

Can you remember that awkward moment when your child asked you where they came from? Or when they became embarrassed at the sight of you in your underwear, and squirmed if they saw someone kiss in a movie! The big question is always, "When should I start talking about sexuality?" One thing for sure is that it's better for us to have the talk with our children BEFORE they learn about it from their peers or from cultural story-telling. My prayer is that my children will understand what sex is about in the context of God's good design for sex.



10 GUIDELINES FOR TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SEX

1. BELIEFS BEFORE BIOLOGY.

In all of your discussions, take the opportunity to talk about God's design and purpose for sex. Avoid the temptation, in your awkwardness, of going straight to mechanics and function.

2. BE HONEST. If you are feeling a little uncomfortable about the discussion, it can be helpful to be honest and acknowledge your uncomfortableness.

3. BE PROACTIVE. Don't wait for your child to ask the questions. Plan when you are going to do it and follow through. Stay ahead of the sexuality education that may unfold in the 'playground'.

4. DON'T THINK OF IT AS 'THE TALK'. It's not one talk that you tick off as done then put your feet up and relax. It needs to be frequent and ongoing.

5. HONOUR YOUR CHILD'S QUESTIONS. No matter how awkward the question (or unsavoury) give a response in such a way that doesn't mean that they will be less willing to raise all things with you in the future.

6. LOOK FOR TEACHABLE OPPORTUNITIES. Sometimes the best discussions happen 'on the run'. When opportunities come, grab them. One of the best I have found is when things come on the radio in the car (news reports or song lyrics etc.).

7. NON FACE-TO-FACE ACTIVITIES. One of the benefits of car conversations is that you are not face-to-face. Washing up together or walking round the block etc. can be helpful in easing the awkwardness.

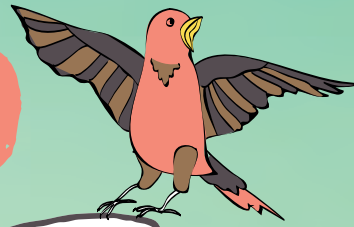
8. TALK ABOUT BOTH GENDERS. Don't just limit your discussion about 'boy issues' for your sons and vice versa. Boys need

to know about menstruation and girls need to know about wet dreams etc. They will hear about these things and it's best that you have been the one to introduce them.

9. MUMS AND DADS INVOLVED. Just as you talk about both genders, both parents should be able to feel free to speak about gender issues. Of course there is a level of detail that dads are best suited to talk to sons about, and mums to daughters, but for the more general issues, both should be talking freely. This is then tricky for single parents or where the other parent does not share the same Christian faith—is there a trusted adult friend you can call upon?

10. PRAY. Pray for your children. Pray for the discussions that you will have with them. Pray with them as part of the discussions—pray with thanksgiving and celebration about sexuality, gender, and family.

BIRDS EYES



TALKING TO OUR
CHILDREN ABOUT SEXUALITY
BY CHRIS PARKER



10 THINGS YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SEXUALITY

1. SEX IS GOOD. It's part of God's good design but it's not ultimate—even though our culture pushes this message.

2. SEX HAS DESIGN BOUNDARIES. Our culture shouts that consent is the only boundary. The Bible reveals God's good design for sex as being within a marriage between man and woman—this is where ultimate sexual freedom is to be found.

3. TALK ABOUT SEX. Teach your children that it's OK to talk about sex. Why not? Sex is good. However, it should always be done in a way that gives it the dignity, respect, and honour that it deserves as a beautiful thing designed by God (often sex-talk by teenagers is far from edifying).

4. SEX IS RELATIONAL. By its design, it is intimately and profoundly relational.

Sex is far more about self-sacrifice than it is about the relief of biological or psychological urges. This is a significantly different message to what is told by our culture—point this out to them.

5. SEX IS LINKED TO CHILDREN, PARENTING, AND FAMILY. Sex between a male and a female always carries the potential to produce a family and two parents! This is God's design and therefore sex should only occur in the context where this can be embraced—marriage.

6. SEX AND SEXUALITY DOES NOT DEFINE YOU. There is no doubt that God has created us to be sexual beings. However, this part of who we are is only one part of many. Our sexuality is far from our primary identity. This is also an extremely counter-cultural message.

7. CELIBACY IS OK. Not having sex for parts, or all, of your life is fine. Celibacy has never killed anyone, has never harmed anyone, or even reduced anyone's potential to live a richly fulfilling life!

8. YOU ARE MORE THAN YOUR BODY. Significantly more. Our culture often suggests otherwise. God has designed you as a whole person. So don't think

of yourself as anything less. Don't let yourself be treated as anything less.

9. OTHER PEOPLE ARE NOT OBJECTS. Online games, social media, music videos, advertising, etc. often don't give the full story about other people. All humans are designed and made in the image and likeness of God and should be thought of with the dignity that comes with that—they are not objects for our amusement, ego, lusts, or service.

10. YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO BRING GLORY TO GOD. This includes the expression of your sexuality. 🍷

Chris is passionate about helping children to see the world through the gospel of the Lord Jesus. He is currently a lecturer and speaker with the National Institute for Christian Education and on the executive team of CEN. Chris and his wife, Coco, live in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. They have two children and a growing collection of ukuleles.

