

BIG IDEA

Provide your child with a strong foundation of godly values and healthy views of sexuality to build upon as they mature.



KEY SCRIPTURES

- *Our bodies belong to God* (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- *Our bodies are to worship God* (Rom. 12:1-2).
- *Our bodies can be an example to others* (1 Tim. 4:12).
- *Our bodies were created to do good* (Eph. 2:10).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR PRESCHOOLER IS ASKING

- What is my body for?
- How do I treat my body?
- Why are other bodies different?



AT THIS AGE MOST PRESCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Naturally explore their bodies.
- Learn the names for body parts.
- Begin to grasp traits associated with their gender.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Preschoolers may mindlessly touch their genitals or explore their bodies. This is a natural part of development. Your reaction, including voice tone, word choice, and facial expressions, is one of your child's first lessons in sexuality. Refrain from responding negatively, as this could develop a lifelong association of guilt with his body. Instead, teach your child that a healthy curiosity about his body is a normal part of life.
- Your behavior as a parent is the most influential aspect of developing healthy behaviors. Model healthy ideas of sexuality whenever possible. From your treatment of the opposite sex to your behavior toward nudity, your child will mold her ideas from what you model.
- Kids at this age are incredibly curious, and they often ask tons of questions. Before answering any question on sexuality, clarify what your child is asking, and ask what your child knows about the subject. Then you can better answer your child's specific question. Avoid elaborate detail at this stage, but be truthful and scientific, bringing in God's design for bodies when possible.

enjoy marital intimacy. We need to make sure our churches and our homes are places where wives and daughters can be honest in an appropriate way about their struggles with this particular sin.

Pornography is highly addictive and its effects are truly destructive. It is like a cancer that slowly destroys a person. Not only does pornography harm our ability to relate to others, it creates spiritual problems as well. The danger of pornography is that, like cancer, it eats away at us from the inside. And because it is consumed in secret, it is possible for a person to suffer under the effects of pornography for a long time before it is apparent to those around them. As parents, we must be vigilant to protect our children from the destruction of pornography.

PROTECTING YOUR KIDS

Anticipate that your kids will see pornography and that you will have to deal with this issue. Don't wait to talk about it. Most parents have no idea how early their kids are exposed. You don't want the first conversation to take place when you've already caught him or her in the act.

Establish accountability for everyone in your home. Pornography has no respect for age. Set filters on phones and computers. If filters aren't enough, get rid of Internet-enabled phones. Have all devices out in the open—no TVs, computers, or smartphones behind closed doors.

Don't assume this is only a conversation for boys. Our daughters need the same protection as our sons. Many young girls, just like boys, report seeing their first pornographic image as young as age nine or ten.⁷ Often a child's first introduction to pornography is at

a friend's house with an image on a phone or computer.

How should you respond if your child is exposed to pornography? Don't overreact. Be calm. Talk about what was seen. Talk about why some people want to look at these images. Acknowledge that the temptation is real and strong, and explain the dignity of the human body and God's design for sexuality. Always make this conversation about the gospel.

Finally, respond with grace. Let confession lead to repentance and repentance to obedience to God's Word. Embrace His promise:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:9

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. In what ways have you dealt with the temptation of pornography? Has this been a sin problem that you have overcome? If so, how can you pass along what you have learned? If it is still a problem, what steps will you now take to repent and seek help?
2. What protections do you have in place to keep pornography out of your home and out of your child's life?
3. If you've not done so already, what is your plan to discuss this issue with your child?
4. What one thing stood out to you from this article?



COACHING TIPS

- Teach your child that his body is good and has a good purpose to be used like God designed. Try not to respond negatively to any natural curiosity. Instead, redirect any questionable behavior or interest to a healthy alternative.
- Reinforce that you, as the parent, are your child's best resource for questions about her body. Tell your child that she may hear or see things from her friends, but she should always talk to you about questions or ideas she has. Stress the importance of telling you if anything questionable occurs, and give brief examples of such instances. This could include, "Tell me if anyone other than Mommy or Daddy (or other trustworthy adults) touches your private areas," or "Let me know if you ever see anything you think might be wrong." Remember that children are now often exposed to pornography at very early ages.
- Remember that "the talk" is not a singular conversation at a certain age but an ongoing dialogue throughout your child's development. Begin with basic information, like anatomically correct names for body parts, and add age-appropriate information as your child grows. Be aware that your child might be exposed to distorted ideas of sexuality via friends or media, so open communication between parent and child is crucial.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHY IS THIS OBJECT VALUABLE?** Using a valuable item your child is familiar with, such as a piece of jewelry, illustrate the idea of worth and compare it to our bodies. Explain how the item is special, and because of that, you keep it safe and take good care of it. Point out that it is the same way with our bodies—they are special, so we protect them and take good care of them in the way God made them.
- **WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF ... ?** In order for your child to recognize unsafe or wrong behaviors, role-play possible scenarios as you teach him the proper responses. These situations could include friends or adults trying to cross physical boundaries, like playing "doctor" or offering bribes. Practice saying no, then getting away to tell parents or another trusted adult.
- **WHAT ARE BODIES FOR?** When you and your child encounter expecting or nursing mothers, use the opportunity to discuss how girl and boy bodies each have a different, good purpose from God.



SAY OR PRAY

- God created our bodies.
- God wants us to use our bodies to obey.
- God wants us to take care of our bodies.

BIG IDEA

Provide your children with strong foundations of godly values and healthy views of their bodies and relationships to build upon as they mature.



KEY SCRIPTURES

- *Our bodies belong to God* (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- *Our bodies are to worship God* (Rom. 12:1-2).
- *Our bodies can be an example to others* (1 Tim. 4:12).
- *Our bodies were created to do good* (Eph. 2:10).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR ELEMENTARY-AGED CHILD IS ASKING

- How am I supposed to treat my body?
- What is sex?
- Why are bodies different?



AT THIS AGE MOST ELEMENTARY CHILDREN WILL ...

- Be increasingly vulnerable to peer pressure.
- Become modest about their bodies.
- Become increasingly concerned with body image.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Most friendships are still of the same gender at this age, but younger elementary-aged kids will begin mixing and playing with children of the opposite sex.
- They may start showing interest in boy-girl relationships, although they don't like to admit it.



COACHING TIPS

- Expect that your child will have questions about words that they hear related to their bodies. Be ready to answer and explain in language that is age-appropriate, but also clear.
- You can set an example for your child by modeling modesty and a healthy respect for your own body.

- Your child will hear and see things in the media that may not be accurate. This will also happen as they spend time with other kids. Keep the lines of communication open by encouraging him not to be fearful to ask or tell you about anything.
- Discuss private parts and who is allowed to see or touch them. Help your child understand bodily boundaries and encourage her to tell you if anyone tries to cross those boundaries.
- Remember that “the talk” is not a singular conversation at a certain age but an ongoing dialogue throughout your child’s development. You want your voice to be heard on this subject before and above the voices of culture, the media, and your child’s peers. Take advantage of teachable moments when your child asks questions about anything related to sex and sexuality.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF ... ?** Lead your child to think about unsafe or wrong situations he might find himself in where he needs to know how to respond quickly. Encourage your child to inform you if he ever finds himself in an unsafe situation.
- **WHAT SHOULD WE EAT TODAY?** As you plan meals or shop at the grocery store, allow your child to help you choose healthy foods. Discuss the importance of eating healthy foods and of taking good care of the bodies God has given us.
- **WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?** Because peer pressure is becoming an issue at this age in a child’s life, dressing like “everyone else” may become important to your child. Help your child understand that her body is valuable and should be dressed modestly. Spend time together looking at and evaluating pictures of clothing in magazines or take a shopping trip to look for appropriate clothing.



SAY OR PRAY

- God created our bodies for a purpose.
- Our bodies belong to God.
- We honor God when we use our bodies the way He designed.

BIG IDEA

Provide your preteen with a strong foundation of godly values and healthy views of sexuality to build upon as she matures.



KEY SCRIPTURES

- *Our bodies belong to God* (1 Cor. 6:18-20).
- *Our bodies should be led by the Holy Spirit* (Gal. 5:16-18).
- *Our bodies are created to worship God* (Rom. 12:1-2).
- *Our bodies can be an example to others* (1 Tim. 4:12).
- *Lust is a sin as serious as adultery* (Matt. 5:27-30).
- *Marriage should be an institution between a man and a woman* (Mark 10:6-9).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR PRETEEN MAY ASK

- Why is my body changing?
- Why am I attracted to this person?
- Is it wrong to feel this way?



AT THIS AGE MOST PRETEENS WILL ...

- Be approaching puberty. Girls usually develop ahead of boys.
- Be aware of sex roles and have changing attitudes toward the opposite sex.
- Feel a deep need for the companionship and approval of their peers.
- Hear and discuss topics related to sex.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- As preteens approach and experience puberty, their questions, anxieties, and behaviors concerning sexuality may take on a sense of urgency, embarrassment, or confusion. Be sensitive and understanding as you discuss these issues. As at other childhood stages, be careful about responding negatively.
- A preteen's parents are still the example for attitudes and behavior. Model healthy ideas of sexuality whenever possible. Since your preteen is more capable of abstract thought and analysis, you can be more direct and intentional in your guidance.
- While your preteen may be as curious as a preschooler, she may be less inclined to ask questions. Be proactive in your connecting with your child.
- The majority of boys and girls have been exposed to online pornography by this age.⁸ Avoid shaming but be proactive in discussing why pornography is wrong. Put strong safeguards in place to keep pornography out of your home.

- A preteen girl who does not receive words of affirmation and appropriate physical touch from her father or godly male role model may seek to have her needs met through inappropriate verbal and physical expressions of love.



COACHING TIPS

- Tell your child that the body is good and was designed by God for many good purposes. Add that there are also many ways in which people misuse or abuse their bodies that are counter to God's will. Try not to respond negatively to any natural curiosity, as this could build a foundation of shame. Instead, redirect any questionable behavior or interest to a healthy alternative.
- Reinforce that you, as the parent, are your preteen's best and safest resource for questions about sexuality. Affirm often that you are willing to answer any questions or talk about any topic. Stress the importance of telling you if *anything* questionable occurs, especially sexual assault.
- Discussing sexuality is not a singular conversation but an ongoing dialogue as your child develops. You want your voice to be heard on this subject before and above the voices of culture, the media, and your child's peers. Because of intense bodily change and an awakening to physical attraction, your preteen may have questions about the reproductive cycle, masturbation, changes in vocal inflection, and changes in mood and emotion. Open communication between you and your child is critical. Be gentle, honest, and appropriate in your discussions.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **IS THERE ANYBODY WHO YOU LIKE OR HAVE A CRUSH ON?** Your preteen may be hesitant to open up with you on this subject, but with careful and gentle communication, this could be a great way to talk about attraction, respect, dating, boundaries, differences between sexes, and God's expectations for our sexuality.
- **WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF ... ?** In order for your child to recognize unsafe or wrong behavior, pose some possible scenarios as you teach your preteen the proper responses to these situations. Reinforce that no means no.



SAY OR PRAY

- God created us in His image, and our bodies have a purpose.
- God wants us to use our bodies the way He designed.
- God tells us there are wrong ways to use our bodies.
- The Bible is full of examples of people who used their sexuality in good or bad ways.

BIG IDEA

Sex should be seen as a good gift created by God to be enjoyed between a man and a woman in the marriage relationship.



KEY SCRIPTURES

- *God created sex as a good gift to be enjoyed between a man and a woman within the marriage relationship* (Gen. 2:8-9,15-25).
- *People can distort and abuse the original design for sex* (Rom. 1:21-28).
- *We are to flee sexual immorality* (1 Cor. 6:12-18).
- *It is God's will that we remain sexually pure* (1 Thess. 4:3-8).
- *Jesus is a friend to sinners and offers forgiveness for those who have sinned sexually* (Luke 5:29-32).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- Is what's happening to me and what I'm feeling normal?
- What's the truth about sex?
- What should I do and say to impress others?



AT THIS AGE MOST MIDDLE SCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Be exposed to things like mature films, sexting, and sexual talk from friends and older siblings. They will also have more unsupervised time online. Therefore, they may be exposed to more information about sex and sexuality than you are aware.
- Navigate the awkwardness of discovering sexuality. They will struggle with what to wear, hairstyles, and other challenges with creating an outward appearance that attracts the opposite sex or strengthens their identity.
- Be going through puberty.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Lots of physical changes take place as your middle schooler goes through puberty. For boys, the changes include body hair, voice change, and growth spurts. For girls, changes include body shape, body hair, breast development, and the beginning of menstruation.
- With the onset of puberty comes emerging sexuality and sex attraction. Most middle schoolers will begin to turn their attention away from same-gender friendships to relationships with the opposite sex.

- Middle schoolers may begin to compare what they are hearing from the culture about sex with what's being taught to them by parents and other authority figures.



COACHING TIPS

- Most middle schoolers will develop a crush on someone (or several someones) during these years. It might be a celebrity or a friend at school. As a parent make a point to talk about these “loves” in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. And be ready to listen and help heal the brokenhearted.
- Even though it's hard to believe, you must acknowledge that your child is changing into a young adult, and with that change comes the ability to be involved in sexual relationships. It's imperative that conversations take place about biblical standards for sexuality. They are already hearing lots of inappropriate messages about sex. You need to give them the right ones.
- In your conversations about sex with your middle schooler, it's important that you don't portray the message that sex is bad. Point out Genesis 1–2 where God created everything and called it good, including sexual relations between a man and woman in a covenant relationship of marriage.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **DO ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS HAVE BOYFRIENDS/GIRLFRIENDS?** Listen closely to words and body language to gauge true feelings about this situation and also to assess where your middle schooler is when it comes to romantic relationships.
- **WHAT DO YOU THINK GOD THINKS ABOUT SEX?** Don't immediately dismiss your middle schooler's response if it's not quite correct. Move from her responses to share biblical truth.
- **WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT SEX?** This is the “don't beat around the bush” question. Throw it out there and see how your middle schooler responds. But if and when he ask questions, don't put him off or shuffle him to the other parent. Answer him honestly. You can do this without revealing details not appropriate for middle schoolers.



SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that your middle schooler will understand God's beautiful design for sex and will choose to live by His standards.
- Pray your middle schooler would feel free to ask you any question about sex and that you would have the courage to answer and the wisdom to know what to say.

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- We are to flee sexual immorality ([1 Cor. 6:12-18](#)).
- It is God's will that we remain sexually pure ([1 Thess. 4:3-8](#)).
- Jesus is a friend to sinners and offers forgiveness for those who have sinned sexually ([Luke 5:29-32](#)).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR HIGH SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- What's wrong with having sex?
- How far is too far?
- Why is it wrong to be gay?
- Is it right for me to judge others' beliefs about sex?



AT THIS AGE MOST HIGH SCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Be establishing their values concerning sexual expression.
- Be trying to clearly define their sexual orientation.
- Have easy access to pornography.
- Face temptation to be sexually active.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- High schoolers are able to critically evaluate what the surrounding culture says about sex and sexuality with what they have been taught by authority figures. Biblical standards will clash with the cultural norms.
- They are physically developed for the most part, especially older high schoolers. Although they may still be growing, they are past the major changes.
- Feelings of love and passion are strong at this age, with a desire to be involved in romantic relationships.



COACHING TIPS

- It's imperative that you discuss sex with your high schooler from a biblical perspective. Champion the positive in that conversation. Point out Genesis 1–2 where God created everything and called it good, including sexual relations between a man and a woman in a covenant relationship of marriage.
- Emphasize that just because her friends may be engaging in sexual activity does not mean she should. Discuss the importance of waiting for God's perfect plan.
- When your high schooler talks with you about sex, don't let your first reaction be shock or condemnation. Yes, discuss God's standards for sex, but a sermon or lecture doesn't need to be the first words out of your mouth.
- Don't assume your high schooler knows what sexual immorality is. Help him know that sexual immorality includes all sexual activity outside of marriage, not just sexual intercourse.
- Statistics prove that almost all high school boys and the majority of high school girls have been exposed to pornography. You must have some frank discussions about the dangers of pornography and your high schooler's involvement. Take needed steps to safeguard your family's access.
- Talking about sex with your high schooler must be an ongoing conversation in your home. Work to create an environment where she can ask or talk to you about anything.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT DO YOU THINK GOD THINKS ABOUT SEX?** You can move this conversation from opinion to the truth about God's standards for sexuality.
- **IS HOMOSEXUALITY A SIN?** This can lead to a multitude of questions about same-sex attraction and sexual orientation. Don't be shocked or panicked if your high schooler reveals he is wrestling with this issue. Be a good listener. Speak biblical truth in love with compassion and grace, reminding him that we all struggle with the temptation to sin.
- **DO YOU THINK PORNOGRAPHY IS A PROBLEM AMONG YOUR FRIENDS?** As noted, there's a good chance your high schooler has, is, or will deal with the sin of pornography. Hopefully this question is a non-threatening way to open a needed discussion.



SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that your high schooler would make wise, godly choices when faced with sexual temptation, and know there is always a way out.
- Pray that your high schooler would feel comfortable in talking with you about anything concerning sexuality.
- Pray that in your own heart and mind you would remain sexually pure and model the biblical standard for sex in your actions and words.

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- We are to flee sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:12-18).
- It is God's will that we remain sexually pure (1 Thess. 4:3-8).
- Jesus is a friend to sinners and offers forgiveness for those who have sinned sexually (Luke 5:29-32).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR YOUNG ADULT IS ASKING

- What's wrong with having sex outside of marriage?
- If we are all sinners, how can anyone judge others?
- What's wrong with being gay, lesbian, or transgender?
- How can I love others without endorsing their lifestyle?



AT THIS AGE MOST YOUNG ADULTS WILL ...

- Critically evaluate what the surrounding culture says about sex and sexuality with what they have been taught by authority figures.
- Test their beliefs about certain issues including sexuality.
- Engage more in the pursuit of romantic relationships.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Young adults have more freedom than ever to express themselves sexually. Too often this freedom is translated into casual hook-ups or live-in relationships.
- Students at this age are making plans for their future and relationships are based on individual decisions rather than what others think.
- They have completed their full physical maturation and are usually comfortable with their own body image.
- Students at this age are engaged in higher-level thinking, abstract problem solving, and contrasting culture with Scripture.