

Going Further — Resources

- Check out this **FREE** program to help you understand the impacts of hypersexualized culture and how to support your teen.: <https://parents.culturereframed.org/course/parents-of-teens/>
- Find additional resources for parenting, marriage, and other seasons of life at <https://growfaithathome.org/>

Going Further — Church Support

Fusion is great places for students (grades 6-12) to meet friends and learn more about God, faith, and so much more! Fusion meets Sundays from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Get more info here:

- <https://staffordcrossing.org/fusion>
- Email fusion@staffordcrossing.org



Helping Teens Understand How God Made Them

Helping families trust and follow Jesus

@home

Let me ask you a question: **Did you receive good, positive, or healthy sex education from your parents or the church growing up?**

For a lot of us, that answer is no. And it's not because the church or parents don't want to give us quality, value-centered sex education. They did—they do. But the problem is, they don't.

One of the bottom lines of parenting is not just raising obedient kids, but rather raising responsible adults who love God. To do this, we have to begin with the end in mind.

So if we want every generation to grow up with sexual integrity, we have to teach our kids to guard their potential for future intimacy through appropriate boundaries and mutual respect.

If sexual integrity is the goal, then what is the strategy? How can you help kids develop appropriate boundaries and mutual respect? What's the plan for navigating sexual integrity through the phases of growth from child to teen?

It's a process that begins in each phase. And your role will continually redefine itself as you help your kid develop sexual integrity. Ideally, that process begins with preschoolers, with the "introduce" phase. Then, in the elementary school years, it's time to inform your kids about how things work. For the middle school phase, students need help interpreting what is changing.

In high school, **your role changes to coaching them toward healthy relationships.**

In this phase, students learn best when they get to talk, not when parents or leaders preach. The average teenager values experience over intellect, which means they want to know for themselves rather than accepting what someone else says . . . but they also fail to consider outcomes of their decisions.

Maybe that's why so many teenagers begin to engage in some kind of sexual experience during this phase.

In this phase, you can talk about dating values, create a response plan for when you find something you aren't expecting, and think about how to utilize other influences, like a weekly small group leader.

When it comes to dating relationships, not all teenagers date. We also know that not all sexually active teenagers date. But even though dating isn't for everyone, it's still a conversation worth having. Studies show that the earlier kids start dating, the more likely they are to have sex before high school graduation. You should **talk to your kid about dating values early and often.** Whenever possible, it's helpful to give teenagers ownership in the conversation.

You should also **create a response plan for when you find something you aren't expecting.** In our experience, when the discovery is about sex, parents don't always respond well. It's not because they're bad parents. It's because they weren't expecting to find out what they found out. When teenagers make risky sexual decisions that could impact their future, the last thing they need is to feel abandoned or isolated from the adults they trust.

Finally, **utilize other influences, like a youth pastor or a small group leader.** Let's face it, teenagers aren't going to tell you everything. That's why smart parents will ask the question, "If you won't talk to me about this, who will you talk to?" Every teenager needs a caring adult who will listen and give the same advice a loving parent would give.

You're also getting them ready for the next phase—autonomy! Each phase builds on the previous phase, so coaching them towards healthy relationships is a critical step for them to develop a healthy view of their bodies and sexuality.

<https://theparentcue.org/helping-your-high-schooler-understand-how-god-made-themhelping/>