

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO **New**

“These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. They are not meaningless words to you but they are your life.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; 32:47)

1. Assume responsibility for your children’s sex education

- ◆ Scripture mandates that you teach your children the whole law of God (Deuteronomy 11:18-21).
- ◆ Begin early, so that your child sees you as an expert and feels free to talk with you about sex.
- ◆ Be simple but clear and specific, especially as your child approaches puberty.

2. Be prepared:

- ◆ Collect materials (brochures, books, CDs) on sexuality as a ready reference for your teen.
- ◆ Ask your church for advice and resources.
- ◆ Attend courses or forums for parents.

3. Talk with your teen:

- ◆ Make your conversation interactive.
- ◆ LISTEN.
- ◆ Don’t give ready-made solutions, but look together at what the Bible says and at the situations that arise. Take Jesus’ conversations as examples – he addressed real problems of real people. So did the Apostle Paul.

4. Seize teachable moments:

- ◆ Something comes up in conversation.
- ◆ They ask a question
- ◆ Sex on television, in the movies, on the Internet

5. Initiate conversations (inoculate):

- ◆ You need to “inoculate” your child against false, negative, or destructive moral messages they will hear. **You**, as a parent, should be the first to talk to your children about the things they will hear from their friends and from the media – that it’s okay to have sex with a girlfriend, for example, as long as she uses contraception. Or that anonymous sex is okay. Or that homosexuality is an equally valid life style.
- ◆ Give your teens the opportunity to think through these messages before they are confronted with them and to come up with responses in keeping with Christian morality.

6. What should you teach?

- ◆ Reproductive biological facts: wonderfully designed by God for union in marriage with husband/wife.
- ◆ Changes to anticipate during puberty:
 - ✓ Physical (e.g. girls: menstruation, changes in body shape; boys: spontaneous erection, wet dreams, penis size)
 - ✓ Different rates of maturing
 - ✓ Emotional
 - ✓ Emerging sexual feelings
- ◆ What Scripture says about sexuality, gender, male-female sexual relationships, and why sex is to be saved for marriage, the assurance of God’s forgiveness and restoration
- ◆ Choosing friends – resisting peer pressure, initiating positive peer pressure
- ◆ Purpose of sexual intercourse: a life-uniting act intended to join a husband and wife for life.
- ◆ Relational skills: how to converse.
- ◆ Assertiveness: how to take a stand and not be persuaded to back down.

7. Encourage your teen to sign a pledge to save sex for marriage, or to write a letter to God asking for his help to do this.

8. Plan a special evening, trip, or weekend to celebrate your teen's coming into puberty
 - ◆ Give a ring, a key, or a necklace as a reminder of a pledge to save himself or herself for their spouse.
 - ◆ Grant more privileges and require more responsibility as recognition that he or she is becoming an adult.

9. Talk with your teen about the real meaning of "love"
 - ◆ To **nourish and cherish** (Ephesians 5:25-33)
 - ◆ **Love**
 - ❖ is patient, kind.
 - ❖ is **not** proud, rude, self-seeking, easily angered.
 - ❖ **always** protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.
 - ❖ **never** fails
 - ❖ **does** rejoice with the truth.
 - ❖ **does not** envy, boast, keep a record of wrongs, delight in evil.

(1 Corinthians 13)

10. Model and discuss:
 - ◆ Relationship: love, faithfulness, sexual purity in marriage.
 - ◆ Masculinity, femininity.
 - ◆ Intimacy – emotional and physical -- in your own marriage
 - ◆ Unconditional love for your child.

11. If your teen will date, help him or her to set and communicate boundaries for dating:
 - ◆ Who to date
 - ◆ Where they will/will not go
 - ◆ What they will/will not do
 - ◆ Where they will draw the line on physical contact
 - ◆ Provide dating practice. Father, take your daughter on a "date." Mother, let your son take you on a "date." Let them practice:
 - ✓ respect for the opposite sex
 - ✓ how to treat a girlfriend/boyfriend and how to expect to be treated
 - ✓ a standard by which they can measure real dates with someone their own age
 - ◆ Talk about alternatives to dating.

12. Provide alternatives to activities of which you do not approve

13. Rehearse scenarios with your teen: "What will you do if . . ."
 - ◆ Make certain your teen knows they can call on you any time to rescue them from a difficult situation.
 - ◆ Agree on a "secret code" which will tell you, but not the person they are with, that they want to be rescued.

14. Supervise teens' activities, and network with other parents.

15. Monitor and discuss with teens:
 - ◆ Music lyrics
 - ◆ Cell phone use
 - ◆ Internet safety and etiquette, instant messaging, online "friends"
 - ✓ Giving out personal information: what not to post.
 - ✓ Sending compromising photos or text messages to boyfriend or girlfriend
 - ◆ School sex education, if it is taught in your area; be aware of what is being taught.

16. Influence school sex education policy:
 - ◆ Know what is appropriate and acceptable; read guidelines such as those from the Medical Institute of Sexual Health.
 - ◆ Is school leadership, board aware of content of materials, classroom presentations?
 - ◆ Suggest/provide alternative materials.

17. Initiate or join community efforts to encourage all teens to save sex for marriage.
18. Be an authoritative, involved parent (not authoritarian or permissive)
 - ◆ Moderately strict in discipline and supervision
 - ◆ Exact consequences for disobedience
 - ◆ Have high expectations of your teen
19. Love your teens. Tell them they are precious to you and to God.
20. Pray specifically for your children's
 - ◆ Holy expression of their sexuality
 - ◆ Godly future mate