

Bibliography of Books on Sexuality

for Children and Parents

Prepared by Rachel Nafziger Hartzler, 2010

Parents, it is recommended that you read books yourself before reading them to your children to ensure that the book fits your theology and philosophy about life. A few books on this list may be out of print. However, they are available in libraries and used book stores.

Books for Children

Brown, Laurie Krasny and Marc Brown. *What's the Big Secret?: Talking about Sex with Girls and Boys*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000.

An engaging straightforward book on sexuality for children ages 4 to 10. Using regular text as well as cartoons with dialogue balloons, this "chatty yet frank" book makes the content of sexual anatomy, sexual development, and reproduction seem like normal conversation for children and adults. Sensitive reference to masturbation and intercourse.

Bryant, Laura J. *God Gave Us You*. Illustrated by Laura J. Bryant. WaterBrook Press, 2000.

Ages 4 to 8. As a mother bear tucks her youngest cub under the quilts, she gently, tenderly, and reassuringly communicates the message loving parents everywhere want their little ones to hear: "We wanted you very, very much, and we are so very glad because "God gave us you." It would be better if the book didn't refer to a hospital birth and bottle feeding and if it referred to some children being adopted.

Ganeri, Anita. *Birth and Growth*. Austin, TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers, 1995.

For ages 7 to 10. Illustrated with good photos and diagrams. Straight forward information about sexual development, placed within the context of overall growth and development. Refers to the egg from the mother and sperm from the father for the conception of a baby but does not refer to sexual intercourse.

Geisen, Cynthia. *My Body Is Special: A Family Book about Sexual Abuse* (Elf-Help Books for Kids). One Caring Place, 2006.

Ages 4 to 8. I think it was Eleanor who suggested this book. Can you write a notation?

Harris, Robie H. and Michael Emberley. *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2009.

Ages 9 to 12. An updated, fifteenth anniversary edition of what is called the definitive book on kids' sexual health. Includes a brand-new chapter focusing on safe Internet use – one of parents'

key concerns. This universally acclaimed classic remains a cutting-edge resource for kids, parents, teachers, librarians, and anyone else who cares about the well-being of tweens and teens. Providing accurate and up-to-date answers to nearly every imaginable question, it offers young people the information they need – now more than ever – to make responsible decisions and stay healthy. A NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW Notable Book of the Year, A BOSTON GLOBE-HORN BOOK Award Winner, An Association of Booksellers for Children Booksellers' Choice and An American Library Association Notable Children's Book.

Harris, Robie H. and Michael Emberley. *It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2004.

Ages 6 to 12. An enthusiastic bird and reluctant bee narrate the comic cartoon panels that illustrate human bodies and reproduction with an emphasis on how families are created, including adoption, with an overall spirit of celebration. The duo's cheerful banter also clarifies some potentially confusing issues ("So the fetus doesn't grow where the pizza goes!" proclaims the newly enlightened bee). Specific topics covered include intercourse, birth control, chromosomes and genes, adoption and adjusting to a newborn sibling. Masturbation, sexual abuse, HIV and AIDS and homosexuality are handled intelligently and sensitively.

Hickling, Meg. *Boys, Girls & Body Science: A First Book about Facts of Life*. Illustrated by Kim LaFave. Harbour Publishing, 2002.

Ages 8 to 12. The story line is of a nurse talking to a class of young children, approaching the subject like a scientist (for example, scientists don't say "yuck!" they say "interesting!"). Providing pertinent information without getting into topics a young grade-schooler might not be ready for

Jacobson, Matt and Lisa. *The Amazing Beginning of You*. Grand Rapids: Zonderkids, 2002.

For ages 8-12. Illustrated with photos and diagrams and drawings. Explicit illustrations of prenatal growth and development. Explains the amazing truth about life before birth with respect for life and for the Creator who made each person unique.

Jones, Brenna and Stan. *Facing the Facts: The Truth About Sex and You*. Navpress, new edition 2007.

Designed for children ages 11-14, the fourth book in the conservative Christian "God's Design for Sex" series is designed to help young adolescents to understand and deal with the changes of puberty. It also examines why God intends sex for marriage, discusses love and dating, and answers tough questions about sexuality, including masturbation.

Jones, Brenna and Stan. *The Story of Me*. Illustrated by Joel Spector. Navpress, new edition, 2007.

The first book in the "God's Design for Sex" series, written to be read to children ages 3 to 5. Explains (from a conservative

Christian perspective) with candid, age-appropriate language and realistic illustrations: God's love and the goodness of all creation, a nurturing family as God's context for love, why God wants each baby to have both a mommy and a daddy, the specialness of being made a boy or a girl, and proper names for private body parts. A reference to adoption is included.

Jones, Brenna and Stan. *What's the Big Deal?: Why God Cares About Sex*. Navpress, new edition, 2007.

Written for children ages 8-11, preferably to be read with parents. From the "God's Design for Sex" this book explains the basic facts about sex, why God made adults so they want to have sex, what God says about sex in the Bible, and how to respond when faced with sexual pressure from peers and media. Names homosexual sexual activity as sin.

Madaras, Lynda. *On Your Mark, Get Set, Grow: A "What's Happening to My Body?" Book for Younger Boys*. Newmarket Press, 2008.

Ages 8 to 11. 128 pages. Highly respected in both secular and Christian circles, Madaras, who has more than 2 million books in print, here informs boys about the physical changes they will experience as they start to mature. Includes quotes and frequently asked questions from the male students in her classes and a sprinkling of humor. A reassuring tone pervades the text with the buzzwords "normal" and "perfectly normal" frequently appearing.

Madaras, Lynda. *Ready, Set, Grow: A "What's Happening to My Body?" Book for Younger Girls*. Newmarket Press, 2003.

Ages 8 to 11. 123 pages. With a sensitive and encouraging tone, Madaras reassures preadolescents that the changes of puberty are normal, natural, and cause for celebration. Goofy cartoons and a cute pink cat illustrate the emotions and stages of puberty, and keep the tone light. Does not include information about sexual intercourse but does explain masturbation. A friendly, accessible introduction to puberty that young girls can read alone or with friends, not just with parents.

Madaras, Lynda. *The What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys*. Newmarket Press, revised third edition, 2007.

For parents and sons, ages 9 to 12. 227 pages of matter-of-fact information, somewhat textbook-like. The Madaras growing-up guides are acknowledged by parents, educators, librarians, and doctors for their unique, nonthreatening style, and thorough coverage of both the physical issues surrounding puberty and adolescence. Less on emotional issues and little on morality. Includes slang terms for genitals.

Madaras, Lynda. *The What's Happening to My Body? Book for Girls*. Newmarket Press, revised third edition, 2007.

For girls ages 9 to 12 and their parents. 259 pages. An updated version of the classic growing up guide for parents and daughters, this volume concentrates on the physical changes that occur during puberty, with new chapters designed to serve as "owner's manuals." Minimal information on sexual intercourse,

birth control, pregnancy, and STDs; no mention of abstinence. Includes slang terms for genitals.

Mayle, Peter. *What's Happening to Me? A Guide to Puberty*. Illustrated by Arthur Robins. Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, 1975; reprinted 2000.

Ages 9 to 12. During the past 30 plus years, more than a million preadolescents and adolescents (and their parents) have benefited from the humor and honesty in this straightforward book. A few things are dated, e.g., the age of puberty has decreased, but reading it together continues to be a good way for parents to talk with children.

Mayle, Peter. *Where Did I Come From? The Facts of Life without any Nonsense and with Illustrations*. Illustrated by Arthur Robins. Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, 1977, reprinted 2000. Also available: African-American Edition and Spanish version: *De Donde Venimos: Un Eficaz Instrumento De Ayuda Para Los Padres*.

Ages 4 to 8. Now in use for a second generation, this easy to read and very explicit book with its silly but tasteful cartoon images covers the basic facts from love-making, orgasm, conception and growth inside the womb, through to the actual birth day. Gives the names and shows the important parts of the body.

Nystrom, Carolyn. *Before I was Born*. Illustrated by Sandra Speidel. Navpress, 2007.

The second book in the "God's Design for Sex" series, written from a conservative Christian perspective, to be read with children ages 5 to 8. With age-appropriate, straightforward text and informative illustrations, the book explains sex as a special gift God gives to a husband and wife and covers such topics as: why God made boys' and girls' bodies different, God's plan for loving marriages and families, the basic facts about intercourse, presented in the context of marital love and intimacy, conception and fetal development, childbirth and breastfeeding.

Richmond, Marianne. *I Wished for You: an Adoption Story*. Marianne Richmond Studios, 2008.

Ages 4-8. This book received the prestigious Mom's Choice Award and also the Book of the Year Award from Creative Child Magazine. The adoption story follows a conversation between Barley Bear and his Mama as they curl up in their favorite cuddle spot and discuss how they became a family. Answers to typical adoption questions are given in an eloquently simple fashion, celebrating many wonderful aspects of adoption, especially the love between parent and child. Especially good for children who have been adopted domestically.

Ritchie, James. *Created by God: Tweens, Faith, and Human Sexuality*, Student Book. Abingdon Press, 2010.

Endorsed by the editors of *Body and Soul: Healthy Sexuality and the People of God*, *Created By God* is a biblically based program resource designed to communicate to fifth and sixth graders that we are a fantastic creation made by God. Tweens will understand what is happening to them physically, emotionally, and sexually, and they will learn that sexual decisions are also spiritual

decisions. The topics of human sexuality, values, and relationships are approached in a frank and honest manner. Emphasizing correct sexual information from an open Christian perspective, a program goal is to open the avenues of communication between adults and tweens. Designed to be used as part of a weekend workshop, the student book is also available on its own and is useful for children who do not have the weekend learning opportunity.

Saltz, Gail. *Amazing You! Getting Smart about your Private Parts*. New York: Dutton, 2005. Illustrated by Lynne Cravath.
Ages 4 to 8. "A first guide to body awareness for preschoolers." Straight forward without giving more information that most preschoolers would ask for. Good information for parents included. The text includes, "Lots of people have their own special names for their private parts, but it's a good idea to know what the real names are, too." On sexual intercourse it says, "When a man and woman love each other and decide that they want to have a baby, a man's sperm joins with a woman's egg. From the egg and sperm, a baby will grow."

Sheffield, Margaret. *Before You Were Born*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984. Illustrated by Sheila Bewley.
Ages 2 to 10. Beautiful illustrations of a pregnant woman and an older sibling who listens to the baby's heartbeat. Good information. Does not refer to intercourse or conception.

Spelman, Cornelia Maude. *Your Body Belongs to You*. Illustrated by Teri Weidner. Albert Whitman & Company, 1997.
Ages 4-8.

Starishevsky, Jill. *My Body Belongs to Me*. Illustrated by Sara Muller. Safety Star Media, 2009.
Ages 4-8.

For parents and other adults who care for and about children

Goering Reid, Kathryn and Ken Hawkley. *Children Together: Teaching Girls and Boys to Value Themselves and Each Other*. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2000; reprinted by Resource Publications, 2010.
Ten lessons for kindergartners through eighth graders to be used in Sunday School, Bible School, after school program or camp. The purpose is to help children appreciate differences among people, to feel more secure in their own identity, and to learn to communicate and relate with those who are different. Presented in the context of scripture and Christian faith.

Haffner, Deborah W. *Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens—From Middle School to High School and Beyond*. Newmarket Press, 2002, second edition 2008.
Book provides specific information particular to each age group (middle school, early high school, late high school, and beyond) addressing peer pressure, dating and parties, alcohol and drugs,

sexual harassment, abstinence, and much more. Whether discussing how to help kids deal with the onslaught of sexual messages in the media or providing sensible guidance on the facts of life, Haffner's values-oriented approach helps parents at a time when they may have difficulty talking with their children about sex. Highly recommended by James Ritchie who says Haffner "speaks with great openness and with the sensitivity of one who is both a parent and a pastor as well as being a nationally-recognized voice for sexual health and justice."

Haffner, Deborah W. *From Diapers to Dating: A Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children—From Infancy to Middle School*. Newmarket Press, 2004, second edition 2008.

This "thoughtful guide for parents" (*Newsweek*) offers a wealth of practical techniques to identify and communicate their own values about sexuality to their children. Whether discussing how to help kids with the onslaught of sexual messages they see in the media or providing sensible guidance on teaching about the body, Debra Haffner's values-oriented approach is informative and comforting. *Washington Post* review: A valuable book to develop a comfortable, ongoing, constructive rapport with your children about sex.

Haffner, Deborah W. *What Every 21st-Century Parent Needs to Know: Facing Today's Challenges with Wisdom and Heart*. Newmarket Press, 2008.

Addresses the big questions, including drinking, drugs and teen sex. Utilizing what she calls the Affirming Parent style, Haffner offers a number of viable solutions to common problems, ranging from Internet use to over-scheduling. An ordained Unitarian minister, Haffner's tendency is to interpret the stats about children and youth from the bright side. readers will appreciate her just-the-facts-please approach.

Hershberger, Anne Krabill, ed. *Sexuality: God's Gift*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2010

Mennonite writers (and one Methodist) explore how God's good gift of sexuality is received in various life situations. Included are chapters on the Gift and its youngest recipients and the Gift and nurturing adolescents. From Christian perspectives, explores intimacy as a need for all people regardless of age or marital status.

Hickling, Meg. *The New Speaking of Sex: What Your Children Need to Know and When They Need to Know It*. Kelowna, BC: Northstone, 2005.

No-nonsense facts presented in a humorous yet scientific manner with the latest information about sexual health. Hickling gently dispels misconceptions and unhealthy beliefs about sex by telling humorous stories from over 25 years of experience working with children, families, teachers, and other professionals. She touches on the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of sexuality, a whole person approach to sex. Age-appropriate information, guidelines on how to talk with children at various stages of their development, and examples of how to answer tough questions. Hickling is a nurse and educator and has received many awards including The Order of British Columbia and The Order of Canada.

Jones, Brenna and Stan. *How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex: A Lifelong Approach to Shaping Your Child's Sexual Character*. Navpress, new edition, 2007.

The parent book in the "God's Design for Sex" series for children and youth. Gives guidance on how and when to talk with children about sexual curiosity, physical changes of puberty, dating, chastity, and more from a conservative Christian perspective. Well documented. Stan Jones is Provost and Professor of Psychology at Wheaton College.

Leman, Kevin and Kathy Flores Bell. *A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey with Your Kids About Sex*. Zondervan, 2009.

Family psychologist Dr. Kevin Leman and sexuality educator Kathy Flores Bell present a conservative Christian straightforward guide for parents and educators about teaching young people about the first period, first nocturnal emission, dating relationships, STDs, molestation, and much more. Advice in down-to-earth terms concerning what needs to be taught, how to build a bond of trust and support, and how to sound fully credible when promoting abstinence in a culture that is media-soaked with sexual imagery. No mention of homosexuality.

Levine, Diane E. and Jean Kilbourne. *So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood and what Parents Can do to Protect Their Kids*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2008.

Levin (a professor of education) and Kilbourne (an authority on the effects of advertising) accuse the media of sexualizing children. American children are constantly exposed to a barrage of sexual images in television, movies, music and the Internet. They are spoon-fed images that equate sex with violence, paint women as sexually subservient to men and encourage hooking up rather than meaningful connections. The authors stress that there is nothing wrong with a young person's natural sexual awakening, but it is wrong to allow a young person's sexuality to be hijacked by corporations who want them as customers. Advice offered on how to limit children's exposure to commercialized sex, and how to engage kids in constructive, age-appropriate conversation about sex and the media. Highly recommended.

Martin, Courtney E. *Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: How the Quest for Perfection is Harming Young Women*. Berkley Trade, 2008.

With a sharp analysis communicated through heartbreaking stories, Martin tells the difficulty most teen and adult females have today when it comes to being secure in their physical appearance. (Some seven year old girls think they are too fat.) Beneath the high-achieving "perfect girl" surface, seven million American girls and women suffer from an eating disorder; 90% of high school-aged girls think they are overweight. Drawing on more than 100 interviews with women and girls ages 9-29, Martin constructs a cultural critique of a generation of girls.

Odean, Kathleen. *Great Books for Babies and Toddlers: More Than 500 Recommended Books for Your Child's First Three Years*. Ballantine Books, 2003.

Accessible guide recommends books in two primary categories: "Nursery Rhymes, Fingerplays, and Songs" and "Picture-Story Books for the Very Young." Each thoughtful, decidedly "un-canned" review demonstrates how a book can be used with a child and describes its distinctive characteristics--the basic content, the look and feel of the illustrations, and the sound of the language.

Odean, Kathleen. *Great Books for Boys: More Than 600 Books for Boys 2 to 14*. Ballantine Books, 1998.

Children's books are frequently used to proselytize. Luckily, resources like these help sort out the good from the dogmatic, the mediocre, and the bad. As former Caldecott and Newbery Award committee member, Odean says boys have different challenges growing up than girls do. Over 600 books, from picture books to novels, arranging them by reader age from two to 14 and providing short, descriptive synopses. While ***Great Books for Girls*** focuses exclusively on titles with assertive, active female characters, this one includes those with strong protagonists of both sexes.

Odean, Kathleen. *Great Books for Girls: More Than 600 Books to Inspire Today's Girls and Tomorrow's Women*. Ballantine Books, revised edition, 2002.

Focuses on titles with assertive, active female characters, titles, ranging from picture-story books for toddlers to biographies and novels for adolescents that depict girls and women who are self-sufficient, decisive, and assertive. "I recommend it for all those who want girls to grow up strong, free bold and kind."--Mary Pipher (Author of *Reviving Ophelia*)

Pipher, Mary. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1994; Riverhead Trade, 2005.

Psychotherapist Mary Pipher says that "at adolescence girls become 'female impersonators' who fit their whole selves into small, crowded spaces." Many lose spark, interest, and even IQ points as a "girl-poisoning" society forces a choice between being shunned for staying true to oneself and struggling to stay within a narrow definition of female. Somewhat alarming tales of girls struggling with deep pain are fortunately not typical of all girls. Pipher offers some prescriptions for changing society and helping girls resist.

Preston, Don and Rhoda, Vance Isner, ed. *Before They Ask: Talking About Sex from a Christian Perspective, A Guide for Parents of Children From Birth Through Age Twelve*. Abingdon Press, revised and updated edition, 1999.

As a companion piece to *Created By God*, this resource is a guide for parents who don't know what to say to their children about human sexuality - or how to say it. Suitable for any adult who wants to talk with children about sexuality from an open Christian perspective. A good source for honest and factual information.

Richardson, Justin and Mark A. Schuster. *Everything You Never Wanted Your Children to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid They'd Ask)*. Three Rivers Press, 2003.

Written by a pair of pediatricians, James Ritchie describes this as excellent resource that should keep parents several steps ahead of their sons' and daughters' questions.

Ritchie, James. *Created by God: Tweens, Faith, and Human Sexuality, Parent's Guide*. Abingdon Press, 2010.

Endorsed by the editors of *Body and Soul: Healthy Sexuality and the People of God, Created By God* is a biblically based program resource designed to communicate to fifth and sixth graders that we are a fantastic creation made by God. Tweens will understand what is happening to them physically, emotionally, and sexually, and they will learn that sexual decisions are also spiritual decisions. The topics of human sexuality, values, and relationships are approached in a frank, honest, and Bible-based manner. Emphasizing correct sexual information from an open Christian perspective, *Created By God* strives to open avenues of communication between adults and tweens during a weekend workshop and beyond. Both the student book and parent's guide are available to purchase without the entire program for parents and children who do not have the weekend learning opportunity.

Winner, Lauren F. *Real Sex: The Naked Truth about Chastity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005.

Lauren Winner weaves an intriguing tapestry from sociological, autobiographical, pastoral, and historical threads to speak candidly about the difficulty and the importance of sexual chastity. She confronts cultural lies about sex and challenges how we talk about sex in church. The candor with which Winner writes about sex may alarm some readers, but those who follow her arguments to their conclusions will find themselves rewarded with fresh insights about an ongoing challenge among Christians. The book gives practical ideas for living a chaste life, portraying chastity as a spiritual discipline.

Books suggested but without notations at this time:

The Roller Coaster Years: Raising Your Child Through the Maddening Yet Magical Middle School Years (BroadwayBooks, 1997) by Charlene C. Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese.

Too Old for This, Too Young for That! Your Survival Guide for the Middle School Years (Free SpiritPublishing, 2000) by Harriet S. Mosatche, Ph.D. and Karen Unger, M.A.

The Tween Years: A Parent's Guide for Surviving Those Terrific, Turbulent, and Trying Times Between Childhood and Adolescence (Contemporary Books, 1999) by Donna G. Corwin.

Coloroso, Barbara, *Parenting Through Crisis: Helping Kids in Times of Loss, Grief, and Change*, Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 2000.

Faith Trust Institute, *Bless Our Children: Preventing Sexual Abuse*, DVD, 1993.

Faith Trust Institute, *Hear Their Cries: Religious Responses to Child Abuse*, DVD, 1992.

Faith Trust Institute, *Love - All That and More*, A Six-Session Curriculum and 3-DVD Video Series On Healthy Relationships For Youth and Young Adults., Faith Trust Institute, Seattle, WA, 877-860-2255, 2001.

Fortune, Marie, *Love Does No Harm: Sexual Ethics for The Rest of Us*, The Continuum Publishing Co. New York, NY, 1995

Kerns Kraizer, Sherryll, *The Safe Child Book: A Commonsense Approach to Protecting Your Children From Abduction and Sexual Abuse*, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY 10017, 1985.

Kivel, Paul, *Boys Will Be Men: Raising Our Sons for Courage, Caring and Community*, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, B.C., 1999

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: A Curriculum for Children Ages 5-8, and Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: A Curriculum for Children Ages 9-12, by Kathryn Goering Reid

Spelman, Cornelia Maude. (2000). *Your body belongs to you.* Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company.

Another good resource is Darkness to Light (<http://www.darknesstolight.org/>). They provide on-line training as well as info that can be downloaded such as "7 Steps to Protecting our Children" and "A Parent Guide for Selecting Youth Serving Organizations."

I'd also recommend the Dove's Nest Collaborative (<http://www.dovesnest.net/>), a new initiative in MC USA focusing on prevention of child abuse.