



THE TALKS

A parent's guide to critical
conversations about sex, dating
and other unmentionables.

DVD STUDY GUIDE

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AN EXCERPT

**FULL STUDY GUIDE
AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE
ON AMAZON**

A General Guide for Every Age

What Every Kindergartener Needs to Know About Sex

Don't let that title shock you. I am not advocating for traditional sex-ed for preschoolers. Far from it. What I hope to do is encourage parents to start very early to build the framework for helping their kids to have the right perspective on the sexual aspect of their lives.

In our ministry of equipping parents to help their kids make wise choices about sex and relationships, we like to use the concept of "navigating." Just as a rafting guide helps people to navigate the hazards that are always part of a whitewater adventure, a parent's job is to help their kids to successfully get through the many relational and sexual challenges that every person will encounter.

Helping parents to do that job right is the reason that we wrote *The Talks* and filmed this DVD series. In our hyper-sexualized culture, we're amazed at how many parents haven't given any thought whatsoever regarding how they will help their kids to have a healthy view of sex.

When it comes to these issues, parents of preschoolers should see their job as one of building the right foundation. To stay with the whitewater rafting illustration, a guide must make sure everyone on his boat can swim long before he lets them get close to the water.

If the goal is to lay a solid foundation for your preschoolers, this

list should probably be titled something a little more broad, such as “What Every Kindergartner Needs to Know About Their Bodies, Their Sexuality, and the Opposite Sex.”

Note that this is not an exhaustive list. And it shouldn't serve as a legalistic checklist. But by the time he or she finishes kindergarten your child should be able to have some awareness of the following:

1. The opposite sex does not have “cooties.” They are different, but they are awesome.
2. Mom and dad will honestly (and simply) answer questions I have about the different parts of my body without making me feel shame about them.
3. My body belongs to me. Nobody can touch me without my permission. More specifically, I need to carefully guard the parts of my body that are covered by a bathing suit. If anyone ever touches me in a way I don't like, I know I can tell my parents. They are there to protect me.
4. Kisses are special and need to be saved for the people who have spent a lifetime meriting such special affection.
5. Mom and dad love me so much that they put a filter on the internet that keeps me from stumbling into something that I don't need to see.
6. If I happen to see someone with their clothes off, I need to look away. Private parts are meant to be kept private.
7. My parents give me a good picture of what a healthy and affectionate marriage looks like. Even if they are single, they make me feel secure by their relationship choices.
8. My parents care enough about me to begin thinking now about how to create a framework for me to develop a healthy view of my sexuality.

What Every Elementary School Kid Needs to Know About Sex

Don't freak out. Your 4th grader may not need to know a bunch of explicit details about how sex works. But by the time they are 9 or 10 (every kid is different), they probably need to know some "birds and bees" basics. In addition, elementary school is the perfect season for your kids to begin to develop a healthy perspective of the way God has made them uniquely male or female. They also need loving and wise parents who will protect them from some of the pitfalls that our over-sexualized culture will begin to put in their paths.

Our kids will face these issues long before we think, so we cannot afford to put this off. All it takes is one conversation on the playground or one glimpse of something on the computer to give our kids the wrong impression of something God made to be a wonderful thing.

Parents of elementary kids should begin to give their kids a healthy impression of sex. To stay with the whitewater rafting illustration given in the previous section about kindergarteners, a guide will make sure that the tourists on his boat have a positive perspective of what they are about to encounter on the river. He wants them to know that it might be a bit scary, but it's going to be awesome.

With the goal of putting a positive spin on sex and relationships, this list should probably be titled something a little more broad, such as "What Every Elementary School Kid Needs to Know About Their Bodies, Their Sexuality, and the Opposite Sex."

This is not an exhaustive list. And it shouldn't serve as a legalistic checklist. But by the time he completes the 4th grade, your child should be able to have some awareness of the following:

1. "Everything that a Kindergartener Needs to Know," plus...
2. The basics of "where babies come from." I will develop plenty of questions over time, but I have heard about intercourse from my parents before I hear it somewhere else.
3. God invented sex to connect a husband and wife, to make babies, AND to be something that feels good to us. Though it is a bit bizarre, my parents have told me that it truly is a wonderful thing. (I'm still not convinced.)
4. I know that, while God made sex and our bodies to be private, there are some who let people take their pictures with their clothes off. I might accidentally see these on a computer or smartphone. If this happens, I need to look away and tell my parents. They will not be mad at me.
5. My parents have trained me to notice good character qualities in members of the opposite sex. After all, I will probably get married some day and I need to learn what traits are most important in others.
6. For Girls: Because I have already started comparing myself to others, my parents remind me often that I am both beautiful and of great value beyond my looks.
7. For Boys: I am being taught how to be chivalrous, seeing the importance of using my strength to protect the young and innocent and to assist anyone who might need my help.
8. Our family may not embrace dating or boyfriends/girlfriends the same way as everyone else we know.
9. I know that if anyone makes me feel uncomfortable in a way that they talk to me or touch me, I can ALWAYS tell my parents.
10. I can regularly see my parents modeling a strong, thriving, and affectionate marriage. Even if they are single, they are making relationship choices that are best for me

What Every Pre-Teen Needs to Know About Sex

When parents ask us when they should talk to their kids about sex, our knee-jerk answer is “sooner than you think.” By the time your kids hit 5th or 6th grade, they should have a basic knowledge of the birds and the bees, but the conversation doesn’t stop there. There is so much more that you and your kids need to talk about.

One tip we often give is to make sure your kids hear about terms and issues related to human sexuality before they hear them from somewhere else.

When it comes to these issues, parents of preteens should make it their goal to inform their kids of what they will likely encounter as they get older. Sadly, that might mean “stealing their innocence” and telling them about some stuff before you might be fully comfortable with it. To visit our whitewater rafting illustration once again, a guide is wise to give solid and specific information about what the journey down the river will be like long before they put the boat in the water.

With that in mind, this list has to cover more than just sex. It should probably be titled something like “What Every Pre-Teen Needs to Know About Their Bodies, Their Sexuality, and the Opposite Sex.”

This is not an exhaustive list. And it shouldn’t serve as a legalistic checklist. But by the time he or she finishes the 6th grade, your child should be able to have some awareness of the following:

1. “Everything that an Elementary School Kid Needs to Know About Sex,” plus...
2. By this time, my parents and I have had “the talk.” Though it can sometimes feel weird, I feel relatively comfortable asking my

parents the variety of strange questions that pop into my head about this topic.

3. My parents have given me some resources to look at on my own that deal with human sexuality and some of the physical changes that I can expect in the coming years.

4. I am beginning to learn that the world's perspective of sex is radically different than what God designed it to be. I am learning to trust that God's ways are best.

5. I know that when I do eventually start to date, it will be with people my parents are comfortable with. My parents will want to personally know any potential boyfriends and girlfriends. Those I date will share my religious faith.

6. Girls: I may not mature at the same pace as the girls around me, but my parents have prepared me for this. I know what changes in my body I can expect, especially as it relates to having a period.

7. Boys: I am learning more and more what it means to guard and protect women. Even though many of my friends don't seem to honor the girls around them, I am trying hard to be a gentleman in both my words and actions.

8. My parents diligently monitor my technology use to make sure I am making wise choices. They know the passwords to any sites I frequent.

9. I am learning that sex should be saved for marriage because it serves as an amazing super-glue in that relationship. I may not understand this for many years, but I was introduced to this truth by my parents early on.

10. My parents are still very affectionate, even though they are getting older. That's weird and sometimes gross, but it makes me feel oddly secure.

What Every Middle Schooler Needs to Know About Sex

Middle school kids are seeing more and learning more about human sexuality than we ever did when we were their age. Because they will be bombarded with a worldview from so many different directions, parents cannot afford to sit by and then play catch up later.

Many kids are well into their adolescent years before their parents communicate anything substantive about their sexuality and the struggles they might face. Plenty more parents avoid these talks altogether.

When it comes to these issues, parents of middle school kids should see their role as one of “trainer.” You want to equip your kids with the skills they will need get through the coming years when their sexuality becomes a more pronounced part of their lives. To stay with the whitewater rafting illustration, a guide has to train his rafters on how to get down the river without getting seriously hurt. If they are going to enjoy the journey, it is up to the guide to equip them with what they will need.

With that in mind, this list should probably be titled something a little more broad, such as “What Every Middle Schooler Needs to Know About Their Bodies, Their Sexuality, and the Opposite Sex.”

This is not an exhaustive list. And it shouldn’t serve as a legalistic checklist. But by the time he or she finishes the 8th grade, your child should be able to have some awareness of the following:

1. “Everything that a Pre-Teen Needs to Know About Sex,” plus...
2. I am learning to interact with the opposite sex in ways that are honoring to them. I can tell that I have a tendency to be selfish in my relationships, so I am striving to put others first.

3. While I may not be dating, my parents train me to look for what I like and value in members of the opposite sex. I'm learning to look for qualities that I might one day value in a spouse.

4. Marriage is a commitment for life. I am learning that our culturally accepted practice of cohabitation has the power to undermine long-term relationships.

5. Boys: My parents have briefed me on what a wet dream is and why it happens. I know that it is perfectly normal and that it happens to every single boy on the planet.

6. Girls: As my body develops physically, I am learning to dress in a way that doesn't advertise it to others. I value my beauty, but I want boys to know and appreciate me for more than just what I look like.

7. Instead of trying to find the right person to "like" me, I know it is more important for me to become the right person. As I grow in maturity, I will be better able to recognize the person that I need to be with.

8. I know that looking at pornography has significant power to mess me up. It is addictive, harms real intimacy with others, and trains me to have a selfish view of sex. My parents are diligently monitoring my technology and reminding me to make wise choices to make sure that I do not get ensnared by it.

9. If and when I start using social media, my parents will set some limits on its use, making sure that I don't give too much of my heart away emotionally with the opposite sex.

10. If someone wants to "date" me, my parents should be involved in the process. They care about me enough to know who I am interested in.

11. My parents will occasionally lock the door to their bedroom and tell me to go away. What could that mean? I don't want to think about it.

What Every High Schooler Needs to Know About Sex

By the time our kids enter high school, they are fully aware of the sexual component of their lives. Even if they are somewhat “inexperienced,” they still have plenty of thoughts and drives that God has placed within them. These things are very good, but if they are not managed with wisdom, they have the potential to be destructive. Parents have a God-given responsibility to help their kids to make wise choices.

Our older teenage kids are in desperate need of guidance and accountability. They need trusted adults to help them to process the many feelings and experiences they will have during these tumultuous years.

Parents of high school aged kids must see their role as coach and guide. We must have specific, detailed conversations about the issues and challenges that our kids are facing...while they are facing them. We must lead as we go. To stick with the whitewater illustration, the high school years are like being in the middle of the river with class 3 and 4 rapids coming around every bend. The guide is giving directions, instructing on what to expect and do, and helping his people to learn from their mistakes before they tackle the next challenge.

Note that whitewater rafting is both thrilling AND dangerous. Along the way, people will often get hurt: everything from sore muscles to various bumps and bruises. But everything is usually okay at the end of the day as long as there weren't any significant injuries.

In the same way, our kids are likely going to have a few emotional and spiritual bruises as they get through these years. Parents who think they can fully protect their kids from that are naive. It rarely happens. However, we can and should be diligent to try to help

our kids to navigate this stage of life without too much lasting damage. Hopefully, they can then enter marriage free of significant baggage. And thankfully, the cross of Christ offers us the redemption of even our biggest mistakes.

There is a lot our kids will face and our simple goal should be to help them get through it. That said, this list should probably be titled something a little more broad, such as “What Every High Schooler Needs to Know About Sex, Dating, and the Opposite Sex.”

This is not an exhaustive list. And it shouldn't serve as a legalistic checklist. But by the time he or she hits the middle of high school (and has the freedom of a driver's license), your child should have some awareness of the following:

1. “Everything that a Middle Schooler Needs to Know About Sex,” plus...
2. My parents have been deliberate to communicate that sex is an incredibly beautiful gift from God. However, outside the security of marriage, it has the power to ruin relationships, not make them stronger.
3. I am learning about the chemical bonds that are formed when two people connect physically. My parents have told me about the effects of “oxytocin” and how it serves as a “bonding chemical” in physically intimate relationships. Thus, I am learning not to be careless in my interaction with the opposite sex.
4. My parents have coached in some “scripts” I can use to get out of potentially tempting situations.
5. I know that it is not wise for me to be alone somewhere with someone that I am in a romantic relationship with.
6. With regard to my dating relationships, my parents are periodically asking me (and the person I am dating) about physical boundaries. They love me enough to provide accountability for us.

7. Self-gratification and the use of porn has the power to make one selfish. I know that if I get into the habit of doing that, I run the real risk of bringing a self-centered expectation of sex to my eventual marriage. This has the potential to undermine the power that sex should have to strengthen my relationship.

8. Instead of asking "how far is too far" sexually, I am asking God to show me what is the most wise thing for me to do to guard my heart, mind, and body.

9. I know that using drugs and alcohol can make me vulnerable to sexual abuse by someone who can easily take advantage of me. I am therefore very careful. I know to NEVER accept a drink that someone gives me at a party.

10. My sex drive can tempt me to think only of my needs. I am learning that God desires for me to give it generously to one person who I commit myself to for life.

11. My sexuality is more than just a physical drive. It offers a transcendent emotional and spiritual connection with another person that should not be taken lightly.

12. I will likely make some mistakes along the way as I discover God's gift of my sexuality. I will have some regrets. I will likely have emotional wounds. But I am learning that God's grace and love are sufficient to restore me and make me whole.