

## **MORE THAN BIRDS AND BEES COMMUNICATING CHASTITY IN YOUR HOME**

Communication from you is the most effective way to encourage your children to make wise sexual choices. Teens often lack knowledge about Sex and Relationships-many schools only teach biology, but little to nothing about relationships: they learn from you the emotional aspects, commitment, love in action, etc.

\*This is what Teenagers would like to ask of their parents...

### **TALKING ABOUT SEX & CHASTITY TO YOUR TEENS:**

1. **PARENTS SHOULD BE A UNIT**-same expectations from both mom and dad (whether they are married or not) for all kids, guys and girls. Please don't contradict yourselves. Discuss expectations-and keep them high. We aren't animals that can't control themselves. If you tell us why you have high expectations, we'll respect them in the long run. Please don't just say, "Don't Do IT!"
2. **START TALKING** about this at a young age - body parts, giving yourself to another, etc. Listen for what your child is learning from school, friends, and other family members. Try to be first in giving them the details so they can hear it all in the context of a marital relationship.
3. Consider a **SPECIAL EVENT OR GIFT** to show importance of chastity and then keep an ongoing conversation. Our masks and attitudes might kick in, but we'll remember consistent love in the long run.
4. **OPEN THE DOOR FOR QUESTIONS** and future conversations. "I wish my parents simply gave me permission to ask. I wish they would have said, 'You can come to me at anytime with questions.'" Tell us we can always come to you - no matter what happens. Don't **SCARE** us from you.
5. **STAY CALM & COOL** when answering questions. Avoid laughing, quick assumptions (asking about birth control/STDs doesn't mean we're having sex) and long lectures & un-requested details.
6. **PICK YOUR MOMENTS**-use stories of others or TV to initiate the talk. If possible, please don't confront me and talk directly about my life. One teen girl described talking about a pregnant teen on TV with her mom, "It wasn't embarrassing because we were talking about somebody else." Ask us questions about the situation and **LISTEN** to us. Then you have the right to talk and we'll listen to you.
7. Talk to us about the **MEN & WOMEN**...Dads, tell your daughters what guys are really like, what they truly respect, how they think about women dressed certain ways and what guys want deep down. Moms, share with your sons what women most value. For kids of the same gender, tell us what it means to be a man or woman of honor and integrity.

8. Tell us about REAL LIFE - not just "what should be". Stories of real heartbreak, teen pregnancies, real love, etc. At the right time, consider telling us YOUR STORIES-true joy, regret, etc. "My mom's story of heartbreak and hurt after sexual relations encouraged me to not do the same." "My parents explained their temptations to be unfaithful - and how they didn't give in."

## **WAYS TO ENCOURAGE CHASTITY TO TEENS:**

1. **SHOW US** what healthy, responsible relationships look like. We are more influenced by what you do than what you say. Show affection, live chastity/faithfulness and honor to one another.

2. **IGNORE OUR MASKS.** During the teen years, we're testing everything, including your responses. Often we say or do things just to see how you react. For most teens, we wear masks all day at school which say that we're strong, independent and don't need help from our parents. It's almost impossible to simply take it down when we get home and say, "Okay, Mom, you're right, chastity is a great idea!" Expect us to try to rebel, roll our eyes and blow you off. But, please don't stop loving us, telling us the truth and expecting the best from us. Hold the line - we'll be grateful in the long run.

3. Give us **TRUSTING PROTECTION:** Help us avoid temptations. Curfews, dating guidelines, expectations in the house, TV and computer monitoring (in open areas with accountability software, not just filters) encourage us to stay pure. We could go other places, but at home, we're always called to high standards of love and purity. "I can't believe my parents let me be alone so much with my boyfriend. After all was said and done, I wish they hadn't."

4. Encourage **GROUP DATES/ FRIENDSHIPS** and not the boyfriend/girlfriend thing. Try to avoid glorifying relationships and dating as the best part of being a teen. We might do anything to be loved if we think something is wrong if we're not dating someone. Encourage us to use our youth to discover our interests, talents, etc. Besides, we often we have sex or check out porn because there's not much else to do. Make sure we have something to **OCCUPY US.** Help us try new hobbies and support our attempts to do extra-curricular activities and join youth groups. Don't encourage us to focus on dating.

5. Role model **APPROPRIATE FUN.**

**Alcohol:** Major influence on teen sexual behavior. Watch usage of alcohol, especially avoiding drunkenness. From time to time, show us how you can have fun without alcohol.

**Clothing:** "Fun outfits" What you wear & respond to. "My dad always stared at certain model types in slutty outfits and I really believed that's what I need to do to get male attention." "I realized that I sometimes dress provocatively yet I don't want my 7th grade daughter dressing like that. As a mom, I knew I needed to make some changes."

6. Role model **DELAYED GRATIFICATION-**Lent is perfect opportunity. When you practice giving up difficult things, we'll follow suit. Practicing this can help us say no to other things in the future.

7. LOVE US as a young man or woman: Give us love, positive attention and affection so we don't need to look elsewhere. Boys: Show us we're a "man" without us needing to prove it through sexual relationships. Give us feedback that we're becoming strong men in the responsible, healthy things we do.

8. PRAY for us and encourage our prayers-esp. praying for future spouse/vocation. Instilling faith and hope for our future. We want to know we have something to look forward to in life and relationships.