

# PREPARING FOR ADOLESCENCE

## Frequently Asked Parenting Questions

Starting the conversation about purity, sex, and dating can be a daunting task. The earlier you begin age-appropriate conversations, the greater the opportunity to lay a great foundation of purity with your children. Additionally, your children will be accustomed to coming to you with questions instead of turning to friends, the Internet, or other sources for information. The **God's Design for Sex** series by NavPress is wonderful in assisting with these conversations. For developing a Christian worldview on this topic, check out **Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story** by Christopher Yuan.

### How early should I talk to my child about relationships, purity, and dating?

Every child is different, but you know it is time to discuss purity if any of the following is true.

- Your adolescent child shows interest in having a girl/boy friend
- You notice texts, emails, Facebook posts, etc. from the opposite sex
- Your child has any sort of online access including a home computer, mobile phone, iPad, and other electronic devices

### How can I talk to my child about modesty?

Remind your child that modesty is about honoring God with our bodies and our minds. Emphasize that these principles extend to both men and women. Below are some suggested topics to discuss.

- Clothing: fingertip length on shorts/skirts, swimsuit (jump up and down and make sure everything stays in), tops (cover cleavage even when bending forward). Discuss fashion and basic guidelines to tell if something is modest or not.
- Books: discuss how to honor God with what we read
- Music: discuss how to honor God with what we listen to
- Media (Movies, online videos, etc.): discuss how to honor God with the things we view

### How do I help my child set good boundaries for internet/online social media?

Set a time to discuss the following questions with your child.

- What is a healthy/appropriate amount of time per day to spend online?
- What guidelines will keep our identity and personal information private?
- What kinds of pictures are/aren't appropriate to post? (i.e. no swimsuit or pajama pictures or pictures with too much skin showing)
- Emphasize the importance of never responding to someone online that we don't know in person.
- Talk about how it is never okay to send naked pictures via social media.

### How do I protect and help my child in the temptations they face with

# PREPARING FOR ADOLESCENCE

## Frequently Asked Parenting Questions

### technology and media?

Even if you believe your child is not yet tempted, take the following proactive steps:

- Do not allow your child to have a computer or television in his/her room.
- If your child has a mobile device or phone, have them turn it off and plug it in in your bedroom at a certain time each night.
- Limit and monitor all electronic devices for messages, videos, etc.
- Put parenting controls on your television.
- Be careful of the shows/television that you watch in the company of your child to avoid sending mixed messages.
- Check services such as *pluggin.com* and *commonsensemedia.org* for content details on any movies, music, and television shows they want to watch
- Set controls/accountability on all computers, phones, and other electronic devices in your home using services such as the following:
  - \* *Covenanteyes.com*
  - \* *Bark.us*
  - \* *Pinwheel.com*
  - \* *Clearplay.com*
  - \* *TVguardian.com*

### How can I expose my child to the influence of other Godly adults to reinforce what we are teaching at home?

When a child enters the adolescent years, it becomes important to help him or her glean from the example of other Godly adults, some of whom may become important voices into your child's life when he/she reaches the rite of passage step of their Faith Path.

A few suggestions:

- Start with extended family including grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. Invite Godly relatives to take an interest in your child's activities by attending his/her concerts, games, award assemblies, etc. Ask them to invite your child to breakfast or ice cream once in awhile to connect and speak into his/her life.
- When you eat meals with Christian friends, invite your adolescent son/daughter to sit at the adult table rather than with the kids. Simply including him/her in these conversations can help establish a bond with other Godly adults.
- Ask church leadership who they consider Godly leaders and volunteers in their areas. Consider volunteering in the Childhood or Student Ministry in order to get to know other adult leaders who might be willing to take an active role in your adolescent's life.
- For more ideas on inviting the influence of other adults into your child's life read ***Parenting Beyond Your Capacity*** by Reggie Joiner and Carey Nieuwhof.

