



GROWING HEALTHY PASSION

Strategies to Guide Teenagers into Healthy Sexuality

Preparing Youth for a Life of Passionate and Sacred Love

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Adolescence: Parents change from teachers to consultant/managers

I. Help Prepare to Choose a Path

1. Authority: Be an “expert”, not a “boss”
2. Biologists: Condoms, HPV, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and bonding changes your brain
Did you know that STDs get contracted by any form of contact? That condoms work only 65-95% of the time, that condoms do nothing to stop HPV (genital warts), which are untreatable, that 48% of single and sexually active women have Chlamydia (which causes infertility), and that gonorrhea is most prevalent in 15-19 yr olds? Genital sexual contact exchanges everything about your partner and his or her previous partners. (In a recent study a high school student with one sexual experience had indirect contact with 286 others!)
3. Psychologists: Best chances for long-terms satisfaction: Marriage; Dynamics of addiction
Susan, what do you think of these research findings? 1. The more sexually active a person is before marriage, the less satisfied they are after marriage. 2. The more partners a person has prior to marriage, the less satisfied. 3. Sex outside of marriage is most likely to be unwanted, forced, without climax, and unsatisfying. 4. People on the planet who have the most frequent and satisfying sex are married and have had no previous sexual partners.
4. Spiritual Gurus: Moses, Jesus, Paul: genital sex binds you; learn to love well!
5. Your Heart: What do you want for your future spouse, sibling?

Summary: Avoid skin-skin genital contact with others until you are married.

II. Facilitate Decision-making and Commitment

1. Advanced Strategic Decision-Making (This can be a nice half-day workshop, perhaps in combination with your teen's friend's parents.)

1. Begin by teaching how life can be divided up into 7 segments of 12 years each, noting that teen is now beginning second 7th of his/her life.
2. Talk about the biggest decisions a person makes in his or her life and during which 7th they tend to make that decision. Then clarify which decisions will have lasting implications vs. those that won't (i.e., whether to drink alcohol as a teen vs. which party to go to this weekend).
3. Make the list of the "biggies," such as whether to drink alcohol, use drugs, have a boy/girlfriend, have sex before married, which college to go to and what profession to pursue, and whether to pursue spiritual growth.
4. For a few of the "biggies," make a list of the reasons people would make a choice that we might believe is wrong. For example, why would someone have sex before getting married (i.e., they believe they are in love, plan to marry person, afraid to lose person, bored, drunk, etc.).
5. Then talk openly about them, one at a time. Help teens to see how each of the reasons are often based on a lie and how experiences of people consistently show that these decisions are regretted later.
6. Finally, talk about how really important decisions should be made way in advance so you don't end up deciding when overwhelmed with feelings. Give teens time to go to a quiet place and think about some core areas – like sex, commitment to God, commitment to friends or family – and make a vow to themselves and possibly to parents or friends about what kind of person they are going to be

2. Commitment ring or rite of passage weekend away to help solidify these decisions.

[Out for dinner for special night with Dad or both parents] *Do you even know how much your mom and I love you? We are so proud of you and thank God for you every night. It is an honor to be your Dad. You probably know this, but God gave me as your dad the job of protecting you and looking out for you. Up until now that has been pretty easy, because you've been around me quite a bit. But as you get older and start spending more time with your friends you will be on your own more and more. That is exactly how it is supposed to be. In fact, you will eventually probably meet a man that you believe God chose for you to spend the rest of your life with. That will probably be the second most important decision you ever make in your life (next to choosing to follow Jesus). That will be exciting, won't it? What do you think helps people make good choices about their future spouse and what makes people make bad choices? . . .(being honest, knowing the person well, getting honest feedback from people, etc.). You are right, Shannon, the truth is sometimes its tough to see the people you might be interested in so the advice of other people would be really helpful. Here's what I want to offer to you: You know how I've been looking out for you up until now? I'd like to offer to continue to look out for you until we are sure you have found the man that God wants you to marry. Then I'll back off. How does this sound so far? OK here is what it would look like in practice: First of all, I'd be here to talk with you about boys and stuff whenever you wanted. I know you might want to talk with Mom about some stuff too. That's cool. Second, we would agree that, before you "go out with" or spend time alone with a boy he would have to talk with me first, kind of like to get permission. So if a guy asked you to go out alone, and I hadn't met him yet, you would just tell him "sure, but you have to talk with my Dad first." This is a good thing, Shannon, because it tells boys that you have a man who is going to protect you if the boy does not treat you well. The third thing this would mean is that you would keep your commitment to save your body for your husband when you are married. You don't have to agree to this. But if you do I want you to wear this ring from me as a sign of your commitment.*

III. Fire Drills: Skills to Avoid Destructive Situations

1. “Outer Fires” When regrettable sexual encounter is most likely and how to avoid it

There is also pretty interesting research data on what circumstances cause teens to have a very negative and regrettable sexual experience. Can you guess what situations those are? 1. Alcohol served 2. No parents present 3. With boy 3+ years older 4. Feeling lonely 5. Feeling need for affirmation.

Susan, I know you are aware that boys may push you to go farther sexually than you want to. But I want to make sure that you have some good strategies to say no that are nice but firm. Let's say a boy you really like goes for a walk with you and you find yourself alone with him. You really like him and he starts to get close in a way that you know is going to go in bad directions. What can you say? (I wish I didn't but I really need to get back. . .) How about if a boy is really pushing hard and you begin to fear he might even force himself on you? (I think I might throw up, I'm getting my period right now and feel sick. Please stop and let me go home now.)

2. “Inner Fires” Transform eroticization of longings for love

***Learn to listen to deeper voices in the heart:**

You know, Jimbo, I've heard you say several times that you “want her bad.” So here's a question: What about her do you want bad? Can we go heart to heart? Nobody gets in trouble? I think your heart is telling you something cool but I don't want you to miss it or mistake what you long for. So, what do you really want? How will you feel different if she loved you? What about her do you want close to you? How will being with her make you feel different about yourself? [Look for themes of excitement/adrenaline, internalizing qualities, changing social status or self-esteem, killing pain of loneliness]

***The importance of “self-talk” and identifying how we lie to ourselves**

You know Tommy I overheard some boys in your class talking about how hot the cheerleaders are this year and how one guy wanted to “do” your sister's friend. Do you hear guys talk about women that way? How does it feel to you? How about if they were talking about “doing” your sister that way or your cousin? I know you probably know more about how awesome and amazing sex really is than most of those guys and that is probably why they don't get it. Can I tell you how I learn to not think like them? Here's how it goes. Let's just say we are at the beach and we see some gorgeous woman in a bikini walking down the beach and she looks over at us and smiles. What thoughts are going to go through everyone's mind? That's right, she is gorgeous. Wow. After I catch my breath I need to decide what I'm going to start telling myself about her. How about if I start saying to myself “I wonder what she would look like without that bikini on?” How would I start to feel? Yep excited for awhile and then way, way frustrated. Now how about if I were to say to myself “Wow God you sure do create beauty and you gave me eyes to spot it. Thanks! Lord, please bless her and help her to let her beauty be a blessing to the people in her life. Protect her from men that would want to see her as an object of gratification and give her friends that would see into the mystery of her heart.” Then I might use other visual imagery to help see her as God's daughter with a purpose for being on the planet. If that isn't enough I might think about how her dad might worry about protecting her. Then I would think about how blessed I am to be married to your mom. You can think about how cool it will be to have a wife one day who saved herself for you and you for her. It will be awesome. Now, how different would I feel if I kind of celebrated her beauty in a God-centered way. How would I feel then? The first way to handle her beauty is called “lust.” It makes you feel frustrated and crummy and that's why Jesus told us that we should not fantasize like that about women; he said it's just about as bad as having the affair in real life. So if you do you'll feel crummy and the only way to get better is to talk with God about it and get some forgiveness action going.

IV: Recovery Plans: Meeting ourselves with Truth and Love

1. Embrace Mistakes as Teachers (Why? What did I really want? Excitement? Affirmation?)
2. Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Practical Plan for Future

Resources

Elsie's New Life (M. Finley, 1999) ISBN: 1928749038

A wonderful novel about a teen woman pressured to marry nice boy. She uses her dad's feedback and strength to help guide and protect her. Great for early adolescents. Parents can read to older children.

*The Holy Longing (R. Rolheiser, 1999) ISBN: 0385494181

A fabulous resource by a Catholic priest to help us understand what it means to live with longings for love, including a wonderful chapter on a spirituality of sexuality.

*I Kissed Dating Goodbye (J. Harris, 1997) ISBN: 1576730360

A fabulous, must-read book for young teens to think rationally about dating.

Journey of Desire (J. Eldredge, 2000) ISBN:0785268820

A gifted storyteller who challenges us to listen to the depths of our hearts' desire to find both God and our longing for God.

Millie's Faithfull Heart (M. Finley, 2002) ISBN: 1928749127

Wonderful novel for young teens about a girl who falls in love with non-Christian and struggles well.

Wild at Heart (J. Eldredge, 2001) ISBN: 0785268839

A wonderful book with great stories designed to help men come to life in a biblical, Godly, and passionate way.