

Dear Mums and Daughters of the Ambrose School,
2018

December 15,

My name is Melody Tracy and I have been running Ambrose dances for 12 years, from the very first dance in 2005 to our up-coming 7th-12th dance in February and our 9th-12th Protocol in May.

As a school, we love having dances be a part of our upper school events. If you have ever been to our dances, you know they are unique and dramatically counter-cultural. Our students come dressed appropriately, the gentlemen ask the ladies to dance and the behavior on the dance floor is fun but honoring. This culture however has taken a lot of coaching and many years to build. It is still far from perfect. Each year we train our students because the outside culture is constantly working against us. When we have neglected this training, we see it reflected in our school events.

One of the areas where we see this cultural influence is in the area of modesty. Just try to shop for a formal dress at a typical department store with a teenage girl and you will see how hard it is to find cute, modest, formal wear. To make it more complicated, our school families have widely different standards for dress. So how do we continue to have these formal events and make it an appropriate event for all?

We have decided to give a lunch for mothers and daughters where we talk about these issues with our girls. We are inviting moms (since they are usually the ones who take their daughters dress shopping) to partner with us as we have this conversation about modesty and appropriate dress for our up-coming dances. It is true that we could simply give our girls a *list of rules* for their dresses but this misses an amazing opportunity to talk about the principles of modesty that are behind the rules. We believe this is a good conversation to have **as a school** because we live in a community of differing convictions in this area. We want to meet together to celebrate the beauty of being female, made in the image of God, and talk about how we can reflect God's beauty and have fun doing so. We will share the Ambrose dance guidelines, talk about the reasons behind those guidelines, and link arms with Ambrose moms. Let's come together and make the upcoming dances a much anticipated time of fun and an opportunity to honor Christ and each other.

What if I cannot make it?

We are going to make this conversation available by video to moms who are not able to make it to the lunch. No mom is required to come; you are simply invited and encouraged to join us. Also, if you have questions and would like to meet with me, feel free to make an appointment!

Warmly,
Melody Tracy

Agenda:

- Music
- 11:20-11:40:
 - Everyone come in and sit down with your mom. If your mom's not here, find a friend's mom. Open seating.
 - At 11:30: We pray
 - Line takes 20 min.
- 12:10: Presentation
 - Why are we having this talk?

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 - The Cultural Creep: we live in a culture that does not care about modesty.
 - We are surrounded by this consciously and unconsciously.
 - Experience in Vegas
 - A huge variety of opinions at Ambrose
 - Unfortunate experiences at dances
 - Why we have rules as an institution: we know that for some this is not enough and for others, this is way to much but here are the guidelines we decided

- What does scripture say about Modesty?
 - *“It should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight”* ([1 Peter 3:4 NIV](#))
 - *“Do not allow this world to mold you into its own image.”* ([Romans 12:2a](#))

- Can we define modesty? Melody
 - This is ultimately a relative standard. C. S. Lewis
 - Victorian era v. African Tribal Women v. Us
 - Looking to what makes others feel comfortable.

- Principles of modesty: Melody
 - Keep the focus on the inner person not the body
 - Make others around you in a diverse community comfortable
 - Able to be worn comfortably and appropriately while dancing

- Questions to Ask yourself
 - Who are you dressing for?
 - I think we most often hear: well I feel good in this. Remember this is the culture talking: we don’t dress for ourselves, we dress for others.
 - Are you dressing to honor God? Would he be pleased by that?
 - Why are you wearing that?
 - Is it to be hot or sexy?
 - Is it to be beautiful?
 - Will the guys feel comfortable wearing that?
 - Remember that Ambrose is a unique culture. We wear uniforms so when we go to dances it is a big change. What makes people comfortable here might be really different somewhere else.

- Ambrose standards: Heather
 - No cleavage (boobs) at all. Ever. For any reason. Even half way through the dance.
 - 2 inches above the knee (Sorry! A rule): Why?
 - Lower back: bra line.
 - New Slide:
 - For the up-coming dance that includes 7th and 8th graders
 - Spaghetti strap or strapless has to be worn with a shall or
 - For Protocol you CAN wear a strapless dress: we need to explain why.

- Typical formal wear that is fashionable but not appropriate: Melody
 - Sweet hearts
 - Mid Drifts
 - Low backs
 - Sheer fabric
 - Halter Top
 - Discussion picture: How can you tell if a dress is modest?
 - Halter tops
 - strapless

- Typical pitfalls of formal wear: Heather
 - Basic principle: Know your body type: See examples below
 - WE ALL HAVE BODY PROBLEMS: Heather, Melody, Amy
 - God made you this way!
 - Big butts, short skirts (Melody's body type)
 - Look fine from the front but bend over during the grand march and OOOOO MY!
 - Large chest, sagging dress (Heather's body type)
 - A large chested person should realize that boobs move a dress down as you dance: I have seen it over and over.
 - Bad underwear/Push-up bras/No Bra
 - Underwear lines: ew
 - The point of a push up bra is to make your boob bigger. It will not make your dress more modest.
 - Super high shoes or uncomfortable shoes
 - Just be smart. You CAN'T dance in three inch heels. Ignore the temptation. REMEMBER we are dancing. Dress accordingly.
- Testing-testing-1-2-3: Heather and Melody
 - Jump, twirl, bend, run, pull
 - Send us a picture!
 - Know you are ultimately responsible on the day of the dance and we will hold you accountable. Remember it is rude to those that followed the rules.
- Our Role: Melody
 - We have to enforce what we have said out of kindness to others and belief in truth.
 - These rules, guidelines are to ensure everyone is having fun. Like uniforms, it releases us from thinking about ourselves and our clothes.
 - We don't want to be the police. I have never told a girl that their dress was not appropriate and they were surprised.
 - This is a unique setting
 - You know when it is inappropriate. Heather's story.
 - We will ask you to change and we will bring stuff to help
 - You will cry.
 - Talk to us! Communicate!
 - Are we being too legalistic?
 - When you grow up and go hang out in other communities, you will be relieved that no one is checking you for modesty. We know.
 - We hope you will be equipped to make wise dressing choices even if this is somewhat rule bound.
 - Talk with your mom and dad about modesty!
 - How can we do better at having this conversation?

● 12:50-1:00: Q and A

● Question for discussion with your mom/daughter:

- What is my body type and what types of dresses look good and appropriate on me?
- What is the difference between beautiful and sexy?
- What do I do if I really like a dress but my mom says that is not appropriate?
- I have no intention of being immodest but it seems to easy to make a mistake!
What should I do?
- How do I react if I see someone who is not appropriate (according to my understanding) at a school dance?

understanding) at a school dance: