



### ***What's Going on With My 8th Grader?***

The 8th grader says “goodbye” to puberty issues and “hello” to the quest for freedom from parents and “kiddie” things. Major changes occur during this year as the teen transitions into the middle of the adolescent journey. Here is a look at what is going on with your 8th grader.

#### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Upper body strength begins to develop in boys.
- Boys and girls level out in height.
- Girls are almost fully developed physically.
- Boys have more of a growth spurt to continue.
- Sexual desire awakens in both boys and girls.
- They have a need to develop exercise routines and healthy habits.

#### **EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### ***The 8th grader may:***

- Have a more evident “adult” personality
- Want to try new things in an effort to discover identity
- Obtain a strong sense of accomplishment from being involved in various activities
- Be easily “bored”
- Begin to question authority and analyze their behavior
- Exhibit impulsive behavior with friends and peers
- Express less affection for parents
- Not respond to adult lectures, feeling they know better what is going on than the adult does
- Experience periods of sadness and depression and desperation, which can lead to poor coping habits



### RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Relationships with parents become focused on a negotiation to get what they want.
- They have a strong desire to be accepted by their peers.
- Girls have a tendency to be interested in older boys.
- There is a desire to have and “overuse” a cell phone.
- Friendships change due to new schools, boyfriends/girlfriends, and change of affinity groups.
- Girls tend to build friendships in groups of 2-3.
- Boys tend to build friendships in “packs” of 8-10, based on affinity.
- Boys struggle with being “loners” if they do not find a pack of friends.
- A strong interest in sports is typical for both genders but is not exclusive.

### SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- They need a trusted and loving adult to talk to them about what the Bible teaches on “adult” subjects like sex.
- Rather than being told what to believe, they need spiritual leaders to ask their opinions and let them develop their beliefs.
- Their interest and commitment to faith change rapidly back and forth, signaling an internal struggle on whether or not to accept it.
- While timid about taking on difficult intellectual tasks like studying the Bible, they are ready to begin the practice of daily Bible study (with lots of encouragement).



### 8th GRADE VIDEO SCRIPTS

## 8TH GRADE: THE PURITY WEEKEND

Alright. I'm about to tell you something that you are not going to believe. But just hang in there with me, okay? Because this is really important.

***You should not have a sex talk with your teenager.***

Now don't laugh at me. I'm serious. This is expert parenting advice. *You should not have a sex talk with your teenager.* Don't do it. It's a waste of your time.

Now, you don't want to have a sex talk with your teenager, but what you *do* want to have is *an ongoing conversation* with your teenager about this crucial topic. I promise you they are hearing this topic from others, but they have to hear it from you if they have any hope of being healthy in this area.

We know this can be an awkward and stressful conversation, so we want to help you make the most of this very important time by a Family Experience called "The Purity Weekend." The truth is, as parents we can avoid teaching our teenager a healthy view of sex because it feels like there is a death to our sweet little innocent child that we begin grieving. But you'll eventually grieve even more if you avoid this topic, and there is little in life that can cause more pain to your teenager than an improper view of sex. So the Purity Weekend is a Family Experience that creates an opportunity to set

your teenager up to approach this subject with a healthy view.

We will begin to do this by providing Kick-starters that will 1. Give you tips on approaching this important conversation 2. Will walk you through God's view of sexuality 3. Will give you ideas for striving for God's best in our relationships.

This Family Experience will be a discussion of sex and purity that will take place during a fun weekend trip or event that you will plan with your student. This doesn't take away from how serious and important this discussion is. A trip or fun event will help ease some of that tension.

The first step is to plan your trip. We recommend that this event be with one parent and one teenager. Many families have made this with a father and son or a mother and daughter event. We understand that this is not always possible. It may not be best for your family. Plan something that you can afford, and think of ways to make this a fun, memorable event for both of you. Do this at a place that is both private and comfortable for both of you. A crowded restaurant is not a good idea. At the end of the weekend, give your teenager a symbol to remember this conversation and the commitment you make to one another and to God. Whatever you choose, make it something special and appropriate for the commitment they are making.



We have provided downloadable resources to help you navigate through this weekend. We know that even the most prepared parents can be thrown a curve ball now and then by their teenagers, and because of that, we have created a list of tough questions that teenagers often ask about this topic, along with a biblically based answer so that you're not caught off guard. In the Parent Guide you will find all the steps to make this a meaningful weekend with your teen.

The event, and your openness to talk with and pray with your student will help them see the importance you're placing on this discussion of purity. This will be a gift that will impact your teenager and your family for generations to come.



### ***God's Best in Relationships***

#### **KICK-START WITH ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PARENTS**

- Sex and purity conversations can be the hardest conversations to have with your teen, but they are also talks that can take your relationship to a new level.
- Even though your 13-year-old may wince every time the s-e-x word comes up, they really do want to feel safe with you on this topic.
- Even as an adult, you can still model purity for your teen in your media choices, language, and relationships with the opposite gender at work or in social settings.

#### **FRAMING UP OUR PURPOSE**

***"One flesh" is a really big deal and a great place to start the conversation.***

*"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his wife, and they will be one flesh." --Genesis 2:22-24*

When God first brought a man and woman together, Adam's response was that she was, in reality, a part of him. It pretty much took his breath away to realize that they were meant to be made one.

A great place to start in explaining the sacredness of sex is that God intends for us to be joined and united as one with another human being. It is a powerful union to care for another person sexually, emotionally, and spiritually, and it is not meant to be carelessly repeated with different people throughout our lives. To become one flesh means not to be torn apart.

Grace and restoration play an important part here, too, because our kids sometimes stumble and make poor sexual choices. Marriages often struggle and end. But helping our teens strive for the goal of experiencing "one flesh" with just one person will guard their hearts in a world of broken ones.

***Talk to them about intimacy.***

*"Standing behind at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." --Luke 7:38*

*"When he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." --1 Samuel 18:1*

*"His left hand would be under my head. His right hand would embrace me... Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; for love is strong as death." --Song of Solomon 8:3, 6*



One definition of intimacy could be summarized as a feeling of belonging together. It's the sense that we can let down our guard, be real, and not worry about rejection. There are many examples of intimate relationships in our lives. Hopefully, we can learn to be intimate with God. Most people have a few friendships in their lifetime that are incredibly close and honest. And often there is at least one family relationship that is extremely close to you. So there is more than one kind of intimate relationship where we feel like we belong with someone.

**Talk about sex through the lens of God's best for them.**

*"The man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed." --Genesis 2:25*

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light..." --1 Peter 2:9*

Although it's true that sex outside of marriage is a bad choice--and there can be painful consequences to unhealthy sexual behavior--, sex is still God's gift to us, and it's not helpful to just tell our teens that it's "bad." We want them to anticipate not being ashamed of past relationship struggles and look forward to this gift that they someday will give their spouse.

***Sex is God's gift to us, and it's not helpful to just tell our teens that it's "bad."***

We want them to see that God has His very best in mind for us when He commands us to save sex for marriage. It's also important for our teens to discover that they should not only be concerned about God's best for themselves but also God's best for the people they are attracted to and God's best for the people they are influencing. Their perspective will really be impacted when they consider that their sexual behaviors have an impact on the people around them, too.

***Give practical guidance to help them set healthy relationship boundaries.***

*"Finally then, brothers, we beg and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, that you abound more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.*

*For this is the will of God: your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each one of you know how to control his own body in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who don't know God;*

*that no one should take advantage of and wrong a brother or sister in this matter..."*

*--1 Thessalonians 4:1-6*

Paul reminds the church in Thessalonica that he has given them a description of how to walk and please God. Christian culture does a good job of telling teens, "Don't do that," when it comes to sex. We don't do such a good job of equipping them for that challenge. Here are a



few ideas to equip you and your teen to walk this journey of purity:

Encourage your teen to enjoy co-ed friendship groups as often as possible, because they can learn so much more about sharing everyday life with the opposite sex in those relationships than they will in dating relationships.

Establish the PDA boundaries in your home (location and privacy) to help them avoid tempting situations.

Ask your teen questions like “Are you trusting in God’s best for you in your dating relationships?” and “Are you remembering to keep God’s best for your girlfriend/boyfriend ahead of your own desires?”

Lastly, troubleshoot with your teenager about what to do if they find themselves in a situation where they might compromise on sexual choices.

### **IDEAS FOR STRIVING FOR GOD’S BEST IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS**

- Ask fearless questions like “How are you doing in this relationship?”
- Introduce your teen to couples who have a powerful purity story to tell.
- Point out scriptures that reinforce trusting God’s best for our lives.
- Discourage middle school girls and boys from “going together” and have them wait for actual dating till at least their junior year.
- Teach your son to call and ask a girl’s father if he can ask her out on a date.
- If your teen is in a relationship, have dinner with the young couple once a month.
- Sexting is a HUGE problem among teens, so social media accountability is a non-negotiable. You should always be allowed to know passwords and check their Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and text messages.





### 8th GRADE VIDEO SCRIPTS

## 8TH GRADE: THE PURITY WEEKEND

### Speaker:

Alright. I'm about to tell you something that you are not going to believe. But just hang in there with me, okay? Because this is really important.

### ***You should not have a sex talk with your teenager.***

Now don't laugh at me. I'm serious. This is expert parenting advice. *You should not have a sex talk with your teenager.* Don't do it. It's a waste of your time.

Now, you don't want to have a sex talk with your teenager, but what you *do* want to have is *an ongoing conversation* with your teenager about this crucial topic. I promise you they are hearing this topic from others, but they have to hear it from you if they have any hope of being healthy in this area.

Let me ask you. What is your plan for pouring out your dreams for purity into the heart of your teenager? Your student ministry has an idea to help you do that, and it's called "The Purity Weekend."

Let's be honest. This is not an easy conversation. I mean, this is your little baby, and when you have this conversation, it feels like you're declaring an end to their innocence. Can't we just let them believe until they're 18 that storks bring

babies? Look, the truth is, as parents we avoid teaching our teenager a healthy view of sex because it feels like there is a depth to our sweet little innocent child that we begin grieving. But you'll eventually grieve even more if you avoid this topic. You know, the chances are that your parents did not equip you to deal with this all-important issue, and the fact that you've never seen this modeled appropriately makes it even more difficult to deal with. There is likely no other topic with more distorted missing information than this one. And there is little in life that can cause more pain to your teenager than an improper view of sex. So the Purity Weekend is a rite of passage that creates an opportunity to set your teenager up to approach this subject with a healthy view.

It sets them up for success. Your student ministry wants to give you the tools to lead your teenager to experience a fun weekend together, to build your relationship, and to give your teenager a biblical view of this very important subject. Check out the tools your student ministry has available for you to teach your teenager God's plan for sex through the Purity Weekend. It's all there waiting for you.





### PARENT GUIDE FOR 8TH GRADE: PURITY WEEKEND

#### Speaker:

The 8th grade rite of passage is centered on purity. Hopefully, you haven't run out of the room screaming. We know this is one of the toughest, most awkward conversations for a parent to have with their teenager. We've created several resources to help you through this rite of passage. The discussion of sex and purity will take place during a fun weekend trip or event that you will plan with your student. This doesn't take away from how serious and important this discussion is. A trip or fun event will help ease some of that tension.

The first step is to plan your trip. We recommend that this event be with one parent and one teenager. Many families have made this with a father and son or a mother and daughter event. We understand that this is not always possible. It may not be best for your family. This doesn't have to be a budget buster. Plan something that you can afford and think of ways to make this a fun, memorable event for both of you.

Before the weekend begins, make sure to let your student know your plans. Let them know specifically when you plan to discuss this topic with them on the trip. That way there is no surprise, and they can prepare for the discussion. Do this at a place that is both private and comfortable for both of you. A crowded restaurant is not a good idea.

Give your teenager a symbol--a symbol to remember this conversation and the commitment you make to one another. Many parents give a ring to represent their commitment to purity. That ring can then be exchanged with the wedding ring at their future wedding ceremony. Whatever you choose, make it something special and appropriate for the commitment they are making. We have provided downloadable resources to help you navigate through this weekend. The first is full of tips on how to pull off a successful Purity Weekend. Those resources provide you with a special guide,

***We know this is one of the toughest, most awkward conversations for a parent to have with their teenager!***

Scripture references, and a prayer guide to help you prepare for your talk with your teenager. We know that even the most prepared parents can be thrown a curve ball now and then by their teenagers. Because of that, we have created a list of tough questions that teenagers often ask about this topic, along with a biblically based answer, so that you're not caught off





guard. A document has been included, as well, that will help inform you of what is happening physically, mentally, and emotionally with your student. We've also provided devotionals for you and your teenager to work through together, focusing on purity and God's view of sex. These devotionals can be used leading up to the Purity Weekend, during your trip or as a follow-up after your trip. The choice is yours. These devotionals will help teach your teenager the importance of using the Bible to find the answers to the tough questions that they will face in life.

Okay, so take a deep breath. We know that this can seem intimidating. The event and your openness to talk with and pray with your student will help them see the importance you're placing on this discussion of purity. This will be a gift that will impact your teenager and your family for generations to come.





### **8th Grade:**

#### **Question and Answer Guide**

A primary purpose for the Purity Weekend is to encourage and allow your teenager to ask you the questions they have about sex. For most parents, this is a scary thought, but ask yourself this question: "If they don't get this information from me, who will they get it from?"

Although you can't get out of your responsibility to give your teenager a biblical education on this subject, you can relax, because we have created a tool to help answer some of the questions you might get!

#### **Q&A to Help with Parent/Teenager Discussion of Sex**

##### **What is sex?**

First, and most importantly, sex is a way of worshipping God. The Bible describes us as being created in body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The sexual experience within a marriage is one of the only gifts God has given us that touches all three of these areas (body, soul, and spirit) simultaneously. And any activity that involves all three of these areas can be classified as sexual. Although each activity may not be directly classified as sex, the sexual experience begins with physical touch (holding hands, hugging, kissing, etc.) and progresses to more intimate acts.

##### **What does God say about sex?**

God is the creator of sex and wants it to be enjoyed, but within the boundaries that He created.

A good metaphor for this is a saltwater aquarium. The focus is on the beauty of the coral, the fish, and lighting. People don't look at an aquarium like this and say, "Man, all this glass, metal, and wood is just getting in the way." The boundaries are not the focus; the beauty is. At the same time, if the boundaries weren't there, then death, brokenness, and chaos would ensue.

##### ***God gives us boundaries to keep the beauty in, not to keep the fun stuff out.***

*The Bible says, "Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths. The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray." Proverbs 5:17-23*

##### **Does God give us boundaries and rules for sex?**

Absolutely. Is it His desire for us to put our primary focus on the rules? No. Sex is beautiful. Sex is to be pure. Sex is for a husband and a wife to enjoy.





### **What is a sexually transmitted disease (STD)?**

An STD is a disease that is passed through sexual contact from an infected person to a non-infected person. Any sexual act that involves a bodily fluid is a potential way to transmit an STD. This can range from kissing, for some diseases, all the way to intercourse.

Types of STDs include chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, genital warts, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS. Some effects of these diseases include pain, bleeding, infectious discharges, rashes, burning sensations, blisters, sores, and, in some cases, cancer and death. Currently in America, every hour, 350 teens contract a sexually transmitted disease. This is one reason God provides boundaries for sex. He does not want to see His children suffer in ways that are, in most cases, completely preventable.

### **What is intercourse?**

In many ways, God created a man's and a woman's bodies to fit together like puzzle pieces. Intercourse is part of the sexual experience in which the penis of the male is inserted into the vaginal canal of the female.

### **What is an orgasm?**

An orgasm is another experience that God created for a husband and wife to share. At a certain point in the sexual experience, the body releases chemicals called endorphins into the body. These chemicals cause a person to feel a sense of euphoria, joy, and intense excitement.

### **What is oral sex, and does God consider it to be sex?**

Oral sex is when one person stimulates the other person's genitals with their mouth. God does consider this to be sex, because, again, it is a process that affects a person physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

### **What is pornography?**

Pornography is any form of visual, audio, or video image that portrays nudity or a sexual experience. Pornography, at its core, causes women to be viewed as objects of lust rather than the beautiful creations God intended them to be. It trains people to look upon women disrespectfully, and it also causes people to "lust in their hearts," as Jesus taught against in the Sermon on the Mount. Many people involved in the pornography industry (women, in particular) have gone through abuse, drug addiction, forced abortions, and the like.

As creations of Christ, it is our duty to love those that are hurting by not supporting the pornography industry. Last year alone, nearly \$15 billion was spent on internet pornography. Current research estimates that 1 in 4 American men are addicted to internet pornography. Sadly, the average within the Church is not much better: 1 in 6. Marriages are destroyed because of this. Because pornography is so readily available, monitoring software (such as Covenant Eyes or x3church) can provide an extra level of accountability for teens and their families.





### **What is sexting, and is it okay?**

Sexting involves sending nude pictures or videos of yourself to other people via text messaging or instant messaging. Although they can seem harmless, these images are often used to manipulate the ones who send them into doing things they do not want to do. Also, by sending these images, you are inviting lust into the lives of the ones to whom the images were sent. This is definitely not God's will for anyone.

These obviously won't be the answers to all the questions you might get, so we wanted to arm you with the "silver bullet" answer that will get you out of just about any question that you can't answer. Are you ready for it? Here we go...

"I don't know."

It's that simple. Just admit to your teenager that you don't know the best way to answer their question, but you will go find an answer and get back to them on it. Then you can go find a knowledgeable person, ask them for help, and make sure to follow up on your promise to return the answer to your teenager.

You are a wonderful parent for facing a potentially awkward conversation with courage, in order to do your part to help your teenager have a healthy understanding of sex.





## ***8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Guide for a Successful Purity Weekend***

### **Invite your teenager to go with you on a weekend full of fun.**

If at all possible, let them decide what that fun will be, within the constraints of your family's budget.

Have fun! Plan activities that your teenager loves and do it with them.

Often this trip is planned for one parent and one teenager. Many families make this a father/son or mother/daughter event. However, this may not be possible (or best) for your family.

Before the weekend begins, be sure to let your teenager know your plan. Try not to surprise them. Teenagers don't like surprises, especially when it comes to talking about sexual purity. Let them know specifically at what point on this trip you will be discussing sexual purity. That way they can be prepared for it.

### ***Share your dreams for them in the area of sexual purity.***

When talking about purity or any sexually-related topic, it's important that parents initiate the conversation but stay away from lectures.

Consider sharing with your teenager your experience in learning about the subject of sex. You can tell them whether it was positive or negative and how it affected you as an adult. Share with your teenager that you want to set them up to be healthy in the area of sex.

Share with them why you believe that God's plan for sex is best for them. Here are some Scriptures you might want to share with them:

- **Genesis 1:26, 31:** God sees sex as a good thing.
- **Genesis 2:18-25:** God created sex.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:3:** God has a standard for sex.
- **Matthew 19:4-6:** God created man and woman to become one flesh.
- **1 Corinthians 6:12-20:** Sex outside of marriage is not a good thing.

**Many people in our culture ridicule the idea of waiting until marriage to have sex. Discuss with your teenager the common viewpoints against God's plan for sex. Here are some statements you might use in this part of the discussion:**

I have never met someone who waited until marriage to have sex and regretted it. I have never met someone who followed God's plan and then after their honeymoon said, "I wish I would have had more sex before marriage!"

The people who disagree with God's plan for sex see it more as a physical act. God created it to connect body and soul. Sex for a married couple is like spiritual super glue. It is not meant to be exchanged casually.

When you engage in sexual activity prior to marriage, you are creating a "marital" type bond with a boyfriend or girlfriend. That type of bonding should only follow a marital commitment.



God's plan for sex is the only safe sex. There is no way to 100% avoid pregnancy outside of marriage or to elude sexually transmitted diseases with pills or condoms. The only way to avoid these things completely is to save sex for its proper place--a committed marriage.

Sex is used by many to sell movies, music, and products. Sex is undervalued by many and is used to satisfy a physical urge at the cost of emotional pain. My dream for you is that you value yourself, value your relationship with God, value your relationship with me, value your future spouse, value your own body, value your own soul, and value sex as something to be treasured, not used casually.

It is your job to honor the purity and integrity of your boyfriend/girlfriend, not take advantage of it. One day you might attend the wedding of someone you dated and broke up with. I want you to be able to shake the hand of their future spouse, with no regrets, knowing that you protected their purity.

### **Commit to each other to value purity.**

Let your teenager know that you value purity as well. Give them permission to hold you accountable for treasuring purity in what you watch, what you think, and how you live.

### **Give your teenager a symbol to remember your conversation and commitment to one another.**

Many parents give a ring to their teenager to represent their commitment to purity. That ring can then be exchanged with the wedding ring at their future wedding ceremony.

You might think of another symbol that would better fit your teenager to help them remember this very important commitment you are making to each other.

### **Pray Together**

Take some time to thank God for the opportunity to share with each other honestly.

Here are some things you can pray over your teenager:

- Pray that God would guard their mind and fill it with truth in the area of sex.
- Pray that God would guard their body and give them a desire to honor their body.
- Pray that God would guard their heart and protect them from unnecessary emotional pain in the area of sex.
- Pray that God would continue to grow your relationship with them and give each of you the courage to continue talking about purity.

Thank God for the strength and opportunity to have this important moment together.

### **Now get back to having fun!**

There is no way to avoid awkwardness in this conversation. One way to combat awkwardness is to quickly follow up your face-to-face conversation with some shoulder-to-shoulder fun!

Remember that no one has a louder voice than you in the life of your teenager. Your words weigh the most to them. You are their greatest spiritual influence. Congratulations on using that influence to set them up for success and health in the area of sex!