

How You Are Changing

For girls ages 9–11



Learning About Sex
EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Girls Ages 9–11

Lesson 1: Identity and Calling

I Am a Child of God!

Lesson Focus

God created and loves all people. God created each person to be either male or female with unique gifts he or she can use to serve God and others.

Preparatory Reading

- Read *How You Are Changing for Girls Ages 9–11*, Chapter 1.

Materials Needed

- Inflatable beach ball
- Permanent marker

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for lovingly creating me and each of the students in my classroom. Help them feel content and confident in who You have made them to be and guard them against feelings of insecurity and unworthiness. Help us love, respect, and serve others as You have loved us. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Learner Goals

With prompting and support,

- the learner can describe herself as God's own child, created, loved, and redeemed by Him.
- the learner can talk about how God made her more than just a physical body; there are also social, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects to who we are.
- the learner can give examples of ways she can serve God and others through various callings, also called vocations.

Teacher Insights

- This first lesson lays the foundation for a healthy, godly understanding of human sexuality. We find our identity and worth in Christ. God intentionally and lovingly created each person on this earth. He gave every person a unique personality, gifts, and talents.
- Preteens sometimes try to find their identity by listening to what others say about who they are or what they should do. However, we find our worth not in what others think of us but in what God has done for us. He created, redeemed, and continues to care for us.
- Men and women have complementary gifts. The way God formed us as male or female is one of the many good gifts He gave us as He formed us in our mothers' wombs.
- God created two genders: male and female. There is not a "gender spectrum," as the world would have us believe. But it is important to note that not all males are the same and not all females are the same. Both males and females may enjoy sports, art, hunting, dancing, and many other types of activities that society sometimes pegs as either male- or female-oriented.
- God has given each person callings, or vocations, in life. Vocation is the work that God does through people to love and care for others. There are specific male and female vocations, such as mother and father. There are also many nongender-related vocations, such as friend, athlete, student, doctor, teacher, and musician.

Prayer

Dear Father in heaven, thank You for creating us and making us Your children. Help us love and care for others as You love and care for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Introductory Activity

Use a permanent marker to write fill-in-the-blank sentences on the sections of a beach ball. Have students toss the ball to one another. When a person catches the ball, she must verbally fill in the blank of the statement the right hand is touching. Then the person tosses the ball to someone who has not yet answered. Statements can include: God gave me _____ hair and _____ eyes; God gave me the ability to _____; God gave me a family with _____ people in it. (Add other statements as you wish.)

Teaching and Discussion

Use the Digital Slides (see Digital Content) as a visual guide for this section of the lesson. If you choose not to use the Digital Slides, you can speak or write out the Key Points and Slide text.

God lovingly and carefully designed you. You are His child, and you are valuable.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God. 1 John 3:1

You are valuable to your parents, family, friends, and God! God made you. He loves you. You are His child. Every person is valuable because he or she was paid for with the priceless blood of Christ.

You are one of a kind!

God made you unique. There is no one else exactly like you. **In what ways are all people the same? In what ways are we different?**

God loves you just as you are. That's different from loving everything you do.

We are all sinners. This doesn't change God's love for you, but it changes how we think about ourselves and others. When we treat others badly or feel unhappy with ourselves, we can go to Jesus, asking Him for help and forgiveness. God loves you at this stage and He will love you in the next. He gives us His Holy Spirit to guide us. Each stage of growth gives us opportunities to show His goodness through our bodies and through our roles in life.

You are *more* than just a walking, talking body.

Your mind, emotions, faith in God, and interactions with others all combine to make you who you are.

The Bible tells us that God wove you together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139) and that He redeemed *all* of you, not just your mind or body. So when one part of you grows and changes, the rest of you does too. God designed every part of you to be connected, and He wants every part of you to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Emotions are a part of your body and who you are.

Emotions are strong feelings such as love, anger, joy, hate, excitement, and fear. Emotions are usually in reaction to something and often involve a physical response, such as your heart racing when you feel afraid. God made us to feel emotions!

It's important to listen to your own feelings and talk about how you feel.

It is normal for a person to cry when she or he feels sad. Jesus cried, too, when his friend Lazarus died (see John 11:32–35). In the same way, it's okay for people to smile and laugh when they feel happy or to flush when they feel excited or upset. When you feel a strong emotion, you can talk about your feelings with someone you trust. Remember, you can always tell Jesus how you feel in prayer. He understands you and promises to listen!

God made you a female with many gifts and talents!

God made you a female for a reason—on purpose.

Read Genesis 2:18–23. God created two genders—male and female—and both are necessary for life! In fact, the Bible tells us that the differences between girls and boys are not only necessary but are also very good. God's gift of female or male was determined the moment He made us, and it will remain the same throughout our lives.

Males and females need one another and are a blessing to one another.

There are similarities and differences between females and males. God created women and men to support and complement one another. God does not value one sex or gender over the other. Instead, He rejoices in both!

God has blessed you with many talents and abilities.

God has given each person different talents, abilities, likes, and dislikes that are not related to being female or male. You might enjoy playing the flute, solving math problems, drawing, or playing soccer. Both females and males may be athletic, strong-willed, artistic, or sensitive.

There are many ways you can serve God and others.

You have many different callings (vocations), such as being a daughter, a student, a musician, an athlete, and so on. Both girls and boys can do many things! **How can you serve God and others in your vocations and with your gifts?**

Student Learning Page

Print copies of the Student Learning Page onto cardstock. The learning page has decorative boxes with the following headings: “My favorite foods”; “Things I like to do”; “My family and friends”; and “Things I can do to help others.” Students may fill in the boxes with words or drawings.

Additional Resources

You may choose to do one or more of these activities during the lesson, or you may choose to use these activities throughout the year to remind children that they are specially made by God, loved by Him, and blessed to serve others!

CRAFT: Expand on the concept of being woven together and do a craft that involves weaving—perhaps woven paper place mats, friendship bracelets, or pot holders using small looms.

WORSHIP: Help students brainstorm the gifts God has given them. Include talents, abilities, and physical gifts like gender. Then help students write prayers of thanks for the gifts of their bodies.

Questions and Answers

Your students may ask one or more of the following questions. You may choose to answer their questions in class, or you may choose to find a time outside of class to talk with a student one-on-one.

- **What do the words *heterosexual* and *homosexual* mean?** The word *heterosexual* describes a person who has a romantic attraction to someone of the opposite sex—a male to a female or a female to a male. *Homosexual* describes a person who has a romantic attraction to someone of the same sex—a male to a male or a female to a female. God's good plan for people is for a male to be attracted to a female and for a female to be attracted to a male.
- **What does *transgender* mean?** The word *gender* traditionally has been the term for the sex of a person (male or female) and the behavioral traits typically associated with each sex. Today, *gender* has come to describe the mental sexual identity a person chooses, apart from his or her biological sex. The term *transgender* is used when a person falsely believes that his or her gender identity differs from the person's sex at birth. God has joined gender with biological sex; they belong together. We can be secure in the knowledge that God intentionally created us to be who we are—and all God created is very good.
- **What does *LGBTQ+* stand for?** *LGBTQ+* is an abbreviation for a list of sexual orientations: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning. The plus sign implies that other orientations exist and can be added. Each letter describes a different type of attraction. For example, the term *lesbian* describes a woman who is sexually attracted to other women. The Bible tells us that God's will is for sexual relationships to be between a man and a woman who are married to each other. As Christians, we don't shun those who are struggling with their sexuality. Instead, we love and care for them, and we try to help them with this struggle by connecting them with pastors, Christian counselors, and friends who will affirm who God has made them to be.

Additional Teacher and Classroom Resources

- *How You Are Changing for Girls Ages 9–11* (Provide several copies for students to borrow and read on their own.)
- *Male and Female: Embracing Your Role in God's Design* by Christa and Jonathan Petzold

How You Are Changing

For boys ages 9–11



Learning About Sex
EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Boys Ages 9–11

Lesson 1: Identity and Calling

I Am a Child of God!

Lesson Focus

God created and loves all people. God created each person to be either male or female with unique gifts he or she can use to serve God and others.

Preparatory Reading

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How You Are Changing

A Guide for the Christian Family



girls ages 9–11

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A Guide for the Christian Family



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For *girls* ages 9-11

For Discussion or Individual Use
Book 3 of the Learning about Sex Series for Girls
The Titles in the Series:

Book 1: Why Boys and Girls Are Different

Book 2: Where Do Babies Come From?

Book 3: How You Are Changing

Book 4: Sex and the New You

Book 5: Love, Sex, and God

Book 6: How to Talk Confidently with Your Child about Sex

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Foreword

This book is one in a series of six designed to help parents communicate biblical values to their children in the area of sexuality. *How You Are Changing* is the third book in the series. It is written especially for girls ages 9 to 11 and, of course, for the parents, teachers, and other concerned grown-ups who may want to discuss the book with the children in their care. (See “A Note to Parents” on page 6 for ways to use the book and ways to communicate Christian values about sex in the home.)

Like its predecessor, the updated Learning about Sex series provides information about the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of human sexuality. Moreover, it does so from a distinctively Christian point of view, in the context of our relationship to the God who created us and redeemed us in Jesus Christ. The series presents sex as another good gift from God and helps us understand it in the larger context of our entire life of faith. To counter cultural influences, be strong and consistent in communicating the miracle of God’s design. The way God made us is just the way He knew it should be for our health and happiness.

Each book in the series is graded—in vocabulary and in the amount of information it provides. It answers the questions that children at each age level typically ask. Because children vary widely in their growth rates and interest levels, parents and other concerned adults will want to preview each book in the series, directing each child to the next graded book when she is ready for it.

In addition to reading the books, parents can use them as starting points for casual conversation and when answering other questions children might have. We pray that this will be the beginning of ongoing, open, honest, and intentional communication with your child regarding God’s magnificent design.

The books in this series also can be used as mini units or as part of another course of study in a Christian school or church setting. Whenever the books are used in a class setting, it is important to let the parents know beforehand, since they have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. If used in a classroom setting, the books in this series are designed for separate single-gender groups, the setting most conducive to open conversations about questions and concerns. As the Christian home and the Christian school and church work together, Christian values in sex education can be more effectively strengthened.

The Editors



A Note to Parents

Is all this factual information really necessary for nine- to eleven-year-olds? It's probably a lot more than we knew when we were that age. Our children are living in a different world than the one in which we grew up. They are exposed to distorted information about sex every day—through TV shows, movies, the Internet, the words to popular music, and from their friends at school (Christian schools too). If they already have a solid foundation of knowledge and attitudes, they can evaluate the improper values and the misinformation they get from other sources instead of accepting whatever they hear or learning only as a reaction to a negative situation.

Research has shown that children are far more likely to develop healthy attitudes about their sexuality when parents encourage discussions about sex. Too much information does not seem to do any harm when linked to positive values. The child who feels unable to ask questions is far more likely to become preoccupied with sex than the one who has open access to information.

Of course, girls ages 9–11 will vary widely in their ability to understand the material in this book. You are the best judge of what is appropriate for your own child at each stage of her development. To decide whether this book is too advanced or too easy for your daughter, examine the books in this series that come immediately before and after this one.

How should you use this book? We recommend that you either read it with your daughter or let her read it and then discuss sections about which she has questions. Most children will not want to read all of it at once. They will probably be interested in different sections at different stages of their development. Another option is to use the book as a “what to say” resource as you talk with your daughter.

Ideally, this book will be used as part of a biblically based, broadly focused—yet personal—training program to prepare young girls for womanhood. For young women, this training can flow from a mentoring relationship. A young woman can learn much from a mother, grandmother, or other adult who trusts in Jesus for her salvation.

In the context of such a relationship, questions of a personal nature



can be asked and answered, insightful discussions held, and godly behaviors modeled. Your expression of positive and God-pleasing values will likely have a greater impact on the healthy development of your daughter than any book, other than the Bible. God's plan unfolds as each generation in succession passes on the truths God imparts through His Word and the wisdom that comes as challenges are met and overcome by the power of God's grace through Jesus.

Why do we suggest that sex education begin at an early age? Nearly all the young adults we questioned about their memory of the sex education they had in their own homes said something like "too little, too late. It turned me off to have to listen to a bunch of stuff I already knew—or thought I knew."

Where did these parents go wrong? Perhaps they were waiting for questions, but no questions came. Did that mean their child wasn't interested? Of course not. Perhaps the child had sensed her parents' discomfort. Or maybe she had learned that sex is a subject some people prefer not to discuss.

What if talking about sex is difficult for you? It is important to teach our children that sex is far more than what we "do" with our bodies. Sex is about who we are as people of God. If we help our children to have a

healthy identity as a boy or a girl, then our children can begin to see sexual behavior as just one part of God's design for them as male and female. Talk about the unique and wonderful differences of boys and girls with your children. You can tell your child about your feelings, about how you appreciate and value how God made you. You can acknowledge that talking about body changes and the act of sex is difficult because you see your little children growing into adult men and women. You may also say, "This is so special, so private, but I'm excited to talk about it with you, even if it seems awkward. Thank you for asking such a good question; that really helps." You will find that once trust and openness are established, it will be easier for everyone.

Your child will learn better and remember more from a series of shorter conversations than from a long, serious talk that may be put off because of the difficulty of finding the right time and place for it. Be ready for some surprises. When you show your child that it's okay to talk about sex, she'll ask questions whenever and wherever she happens to think of them.

Many young people who criticized their parents as sex educators admitted that the parents' attitudes and values came through, in spite of their clumsiness in expressing them. It's comforting to know that we can make mistakes without necessarily ruining our children, isn't it? Somehow, God blesses our bumbling efforts and makes them work far better than we would have dreamed possible.

What's the main point to emphasize in your talks? Communicate not only accurate information about the way God made us male or female, but especially a sense of wonder and deep appreciation of the beauty of God's marvelous design and purpose as well as a sense of respect and responsibility toward all God has given.

How to Use This Book

- 1.** You can sit down and read all of the book at once, or you can use the contents section to look up questions you may have. It's a good idea to talk over what you learn with an adult you can trust and to pray about your discussions.
- 2.** Some pages have pictures with labels on them. Be sure to study the pictures and read the labels very carefully.
- 3.** "Some Words Used in This Book" (see page 69) can help you understand and pronounce the technical words you'll find in this book.





You Are Wonderful

1



God thinks you're special. You're His child. He knows you better than you know yourself. God carefully, lovingly designed you.

He made you different from every other kid in the whole world. In fact, you are different from every other kid who has ever lived! Your fingerprints, footprints, and eyes are different from those of any other person. Nobody else has your special mix of hair color, freckles, talents, likes and dislikes, and the million other things that make you *you*. When God made you, He made one of a kind. You came from your mother and father, but it is God who gave you life and blessed them with you.

God knows you. He knows everything about you. And ***God loves you just as you are.*** That's not the same as loving everything you do.

We are all human beings and sinners. Sadly, we know that sin has been part of our human nature ever since sin first entered the world. Sin didn't change God's love for us, but it did change how we understand ourselves. The world wants you to think you're not smart enough, not pretty enough, not likable enough, not athletic enough . . . the list goes on. Your sinful flesh tempts you into making bad choices with bad consequences. The devil wants your relationships with your friends and family to be full of hurt.

But God gives new life through Jesus and ***you can see yourself as God sees you. You are a child of God.*** Because of sin, the only thing you deserved was eternal death. But because you are a child of God, God loved you enough to send His Son, Jesus, to be your Savior. He loves you so much that He wants to be with you forever. So because of Jesus, you have eternal life in heaven. God doesn't see your sin. And because you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit strengthens you each day so the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh no longer has control of you. A child of God with Christ in you . . . that's who you are.

You Are a Female

God created people to be male or female. Male and female are the words we use to describe a person's **sex**. Your sex—your male or female body design—is a very important gift from God. He made you that way for a reason, on purpose. Because you are a female, you can be a mother someday. What other differences are there between being a male and a female? The differences are not just related to appearance.

Our brains are wired differently so males and females don't look at and process things the same way. Pediatric nurses in hospitals often note that even newborn babies already indicate distinctiveness, with baby girls tending to focus eye contact on a person, while baby boys seem to look all over to take in the big picture.

And not only has God made males and females different biologically (physically), but our culture and society views things as **feminine** or **masculine**. In that way, our sex is also called our **gender**. How wonderful it is to have two similar but very unique and distinct sexes as part of humanity!

That's the way God wanted it to be. These differences do not mean that one sex is better than the other. They just mean that God made male and female with gender (sex)-related characteristics we can celebrate and thank God for.



Males and females need one another and are a blessing to one another. God's view of male and female is not of a difference that competes, separates, or conflicts. Rather, it is God-pleasing when our unique abilities and perspectives support and complement each other. 1 Corinthians 11:11 says, "In the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman." Key words that describe a God-pleasing male/female relationship include respect, encouragement, cooperation, sharing, and caring.

Some people may say that boys and girls are the same, but there are important differences that are designed and intended by God that we cannot ignore. There are many ways that all people are alike, but these are factors that relate to being a human, rather than being a male or female. One way we are all the same is that we are loved by God and saved through faith in Jesus. Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This does not say we are the same. It says that though each is distinct, one is not better than the other. All who are in Christ have equal standing before God and an equal share of the inheritance in heaven He has obtained for us. We are all special, loved, important children of God.

Your Emotions Are Important

An emotion is a strong feeling, such as love, anger, joy, hate, excitement, or fear. ***Emotions are a part of your body and who you are;*** they are connected to your biological system (and affected by your own, personal set of experiences). Research shows that **hormones** (a chemical substance produced by your body) are linked to a person's emotional well-being.

Emotions are usually in reaction toward something and usually involve a physical response (reaction) in your body. For example, if you're walking on the road and you see a car coming toward you, your body changes involuntarily (e.g., your pulse races) and then you decide what your (voluntary) reaction will be (e.g., you might jump out of the way).

You have **feelings** when your body is aware of that emotional state or reaction. For example, you may feel happy for a long time after an initial, short-term feeling (emotional response) of joy after something good happens to you.

How You Are Changing

A Guide for the Christian Family



For *boys* ages 9–11

How You Are Changing

A Guide for the Christian Family



For *boys* ages 9–11

Learning About Sex

How You Are Changing

A Guide for the Christian Family

For *boys* ages 9–11

For Discussion or Individual Use
Book 3 of the Learning about Sex Series for Boys
The Titles in the Series:

Book 1: Why Boys and Girls Are Different

Book 2: Where Do Babies Come From?

Book 3: How You Are Changing

Book 4: Sex and the New You

Book 5: Love, Sex, and God

Book 6: How to Talk Confidently with Your Child about Sex

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank all medical, child development, and family life consultants who have assisted in the development, updating, and revising of the Learning about Sex series.



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Foreword

This book is one in a series of six designed to help parents communicate biblical values to their children in the area of sexuality. *How You Are Changing* is the third book in the series. It is written especially for boys ages 9 to 11 and, of course, for the parents, teachers, and other concerned grown-ups who may want to discuss the book with the children in their care. (See “A Note to Parents” on page 6 for ways to use the book and ways to communicate Christian values about sex in the home.)

Like its predecessor, the updated Learning about Sex series provides information about the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of human sexuality. Moreover, it does so from a distinctively Christian point of view, in the context of our relationship to the God who created us and redeemed us in Jesus Christ. The series presents sex as another good gift from God and helps us understand it in the larger context of our entire life of faith. To counter cultural influences, be strong and consistent in communicating the miracle of God’s design. The way God made us is just the way He knew it should be for our health and happiness.

Each book in the series is graded—in vocabulary and in the amount of information it provides. It answers the questions that children at each age level typically ask. Because children vary widely in their growth rates and interest levels, parents and other concerned adults will want to preview each book in the series, directing each child to the next graded book when he is ready for it.

In addition to reading the books, parents can use them as starting points for casual conversation and when answering other questions children might have. We pray that this will be the beginning of ongoing, open, honest, and intentional communication with your child regarding God’s magnificent design.

The books in this series also can be used as mini units or as part of another course of study in a Christian school or church setting. Whenever the books are used in a class setting, it is important to let the parents know beforehand, since they have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. If used in a classroom setting, the books in this series are designed for separate single-gender groups, the setting most conducive to open conversations about questions and concerns. As the Christian home and the Christian school and church work together, Christian values in sex education can be more effectively strengthened.

The Editors



A Note to Parents

Is all this factual information really necessary for nine- to eleven-year-olds? It's probably a lot more than we knew when we were that age. Our children are living in a different world than the one in which we grew up. They are exposed to distorted information about sex every day—through TV shows, movies, the Internet, the words to popular music, and from their friends at school (Christian schools too). If they already have a solid foundation of knowledge and attitudes, they can evaluate the improper values and the misinformation they get from other sources instead of accepting whatever they hear or learning only as a reaction to a negative situation.

Research has shown that children are far more likely to develop healthy attitudes about their sexuality when parents encourage discussions about sex. Too much information does not seem to do any harm when linked to positive values. The child who feels unable to ask questions is far more likely to become preoccupied with sex than the one who has open access to information.

Of course, boys ages 9–11 will vary widely in their ability to understand the material in this book. You are the best judge of what is appropriate for your own child at each stage of his development. To decide whether this book is too advanced or too easy for your son, examine the books in this series that come immediately before and after this one.

How should you use this book? We recommend that you either read it with your son or let him read it and then discuss sections about which he has questions. Most children will not want to read all of it at once. They will probably be interested in different sections at different stages of their development. Another option is to use the book as a “what to say” resource as you talk with your son.

Ideally, this book will be used as part of a biblically based, broadly focused—yet personal—training program to prepare young boys for manhood. For young men, this training can flow from a mentoring relationship similar to that of Paul and Timothy. A young man can learn much from a father, grandfather, or other adult who trusts in Jesus for his salvation.

In the context of such a relationship, questions of a personal nature can be asked and answered, insightful discussions held, and godly behaviors modeled. Your expression of positive and God-pleasing values will likely have a greater



impact on the healthy development of your son than any book, other than the Bible. God's plan unfolds as each generation in succession passes on the truths God imparts through His Word and the wisdom that comes as challenges are met and overcome by the power of God's grace through Jesus.

Why do we suggest that sex education begin at an early age? Nearly all the young adults we questioned about their memory of the sex education they had in their own homes said something like “too little, too late. It turned me off to have to listen to a bunch of stuff I already knew—or thought I knew.”

Where did these parents go wrong? Perhaps they were waiting for questions, but no questions came. Did that mean their child wasn't interested? Of course not. Perhaps the child had sensed his parents' discomfort. Or maybe he had learned that sex is a subject some people prefer not to discuss.

What if talking about sex is difficult for you? It is important to teach our children that sex is far more than what we “do” with our bodies. Sex is about who we are as people of God. If we help our children to have a healthy identity as a boy or a girl, then our children can begin to see sexual behavior as just one part of God's design for them as male and female. Talk about the unique and wonderful differences of boys and girls with your children. You can tell your child about your feelings, about how you appreciate and value how God made you. You can acknowledge that talking about body changes and the act of sex is difficult because you see your little children growing into adult men and women.

You may also say, “This is so special, so private, but I’m excited to talk about it with you, even if it seems awkward. Thank you for asking such a good question; that really helps.” You will find that once trust and openness are established, it will be easier for everyone.

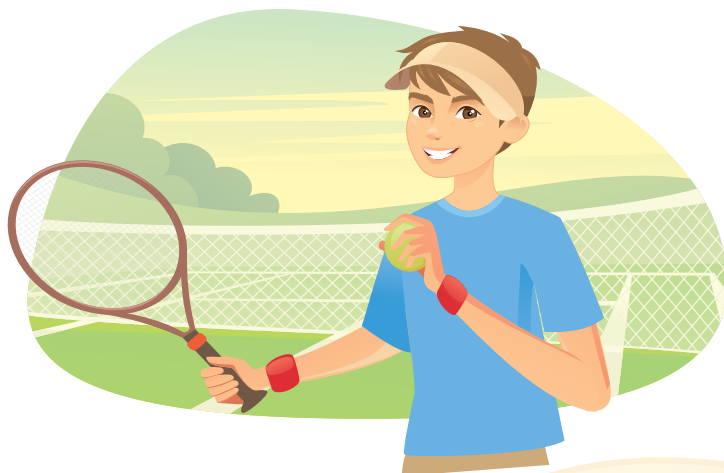
Your child will learn better and remember more from a series of shorter conversations than from a long, serious talk that may be put off because of the difficulty of finding the right time and place for it. Be ready for some surprises. When you show your child that it’s okay to talk about sex, he’ll ask questions whenever and wherever he happens to think of them.

Many young people who criticized their parents as sex educators admitted that the parents’ attitudes and values came through, in spite of their clumsiness in expressing them. It’s comforting to know that we can make mistakes without necessarily ruining our children, isn’t it? Somehow, God blesses our bumbling efforts and makes them work far better than we would have dreamed possible.

What’s the main point to emphasize in your talks? Communicate not only accurate information about the way God made us male or female, but especially a sense of wonder and deep appreciation of the beauty of God’s marvelous design and purpose as well as a sense of respect and responsibility toward all God has given.

How to Use This Book

- 1.** You can sit down and read all of the book at once, or you can use the contents section to look up questions you may have. It's a good idea to talk over what you learn with an adult you can trust and to pray about your discussions.
- 2.** Some pages have pictures with labels on them. Be sure to study the pictures and read the labels very carefully.
- 3.** "Some Words Used in This Book" (see page 69) can help you understand and pronounce the technical words you'll find in this book.



You Are Wonderful

1



God thinks you're special. You're His child. He knows you better than you know yourself. God carefully, lovingly designed you.

He made you different from every other kid in the whole world. In fact, you are different from every other kid who has ever lived! Your fingerprints, footprints, and eyes are different from those of any other person. Nobody else has your special mix of hair color, freckles, talents, likes and dislikes, and the million other things that make you *you*. When God made you, He made you one of a kind. You came from your mother and father, but it is God who gave you life and blessed them with you.

God knows you. He knows everything about you. And ***God loves you just as you are.*** That's not the same as loving everything you do.

We are all human beings and sinners. Sadly, we know that sin has been part of our human nature ever since sin first entered the world. Sin didn't change God's love for us, but it did change how we understand ourselves. The world wants you to think you're not smart enough, not handsome enough, not likable enough, not athletic enough . . . the list goes on. Your sinful flesh tempts you into making bad choices with bad consequences. The devil wants your relationships with your friends and family to be full of hurt.

But God gives new life through Jesus, and ***you can see yourself as God sees you. You are a child of God.*** Because of sin, the only thing you deserve is eternal death. But because you are a child of God, God loved you enough to send His Son, Jesus, to be your Savior. He loves you so much that He wants to be with you forever. So because of Jesus, you have eternal life in heaven. God doesn't see your sin. And because you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit strengthens you each day so the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh no longer has control of you. A child of God with Christ in you . . . that's who you are.

You Are a Male

God created people to be male or female. Male and female are the words we use to describe a person's **sex**. Your sex—your male or female body design—is a very important gift from God. He made you that way for a reason, on purpose. Because you are a male, you can be a father someday. What other differences are there between being a male and a female? The differences are not just related to appearance.

Our brains are wired differently so males and females don't look at and process things the same way. Pediatric nurses in hospitals often note that even newborn babies already indicate distinctiveness, with baby girls tending to focus eye contact on a person, while baby boys seem to look all over to take in the big picture.

And not only has God made males and females different biologically (physically), but our culture and society views things as **feminine** or **masculine**. In that way, our sex is also called our **gender**. How wonderful it is to have two similar but very unique and distinct sexes as part of humanity!

That's the way God wanted it to be. These differences do not mean that one sex is better than the other. They just mean that God made male and female with gender (sex)-related characteristics we can celebrate and thank God for.



Males and females need one another and are a blessing to one another. God's view of male and female is not of a difference that competes, separates, or conflicts. Rather it is God-pleasing when our unique abilities and perspectives support and complement each other. 1 Corinthians 11:11 says, "In the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman." Key words that describe a God-pleasing male/female relationship include respect, encouragement, cooperation, sharing, and caring.

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*How to Talk
Confidently
with
Your Child
about Sex*

A Guide for the Christian Family

For *Parents*

Learning About Sex

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Book 6 of the Learning about Sex Series

The titles in the series:

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Book 4: Sex and the New You

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Written by Lenore Buth

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Editors' Foreword

How to Talk Confidently with Your Child about Sex is written especially for parents who want to communicate Christian values as they discuss sex with their children. Like its predecessor, this revised and updated Learning about Sex series provides information about the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of human sexuality. Moreover, it does so from a distinctively Christian point of view, in the context of our relationship to the God who created us and redeemed us in Jesus Christ. The series presents sex as another good gift from God, and it helps us understand sex in the larger context of our entire life of faith. To counter cultural influences, be strong and consistent in communicating the miracle of God's design. The way God made us is just the way He knew it should be for our health and happiness. The other books in the series are graded—in vocabulary and in the amount of information they provide. They answer the questions that persons at each age level typically ask. Separate books for boys and girls are provided at each age and developmental level.

Because children vary widely in their growth rates and interest levels, parents and other concerned adults will want to preview each book in the series, directing the child to the next graded book when he or she is ready for it.

Ideally, the books in this series will be used as part of a biblically based, broadly focused—yet personal—training of young people for biblical adulthood. For young people, this training can flow from a mentoring relationship similar to that of Paul and Timothy or Ruth and Naomi. A young man or woman can learn much from a parent, grandparent, or other adult who trusts in Jesus for his or her salvation. In the context of such a relationship, questions of a personal nature can be asked and answered, insightful discussions held, and godly behaviors modeled. Your expression of God-pleasing values will likely have a greater impact on the healthy development of your son or daughter than any book, other than the Bible. God's plan unfolds as each generation in succession passes on the truths God imparts through His Word and the wisdom that comes as challenges are met and overcome by the power of God's grace through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Each of the books in the Learning about Sex series for boys and the Learning about Sex series for girls can

serve as a helpful starting point for casual conversation and when answering other questions a child might have.

The other books in this series also can be used as mini units or as part of another course of study in a Christian school setting. Whenever the books are used in a class setting, it is important to let the parents know beforehand, since they have the primary responsibility for the sex education of their children. If used in a classroom setting, the books in this series are designed for separate single-gender groups, the setting most conducive to open conversations about questions and concerns.

As the Christian home and the Christian school and church work together, Christian values in sex education can be more effectively strengthened.

The Editors



1

Children = Changes



*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward. (Psalm 127:3)*

Parenthood certainly brings with it myriad changes. Veteran parents advise new parents, “Life will never be the same again,” but add, “and we wouldn’t have had it any other way!” Although a parent’s world may get turned upside down with the addition of a child, the joys are unparalleled.

Subtle changes begin when the woman misses that first menstrual period. Immediately, both spouses find that their perspective on life enlarges. The husband ponders what it will mean to be a father. The wife ticks off the months to wait and thinks about the bodily changes that lie ahead. Together, they try out names and speculate about the future. Life has a new focus.



For most parents, their child's birth instantly cements and strengthens the bond they already feel with their tiny child. Despite the exhaustion associated with caring for a newborn, parents are most often happy to serve their dependent infant as an expression of their love. A parent's care and nurture for his or her new child is a loving gift of the self, with little or nothing expected in return. Christian parents may grow weary in their round-the-clock service to their "helpless" little one, but also know that their child is a gift from God and find comfort in His promise to renew their strength through His Word. Parents may have bags under their eyes, but they gaze upon the child in their arms with gratitude to God.

For those who become parents through adoption or become a step-parent, their love may not be so instant. But by the power of the Holy Spirit the love between parent and child grows as the child looks to the parents to meet all of his or her physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Look forward to the joy of watching your child develop, and give the relationship time to develop, trusting that God brought you together as a family.

From the day a child arrives, parents embark on an exciting learning adventure. Each phase of the child's life is new to both child and parents. The arrival of a baby boy or girl—a brand new life—brings with it joy, anticipation, and hope for the future.

Children are a
gift from God!

The gift sometimes overlooked is that parenthood offers a deeper understanding of God's love for His children. While imperfect in our ability to love unconditionally, parents can reflect the perfectly unconditional love God has for us, evidenced in His sending of His very own Son to die for our sins. Even though our best efforts fall short and we follow our own selfish desires, God never runs out of patience or forgiveness for us, His children. *"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him"* (Psalm 103:11–13). God calls, motivates, and empowers us to parent our children, exercising Christlike love, patience, and forgiveness.

The Number One Task

The most important task that faces the new father and mother is *not* the obvious physical childcare and support. The major job, starting with

the first day, is to provide their child with constant, accepting love. As Christians, we believe that kind of love has only one source: God.

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. . . .
We love because He first loved us. (1 John 4:7, 19)*

No less vital is to have the same attitude toward each other. When parents love each other abundantly, they have an abundance of love to give their offspring. In such an atmosphere, children are more likely to grow up well-adjusted, with good self-images, and with the foundation they will need as adults. When spouses love and support each other throughout the child-rearing years, healthy patterns are formed. Parents model unconditional love when they readily forgive and do unselfish things for each other.

The child's sense of being accepted or rejected, his or her self-image and value system for the rest of life, is greatly influenced during the first five years of life. Parents may see the time of their child's growing-up as years of sacrifice and hard work, with never a moment to call their own (and in many ways that's true). Yet during that time, life values are being laid down.

When parents must find someone else to care for their child for extended periods, it's of prime importance that there is as little turnover as possible in the person(s) providing childcare. A child needs stability. It's also vital that the person(s) who cares for children have attitudes and values similar to the child's parents. A child often spends more waking hours with another caregiver than with his or her parents, so that person's lifestyle and views inevitably carry great weight with the child. Is that reassuring? Or does it make us uneasy?

Reading this may fill many of us with remorse and guilt. If so, be assured: All parents make mistakes. All parents have times when they feel antagonism toward their child. All parents at times communicate attitudes they later regret. And few totally agree with their caregiver's attitudes, even when the child's own grandparents fill that role. So what's a parent to do?

"There's only one thing parents can do!" says one great-grandmother. "Same as we did and our folks before us. Just ask the good Lord for wisdom, and count on Him to take everything in our children's lives—even