

Preparing For Adolescence

You know how it goes. You're sitting there with your child or tucking them into bed, and Wam!!!, they fire off the sex question.

That's how it was for my daughter and I back in third grade. At first I thought, surely I'm not going to have this conversation with her now. I always knew that I would try to be as open, honest, age appropriate, and Biblical based as I could when we had "the talk", so I just started. I found it best to let her guide the conversation and ask the questions. I provided honest, age appropriate, simple answers which seemed to curb her curiosity.

Later that week, I talked with a friend and borrowed some age appropriate Christian sex education books. We went back to the very beginning and read through age appropriate material for an 8yr old.

That curbed her appetite and questions until 5th grade when they view the district video for girls. Again I found myself needing to prepare to answer questions. I went to Lifeway and bought the whole sex education series and got prepared.

I have through the years tried to keep honest, open conversation with my daughter and son. It seemed very natural and easy to discuss sex because from little on I have always had open, age appropriate conversations with my children about many topics. I've always made sure we have "pillow talk" before bed. This seemed to make the sex education talks run smoother.

We take time to read the books, answer questions, and for my son, get Dad when needed. Reading Christian books helps to keep the focus on sex as a gift from God and to be shared in the confines of marriage. I find being honest and open works the best.

My daughter and I will continue through the books this summer as they are guided by ages. We will also have a special mother-daughter weekend to finish up the CD series, Preparing For Adolescence. It will be my son's choice in a few years to decide if he wants Dad or I to finish up the books, CDs, and talks, but either way, they will have a father-son weekend too.

I find it very important for my daughter and I to have "girl time" too. This helps solidify our relationship and keep us connected. My husband and daughter also have their fun time either with a church activity for KBC or doing something she likes. We also do this with our son too---mother-son time and father-son time.

We also find it very important to have a lot of family time. For now, Fridays are just for the family with pizza and movie night. Both kids really look forward to the time together which also helps to keep us connected and involved in their lives. We allow friends over of both sexes with a door open/in-sight policy.

I find it very important to know who their friends are and keep involved at school and church so that they know we are around and care. I believe this helps them feel loved and in turn gain self confidence.

I'm honest with them about sensing they may have a "crush" on someone. We talk openly about this and what it will be like to date in the future, have a boyfriend in the future, get married, have kids, etc. We also focus on the appropriateness of behavior for the here and now. I think for the girls you also have to cover the boys and what they are dealing with in adolescence and how boys respond to girls, the way they dress, hormones, etc. Once I was able to review these things with my daughter, her eyes were opened to a whole new concept she never knew existed. We discussed why we do or don't wear this and why we do or don't behave in certain ways. For my son, we approach it from a gentlemanly manner of how girls should and should not be treated. I ask him how would he want someone to treat his sister? I remind my daughter that she is a princess of God and my son that he is a knight of God. They deserve royal treatment respectively.

My daughter has told me several times, "Mom, you're so good at these talks". I believe I attribute that to the fact that I want her to be more prepared than I was for adolescence and be prepared from a Biblical perspective. The sources, Preparing For Adolescence on CD, Learning About Sex---A Series For the Christian Family(Book Series), The Garden Wall, The Princess Kiss, The Squire and The Scroll, and Proverbs 31, have all helped me to guide my daughter and son along this adolescent and pre-adolescent era.

I also believe it's too late to start in junior high or even high school. Children are exposed to so many things at an early age. If you wait, they may already have misinformation from friends. I tell my kids that they should always feel that they can ask me anything and should. Their friends may or may not know what they are talking about. Plus I tell them that these are private conversations because we don't know what other parents want their kids to know/hear.

I think you have to cover the Biblical facts and the more difficult issues of porn, sexual diseases, sexual deviations, and the like. The more you can prepare them and arm them with Biblical truth, the better off they will be. If you don't act embarrassed or bothered by the conversations, chances are they won't either.

And finally but certainly not the least part, pray. Pray daily, nightly, hourly, whatever it takes, but cover them in prayer. Pray for the here and now as well as the circumstances of the future—dating, marriage, kids. And make sure they know you pray for them and that you love them. Acknowledge the good decisions and choices and help them through the bad. Remind them they are a child of God and He loves them very much. Your best parenting resource is His word.