



Start a Conversation about... **Sexual Purity**

While conversations around sexual purity have always been challenging, we know teens today are hearing more than ever about sex in songs, shows, and other forms of media. You could argue the topic of sex is less taboo now than it was even 10 years ago. Conversations around sex may dominate cultural messaging, telling youth to worry most about consent and what brings them pleasure. Discussing Biblical purity has become increasingly taboo.

Technology has made discussions around sex commonplace, but also increasingly critical of how the church discusses Biblical sexual purity. Some criticisms of "purity culture" should cause us pause to ensure we are balancing law and gospel. We need to listen to the impact our teaching have not just on teens, but on older singles, married couples and beyond in order to teach a lifelong understanding of "sexually pure and decent life." Other criticisms simply want to disregard what God says about His gift of sexuality. God's plan for the gift of sex is clear. Items purity rings, accountability partners, and more can & are a benefit for many. The issue comes in how we share what we know to be true in God's Word with love and clarity.

We should be prepared for these conversations, even when teens snicker or roll their eyes. Or when they are far more open than we expect, bringing questions and concerns you may be unprepared for. One voice to be conscious of in this discussion is that of victims of sexual assault, abuse, or rape. The Church has not always behaved honorably or with grace to those hurt in these ways, and instead brought them additional isolation and shame. It is important to make your conversation a place where those who have experienced this kind of hurt can be honest and hear God's Word of love and care for them.

Our hope and goal is that this Conversation Sheet helps you tackle, specifically, the complex conversations around sex & Biblical purity in a way that does not simply shame you and your teens, but leads all to a deeper understanding of God's plan & purpose. We hope it will also help faithful Christian parents to continue this conversation in their home. When preparing, take a deep breath, pray, and ask God to give you both challenge and grace-filled words for young people.

Potential Activities

- Propose situations that youth might experience that would challenge the guidelines God has given for sex and sexuality. Have them get in small, same gender groups and discuss what might be most challenging about these situations and how they might respond in a God pleasing way. Be sure to remind them that God offers grace and forgiveness for those who have struggled in these situations in real life and regret the choices they made.
- Have students share messages they see on social media, television and movies about sex and sexuality. List them out on a sheet of paper or board. Then compare them to what Scripture says about sex and sexuality. Discuss how they are different and why following what God says holds the most promise for them in the long run.
- Take time to serve a local crisis pregnancy center. This can help to connect this kind of study with studies on respecting life as given by God.

Discussion Questions

- ·Where are you learning about and discussion sex right now?

These questions allow you to know what they already know (or think they know) and where they learned it from. Both questions can give you great insight on your young people & how to navigate the conversation.

- ·What do you know about God's plan for sex?

Allow them to share with you. Fill in the blanks as needed. If you have the ability, write these down on a board or canvas for everyone to see. Be sure to balance God's Plan in law and the good news of forgiveness.

- ·What is the world's plan for sex? How does that plan differ from God's plan?
- ·Does the world's plan for sex ever contradict itself? Does God's plan for sex ever contradict itself?
- ·Why is the temptation to have sex before marriage so strong?
- ·What are some practical ways we can fight off & flee the temptation of premarital sex (and other sexual sin)?
- ·How do we talk about purity without shaming ourselves & others? What are grace-filled phrases we could use when talking with others?
- ·What do we do if we have already/are currently engaging in sexual acts & encounters? Where do we find repentance and forgiveness?
- ·What are earthly benefits of keeping God's good plan and rules for sex inside of marriage?
- ·How can we respond in a Christ-like way when someone we know has been sexually assaulted?
- ·Read John 8:1-11 together and ask the following questions:
 - If we were a character in this account, who would we be? Who SHOULD we be?
 - What words of encouragement are there for those who have willingly committed sexual sin?
 - Is there any encouragement here for those who have been sexually assaulted/abused?

Foundational Scriptural Truth

For these questions, refer to the scriptures below for guidance and direction. Some of these verses could be read in a manner that produces shame. Make sure to walk through what each verse means in a careful & delicate way.

·Genesis 2:24 & Mark 10:6-9

We see God's Plan from the very beginning for sex. It is one man, one woman, in marriage. Mark 10:6-9 shares a bit more about the marriage union. Sex & marriage go together in God's perfect plan.

·1 Corinthians 6:18

When it comes to sin, we often want to fight our own battles. That is always foolish. In this verse, we see what our response to sexual temptation should be: Run. We are not strong enough to stand up to the temptations of sex. God's plan for sexual temptation is to flee to our Savior Jesus.

·1 John 1:9

In this well-known verse we are reminded of the outcome of confessing our sins! God is FAITHFUL and JUST – even when we aren't! He faithfully gives us forgiveness. Only He can provide true purity from all our sins; and He does just that!

·Matthew 5:28

Sex & sexual sin is not just a physical action, it can happen in our minds & desires. God knows our thoughts – and our thoughts often lead to our actions. Fleeing from sexual sin as 1 Corinthians 6:18 instructs often starts in the mind.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

God doesn't give us His plan for sex to be a party pooper. He doesn't give us His plan to dangle sex over us like a carrot. God desires to make us holy & to mold our character to be more like Him, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 10:23

Sex, like many things, feels good. It is gratifying, satisfying, and a true gift given from God. However, not everything is beneficial or good for us. Our sinful nature can turn great gifts into selfish pursuits. Use this verse to discuss how sex is both good & but not always beneficial for our lives when used outside of God's good plan.

2 Corinthians 3:17

God is not a God of shame. God knows our sin and identifies it clearly for us. Yet, where God is there is salvation and freedom from sin and shame. This verse could be instrumental in changing the lives of those who are struggling with willingly committing sexual sin. It could also help heal the wounds of those who have been sexually assaulted or abused. No matter what has happened in our lives, we have FREEDOM in God!

Other Resources

- Heather Ruesch is an LCMS speaker and writer who has written a book called [Sexuality Mentality](#) from CPH. She wrote a four part study for [YouthESource available here](#). The book is an excellent resource and there are several podcasts and videos available that might be used by leaders, parents or youth.
- Use the study [Beyond Broken](#). This is a sex week study focused on God's intent for identity, gender and sexuality.
- Consider the [Starting a Conversation about Dating sheet](#) from YouthESource.

Final Encouragement

As you talk through these topics with your young people, engage their parents. Notify them in advance that you are going to be talking about sexuality and purity. Open communication helps build trust and allows you to support parents in having ongoing conversations at home.

If possible, have a night or event where you talk with parents about these topics. Perhaps it needs to be a series of nights or events. Maybe you have parents that need to understand both how to model sexual purity for their teens, consider the culture their teens are in and address what they might need to be reminded of God's plan and forgiveness for their sins.