



Sex Is . . . : Parent Cue

[FOR STUDENT PASTOR AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS]

Due to the topic, this series, more than others, is critical to keep an open line of communication with a parents. A few weeks before you start the Sex Is . . . series, e-mail the parents of your students the information below in the “What We’re Talking About” section (or post the content online) to inform them about the new series and what students will be discussing.

Also, the XP for this series is a survey to get an idea of what students think sex is. It’s very important that you communicate with your parents about what this survey is and why you are doing it. After all, most parents would raise an eyebrow about their child completing a survey on sex—if they knew about it. Make sure you keep your parents informed.

The information in the “For Parents Only” section will give parents direction on how to talk about the content of this series at home, and cue them with specific questions tied to each week’s concepts. You may want to consider recording the talks for them prior to the sessions, or giving them the outlines so they can have more detail than the summaries shown below.

Copy and paste the following description into an e-mail or a blog post for parents to help convey the main goal of this series.

WHAT WE’RE TALKING ABOUT:

Here is an overview of what we’re talking about. Listed below the summary is a “parent cue” to help you dialog with your child about the session. The question is intended not just to be asked by you, but to be responded to by **BOTH** of you. Use this opportunity to find out what God is teaching your child, and allow your child to see what God is teaching you as well.

Sex Is . . .

Series Overview

Everyone has an idea of what sex is. Some people think it simply is an act to meet a physical “need.” Others believe it’s the way to make a relationship closer. Some people treat it like an addiction, while others have been burned by it. So what is sex? What was it created to be? Because if everyone has such a strong idea of what it could be and should be, maybe we need to find out what it is *really* and how we live with what we learn?

Session One: Sex Is . . . Serious (2/1)

Sometimes the things that we think are not a big deal really are. Take sex for example. Sure, it’s a big deal to some people, but other people dismiss it as just a normal part of a relationship or a rite of passage. And when treated that way, if we aren’t careful, sex becomes just something casual. But sex isn’t really casual. It’s, well, serious. There’s more to it than just a physical act. It’s more complex than that. And while we know it’s a big deal because of what “bad” things could happen, there’s a much bigger reason why it’s serious—it’s how God created it to be.

XP3: Sex Is . . . : Parent Cue

Session One Parent Cue: How do you see people perceiving sex as not that big of a deal in real life and in the media?

Session Two: Sex Is . . . Powerful (2/8)

You know sex is power in our culture when it's used to sell cheeseburgers or furniture. But sex is power in a relationship too. Guys and girls use it to get what they want. And the tricky thing about sex is, just when you think you have the power, it can backfire. When you try to abuse its power, everybody loses. You can't underestimate the power of sex, because if you aren't careful, it will end up costing you.

Session Two Parent Cue: How can sex have power in a relationship? How can it affect you and how you see yourself and the other person?

Session Three: Sex Is . . . Everything? (2/15)

Sex is serious. Sex is powerful. But sex isn't everything. Yes, we said it. Sounds like heresy in our culture, doesn't it? But there's more to relationships than just sex. Sex may meet a need, but it never fully satisfies the deepest needs we have. There's more to relationships than that. There are plenty of married Christian people who "get" to have sex, yet find out that there's more to connecting with another person than just physically. Yes, sex is great. Yes, sex is important. But sex wasn't created to meet every need and be everything.

Session Three Parent Cue: What makes a marriage "good"? Describe some specific things that make up a healthy marriage. (Some of these things will be from lessons you may have learned the hard way. You may want to consider sharing some of those lessons with your teen if age-appropriate.)

Session Four: Sex Is . . . More (2/22)

Information can be overwhelming. Sometimes you just want someone to set everything aside, and get real with you. You want him or her to have a real conversation. This session is much different from the rest of the series. It takes into account the past three weeks, but also gets real with where students are. Because when it comes to sex, they may be at different places. And they need someone to acknowledge that and help them move in a good direction.

Session Four Parent Cue: What did you learn from this series?

Copy and paste the following content into an e-mail or blog post for parents. Make this content available during the series.

FOR PARENTS ONLY:

E-mail/Blog Post for parents

How did you learn about sex? Was it in a classroom? Was it from a friend? Was it from your mom or dad? A magazine? A movie?

When you found out about it, did you think you knew more than you actually did? It's amazing how you can think you are such an expert on something with just the basic facts. That's probably where your child is. He or she thinks they know all about this subject. Maybe it's because you had some conversations with them. Maybe it's because they had sex ed at school. Maybe it's because they heard some things from a friend, or read something in a book or saw something in a movie.

They think they know what sex is, but there's a lot more to sex than just the fundamental facts. And for many of us, that's the part of the conversation that we never heard growing up, and we may not think to have with our kids. But we don't have to look very far in our own lives or in the world around us to know it's a reality.

The conversations we are having with your child will lay the foundation for discussions you can have with them as well. As uncomfortable as this topic may be, we encourage you to take this

XP3: Sex Is . . . : Parent Cue

opportunity to broach the subject with your child. Use the following questions merely as a starting point. Let the conversation be natural. And most of all, pray before you talk with your kids. Ask God to help give you wisdom to know where to steer the conversation and what to share.

Also, think about the setting for the conversation. Take a walk or go to dinner, but have the conversation in a place that's outside of your normal routine. Find a place outside the home if possible and see this time as a way of building relationship with your son or daughter.

Sometimes our teens need to hear not only about the choices we made, but why we made those choices. What we thought sex would get us, when all it did was leave us empty. What we wish we would have done instead and why. Because the truth is, as adults, we understand something that we may not have understood as teenagers—sex is serious, sex is powerful, but as great as sex is, it isn't everything. And even if we have learned it the hard way, we know you can't have a relationship solely based on sex.

We're going to focus the conversation on three different areas that correspond with what your teen is hearing during this series. You can choose to have the conversation weekly, or talk through all of these in one setting.

Just as a word of advice—**LISTEN**. Listen to what your son or daughter thinks and feels about these issues. Try to help guide them in conversation, and avoid shutting the conversation down. And as scary as the idea of this conversation may be, we encourage you *not* to approach it as an opportunity to strike fear in your child. See this instead as a dialogue, a chance to be vulnerable and honest, approachable, but still within the boundaries of a healthy parent/child relationship.

Also, keep in mind that your child may feel awkward having this discussion with you as well. Don't let the eye rolling or the mumbling throw you off. Use these questions as a guide, but feel free to adapt them to persevere through this potentially embarrassing topic. The chances are that your child will appreciate the fact that you attempted to talk about this—even if they don't fully acknowledge it until years from now.

Create meaningful conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

Sex is serious (include date)

Did you hear anything at church this week that you had never heard before when it comes to the seriousness of sex? What was it?

What do you think sex does in a relationship?

You know about the physical part of sex. (And if your child doesn't or simply thinks he or she does, this would be a good time to explain it.) But how do you think emotions play into sex?

How does the spiritual part of us play into sex?

How does the "two will become one" show up in the emotional and spiritual side of us? (The physical is obvious.)

When it comes to sex and relationships, how do most people portray what sex does to a relationship?

With sex, does it ever feel like the message culture, friends or media are sending is incomplete? Like you are only hearing part of the story? (probably not) Why or why not?

XP3: Sex Is . . . : Parent Cue

As the parent, communicate (appropriately) what you think is being left out of the messages about sex your child is hearing.

When someone doesn't take sex seriously, how have you seen it affect his or her life? (**parent:** maybe in a marriage of a relative or friend, a co-worker, in the news; **student:** maybe in the life of a friend or peer from school)

Sex is powerful (include date)

Did you hear anything at church this week that you had never heard before when it comes to the power of sex? What was it?

How do you think our culture conveys the message that "sex is powerful"? (focusing on the power of a girl's body and how she dresses, and the power a guy has when he gets with a lot of girls)

Why do you think guys want to have sex? (If you're a dad, explain why guys want to have sex.)

Why do you think girls want to have sex? (if you're a mom, explain why girls want to have sex.)

As a parent, share—either through personal experience or stories of people you've known—how powerful the lure of sex is and the way it can change a relationship.

You may want to talk about the power of pornography, and how guys buy into the illusion of sex that requires nothing from them. And increasingly, girls are viewing pornography, buying into the illusion of intimacy that porn portrays of someone desiring them.

Sex isn't everything (include date)

Did the message at church surprise you—that sex isn't everything?

People have sex for many different reasons. Some people are just curious. They want to know what it's like. Other people are looking for something.

Some people have sex to find security in a relationship, thinking it will make someone stay or the relationship grow stronger.

Some people have sex to get them status. They want to be known as someone who people desire and want to be with.

Some people have sex for companionship. They just want to be close to someone, anyone, and not be alone.

Some people have sex for acceptance. They don't want to be a 40-year-old virgin.

If you were sexually active before marriage, this might be a good way for you to talk to your child about some of the choices you made, and why you made those choices.

Have you ever known a couple who was sexually active outside of marriage? Does their relationship seem overly physical?

Does it seem like sometimes when people say "sex is for marriage" that it really plays up the concept of getting married so you can have sex? In addition to sex, what do you think it takes to make a marriage work?

Note for parent: Sex defines a relationship in our culture, but it's only one part of a relationship. Your child doesn't hear that. Your child doesn't realize that while it's a great thing, it's also not everything. It's why sex isn't the end goal for marriage. It's why if they choose to wait to have sex until marriage, they need to know that sex isn't the point once they get there. Sex will be a part of married life. It will draw a husband and wife closer together, but it isn't the only thing that draws them together. Let your child know what you believe it takes to marriage work—even if those are

XP3: Sex Is . . . : Parent Cue

lessons you learned the hard way—and how sex plays a role in that, but that it's not the only thing.

© 2010 Orange. All rights reserved.

Get connected to a wider community of parents at www.orangeparents.org.