



SEXUAL INTEGRITY

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONVERSATION GUIDE **FOR PARENTS**

Your middle schooler is changing fast. Changing their friends, changing their style, changing their interests, and yes—even changing physically. As with any change, you have three options. You can resist it, and inevitably fail. You can ignore it, and become increasingly disconnected. Or you can talk about it, and probably suffer a fair amount of eye rolls.

When it comes to guiding your kid toward healthy sexuality in these turbulent years, your role is simple.

INTERPRET WHAT IS CHANGING.

Even when your middle schooler pushes you away, lean in. They need you to stay present and connected in order to interpret their changing reality. As you interpret the changes, there are probably some things you should say, and some things you shouldn't. Here are just a few.

WHAT TO SAY

- If you haven't yet, inform your child about how both boys' and girls' bodies will change as they get older and mature. (Consider covering these topics: body odor, growth spurt, breast/testicular development, growth of hair, menstruation/vaginal discharge and wet dreams.)
- "I'm so glad you asked me."
- "Thank you for telling me. You will never get in trouble for talking to me about that." (Encourage conversation through your words, tone and body language.)
- "I think it would be good for us to talk about this again sometime. Is that okay?" (Keep the lines of communication open.)
- Start to discuss relationship values by using phrases like these:
 - "Honor God with your body."
 - "Think about things that are good."
 - "Don't let anything or anyone control you."
 - "Don't sexualize a relationship."
 - "Guard your heart."
- "You are beautiful/handsome." (Give authentic, positive affirmation and affection to the point of embarrassment.)

WHAT NOT TO SAY

- "We don't need to talk about that."
- "You're not supposed to be thinking about things like that."
- "Don't worry, right now you're just in an awkward phase."
- "Remember, kissing a boy will make you get pregnant."
- "Why aren't you dating anyone?"
- Nothing.

Make sure to involve professional counselors, as needed, as well as your ministry leader and parents, if you're not the parent.