



BIRDS  BEES

TAKES FLIGHT

WITH MARY FLO RIDLEY &
MEGAN MICHELSON

A DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH QUESTIONS AND
CONVERSATIONS TO GET YOU OFF THE GROUND



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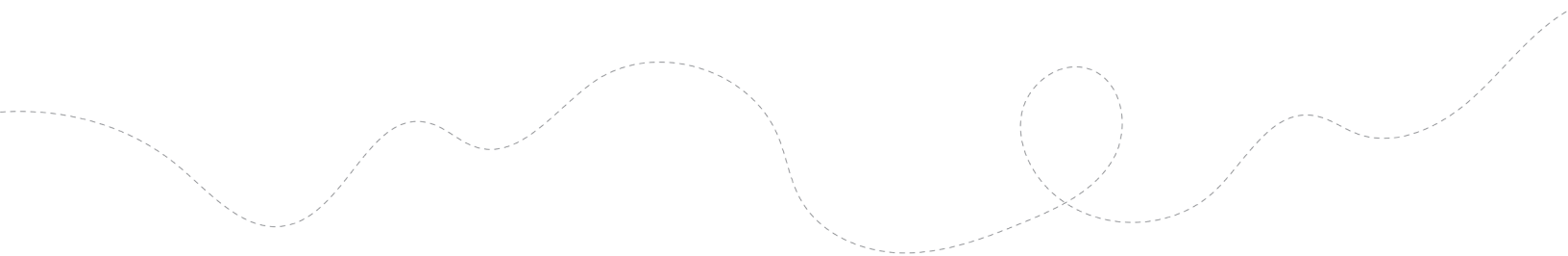
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HELLO AGAIN!

Thank you for purchasing The Birds & The Bees Takes Flight Discussion Guide. It is designed as a companion piece to what you have heard in our video series or in one of our live programs. Our goal is to equip parents with the tools they need to have multiple conversations with their children about sex- not just one talk.

We created it to help get you talking out loud. We know talking about sex is challenging and awkward- among adults and especially with our kids. Talking through this guide with your spouse, trusted friend or community group will reveal your own thoughts and values about sex. It gives you opportunities to **practice saying out loud some of those tough words and phrases.** You need to be comfortable talking about sex before you start talking to your kids.

Our hope is that through this Discussion Guide, you will gain confidence in talking about the birds and the bees. We hope it provides clarity for the direction your family will take in future conversations.

Your kids will be asking questions sooner than you think. We want you to be ready.

Let's get talking.



STEP 1

Making Your Family Message

The goal of this first step is to create your personal family message. You can start by asking: What is it that I want my children to know about sex as they grow up in my home? Future conversations with your children will come easier if you have a plan and direction in mind. The following questions are meant to get you and your spouse thinking and talking about this topic. **As parents, we need to be comfortable talking about sex in order to talk to our kids about sex.**

These questions are meant to be discussed out loud. You will talk through:

- What shaped your understanding of sex in the past
- Your current values and beliefs
- Your hopes for your child's understanding about sex in the future

It is important to remember that the focus moving forward is on their future and not your past. There is a lot to unpack here, so take your time going through these questions.

Buzz Words for Step 1:

Be proactive, not reactive.

You give the first impression.

It's not about you – it's about them.



YOUR PAST

1. Did your parents give you "the talk" or have significant conversations with you about sex?
If so, how would you describe that experience?
2. Did the talk or these conversations have an impact on your views about sex or sexuality?
3. What was the overall tone regarding sex in your home growing up?
Was it talked about positively? Negatively? Not at all?
4. Were you adequately informed by your parents about sex?
5. Did you feel comfortable talking to your parents about sex?
6. If your parents were not the key source of your information, who or what formed your overall impression of sex?
7. Did the media play a key role in shaping your attitudes and behaviors about sex and sexuality?
Movies? TV Shows? Magazines? Books? Pornography?
8. Considering that many lessons are "caught" and not necessarily "taught," what non-verbal lessons did you receive from your parents about sex?
9. Would you describe your parents as approachable when you had questions? Did you feel comfortable going to them?
If not, what was the barrier?
10. Select a word that most closely describes your communications with your parents growing up.
Silent • Miserable • Confusing • Awkward
Adequate • Helpful • Amazing • Open • Honest
11. Did your understanding or lack of understanding of sex affect any decisions you made in regards to your own sexual activity?
12. What do you wish you had known about sex when you were younger?



THE PRESENT

1. How would you define healthy attitudes and behaviors about sex and sexuality?
2. What would you say is the purpose(s) of sex?
3. What are your beliefs or values regarding sexual activity?
4. What role does your faith, if any, play in your understanding?
5. Where do you stand on the following topics?
*Homosexuality • Transgenderism • Hook-Up Culture •
Sexting • Pornography • Abortion • Virginity*
6. Do you feel like you and your spouse are on the same page in regard to understanding sex and sexuality?
If not, where do you differ?
7. What current influences in your child's life could impact his or her understanding of sex?



THEIR FUTURE

1. How important is it for your child to first hear about sex from you?
2. How do you want your child to feel when asking you questions about sex?
3. What do you want the overall tone to be with these conversations?
Approachable? Open? Factual? Reassuring?
4. What do you think it takes to be an askable, approachable parent?
5. Has your child asked you any questions about sex (reproduction, conception, body parts, etc.)?
*How did you respond?
Do you wish you had responded differently?*
6. How do you want your child to view their masculinity/femininity?

7. How do you hope your son views women? How do you hope your daughter views men?
How could your parental roles influence or shape these ideas?
8. How do you hope they will interact with the opposite sex?
9. Which do you think will influence your child the most?
*Parents • Family • Friends • Media • Teachers •
Coaches • Doctors • Technology*
10. Of the above, which will be the most positive or negative?
11. Do you hope your child saves sex for marriage?
Why is this important to you?
If not, under what conditions would you support them being sexually active?
12. Do you hope your child will establish clear boundaries and develop self-restraint in order to protect their sexual health?
Which physical or emotional boundaries do you hope they develop?
What consequences do you fear the most if they don't?
13. What choices do you hope your child makes regarding their sexual activity?
14. Ideally, what do you hope for their adult sex life?
15. What are some of the consequences of growing up with a misunderstanding of sex?



Spreading Your Wings




Now that you've considered your past and your child's future, let's begin the task of shaping the message that your children will receive about sex as they grow up in your home.

This message is personal to YOU, and reflects your core beliefs and values, so it's important for you to bring those to the surface. This message will look different from family to family. All this preparation will help you be a proactive parents and not just a reactive one.

Keep in mind that you want to remember this message– so keep it short!

PLEASE WATCH OUR VIDEO, **STEP 1: YOUR FAMILY MESSAGE**, FOR SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS.

Action Steps:

-  Find a time to sit down with your spouse or individually to make a detailed list of what you want your child to understand about sex.
-  Narrow down this list to one sentence that encompasses your core beliefs.
-  Consider sharing your message with your child's caregiver and/or grandparents so that everyone is on the same page.



STEP 2

Learn the Anatomical Vocabulary

Most of us have used silly words for private parts when we really don't need to. **For their safety and understanding, it's important for your children to be able to identify their body parts and to know they are private.**

It is okay to occasionally use the word "privates" or any other *wingy waxy* words, as long as "penis" and "vagina" and other anatomically correct words are included regularly. You don't want your child to hear those words for the first time when you explain sexual intercourse. That's just too much at once!

Using these words in a matter-of-fact way prevents shame, secrecy, and silliness.

Buzz Words for Step 2:

Use your words.

Have a matter-of-fact tone.

Empower your child to protect their privacy.



WHAT'S THE WORD?

1. What words did you grow up with for identifying private parts?
2. What words does your child use to identify female or male body parts?
3. What is challenging for you about using anatomically correct vocabulary?
4. Is it difficult for you to say the word "penis" or "vagina" out loud?

Ha! You just did.

5. If you don't currently use the correct terms, when can you introduce those words to your children?

Tonight? This week?

Bathtime? Doctor visits? Getting Dressed?

6. If your children are all boys, do they know the name for the female parts?

And vice versa for all-girl families?

7. Can you think of any words that your children have picked up (from you or others) that would seem disrespectful regarding body parts?

What are those words?

8. What words could you use to bring an attitude of respect towards their bodies and other peoples' bodies?

Breasts vs. boobies? Bottom vs. booty?

9. Does your child know that he or she has body parts that are private?

Do they know what private means?



BEFORE YOU FLY...

What is the definition of "private?"

When we tell our children to keep their body parts "private," that means that aside from parents or occasionally their pediatrician, others are not allowed to see or touch them, and they are not allowed to see or touch other people's private parts. We must also include picture taking—no one is allowed to take pictures of their private parts. We must give them permission to say NO very loudly, to walk away, and to never keep secrets about this. If anyone tries to violate their privacy, they are to let you know immediately no matter what. You can reassure them that this will probably not happen to them, but you want them to be safe and protected.

Spreading Your Wings

While it most definitely is not the end of the world to use some of these silly words, it's best also to use medically-specific vocabulary. We know that there will be giggly moments about body parts, and that's to be expected, but we want to be respectful in the way we talk about our own bodies and anyone else's body.

PLEASE WATCH OUR VIDEO, **STEP 2: LEARN THE ANATOMICAL VOCABULARY**, FOR SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS.

Action Steps:



Introduce the correct names of body parts to your child if you haven't already done so.



Be aware of any comments or words (about your body, their body, or anyone else's body) that could send a negative body image message to your child and try to break that habit.



Remind your child not to yell "penis" in the middle of the grocery store (*hehe*).



STEP 3

Tell The Birth Story

"How is that baby going to get out of there?"

Even though we know conception happens before birth, kids typically ask this question before they ask about how the baby got *in there*. Fortunately for us, this is an easier question to answer. **We want to dazzle our children with the story of birth.** (It is pretty amazing!)

We want to be prepared to share the exciting and truthful story of birth with medical terms like "uterus," "contractions," "birth canal," "vagina," "umbilical cord," etc.

Buzz Words for Step 3:

Give them the dazzling details.

Take initiative, if needed.

Be the expert.



A CONVERSATION IS BORN

1. Is there anything about the birth story that will be challenging to share with your child?
2. Has your child asked how a baby is born?
3. Did you answer with specifics?

Or did you give them a short answer about the doctor and the hospital?

4. Do you need to revisit the conversation?
5. Does your child know that babies grow in a uterus or a womb and not in a tummy?

HERE IS A SAMPLE CONVERSATION ABOUT BIRTH THAT WILL DAZZLE YOUR CHILD AND ELEVATE YOU TO EXPERT STATUS. TAKE TURNS READING THIS OUT LOUD A FEW TIMES TO GET COMFORTABLE WITH A FEW OF THESE PHRASES.

"Mommy, how is that baby going to get out of your tummy?"

Well, the baby is actually in a special place in mommy's body called a uterus (womb). It's a special place next to my tummy, and it grows as the baby grows. When it's time for the baby to arrive, the baby will make it very clear to me that I need to head to the hospital. The muscles of my uterus will start to squeeze tightly together. When it's time for the baby to come out, he/she will move down the birth canal and come out of a special opening between the mommy's legs called a vagina.

The baby is born!

Now, the baby is still attached to mommy by the umbilical cord. This is how the baby got food these past nine months. The doctor or daddy will cut the umbilical cord, and that's where your belly button came from!

Now, sometimes a baby starts to wiggle as it's getting ready to come out and not make its way down the birth canal. The doctor will know this, and he/she will use his instruments to make a small slit on the mommy to take the baby out of the uterus. And that is called a Cesarean section— you can call it a C-section for short. That is how your cousin Emma was born— and that's why she has such a perfect head!



A CONVERSATION IS BORN

1. How did that go?

Were you able to say all of it out loud?

2. Would you be comfortable sharing this explanation (or similar) with your child?

3. If you've already answered your child's question about birth and want to circle back to add more details, when would be a good opportunity to do so?

Birthday? New baby in the family? Going through the baby book? Pregnancy?

4. Is there a special fact or positive memory you would like to include in this explanation?

5. What questions do you think your child will ask following this explanation?

Be ready for anything you think might be coming your way, and formulate an answer in your mind just in case.

6. What if your child hasn't ever asked about birth?



BEFORE YOU FLY...

When talking about birth, we suggest using the phrase: *"Have you ever wondered?"*

Simply ask them: *"Have you ever wondered how this baby is getting out of mommy?"*

Sometimes children are inwardly curious, but are unable to formulate the question. Go ahead and take the initiative if you think this would be good information for them to have.




Spreading Your Wings

Sometimes with the Birth Story, we have shared SOMETHING, but have left out many details. Circle back with your kids and tell the "expanded" version. If you told them when they were very young, ask them how much they remember, and go over the dazzling details once again.

We find that children who come to your family through adoption are very curious about the meaning of the word "birth," as they have heard of a very special person called a birth mother. Even if you didn't actually give physical birth to them, it's important that they understand how birth happens.

PLEASE WATCH OUR VIDEO, **STEP 3: TELL THE BIRTH STORY**, FOR SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS.

Action Steps:

-  Look for opportunities to give your child a more detailed version of the birth story.
-  Ask your child if they have ever wondered about how a baby is born.
-  Look through old photos with your child of the day he or she was born.



TOOLS

Pause for Porn

We are going to pause for a moment to consider the importance of guarding your children from the devastating affects of pornography. When we think about the proliferation of porn, we sadly know it's probably not a matter of IF they will see it, but WHEN. Because children are viewing porn at a younger and younger age, we want to give parents some tools for both guarding against this happening and a strategy to use if your children happen to see it.

Buzz Words on Porn:

If you see a bad picture, that doesn't mean you are a bad person.

If you see something, TELL US!

Talk about the difference between good and bad pictures.

DID YOU KNOW?



every second 28,258 people view porn online



the largest group of internet porn consumers



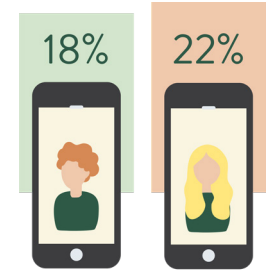
(average, that means it happens even younger)



9 out of 10 boys are exposed to pornography between the ages of 8 and 18.



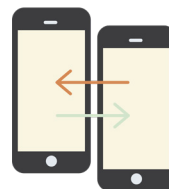
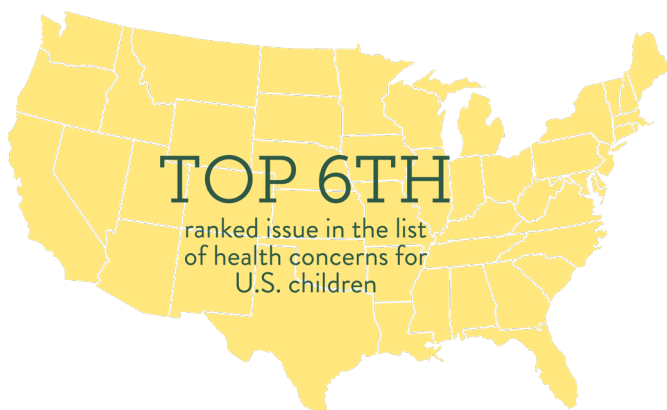
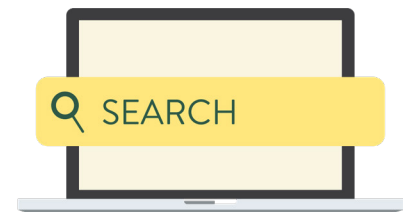
6 out of 10 girls are exposed to pornography between the ages of 8 and 18.



AGES 13-16 have sexted nude or semi-nude photos of themselves



Children are as likely to see online porn by accident as they are to actively search for it.



SEXTING

The sending of sexually explicit photos, images, text messages, or e-mails by using a cell phone or other mobile



PROTECTING KIDS FROM PORN

1. Does your child understand the toxic consequences of viewing pornography?

Have you had conversations about how your family will guard against pornography entering your home?

What do you think are the greatest long-term dangers of pornography?

2. Have you made a plan to have a conversation about pornography with your children?

What do you think the main message of that conversation will be?

3. Does your child have easy access to devices that are not protected from wandering into the internet?

Are you aware of the easy access to porn as a result?

4. Do you think you should include grandparents and care givers in guarding against these dangers?

5. When your child is not with you, do they know the rules for devices?

What guidelines can you give them for various tempting situations?



Spreading Your Wings

Talking to your kids about the perils of pornography will not be easy...but honestly, the pain of porn addiction is far worse! Let's move forward with this topic in order to interrupt the cycle of secrecy that surrounds it. Inform your children that it exists, that it's toxic, and that open communication with you is essential. Take your time to calmly but firmly warn your children, and support them wholeheartedly in their efforts to resist it.

PLEASE WATCH OUR VIDEO, **PAUSE FOR PORN**, FOR SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS.

Action Steps:



Read *Good Pictures Bad Pictures* or *Good Pictures Bad Pictures, Jr.* by Kristen Jenson with your children.



Spend time on the website www.protectyoungminds.org learning about some amazing ways to protect your children, modify your devices, and make a plan for conversations.



Remind your child that when they leave your house, the family rules still apply.



STEP 4

Explain the Beauty of Reproduction

Now that your child knows the story of birth, the next step is really quite simple. **You will find this small step helpful when explaining where babies come from.**

Understanding that there is a pattern of seeds and eggs in all living things will give context to the story of conception. We want our children to see that deep inside EVERY living thing is part of what it takes to create the next living thing just like it. Let's help them cultivate a fascination with the way things grow.

Buzz Words for Step 4:

Fascinate them by the way things grow.

Patterns of seeds and eggs are in all living things.

Teach them to be curious and observant.



SEEDS & EGGS

1. As you look around your kitchen or yard, where do you already see ways you can talk to your kids about seeds and eggs?
2. Think of three opportunities to observe seeds or eggs.

This can be as easy as your kitchen or a quick field trip to a local farm.

3. Do you have any books that talk about seeds or eggs?
4. Are there any pets in the house?
5. Where could you go on a nature walk and count how many things have seeds and eggs?
6. There is a pattern for living things. What in your home is living and what is not?

Chairs cannot make new chairs, but living things can reproduce.



SAMPLE QUESTIONS

"Look at how big that avocado seed is..."

"The strawberry seeds are on the outside!"

"A watermelon is so big, but its seeds are so small!"

"Look how delicate the bird's eggs are..."

"Notice how the seeds can't grow on their own, they need water and sunshine..."

Spreading Your Wings

Even though this is a simple next step, you will find it very helpful preparation for explaining human reproduction. Understanding the function of seeds and eggs is an important link. Pointing to the beauty of this intricate design in all living things gives your children an appreciation for the beauty and miracle of life!

PLEASE WATCH OUR VIDEO, **STEP 4: EXPLAIN THE BEAUTY OF REPRODUCTION**, FOR SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS.

Action Steps:



Explain to your child how living things start as a seed or an egg and then grow into something new.



Find one or two activities to do with your child this month that incorporate seeds or eggs. Plant flowers, cut open fruit and observe, etc.



Keep an eye out for books that include seeds or eggs and read them with your child.

STEP 5

Teach the Story of Conception

"Where do babies come from?"

This is one of the most dreaded questions for parents. It doesn't have to be!

We hope that after watching our videos and talking through this guide, you feel equipped to confidently answer your child's curious questions. We want these conversations (there will be more than one) to be as comfortable as possible for both you and your child. We want your child to view you as the expert.

Buzz Words for Step 5:

Be glad that they asked.

Stick to basic biology.

Include your family message.



LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

1. How did YOU first hear about how babies are made?
2. If it was from your parents, how would you describe it?
Awkward? Shocking? Helpful? Informative? Reassuring?
3. If it was from someone else, what were those circumstances, and what was your earliest impression?
4. Can you describe an ideal setting and experience for a child to learn about this?
5. Can you give three words that you want your children to hear?
Are there any words that you hope they don't hear?
6. What is it about this conversation that gives you the greatest hesitation?
7. Has your child asked this question yet?
If yes, how did it go?
8. If it wasn't ideal, what part would you like to do over again?
9. If you haven't said anything yet, how do you envision this conversation coming about?
10. Is your child a curious question-asker, or do they seem oblivious to this subject?
11. Is there any fact about conception you feel you need more information about before you have this conversation?
12. Maybe you are comfortable with the facts, but is there an emotion you need to consider and work through before you have this conversation?
13. Is there anything about your past that you need to set aside so you can move forward with this conversation?
14. Do you see the benefits of having the earlier conversations (vocabulary, birth, seeds, and eggs) before this one?
What is helpful about the Birds & Bees strategy that can now give you confidence moving forward?

15. What about your child's personality may present a challenge to you?

How do you plan to overcome it?

16. Is there one parent that seems more comfortable with this conversation?

How can the other still be included?

17. Do you hope that both parents will participate in this conversation, or do you anticipate that it will be only one of you?

18. Is there something about your particular conception story that will involve science and/or other people?

Infertility? In vitro? Surrogate? Adoption?

Are you ready to talk about these?

19. After watching the sample conversations in the video, what did you find to be the most helpful?

What would you alter to suit your family?






Spreading Your Wings

In conversations with young children, remember to keep this topic to the basic biology while pulling words from your family message. For example, if you are talking from a family message that emphasizes the importance of marriage, you can use the words "husband" and "wife" instead of man and woman to make your point.

If children say "yuck!" after hearing about sex, don't be alarmed...just tell them that it's natural for children to have that reaction...it's not FOR children. Realize, too, that if they are young, they may forget some of these facts, so check back in with them to see if they remember how a baby is made. Keep the lines of communication open!

PLEASE WATCH OUR VIDEO, STEP 5: TEACH THE STORY OF CONCEPTION, FOR SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS.

Action Steps:

-  If you haven't explained the basics of conception to your child, consider when it would be the best time to explain where babies come from. You want to define "sex" in the most basic way.
-  Follow up by explaining that any conversations about "sex" are parent-to-child and not child-to-child conversations.
-  Encourage your child to come to you with any questions they have about sex or share with you things he or she hears from peers.

STEP 6

Continue the Conversation

Before we move on...please pause and CONGRATULATE yourself and CELEBRATE the fact that you have set a very strong foundation. Think about it...the foundation of a house isn't your home, but it anticipates one.

You have done a great job of laying a foundation for your child's understanding about sex. These foundational conversations are Critical for your future conversations, but a foundation is only the beginning, and there is still a lot of work to do and details that have to be filled in.

Buzz Words for Step 6:

These conversations will happen sooner than you think.

It's your job to teach them beauty– and boundaries.

You are the expert.



BEFORE YOU FLY...

After these early conversations but before the puberty years, think about how you can reinforce your message and engage in conversations, when appropriate. Realize that some of your conversations will have to do with sex, but some of them will be about relationships, age-appropriate rules and boundaries, integrity, the way your family may do things differently than what your child hears about at school or online.



KEEPING ON MESSAGE

1. Is there a circumstance in the realm of sexuality in your neighborhood, family, school, or in the news that lends itself to conversations for your family?
2. Have you heard or seen something that you hope your child doesn't ask you about?
Anticipate that he or she does ask, and consider how you will discuss it.
3. Have you set some ground rules for phones, iPads, computers, screens, and video games?
What are they?
4. Does your child have a plan for what they are to do when someone entices them to go outside the boundaries you have set for your family?
5. Conversations about honesty and trust are important. Can you think of a circumstance that may need addressing in this area?
6. Upper elementary years can be a time for friend groups to be established. Are you happy with your child's friends?

Are there any friend issues you anticipate as a challenge?

*Has your child cultivated multiple friend groups?
(Neighborhood, school, church, sports, hobbies)*



KEEPING ON MESSAGE, CONT.

7. As your child's world outside your family grows, how can you stay connected?

Is your home a good, safe place for kids?

Do you have the opportunity to volunteer at the school or as part of his or her sports team or activities?

8. Can you identify a family that is several years ahead of yours who you would hope to emulate in some way?

Make plans to take them to dinner and ask them how they handled some of the pre-teen and teenage years. What were some of the ways they handled teenage challenges?

How would you handle things differently?

9. In order to reinforce your message, and add to the facts that your child has heard from you, what could you do to keep talking?

Go on walks?

Work in the yard together or start a vegetable garden?

Work together in the church nursery?

Take a meal to a family who has had a new baby?

Go to a wedding, or help a family who is having a wedding?

Look back at your wedding book? Their baby book?






Spreading Your Wings

As you continue these conversations, the next big steps in the Birds & Bees strategy is to plan a time away with your child about a year or so before puberty. It's important to have uninterrupted time without distractions to discuss the physical, emotional, and social changes that are about to be a part of your child's life. We have developed a helpful tool called **The Timeline** to guide some of these conversations during this time away.

Try spending some one-on-one time with your 5th or 6th grader. You pick the topic one week; he or she picks it the next. Change it up: funny, current, event, deep topic, etc.

PLEASE REFER TO **THE TIMELINE TOOL** IN THE
NEXT PAGES OF THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE.

Action Steps:

-  Look for an opportunity to talk with your child about topics you used to shy away from (family situations, something in the news or goings on at school).
-  Start to make plans or brainstorm about a weekend or overnight away for the pre-puberty talk.
-  Ask your pediatrician when he or she estimates your child will go through puberty.



TOOLS

The Timeline

This is an exercise that is explained in the video, **Continuing the Conversation**. Please see this as examples of questions you might use for this exercise. Add or subtract in any way to make it personal for your family.

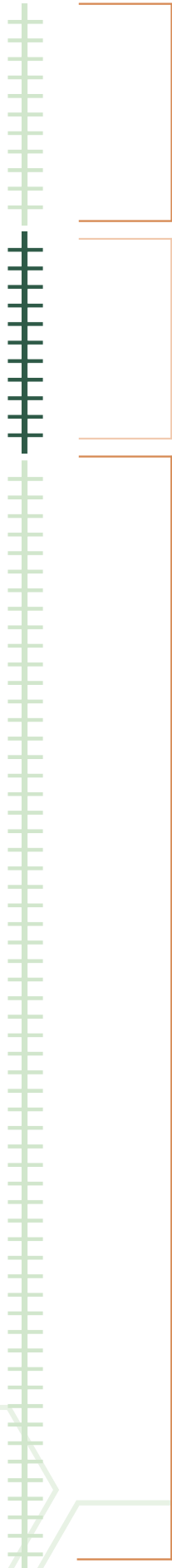
As you look at the timeline, it is divided into three sections. It would be helpful first to watch the video, **Continuing the Conversation**.

Buzz Words for The Timeline:

It's important to be prepared with questions.

Focus on the positive aspects of their next big steps,
not just the scary parts of being a teen.

Let them dream a little bit.



SECTION ONE

Birth - 12 Years Old

SECTION TWO

12 - 22 Years Old

SECTION THREE

22 - 88 Years Old





SECTION ONE: BIRTH-12 YEARS OLD

1. As you look back, what are some of the important things that have happened in your life so far?
2. Who are the people who have influenced you the most? In what way?
3. Who has been the most positive influence?
Who has been a less than positive influence?
4. Best teacher? Why?
5. What is the funniest thing you remember?
Parents, try to remember one for them from when they were too little to remember.
6. Best birthday?
What made it so memorable?
7. Which activity have you tried, but didn't want to continue?
Would you like to try again? (Maybe piano or tennis, etc.)
8. What is the biggest challenge you have encountered so far?
*Would you say that you have overcome this challenge?
How do you continue to work on it?*
9. What talents have you discovered you have?
When did you know you enjoyed this talent and were learning to be good at it?
10. When did you meet your best friend?
What were the circumstances? Why is he or she such a good friend?
11. What is your favorite holiday or vacation?
What were some of the details that made it special?

12. What is your favorite book? How did it impact you?

Who is your favorite character in the book?

Is there character in a book or movie that you would love to be YOU?

13. Have you moved to a new city or neighborhood?

When, and how did it affect you?

14. Now that you are 12, and you are looking back on your life, what do you hope you ALWAYS remember?

15. What are you most grateful for right now?

16. What are you most excited about as you think about your future?

Any fears you want to share?

17. What is your greatest strength?

How do you like sharing that strength within our family?

18. When you have a really great day, what made it a great day?

How did it start?

**BEFORE SECTION 2, WE'LL SKIP TO
SECTION THREE: 22 - 88 YEARS OLD.**



SECTION THREE: 22-88 YEARS OLD

1. If time were not a factor, what are two things you hope to accomplish in your lifetime?
2. Thinking ahead, what would you say is your biggest dream in life?
3. What are your other dreams?
4. Where do you imagine going to college? Why?
5. Would your dreams include graduate school?
Doctor, lawyer, pastor, artist, nurse?
6. Would it be helpful to do some things in summer to enhance your goals?
Learn a different language? Intern with someone who works in this area?
7. Where do you hope to pursue your career?
8. Do you think you will travel before you settle down with a family?
Where would you like to go?
What would you like to do there?
Is there a country you have always wanted to visit?
When would be a good time to go?
How will you pay for it?
9. Is there a hobby of yours that you think could turn into a career?
How long will it take?
If it's not suited for a career path, how do you hope to get better at something you're good at?
10. What are your dreams about your future family?
11. When is it a good time to start a family?
12. How many children do you hope to have? Why?
13. Once you start a family, where do you hope to raise your family?



BEFORE YOU FLY...

As you discuss your child's future education, family, career, and travel, follow his or her interests to ask further questions, so basically he or she is sketching out a dream life with as much specific detail as possible.

- 14.** When your children are young, who will take care of them?
- 15.** You have some fun and interesting hobbies. How do you hope to continue these?
Which new ones would you like to learn?
- 16.** Where do you see yourself volunteering and giving your time to others?
When do you hope to start doing this?
What could be the most helpful thing you could do for others?
- 17.** What will you do to stay healthy so you can do all these things?
Is there an exercise or nutrition path you think you could start taking now?
- 18.** How do you hope your life looks in your 40s? 50s? 60s? 70s? 80s?

**NOW PROCEED TO SECTION TWO:
12 - 22 YEARS OLD.**



SECTION TWO: 12-21 YEARS OLD

As you can see on the timeline, this is a relatively short time in your life, but these are the years when **you change from being a child to being an adult.**

You will be changing physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually as you develop into the adult you will become. It's exciting to think about these years and to be introduced to so many privileges like driving or dating– but **with those privileges come responsibilities.**

Learning to handle situations that may come up can be challenging, but **we are here to give you guidance, encouragement, and some boundaries** to help you succeed through these years. We want you to grow up and be able to achieve your dreams and goals as much as you do!

Some people are drawn into drugs, sex, alcohol, or pornography during these years. That can have a deeply harmful effect on their future plans, so please know that **when we give you boundaries or advice, it is because we love you and we know what these years are like.** You also are going to have some of the most fun and create some of the happiest memories of your life.

As your parents, **we are here for you.** We plan to trust you, but you, in return, must be trustworthy for it to work.

Let's think ahead, together.

1. What are some of your goals for these years?
2. What would be a dream-come-true for you in high school?
3. Is there anything about becoming a teenager that makes you anxious?
4. What habits might be the most helpful to cultivate as you look to your future?
5. Which privileges are you looking forward to the most?
6. How can you and I keep communicating well through the years?
7. How should we handle it when one of us messes up?



BEFORE YOU FLY...

"Let's talk about the physical changes that you will be going through in the next few years."

Explain what physical changes the other gender experiences. Give your child plenty of time to ask questions.

Be sure he or she understands that each person goes through these changes, but not all at the same time or at the same pace. Remind your child to be patient and kind as some struggle with their voice changes or skin problems and that he or she will have their own set of growth spurts that may feel awkward.

Talk about the consequences of experimenting with drugs or sex or alcohol or porn. Perhaps arm yourself with some of the state or federal laws for underage drinking or sexual experiences or sexting and pornography. Let him or her know where you stand on a variety of issues that come up during these years such as sexting, oral sex, or drinking.

Be prepared to cover a wide range of topics, and you may want to take resources with you. You can ask the counselor at your school, your pediatrician, or your place of worship about some resources that fit your message and your concerns.



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