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A Foursquare Church

Rescue, Restore, and Release – Luke 4:18-19
2728 North King Road
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Sexuality: Teaching Your Kids about God’s Design for Sex

A resource to help parents talk to their 3-9 year olds

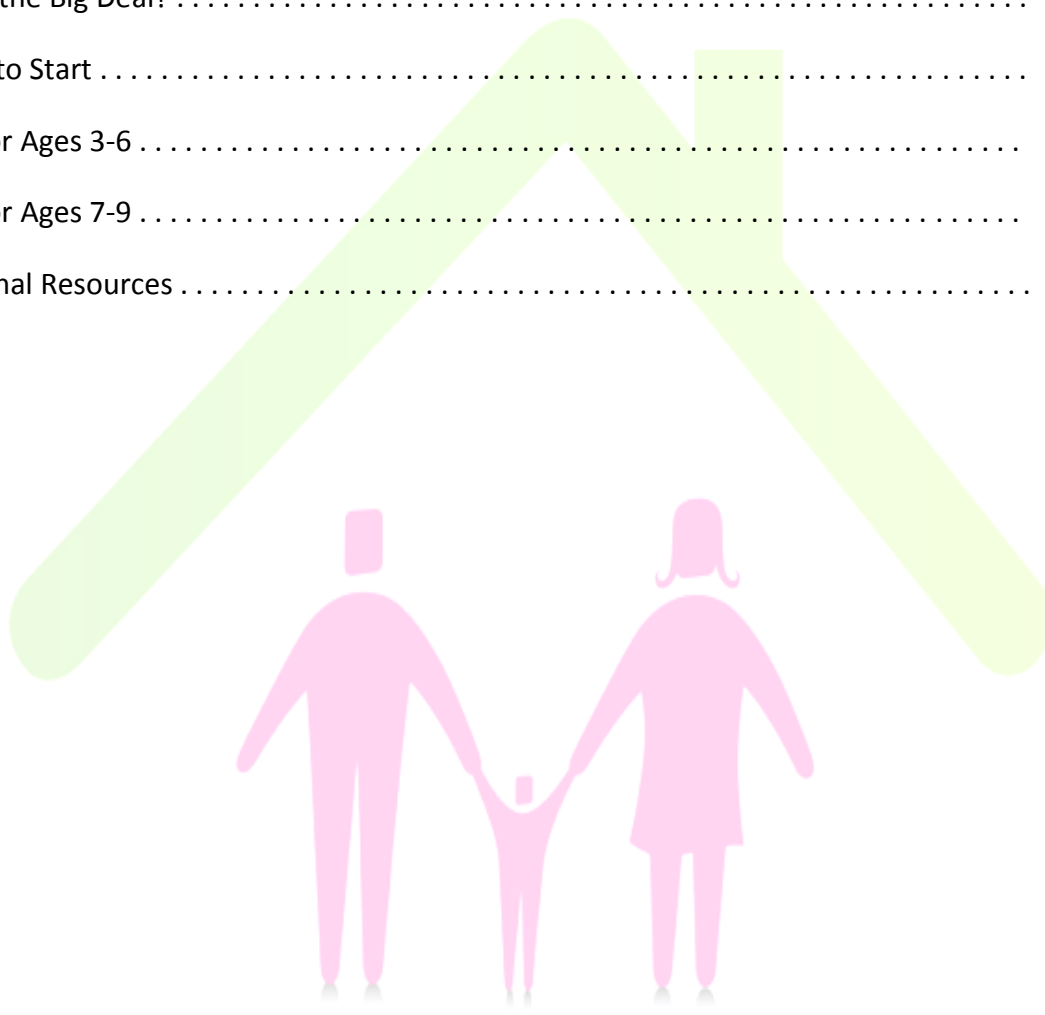
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Sexuality: Teaching Your Kids about God's Design for Sex What's the Big Deal?

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A 3 year old! That must be a mistake. What crazy person talks to their 3 year old about sex? Or even a 6 or 8 year old? The idea behind this is not to explain all the details of sex to your 3 year old, but it is designed to help parents avoid the one “big talk” about sex when they hit puberty. After all, kids are curious and ask a lot of questions before they turn 11-12. How about looking at teaching our kids what God has to say about sex as one long, ongoing talk that starts when they are young with a lot of commas in it! There will be many small conversations and yes, some big, more awkward ones, but let's see this as an opportunity to train our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).



So, you may be saying, what is the big deal? Surely my elementary-aged kid doesn't think and wonder about sexual things. They probably do whether they talk about it or not, and the internet is a great place for them to appease their curiosity. We focus on the internet because it is so available and most kids use computers and other electronics at school and at home where they often have easy access. Here are a few statistics to put this in perspective:

- **93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to Internet porn before the age of 18¹**
 - **11 is the average age of first exposure to Internet pornography²**
 - **12% of Internet websites (4.2 million) are pornographic²**
 - **Less than 15% of parents discuss sexuality with their children³**

The other argument is that “they are too young or just not ready”. But the reality is that the society we live in is saying they are ready by what is on TV, the computer, video games, billboards, store signs, magazines in the check-out line, or even what they see or hear in school. So, our children are going to be taught about sex, the question is will we the parents be the primary educators? Take a look at this short video, “[Filling the Sponge](#)”, to help put it in perspective. Being intentional about teaching our kids about sex is a great way to be active instead of reactive. We can teach them about what is true and right so that when evil comes, they have a measuring tool to compare what they see to what they have learned is true (Romans 16:19).



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Being a parent is a high calling, but we can do this. God promised us the Holy Spirit and said, “he will teach you all things” (John 14:26--ESV). And he gave parents the job to teach his commands to our kids. He says, “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 (Deuteronomy 6:7,8—ESV)” Yes, it takes diligence. Yes, it takes time. Yes, it takes courage. But your obedience to God will not be in vain.

So, hopefully you are seeing a need to make this an important teaching topic, but the next question is how do you do this? That can be overwhelming to think about. We put together some starting points for different ages and then attached some further resources we found to help you navigate this tough topic. Just remember, you are the student as well as the teacher. Let God teach you and show you about his character and plan as you teach your children. And if you are stuck on a particular subject or question, ask for help from another parent you trust. We are all in this together. And remember, it is never too late to start, whether your children are preschoolers or teenagers.

Blessings,

Children’s Ministry Team at Family Christian Center

Note: Talking about sex with your kids may concern you because of your past. Maybe you were abused or never taught. As you dig into this subject, you may find you need some help in working through some hurt from your past. Go through the [Dealing with Your Past](#) article as a good starting point. For God longs to heal your deepest hurts and shame and see them become a great testimony and example of hope for your children and others. Also, [Toledo Break the Link](#), is a good resource if you find yourself struggling with pornography and other sexual issues.

FOOTNOTES:

1 *The Nature and Dynamics of Internet Pornography Exposure for Youth* by Chiara Sabina, Janis Wolak, and David Finkelhor (from *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 2008)

2 internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/internet-pornography-statistics.html

3 harvestusa.org.

Comic from http://aikenyouthempowerment.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=264&Itemid=371



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Where to Start:

Before you dive into talking to your kids about sex, it is important to have a plan. You may make changes to your plan as you go, but it is better to have a vision in mind. Remember, it is never too late to start! And it is never too early for you to be thinking about how you will approach this topic.

You should decide a few things before you start:

1. What overall message do you want your kids to have about sex? Spend some time in prayer and discussion as you develop this. Your message will give a purpose and guide for the conversations you have with your kids. Keep it simple. For example, your message may be that God created sex within marriage to be fun, give life, and as an example of intimacy with Christ. (based on Song of Solomon 7, Genesis 1:28, and Revelation 19:7-9).

Note: Use the book God's Very Good Design by Mary Flo Ridley (pages 27-28) for good questions to ask yourself and your spouse as you ask God about what you want your message to be.

2. What vocabulary do you want to use? Do you use anatomically correct names? You may desire to wait until your child is a little older to introduce some of those terms. If you do choose to use the correct terminology with your 5 year old, it is important that they know it is not appropriate to use those terms out in public (especially if they want to announce it to their Kindergarten class)!

A few notes:

--Your effectiveness in teaching your kids about sex will be most successful if what you say is the same as what you believe and do. You can have all the right words to say and perfectly timed conversations, but if you are not genuine, you will not be very effective because your kids will know.

--The age ranges given below are not absolutes but are guidelines. You may need to introduce more information sooner to your kids based on their exposure or history. If you have an extremely curious 5 year old who wants to know everything, then it is okay to tell him that is all the information he needs for now, and you will keep explaining more as he gets older. Just make sure you come back to it.

--If you have a child who doesn't ask questions about sex, then you as the parent will need to be the initiator. A good way to start is by asking questions that start out with, "Have you ever wondered . . . ?" And if you have kids close in age, you could talk about some of the concepts as a group to help ease the child who feels uncomfortable.



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Talking to your 3-6 Year Olds:

Genesis 1:27-28, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” NIV

From this Scripture you can first establish a few facts with your children AT ANY AGE:

1. God created us.
2. People are precious. You are precious because you were made in God’s image.
3. God created marriage between a man and a woman.
4. It is best when we follow God’s plan that a man and a woman in marriage start a family.

One morning a mom is grocery shopping with her curious 4 year old son, who has a question about everything. They pass by a woman who is very pregnant and the boy wants to know why that woman has a basketball in her tummy. The mom explains it is a baby and not a basketball, and of course, the curious little 4 year old wants to know more like, “how will she get that baby out of her belly?” What is the mom to do?

Freaking out, pretending not to hear the child, or distracting him with candy are not good solutions, but they sometimes seem to be the best option in the moment! Children are often first curious about the birth, so that can be a good place to start.

A few things you can do to talk about birth:

1. First, let your kids know these are great questions.
2. Let them know God made it so the baby can grow in the mommy for 9 months (this is why some pregnant women are bigger than others). The baby is getting bigger and bigger every day.
3. God made it so that when the baby is ready to come out, the mommy’s muscles around her belly begin to get really tight and help push the baby out. The mom can tell when this is happening. Maybe even have your child flex their arm muscles really hard and feel how tight that is. *“You can feel that, right?”*
4. A mom may go to the hospital to have a doctor help her get the baby out, and some moms have the baby at their house with the help of a friend. (Once again, you need to decide how much new vocabulary you want to introduce to your children depending on their age and maturity. Do you want to use terms like womb, uterus, contractions, vagina, or umbilical cord? You might not want to add all the new terminology at once. You can keep adding more detail and vocabulary about this process as they get older).



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5. Also, tell them the story of the day they were born. Show pictures of the pregnancy, ultrasound, and of them as newborns. Maybe even retell this story over and over again each year on their birthday. Let them know there is no one exactly like them in the world. God made them unique and wonderful (Psalm 139:14).

Another important piece to teach your kids about is reproduction. Fortunately, God gives us so many examples of this process in nature—and many of those are far easier to talk about than sex between a man and women. Thank goodness! Here are some ideas on talking to your kids about the reproduction aspect:

1. Genesis 1:29, “I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit.” Yes, God made the plants and fruits with seeds in them so that more could be produced. He did that on purpose from the beginning of time and said that it was very good (Genesis 1:11-12). Look at how creative and beautiful the whole process is.
2. Observe what is going on in nature around you. Do you have a bird nest in your backyard or have you seen snake eggs at the zoo? You can not only talk about how these are their babies, but you can also talk about the work it takes to protect them and care for them.
3. If you have a garden, that is a great time to explain to your children the idea of planting a seed, taking care of it, and watching it grow into fruit, vegetables, or beautiful plants. This reproduction process sounds familiar, doesn't it?
4. If you don't have a garden, visit a friend, go to a local farm, or find a YouTube video showing the process.



Remember, you are laying the ground work for some further discussions to come like, “how did that baby get in there in the first place?”. This will be coming, so why not have a good foundation to build on and a previous conversation to reference.

Our sweet preschoolers and kindergarteners are quick to share stories and information they have learned with their friends. So, it is important to let them know what they can and cannot share with their friends. Let them know some things are left for their moms and dads to explain to them. This is also a good time to talk to our kids about what parts of their bodies need to be kept private, and who is and is not allowed to see them naked. There are reasons why we have clothes 😊 You are talking to your kids about preventing child abuse without even mentioning that phrase. Also, letting them know that keeping secrets from mom and dad is never good and make it clear that if anyone ever asks them to keep something a secret from you, they should tell you and not be afraid of getting in trouble.



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Talking to your 7-9 year olds

Genesis 2:18,24, "The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him' . . . That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." NIV



Eight year old JoAnn and her friend, Meg, are riding the bus home from school and talking about how JoAnn is about to be a big sister again. Meg says that her parents have told her how the baby gets out of the mother's belly, but she wonders how the baby got there in the first place. JoAnn lets her know that God makes babies, and he is the one who puts them in the mom's belly. But Meg isn't satisfied and she wonders, "How does he do that?" JoAnn is now curious and that gets her thinking too . . .

So, JoAnn's and Meg's parents now have daughters who want to know more, and the answer, "God did it" is not going to fly anymore. So, parents are again faced with the choice to dodge their children's questions or take the opportunity to talk to their children about God's masterful plan.

Right from the beginning, God knew it was not good for a man to be alone. He brought all the animals to Adam to name, and Adam found none of them as a suitable helper for him. So, God created a woman, Eve, who was the perfect fit for Adam. And God brought her to him—talk about a beautiful picture of a Father walking the bride down the aisle. And with that, God created marriage, declaring that the two will be become one! Beautiful story, isn't it? And it is one worth sharing with our children.

Some ideas for talking to your elementary-aged kids:

1. First, let your kids know it is great they are asking questions, and you are so glad that they came to you as the parent!
2. Tell them the story mentioned above about Adam and Eve becoming one (Genesis 2:18-24) and how God designed a husband and wife to show off his image through marriage.
3. Start or build on the foundation mentioned in the 3-6 year old section. Add more vocabulary and detail to the stories of birth and reproduction.
4. If they are asking the question, "how did the baby get there in the first place?" or if they are nearing puberty, it is good to give them some explanation about conception. You can keep it simple. And remember, all the sensuality and emotion we as adults have tied to sex, is not there for most elementary-aged children. So, it can be explained as a beautiful process God designed just like a lot of other processes he made in nature.



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5. Here are some example responses from Mary Flo Ridley's Book, God's Very Good Design, on how to answer a young child's question, "how did the baby get in there?".

"Well, I am so glad you asked. You know what? By God's design, a husband and wife were made to fit together in a very special way. And when that happens, part of what is deep inside Daddy, the sperm, meets with part of what is deep inside Mommy, the egg, and that is what God uses to make the baby" (page 77).

As the child gets older and more mature, you can answer more questions, like "how do the mom and dad fit together?" You can give your children more detail, for example:

"Honey, it is pretty amazing how God designed for this to happen. Do you remember when said that there is a part that is deep inside of Daddy? Well, that is called the sperm, or the seed like we talked about before. The sperm needs to meet with the egg that is deep inside of Mommy for the baby to begin to grow. So this is how it happens: the husband places his penis inside of the wife's vagina. The sperm that is deep inside of the daddy travels through the penis and meets with the egg that is deep inside of the mommy. That is how a mommy and daddy fit together and how the baby begins. God designed marriage for oneness and also for making babies" (page 78).

Okay, if this seems shocking to you, remember, you are sticking to the biology of sex at this point, not talking about pleasure or manipulations of it. And if you have already introduced these terms before this conversation, it will not be as uncomfortable as it seems. Just remember, this is part of an ongoing conversation and likely easier if you have already had several conversations leading up to this.

6. A note on educating your children about child abuse:

"Explain to your child that God made their body very special. Every part of their body is good, but some parts of their body are private. Clearly identify for your child which parts of their anatomy are private. . . Let your child know they must tell you if anyone touches them in the private areas – no matter who the person is, or what the person says to them. Assure your child they will not be in trouble if they tell you they've been touched inappropriately – rather, you will be proud of them, and help them through the situation" (from [Talking about Sexual Abuse from Focus on the Family](#)).

These are just some ideas to help you teach your children and hopefully will set the stage for more conversations as your kids become teenagers. Remember the idea is for us as parents to be the primary educators about sex and not the world. We teach them what is good and true so when they see manipulations of it, they can compare that to the truth they learned. For there will always be a new distortion of sex, but the truth about God's design will forever remain the same. So, if you drive by a strip club or if your child sees a picture of a naked person, talk about it and connect it to previous conversations you have had with them about what is true.



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Further Reading/Summary of Resources:

Books:

1. Learning about Sex Series (Christian)
 - a. Why Boys and Girls are Different, Ages 4-6 by Carol Greene: This simple children's storybook is intended for the parent to read to their child, talking about how God created boys and girls different. There is a different book for each gender, but both books have the exact same content. One warning, there is a picture of a boy and a girl without clothes, explaining and showing how God made them different.
 - b. Where Do Babies Come From? Ages 7-9 by Ruth Hummel: This pictured-filled story is designed for parents and children to read together, following Alisa's or Simon's questions about babies. Once again, there is a different book for each gender, but the only difference is the name of the character. All the other information is the same. *The major concern for me with this book is that there is a section describing male and female body parts with a picture of a cartoon-like naked man and woman, which I think is unnecessary for 7-9 year olds to see since I think a basic description without added images in their brain would suffice.*

Note: There are 3 more books in this series for preteens and teenagers to read.

2. God's Very Good Design by Mary Flo Ridley: This is an excellent, practical, and easy read for parents to help them navigate the tough conversations with their children about sex. The cover of the book looks childish, but the content is solid.

Free Online Articles:

1. [Talking about Sex](#): This is the home page for several solid articles by Focus on the Family dealing with childhood sexual development, talking about sex, and when children view pornography.
2. [Pure intimacy](#): This is some of the exact same material on Focus on the Family's site, but then there is more detail on homosexuality, pornography, protecting your family, and a FAQs page.
3. [Protecting Your Children from Sexual Predators](#): Good article on being aware of sexual predators and training your kids to talk about any inappropriate attention from others.
4. [Talking to Your Kids about Sexual Abuse](#): This shorter article gives some practical advice on how to talk to your kids about being aware of sexual abuse in a proactive way.
5. [Parenting in a Sexualized Culture](#): This is a solid resource for parents with kids of all ages explaining the importance of talking to your kids about sex and how to Biblically protect, model, and equip your children. There is also a section on technology usage and children.



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