by full electronic teacher guides which explain the anthropology as well as giving teachers full lesson plans with a range of activities and web links.

Where *Alive to the World* also stands out is in the close relationship it fosters with parents, whose primary role in the education of their children is emphasised throughout. Each lesson ends by encouraging the children to carry out some small task at home, often in the form of a practical resolution or in finding out something from their parents. Ideally, the books would also go home to be shared with the family. As this is not practical, a representative exercise for each lesson will be mounted on our website so as to be easily accessed by anybody. Encouraging families to talk to their children about life when they are young, about their friendships, their tastes in music and many other personal topics lays the

groundwork for helping parents play their role in sex education and in guarding against evils such as pornography.

There is always sensitivity in teaching about marriage and family life when so many pupils come from broken homes. Working through stories is a good way to put lessons across at a safe distance. Nobody is in the spotlight when Charlie or Alice's behaviour is under discussion. In the same way, by living with the stories, children can learn to cope with the reality of their own home lives without losing the natural aspiration for marriage and family life which every child shares. *Alive to the World* puts strong emphasis on respecting the uniqueness and value of each person and each family member, whoever they may be, while allowing children to dream.



Books 1 and 2 are already published with Book 3 expected in early 2021. The teacher guides will be available through our brand new website [www.alivetotheworld.co.uk](http://www.alivetotheworld.co.uk) which is expected shortly. Teacher Guide 1 is ready and 2 and 3 will follow on. Please have a look.

**To ask Louise more about *Alive to the World*'s resources she can be contacted at the following email [louise@alivetotheworld.co.uk](mailto:louise@alivetotheworld.co.uk) They may also be purchased from [www.gracewing.co.uk](http://www.gracewing.co.uk)**