

Caring for the
Next Generation

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Sex is not a Four Letter Word

Talking to our children early and often about the beauty of sex, By Tara Gibbs

When one of my children was in 3rd grade she asked, “Mom, when a dog has puppies, why do the dogs look like the mom AND the dad?”

“Well, it’s like an apple tree, honey. It takes a male and a female apple tree to make an apple. The male tree has to fertilize the female tree when a bee takes the pollen from one and spreads it to the other. So parts of both the mommy and daddy are in the apple that is produced.”

“No, no, I know that mom! How does the part from the dad get into the mom?”

So many things run through your head at that moment, but thankfully, I took a deep breath and didn’t let my mouth take off before my brain. I responded, “That’s a great question. I’d love to talk more about this, but it is a bigger conversation. Let’s make a time to talk.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 exhorts us, “*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*” In this verse God prepares His people to enter the Promised Land with the reminder that walking alongside Him requires a constant dialogue about His truths. Teaching our children to walk with God is a beautiful and ongoing conversation. And this applies to sex as much as it does to the rest of God’s truth.

The land the Israelites were entering was saturated with sexual promiscuity, and so it is with us. We must talk with our children about sex when we sit in our house, when we walk by the way, when we lie down and when we rise up. Society certainly is.

Here are a just a few statistics on the education society provides to our children:

*9 out of 10 boys are *exposed to pornography* before the age of 18.

*The *first exposure to pornography* among men is *12 years old*, on average.

*6 out of 10 girls are *exposed to pornography* before the age of 18.



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It is more likely than not that our children will be exposed to sex through pornography before they leave our home. And even apart from explicit pornography, our children are exposed to sex on TV, at the grocery store, on their friend's phones, on You Tube, on billboards and countless more places. They hear sexualized songs at the dentist or Wal-Mart or wherever else they go. They will hear things from friends at public school, private school, homeschool co-op and elsewhere. According to online internet accountability service Covenant Eyes, "**...only 15% of Christians say their parents were their primary source of information about sex—and 65% say their primary sources were their friends, TV, or porn.**"

It is important to guard our children's eyes and ears and place accountability filters on all of our electronic devices, but this will not eliminate the issue.

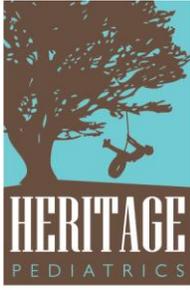
So, it is hopeless?

Although the medium of delivery has changed, the issue of sexual brokenness is not new, and the good news is God has provided us with abundant resources to address this issue in a most beautiful fashion.

Sex is not a dirty word. It is a beautiful gift from God, and there are developmentally appropriate ways to begin discussing this with your children early and often. The sexual brokenness of our world is a scary and dangerous thing, but as Christian parents, we have the opportunity to combat the power of shame and destruction with truth and beauty. There are many factors which contribute to the power of sexual addictions, but a large part of the power this sin wields is linked to shame and hiding. Many pitfalls can be avoided by children who know the truth about sex and are used to talking about it with their parents.

The Bible is always the best place to start. In Genesis 2:22, when God brings Eve to Adam, Adam sings a song of joy at seeing this beautiful woman God has made to complement him. In Psalm 139, the Bible talks about the baby in the mother's womb. In the Song of Solomon, an entire book is dedicated to the beauty of the sexual relationship between the husband and the wife, and in Ephesians, Paul speaks of the mysterious union of a husband and wife as mirroring the relationship of Christ to His Church. These are only a few examples, but they can get us started. We are privileged to teach our children about sex from the creator of sex.

Each of our children will be ready for different information at different ages. When my 8-year-old was not satisfied with my "apple tree" analogy, I didn't know exactly how much to say next. I purchased the *Learning About Sex* series, and those books helped me answer her questions with beauty, truth and just the right amount of information for her age and questions. This series begins with a picture book for



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young children and graduates up to more detailed books to help parents continue to talk about sex with their children in age-appropriate ways.

Get educated. Visit the website listed at the end of this article. Talk to your church leaders and parents who are further down the road. And pray. God has not left us alone in this battle. He has given us the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).

The world will introduce our children to its version of sex. Do not let your first conversation happen when you accidentally find a search history by your naturally curious 10-year-old. The world has a lot to say, but we can guard our children with the truth. "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm" (Eph. 6:13).