

GEORGETOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

ENVISION

OUR MISSION IS TO GLORIFY GOD AND MAKE
DISCIPLES BY GUIDING DISTRACTED PEOPLE TO
CONFIDENTLY PURSUE THEIR NEXT STEPS WITH
JESUS.

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GEORGETOWN

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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How Do I Get Updated Information?

- We send out two weekly emails (Mon & Fri) with important announcements
- Our weekly printed "Members Cue"
- Contact the office/minister for more info

Prayer Request?

- On our website (under the "Im New" tab)
- On the GTCOC app
- Contact the office and let us know

How Do I Get Prayer Concerns?

- We have a special email list called "Prayers Go Up" where you will receive updated prayer concerns
- Contact Amy Scott to sign up

Member Directory?

- On our website (under the "About" tab)
- On the GTCOC app
- Contact the office for a printed copy

Need immediate help or need question answered immediately text or call...

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"The Talk"

BY PAUL PARTLOW

For many generations and many cultures the topic of sex has been taboo. It's one of those topics that is not discussed in 'decent' company, and it is a topic that many parents avoided talking about with their kids.

When did your parents have "The Talk" with you? For me, unfortunately I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a Saturday morning and my parents asked if I wanted to play Monopoly, my all-time favorite board game. Now, what was weird is both of my parents hated Monopoly, so immediately I knew something was up.

When we sat down at the table, they popped in a VHS tape that they picked up that morning at Blockbuster and told me to watch it as we played. It was the most awkward cartoon I had ever seen. It went over the different anatomy of male and females, and the only part that talked about sex was when the two naked cartoon characters went into the bedroom and turned off the lights.

Then the scene cut to a cartoon sperm with a top hat dancing as it made contact with the egg. Soon after that this couple had a baby and then the show ended. It was 30 minutes of awkwardness. But to make it more awkward, my parents invited my best friend and his parents over, so I had to sit there and watch it again. Yikes.

I know this is a humorous story, but sex and sexual integrity are serious matters. You and I as parents or grandparents need a better strategy than “if we don’t talk about it it doesn’t exist,” or “if I tell them not to do it, everything will be fine.”

I don’t have to tell you how bombarded our kids are with sexual images, innuendo, and conversation all day long. They have access to pornographic images and videos at the click of a button on their phone, laptop or TVs. The statistics are staggering for both men and women. Pornography addiction is on the rise which leads to the destruction of relationships, self-worth, brain function, productivity, and spiritual lives. We must take this seriously.

This conversation must go beyond sexual purity and we must talk about sexual integrity. "Rather than teaching purity, we need to encourage each other to live with sexual integrity. To live with honesty and transparency, striving to integrate God into every area of our life, including our sexuality. Every day, we make the choice to live with sexual integrity, whether single, married, divorced or widowed. We get to decide to live with sexual integrity whether we have crossed many lines, or none, from the time we are old enough to make decisions, to the day we die. Sexual integrity is a life time of learning to live true to who God created us to be and in more perfect communion with him.

Rather than the church providing all the answers or defining all the lines, we create safe places for honesty and transparency. Growth and direction becomes more important than perfection. While we hang onto God’s truths we extend grace to others and to ourselves. People struggling with tough decisions and situations are encouraged to seek God and hear from Him. We study the Bible to learn God’s truth, like guarding ourselves from lust, or saving sex for marriage. But we also learn what the Bible says or doesn’t say about less talked about areas like dating vs. courting, masturbation or kissing before marriage. Sexual integrity doesn’t just spell out the do’s and don’ts. It opens up discussion about how to live in our world and stay connected to God. Sexual Integrity requires that if we believe God has the answers, then we ask Him." Ruth Buezis

In the month of February our Student Ministry has been talking about Sexual Integrity and we wanted to help you start or continue the conversation with your kids and teenagers. If you need resources or help talking to your son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter about this important topic, please let us know. We are here for you!

May God bless us as we strive to live with sexual integrity and to teach the next generation to live with sexual integrity in a sex saturated world.

FIVE TIPS FOR TALKING TO MIDDLE SCHOOLERS ABOUT SEX

By: Ashley Bohinc

Let's be real.

The "sex talk" you may or may not have received when you were in middle school is a far cry from the conversations middle schoolers are having about sex these days. We live in a very over-sexualized culture, and that means students are exposed to sexual images and language at a much younger age than ever before.


What hasn't changed? A middle schooler's squirrely response to talking about this topic. They may act like they dread it, but attendance is usually at a season high during this kind of series. What does that tell us? Students secretly love the "sex talk" because they desperately want to know more about this topic and how it relates to their lives.

While it may or may not be your favorite topic to discuss with middle schoolers, we want the church to be the safest place on Earth to talk about anything students are curious about. And that includes the topic of sexuality.

Let's face it: Talking to middle schoolers about sex may be one of your most awesome experiences or one of your most awkward. So here's how you as a communicator can make sure it's awesome. Use these five tips to help create a space where your students will feel safe enough to open up and be real with themselves and others.

1. KNOW YOUR STUDENTS.

Nobody knows your students the way you do. You know what your students can handle and what they aren't ready for yet. You know what they're facing in their schools and in their lives. You know better than anyone how to relate this series to current trends your students are actually experiencing. That's because you know what situations you're currently leading them through in your ministry. Consider it all! Then, ask yourself what it is they need to hear. I mean, what they really need to hear. Keep in mind that you're probably not going to say anything they haven't heard already!



2. LAUGH WITH THEM.

Middle schoolers are going to laugh at certain times during a series like this. That's okay! They aren't being disrespectful; they're just being middle schoolers. If you can roll with it and laugh with them when it's needed, it will build trust. And when you're real with your students, they'll be real with you in return.

3. GET COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS THAT FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE.


If you're awkward saying certain words or talking about certain subjects during this talk, your students are going to be awkward right back. If you're uncomfortable, they'll feel uncomfortable as well. If you're rigid, they'll be rigid too. Students will receive the series in the way you present it, so start getting used to words or phrases that may normally take you out of your comfort zone!

4. TALK ABOUT THE WHOLE PICTURE.

One of the biggest mistakes parents and ministry leaders make when talking to teenagers about sex is only talking about the physical act of sex. They inadvertently ignore all the stuff that leads up to and goes along with it. But the truth is, this conversation isn't just about sex itself. It's about how God created us as sexual beings. There are a lot of ways teenagers can directly and indirectly express their sexuality, like in the way they dress, the pictures they upload, and the texts they send. Those things can be just as important in the overall conversation about sex and sexuality.

5. NORMALIZE. NORMALIZE. NORMALIZE.

Everything in the life of a middle schooler is changing: their bodies, their feelings, their thoughts, their questions, and their desires. Most of them feel like total weirdos for the ways they now think or feel. Middle schoolers need to know they're not alone. They need to know what they're feeling or wondering about is totally normal. They need to feel like there isn't a question they could ask that would be surprising or embarrassing because every adult in the room has gone through it. They've already gone through puberty and had to work through these questions in their own lives. Now it's time to make sure your students feel safe to go through it with the adults in your ministry by their side. We know it may be a challenging few weeks for you as you teach this series, but we're confident that this is a message the church needs to tell.



Sex Conversations Through the Phases

Is there any conversation that ranks higher on the awkward-o-meter than the sex talk with your kids?

What about when you have to ask grandma to please stop kissing your baby's hands because of the germ factor?

Nope, not as awkward.

Well, then, maybe it's the sit-down you have to have with your kid to talk about why they have to start wearing deodorant?

Cringeworthy, but still not as awkward.

No parent feels confident talking to their kids about sex. Sex is such an important subject and we want to have the conversation in the right way, but most of us didn't have this conversation modeled well by our own parents. As a result, we don't feel equipped or comfortable leading the conversation about sex because, well, it's sex we're talking about, and with our kids. Most of us wish there was a formula to this dialogue, but we know that wouldn't work—every kid is different, so every approach to this conversation needs to be different too.

While it may be easy to shy away from this conversation and put it off until later, research shows there's no better time to have this conversation with your kids than right now. A lot of parents default to tackling the sex talk when their kids enter high school, but it's important to begin guiding "the big talk" as early as preschool. It turns out, the more positive, value-centered sex education kids receive at home, the less promiscuous they'll be.

"Kids learn best when they talk, not when you talk," says Dr. Jim Burns, a writer and speaker on topics about marriage, family, kids, and leadership. "Dialogue is never going to happen if you stay silent. Your kids will just get the information from somewhere else, or if it's too rigid, they'll rebel."

Here's how to start talking to your kids about sex based on the phase they're in:

Preschool

Preschoolers ask a lot of questions because they're curious about the way things work. Because of that, you can anticipate some questions that have the potential to lead to awkward dialogue. And that's okay.

Lean into the whys and talk to your kids about their bodies and how and why each body part works the way it does. Use the proper names for body parts when discussing them and get comfortable with using them in everyday life. Talk with your preschooler about privacy and give them the space to use their voices to share what makes their bodies feel good and what makes them feel uncomfortable. This conversation may seem simple, but it lays a great foundation for a successful sex talk throughout all the phases.

Elementary

When your kid is in kindergarten through fourth grade, they're still into asking lots of questions, but now, they've got a lot more prior knowledge to make the questions even more in-depth and harder to answer. During this phase, have an open discussion about respect and how to act around those of the opposite sex. Reinforce the idea that a person is just that—a human being and not an object. This is a great time to be intentional about teaching your kids to say no when something feels uncomfortable and ensuring your kid has a safe place to voice any concerns.

Something to be mindful of in this phase is to keep things age-appropriate without diving too deeply into the conversation in a way they can't comprehend. Feel free to use the phrase, "You know what? That's a great question. We'll talk about that when you're a little older."

Middle school

During the middle school years, your kid is changing a lot—from the way they think to the way their bodies look and feel. This is a very important phase because not only are they going through puberty, but research shows most kids see pornography by age 11. This is a great time to start talking to your kids about the changes happening in their bodies, emotions, and relationships. During middle school, kids' emotional involvement often exceeds their level of maturity, sometimes leading them to make poor choices. Introduce the concepts of boundaries and sexual integrity. Emphasize how your kids can honor their bodies, how to handle situations they may find themselves in with the opposite sex, and guarding their hearts.

High school

Many parents use the high school phase to start talking about sex. If you fall into this category, don't worry—it's never too late to start having the talk. During the high school phase, you're your kids' coach. Guide them to make wise decisions by holding them accountable to themselves and their boundaries. Be a safe place for your kids—make sure there's no doubt your kids know you're open to talking to them even though you may disagree on their views. Project acceptance and try to limit lecturing—this phase is defined by the desire for independence.

Extra positive influence never hurts, so make sure you've got other caring adults in place to step in to be a sounding board for your kids. Sometimes, your kids won't feel comfortable coming to you. Expect that and learn to get comfortable with asking for help, even if you're accustomed to tackling challenges like this on your own.

There are many things in life that come naturally, but conversations about sex rarely fall into that category. Even though kids are bound to make unwise choices when it comes to sex, the odds are better for your kids to make wise ones when there is openness about the topic in your home.

And here is something else that Dr. Burns says that's important to remember: "Listening is the language of love."

How to Know Your Kid is Ready for THE TALK

By: Holly Crawshaw

Part 1 – THE TALK

You know which talk I'm talking about.

THE "TALK" talk.

THE TALK that no parent looks forward to, but all parents know is critical. THE TALK that reduces most of us to our middle-school-selves, all tongue-tied, darty-eyed, and fidgety. THE TALK parents desperately want to do well, but THE TALK we're sure we'll screw up, delivering a debilitating blow to the healthy development of our children.

Recently, I had THE TALK with my third grade daughter, Lilah.

Now, before you screenshot this and send it to your friend with the caption "THIS CLEARLY UNSTABLE MOTHER HAD THE TALK WITH HER KID AT WHAT AGE?!", you should know that I didn't have THE ENTIRE TALK with Lilah. We had the first stages of THE TALK. We laid the groundwork of THE TALK that will support all future versions of THE TALK. We had THE TALK 101.

Lilah's young. She's eight. She just started third grade. She has had, by most comparisons, a sheltered and conservative upbringing. There wasn't a situation that prompted me to have THE TALK with Lilah. No overhearing of an adult conversation. No crude joke or comment made at school. Not even the good old-fashioned 'Where do babies come from?' prompting.

So why in the world would I initiate a conversation to expedite a maturing process that will already move faster than I want it to?

I mean, #LetThemBeLittle, right?!

Did you know that in today's digital age the average kid has their first encounter with pornography at 11 years old?[1]

ELEVEN YEARS OLD. That's not a typo, friends. You don't need me to tell you how drastically different our world is today than it was when we were 11 years old. I mean, I was still playing dolls with my next-door-neighbor, Erica. The craziest thing we encountered was my brother's boxer shorts hanging to dry on my back porch. (We were scandalized!)

I could lock away Lilah until she's thirty (a notion I still consider from time to time), or I can give her the knowledge that will hopefully shape her sexual integrity into something that reflects both well-informed decision making and unrelenting self-respect.

SPOILER ALERT: If we don't teach our kids about personal health and sex, someone else will.

The main reason I chose to have THE TALK with my daughter is simple: I want my kids to learn about their wonderful, incredible, perfectly-made little bodies from the people who love and value them more than anyone else on this planet—their parents.

So. How do you know if your kid is ready for THE TALK?

You don't.

For me and my husband, we decided that third grade was the appropriate time to have the introductory conversation with Lilah. Now, based on her personality, I can already tell that her younger sister will be ready for the same conversation at an earlier age. You know your kid best. Watch. Listen. Observe. Become a student of their phase. You'll have a hunch when "it's time."

What tips do you have for "knowing" when it's time to initiate to have THE TALK with your kid?

For exactly how much of THE TALK we had during THE TALK, check out Part 2 of THE TALK, coming soon.

[1]http://www.digitalkidsinitiative.com/files/2013/02/Parent_Primer_Internet_Pornography.pdf

What I Learned About Having THE TALK

By: Holly Crawshaw

Recently, I had THE TALK with my third-grade daughter.

Do you guys remember the TV show Blossom? It aired in the 90's on NBC and dealt with issues like drugs, alcohol, and teenage pregnancy. It was a borderline controversial show back then, so naturally, I was totally into it.

I remember an episode where one of the characters got her period for the first time. I was watching with my older sister and a friend (who always seemed about three steps ahead of me, maturity-wise), and they both giggled when I begged to know how anyone could possibly experience the physical symptoms of a punctuation mark.

She GOT a period? What's that like? Can you get an exclamation point? I think I've gotten a question mark a time or two.

Oh, ten-year-old, Holly. Her naivety was ironic in light of her chronic curiosity (which followed her into adulthood and can now be better categorized as straight up nosiness).

I ran to the den to where my mom was listening to an elderly man from our church pitch his company's newest line of Electrolux vacuum.

"Mom! What's a period?" I demanded. "Is it when a girl starts wearing a bra?"

My mom practically coughed up a hairball while Mr. Electrolux became acutely interested in the photos on his glossy brochure.

"We'll talk later," she hissed. And that was the end of that.

Only, later never came.

My mom did something that a lot of parents do. She assumed I would figure it out when the time was “right” or that I would ask again later. In her defense—she would have been right. Only, my highly misinformed (though well-meaning) friend filled in the gaps for me with incredibly graphic and largely inaccurate information. I’m still a little scarred.

Looking back, that experience taught me several things:

- Kids will wait for the most inopportune times to ask you the most invasive questions.
- Make no assumptions when it comes to talking to your kids about health and sex.
- Door-to-door salesmen were never given enough credit.

I’m no expert – but I am still nosy – so I asked several other parents what they had learned from having THE TALK with their kids. I walked away from those conversations with three strategies that helped guide our approach with Lilah:

1. Before you can have THE TALK, you have to understand the kid.

Lilah is highly self-aware and empathetic. She’s easily embarrassed and avoids “heavy” or “emotional” conversations. I knew that bringing up such a sensitive topic would immediately put her on the defensive, so I needed to plan out how I initiated. Remember, getting the conversation started is the hardest part – but do so in a way that best suits your kid’s personality.

2. You don’t have to talk during THE TALK.

Lilah loves to read, so I bought a book series called God’s Design for Sex and read it in advance. I had been waiting for life to give me the perfect this is it moment, but alas, I don’t live in a sitcom. So one random afternoon, I just made myself do it.


We were home alone, and I called her downstairs. I said, “There are times as a mommy when I don’t know what I’m doing. This is one of those times. Will you show me grace while I try to have a conversation with you that may be uncomfortable for us both?”

I didn't want to downplay the importance of what we were talking about by acting like it wasn't a big deal because it is.

I reassured her that we'd figure it out together, and then showed her the book. We leafed through the pages and went over any words or ideas that were new to her. Then, I let her take the book upstairs and read it cover to cover before I joined her and asked her questions about what she'd read. This approach put Lilah in "control" of the content made all the difference in her posture and response to THE TALK.

3. THE TALK is less of a talk and more of a conversation.

I realized about halfway through our conversation that Lilah wasn't ready to hear THE WHOLE TALK. And that's okay. Because THE TALK isn't a one-time thing. It's the beginning of a conversation that I hope to continue her entire life. Simply letting her know I'm available and willing to go there with her was just as important as the content itself.



When and How to Talk to My Child about Pornography

By: Dr. Jim Burns

Most likely in the history of the world, there has never been a non-awkward conversation about pornography between a parent and child. “I had a wonderful, easy, conversation with my parents about porn,” said no kid, ever. Yet in today’s world, it’s more a matter of when, not if they will view porn. It may be accidental, or it may be on purpose, but the odds are that porn will at one time be a part of your child’s development. Surprisingly, authorities tell us that the average age a child will view internet pornography is 11 years old. Kids don’t even need to be looking for porn—it is programmed to find them.


With this in mind, here are four tips for thinking about when and how we can talk with our kids about pornography.


Start talking.

Yes, as a parent you lead the conversation. No one said it would be easy. Just do it. And it’s not a one-time talk, it’s an ongoing dialogue. All studies show that the more positive, healthy, value-centered, sex education kids receive from their parents, the less promiscuous and confused they will be. When you talk about porn, include the larger issues of sexuality and sexual integrity whenever possible. Most parents did not receive healthy sex education from their parents, so this makes it even more difficult. It helps to find good resources, but even with the great resources available, it will probably be awkward for everyone.

Don’t wait.

Talk about the issue before it’s an issue. Far too many parents wait to have the conversation until after the child has seen porn. That dramatically changes the conversation. Introduce the issue early and keep it developmentally appropriate. (Remember: “It’s just a phase.”)





When children are quite young, you can say things like, “God made your body, and you are created in the image of God.” You will want to add, “If anyone ever shows you a photo of naked people or wants you to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable with your body, you can tell them to stop. You can tell mommy or daddy and we will not get mad at you.”

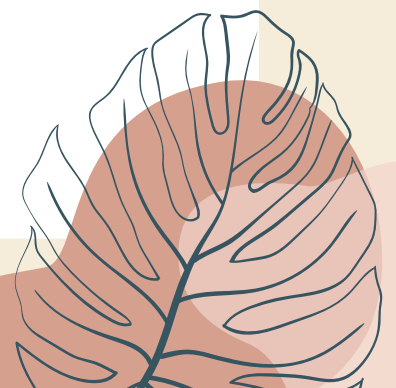
As kids get older, but before age 11, this is the time to have a more direct conversation. Yes, it will feel early, but prevention is always better than dealing with the issue after the fact. Because of the early sexualization in our culture, we just can’t hold off the conversations. Porn is only a mouse click away or one swipe of the phone away. Kids are confused and curious and part of your job is to give God-honoring wisdom while you shower them with understanding and love.

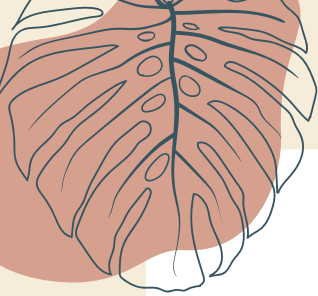
Be a safe haven.

Regardless of your approach, leave shame-based parenting out of the conversation. You want your kids to feel that you are a safe person for conversation about sexuality and pornography. Most likely your child might be embarrassed to talk about porn. Don’t push the conversation too hard or too fast because trying to help your child feel comfortable is vital. You can show empathy and understanding while still helping them with boundaries. By the time your kids are adolescents, don’t expect them to want to have the conversation. Acknowledge that this conversation can be difficult and don’t forget to listen to their thoughts. It’s better to have several short conversations with dialogue than one long, memorable, harsh one.

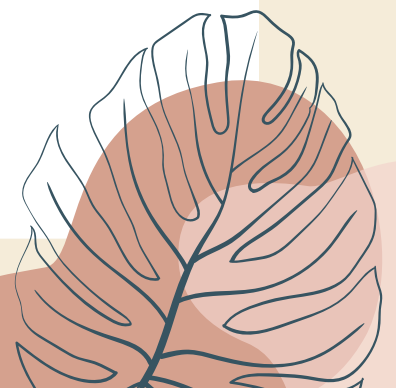
Make a plan together.

Don’t just talk about porn. With your child’s participation and involvement, create a plan to choose to make good decisions. Here is a simple plan you may want to begin with:



- 
- Teach healthy sexuality
 - God loves you
 - God created your body and sexuality
 - The Bible says: Honor God with your body (1 Corinthians 6:20), Renew your mind for good (Romans 12:1-2), Turn your eyes from worthless things (Psalm 119:37), and Guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23).
 - Talk about porn not being real
 - Porn stars are actors
 - It's fantasy
 - Watching porn can be addictive
 - Your brain craves a false feeling of intimacy
 - It can cause your mind and thoughts to treat the opposite sex inappropriately
 - It causes shame, deception, and avoidance
 - Roleplay ways of making good choices when tempted
 - What to do if someone wants to show you porn on their phone
 - If you accidentally view porn, who can you talk with about it?
 - Help establish media-safe home guidelines
 - Consider accountability friends (make a list)

Pornography isn't going away. It is a temptation for all of our kids. Your role is key in helping them deal with this issue as well as the greater issues of healthy sexuality and sexual integrity.



SEXUAL INTEGRITY



INTRODUCE them to their body



So they will . . .
**DISCOVER THEIR BODY
& DEFINE PRIVACY**

INFORM them about how things work



So they will . . .
**UNDERSTAND BIOLOGY
& BUILD SOCIAL SKILLS**

Start with the basics
Say things like:
"God made you."

Name body parts
Use the real names
for private parts—
you know them.

**Acknowledge
differences**

Define privacy
Say things like: "Private
parts are meant to be
private."

**Answer simple
questions**
Say things like:
"Babies grow
inside of their
mama until it's
time to be born."

**Affirm a positive view
of their growing body**
Say things like: "I love
watching you grow."

Coach privacy
Say things like:
"Sometimes it's
polite to look
away."

**Talk about
boundaries**
Say thing like:
"Your body
belongs to you."

**Give simple
answers to
biological
questions**

**Explain marriage
and conception**

**Improve
relational skills**
Work on things
like kindness
and respect.

**Begin a
conversation
about body
changes**

**Support finding
and keeping a
"best friend"**

**Caution
sexual activity
and porn**

Refine the vocabulary
Pay attention to words
they are using to talk
about bodies, sex,
and people.

**Redefine
beauty and
modesty**

ZERO
TO ONE

ONE
& TWO

THREE
& FOUR

K &
FIRST

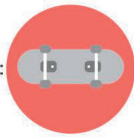
SECOND
& THIRD

FOURTH
& FIFTH

EMBRACE their physical needs

ENGAGE their interests

Guarding my potential for intimacy through appropriate boundaries and mutual respect



INTERPRET what is changing

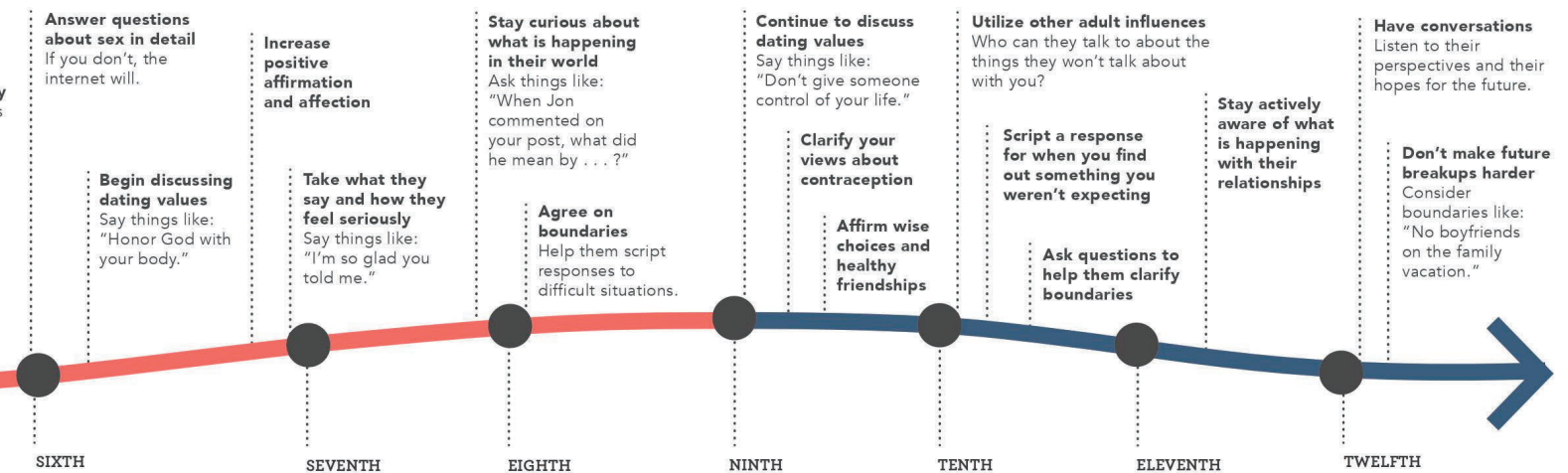


So they will . . .
**RESPECT THEMSELVES
& GROW IN CONFIDENCE**

COACH them toward healthy relationships



So they will . . .
**ESTABLISH PERSONAL BOUNDARIES
& PRACTICE MUTUAL RESPECT**



AFFIRM their personal journey

MOBILIZE their potential

Our mission at the Georgetown Church of Christ is to glorify God and make disciples by guiding distracted people to confidently pursue their next step with Jesus



GEORGETOWN
church of christ

Truth
with Grace

Giving
with Joy

Serving
with Love

Relating
with Depth

Mentoring
with Purpose

Going
with Courage

Pathfinder
that pursues the way

↳ **Partner**
that doesn't walk alone

↳ **Provider**
that shares gifts freely

↳ **Preparer**
that intentionally equips others

↳ **Pioneer**
that goes anywhere
and tells everyone





GEORGETOWN
CHURCH OF CHRIST