

*Sexual
Integrity
Through
the
Phases*

WHAT IS SEXUAL INTEGRITY?

True or False?

The more positive, value-centered sex education kids receive from home, the greater likelihood they will be less promiscuous?

The goal is sexual integrity. By sexual integrity, we mean this: We want every kid to **guard their potential for future intimacy through appropriate boundaries and mutual respect.**

What were conversations about sex like in your home growing up?

We can help our kids establish lasting sexual integrity that starts at a young age and extends throughout their entire life, guiding their self-image, how they treat members of the opposite sex, and how they view and enjoy intimacy in marriage, as well as how resolute they are to remain faithful in mind and body.

If parents don't talk to their kids about all things related to sex, where is the number one place kids go to get information?

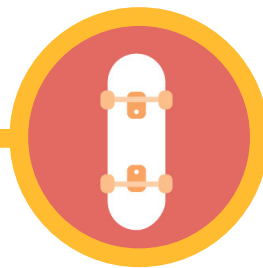
ON GOING PROCESS



PRESCHOOL
BODY



ELEMENTARY
INFORM



**MIDDLE
SCHOOL**
INTERPRET



**HIGH
SCHOOL**
COACH

THE STRATEGY

Proverbs 4:23 NLT says, "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." We can't guard our kids' hearts for them, but we can create a strategic approach to parenting that helps kids begin to internalize truth and apply it to their relational, and even sexual, decisions.

This kind of core belief in sexual integrity doesn't come from a one-time conversation or a sex education class. It develops as parents instruct, dialogue, and model a life of value-centered sexuality.



6 OUT OF 10

Sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds have had sexual intercourse.



Two-thirds of males and females between the ages of 15 and 24 have had oral sex.

As parents, we will have to continually re-define our role as we help our children develop sexual integrity.

We want to encourage making a lifetime commitment to:

- Honoring God with your body
- Renewing your mind for the good
- Turning your eyes from worthless things
- Guarding your heart above all else

STATISTICS

There is no such thing as casual sex. Sexual intimacy affects our emotional, relational, mental, and spiritual life, not to mention our physical well-being. Some experts say that as many as **70%** of teenage suicide attempts stem from a broken romantic relationship.



The average age of the first internet exposure to pornography is ten-years-old.

5 KEYS TO DEVELOPING HEALTHY SEXUALITY

1

TALK

Communication is a key to developing healthy sexuality. Kids learn best when they dialogue rather than just hearing lectures from mom and dad. Make teaching healthy sexual values as normal and natural as possible.

3

POSITIVE PEER INFLUENCE

Don't underestimate the influence of your children's friends. Bring positive peer influence into the lives of your kids through church activities, sports, band, and other healthy activities. Go the extra mile to encourage the good friendships.

2

ROLE MODELS

You don't have to share all your "sins of the past," but don't be afraid to say that the reason you have concerns for your children is because you didn't have healthy conversations about sex. Also, let's face it, you can't ask your kids to live out a way of life that you aren't doing yourself.

4

GRACE & FORGIVENESS

Make sure there is plenty of talk about grace and forgiveness. Don't turn sexuality into something dirty. God is for sex in the right context.

5

SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING

It is never too early to begin and never too late to start talking about this subject.



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Sex and sexuality are a natural part of our lives and our children's lives because God made us sexual beings. At a certain age, our children's God-given sex drive will kick in. However, there are other factors in our culture that affect how kids are being influenced by sex, even at a young age.

Sex is everywhere.

TV, movies, music, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, YouTube, video games, you name it! If we are going to help our children build a foundation of healthy beliefs related to sexuality, we need to acknowledge that kids will think about sex, because it's everywhere in the culture. Your job will be to teach your children how to discern what is a good message or a bad message. It's our job to help them listen to the words and see if messages in the media they are using are healthy or unhealthy. This also means we have to know what they are watching and listening to.

Sex is mysterious.

Sex influences our kids because it is mysterious, and, like us, they are naturally curious. They are going to ask questions. They are going to talk about it. If they don't talk about it with you they will go to the internet, their friends, or elsewhere. That's why we need to demystify sexuality and be the ones to help them build a solid foundation of healthy views about sex and relationships. Just acknowledge to them that sex is mysterious and that you are willing to discuss any subject in a nonjudgmental way at any time.

Sex is enjoyable!

Just because you tell your kids that sex is fun doesn't mean it will cause them to experiment. As we teach our kids to view their sexuality in a positive manner, it will typically move them toward the self-discipline to wait.

A THEOLOGY OF HEALTHY SEXUALITY

It is our job to teach our kids what the Bible says about sex and relationships.

1. God created sex.

God created male and female. (Genesis 2:18-25) Since he created man and woman, He also created our sexuality. Kids need to know that sexuality is God's idea. Because God created our sexuality, we will want to honor Him with our bodies.

2. God sees sex as "very good."

When God created humans, He called them "very good." This description includes more than our sexuality, but that is part of it. We have to help kids understand that our sexuality is a gift from God and how to use it in the right context.

3. The Bible on the union between man and wife: one flesh.

In the book of Matthew, Jesus tells us that when a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, the two become one flesh. This is referring to much more than sexual intercourse, but that is the perfect example of two literally being joined together to become one flesh. Too often media portrays sex as very casual, but there is no such thing. Ultimately, the less baggage our kids bring into their own marriages, the better off they will be. (See facts on the following page.)

4. The Bible on the human body.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.

Our bodies are so much more than skin, bones, tissue, and organs. Literally, the Spirit of the living God resides in us, and the foundation we are to lay out for our children and ourselves is that of radically respecting our body as well as the bodies of others. Radical respect teaches our kids that the opposite sex possesses the Spirit of God in them as well. We are called to honor them and treat them with the same value and respect that God treats them with.



PREMARITAL FACTS

1. Premarital sex tends to break up couples.
2. Many men do not want to marry a woman who has had intercourse with someone else.
3. Those who have premarital sex tend to have less happy marriages.
4. Those who have premarital sex are more likely to have their marriage end in divorce.
5. Persons and couples who have had premarital sex are more likely to have extramarital affairs as well.
6. Having premarital sex may fool you into marrying a person who is not right for you.
7. Persons and couples who have premarital sex experience sexual satisfaction sooner after they are married. HOWEVER-
8. They are likely to be less satisfied overall with their sex life during marriage.
9. Poor premarital sexual habits can be carried over to spoil sex in marriage.

* Ray E. Short; Sex, Love, or Infatuation: How Can I Really Know?

PRESCHOOL

INTRODUCE THEM TO THEIR BODY

This is a beautiful-and in some ways, simple-phase. The best thing a parent can do for their preschooler is to speak naturally about their child's body. If parents can open the door for honest and easy conversations in this phase, it will increase the likelihood for better conversations in the phases to come. Here are three practical ways parents can introduce their preschooler to their body-the body that God created!

Name the correct body parts.

Every parent will name their child's body parts. "Nose." "Eyes." "Ears." It's a game every parent plays during this phase. But all too often parents mistakenly leave out major parts of the body. We skip the private parts as though they don't exist. Yet research shows it's much better to teach children proper names for all their body parts. It's only awkward for us, not our kids, and at some point parents should say, "This is your penis/vagina." God didn't make unspeakable parts of our bodies. God sees all of what He made. It's more than okay to let our preschoolers know how to talk about their body. When kids are comfortable with the proper names, they tend to be more comfortable talking about issues with their parents. This has also been a documented benefit for children who are victims of sexual abuse. It's hard to report something you don't have words to talk about.

As Christian parents, it's also good to not only name the parts, but to teach our children to view our body with respect. Parents can begin in these years to say, "God created your body and He sees it as very good."

Define privacy.

Just because children know the names for their body parts doesn't mean all the body parts were created equal. Privacy matters. Now that they know the appropriate terms for their body parts, they need to understand that some parts are private. Parents have the sometimes-challenging task of helping preschoolers learn what's appropriate inside and outside of the house.

Acknowledge differences.

As parents introduce their preschoolers to their bodies, they'll inevitably have conversations about how people are different. As part of these conversations, preschoolers may notice that boys and girls have some anatomical differences. This is the perfect phase to acknowledge how boys and girls are different. There may be conversations that sound like this, "Boys go potty standing up because they have a penis."

ELEMENTARY

INFORM THEM ABOUT HOW THINGS WORK

Most elementary kids ask a million questions. They're curious about how all things work. Kids' curiosity and inclination for discovery includes their own body. Here are three practical ways to have conversations with elementary-aged kids.

Give simple answers to biological questions.

Kids will ask questions, and parents should answer in an age appropriate manner. We need to become active listeners in this phase. Respond to a question with further questions. "Where did you hear that?" "What got you thinking about that question?"

You can answer your kids with honesty, but also without disclosing more information than the child is seeking. When a simple answer resolves the child's question, it's okay to move on. You don't need to inform your child about every detail all in one setting. It's far better to give simple answers over multiple conversations.

At some point before the end of this phase, give an explanation for how babies are made, for how kid bodies will become adult bodies, and for how you see God's plan for marriage and family.

Talk about boundaries, like: "Your body belongs to you."

In the preschool years, parents introduce the idea of privacy. Now is the time to take that conversation one step further. As kids spend more time outside the home, parents should have conversations about boundaries, touching, bathrooms-and even teach some prevention words to help protect them from sexual abuse. Talk about who is allowed to see or touch private parts in different circumstances. Talk about secrets. Tell your kids to tell you if anything ever makes them uncomfortable.

Improve relational skills.

As kids move from kindergarten to fifth grade, friendships will become increasingly important. In fact, by fourth and fifth grade, peers have incredible influence. Parents should pay attention to these friendships and the influence they have on their child's choices. This is an essential phase to help kids understand and practice relational skills like honesty, forgiveness, generosity, and respect.

MIDDLE SCHOOL INTERPRET WHAT IS CHANGING

In the middle school years, kids experience a lot of changes. Almost every area of parenting intensifies, and the same is true for sexuality. At the risk of oversimplifying, here are just three practical things middle school parents can do to interpret what is changing.

Answer questions about sex in detail. If you don't, the internet will.

The average age a child in America will view pornography is age ten. Scary, right? Our middle schoolers experience the onset of desires that come with puberty in a world of often unlimited access. They have an increased awareness of all things sexual. But awareness isn't the same thing as understanding. One of the greatest gifts a parent can give their middle schooler is an interpretation of the sexual and relational changes happening all around them.

Do you really need to have dialogue with your daughter about her period and with your son about masturbation? Consider this: If you don't, someone else will. Will the conversation be awkward? Absolutely. Will your middle schooler act disgusted? Probably. But if you don't have this conversation, they'll take their cues from other places-particularly the internet, media, or someone else's two-years-older sibling.

Increase positive affirmation and affection.

As your son or daughter enters late elementary and middle school years, they are likely to become more private. That's okay. But don't confuse this increased need for privacy with a decreased need for positive affirmation and affection. Middle schoolers need to know that their body is good. The changes that are happening are part of God's good plan. At a time when so many kids feel embarrassed and awkward, be sure to affirm your child's physical appearance. Give them a hug and a pat on the shoulder. Humans were made for physical touch. A parent can and should give their child appropriate and positive affection in the middle school years.

Agree on boundaries and help them script responses.

There's a ton of data to suggest that the middle school years are rich with poor decision making. Middle schoolers feel all the feelings but they aren't always good at interpreting what those feelings mean. They are often naive and over optimistic and assume they don't need a plan to navigate sexual boundaries. They do not have a long term sense of consequences. Have honest conversations with your kids about what kinds of pressures may arise, and help them create a response plan. Ask, "When this happens, what will you do?"

MIDDLE SCHOOL

INTERPRET WHAT IS CHANGING

By the end of this phase, most everything should be addressed-from guy/girl relationships, to pornography, cultural influences, peer pressure, modesty, flirting, as well as grace and forgiveness.

Rites of Passage

Consider having a special date night, trip, or mini-staycation to celebrate and talk about puberty. It's important to discuss all of the details. Kids begin to see and feel changes going on inside and outside of their bodies, but many don't get the perspective of their parents. Talk to your child before and while these changes are taking place. Read a book with anatomy diagrams. Make sure you don't forget to discuss topics and facts that are often uncomfortable to talk about, because if you don't discuss them, who will do it in a way you would be happy with?

Talking About Our Bodies

Males

- Penis
- Foreskin
- Scrotum
- Seminal Vesicles
- Prostate
- Testicles
- Sperm
- Erections
- Ejaculation

Females

- Ovaries
- Fallopian Tubes
- Uterus
- Cervix
- Vagina and vaginal canal
- Hymen
- Urethra
- Labia
- Clitoris
- Vulva
- Eggs
- Menstruation

General

- Sexual Intercourse
- Pregnancy and birth
- Wet dreams



HIGH SCHOOL COACH THEM TOWARD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The average high schooler values experience over intellect, which just means they want to know for themselves rather than accepting what someone else says. But these same teenagers who seek experience often fail to consider outcomes of their decisions. They underestimate the ramifications. They don't have a mature sense of long-term consequences. Maybe that's why so many teens begin to engage in some kind of sexual experience during this phase. We're coaching teenagers to make wise choices about their sexuality in a world that offers them access to experiences that far outweigh their maturity level.

Coaches know their players personally. They know their particular strengths and weaknesses. Coaches maintain a big picture perspective. They inspire, they set goals, they train, and they never stop working to help a player improve.

In the same way, we can coach high schoolers toward healthy relationships when we know them personally. We can help teens improve their ability to discern what's taking place in their mind, body, eyes, and heart. Here are some practical suggestions to help.

Talk about dating values.

Not all teenagers date. Not all sexually active teenagers date. But even though dating isn't for everyone, it's still a conversation worth having. Parents should talk to their kids about dating values early and often. Work together to set up boundaries, accountability and agree on expectations.

If your child is beginning to date, talk with them about the type of person they would or would not be wise to date. Talk openly and often about the pressures that being in an exclusive dating relationship can lead to.



HIGH SCHOOL

COACH THEM TOWARD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Create a response plan for when you find something you aren't expecting.

Many high schoolers with good parents make choices their parents wouldn't have hoped for them. Whether it's about grades, alcohol, athletics, or sex, you may discover something in this phase you weren't expecting. Allow yourself to freak out on the inside, not on the outside. Approach your child with grace, understanding, and an open heart to talk about anything.

Utilize other influences.

The best decision we believe you can make in this phase is to find other adults who can coach your teenagers' relationships. The temptations are too great. The stakes are too high. And, let's face it, teenagers aren't going to tell you everything they do. So ask yourself, "If they won't talk to me about this, who will they talk to?" Every teenager needs a caring adult who will listen, not freak out, and give the same advice a loving parent would give.

Keep the conversation going.

By this stage, no conversation should be off limits with parents. Blunt, unashamedly moral conversations with your kids about anything and everything make it easier for your kids to navigate their sexuality at this important age. Conversations and parental instruction need to take place on dating, setting standards, sexual abuse, learning to radically respect members of the opposite sex, drugs, alcohol, partying, and the like.

This next list is daunting, but choose topics for a six-month period of time and look for ways to bring up the subject for some "planned spontaneity." Look for opportunities from conversation with your kids, TV shows, magazines, music, movies, or anything that you think might be an opening for good discussion.

TOPIC LIST

- Appropriate touch and inappropriate touch
- Correct names of body parts
- Puberty and changes
- Physical differences between males and females
- Cultural influences and learning to discern right from wrong
- Radical respect for the opposite sex
- You body is the temple of God
- Pornography
- Interent influence
- Sexual abuse
- Lust
- The power of friendships
- Grace and forgiveness
- Emotions
- Self-Image
- Peer pressure
- True beauty
- Partying
- Clothes and modesty
- Your mind is a sex organ too
- How far is too far?
- STDs
- Dating
- Technical virginity (everything but intercourse)
- Oral sex
- Cohabitation
- Secondary virginity
- Hooking up
- Abusive relationships
- Consequences of poor choices and sexual behavior
- Depression
- Mental health
- Suicide
- Eating disorders
- Birth control
- Gender identity
- Homosexuality
- Masturbation
- Setting boundaries
- Accountability
- Abortion
- Pregnancy
- Why wait?
- Unconditional love

EXTRAS

Parents intuitively know they need to talk to their kids about sex, but few parents know when or how. They hope their child will grow up to have healthy relationships, but they don't have a plan that can help make that happen. Add that to the reality that never before have our children had to navigate so many temptations, pressures or challenges in the area of sexuality, and you understand very quickly why there's a need for these important conversations throughout all phases of your child's life. There's not plan that guarantees a child's future, but it's never too late to...

Introduce your preschooler to their body,

Inform your elementary kid how things work,

Interpret how things are changing for your middle schooler,

and coach your high schooler toward healthy relationships.

Bonus Conversations

How Far Is Too Far?

- When it comes to standards, help your child set limits before he or she ever needs to use them.
- Find times to be frank about the potential dangers, pitfalls, and experiences that go along with each of these physical components:
 - Holding hands casually
 - Holding hands constantly
 - Hugging
 - Light Kissing
 - Passionate Kissing
 - Fondling of the breast
 - Fondling of the sexual organs
 - Oral sex
 - Masturbation
 - Sexual intercourse
 - Massages/tickling
 - Napping together



Porn

- Use a technique called "bouncing the eyes" when you see a sensual image
- This principle helps kids realize that it's natural to notice sexual images, but we shouldn't stare.
- Zero tolerance for porn
- Set phone, tablet, and computer boundaries
- No prolonged, unsupervised use of internet connected devices
- Speak to your kids about all the ways porn can enter their life

Sexual Identity Issues:

- Do everything in the light of God's word and God's love
- Introduce positive role models
- Teach kids the scriptural perspective on healthy sexuality
- Find ways to address the issue of possible sexual abuse
- Note possible hormonal problems
- Encourage openness and loving dialogue

Media Standards

- Garbage In/Garbage Out principle
- We are in the protection business, and we have to walk the fine line of keeping unhealthy images away from our kids while teaching them how to have the self-control to deal with what they see every day
- Help our kids set standards and limits on media usage
- Be a student of what they watch, listen to, and read
- Model right behavior

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse happens anytime a person is forced, tricked, or threatened to have sexual contact or is exposed to sexual content unwillingly
- 80% of sexual abuse victims know their abuser
- Be very conscious about who you leave alone with your children from babysitters, to family members, to dating relationships

Possible signs and symptoms of sexual trauma:

- Younger Children:
 - Bed-Wetting
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Nightmares
 - Lack of appetite
 - Clinging with fear of being left alone or with someone they have been alone with
 - Depression
 - Sexually acting out or sex play with dolls or toys
 - Drawing naked pictures
 - Acting seductively
 - Acts of sexual aggression
- Older Children:
 - Learning problems at school
 - Poor peer relationships
 - Self-destructive behavior
 - Nervous, aggressive, disruptive behavior
 - Running away
 - Seductive and promiscuous behavior
 - Shutting down emotionally
 - Lack of trust and hostility toward authority figures
 - Fear of going home or being left alone with a certain person
 - Severe depression
 - Pain, itching, bleeding, bruises in the genital area
 - Extremely low self-esteem

Sexual Abuse Prevention

- Teach kids if anyone touches them in a sexual way or does anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, they should report it to you.
- Help them learn they have the right to say NO, even if person is a relative or close friend
- Don't accept rides, gifts, or favors from strangers.
- If in doubt, stay away. If your child gets a strange or bad feeling when they are around someone, stay away.
- Be sure to check in with your kids and know where they are and who they are with
- Give them a secret word they can use if they are in a bad situation



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Preschool

- God Made Your Body-Jim Burns
- God Made All of Me-Justin & Lindsey Holcomb

Elementary

- How God Makes Babies-Jim Burns
- Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr-Kristen Jenson

Upper Elementary/Middle School

- 7 Lessons to Introduce Your Child to Biblical Sexuality-Luke Gilkerson
- Good Pictures Bad Pictures-Kristen Jenson

Middle School/High School

- The Purity Code-Jim Burns
- Accept Nothing Less-Jim Burns

Parents

- Teaching Your Children Healthy Sexuality-Jim Burns
- Parent Conversation Guides
- Sexual Integrity Map