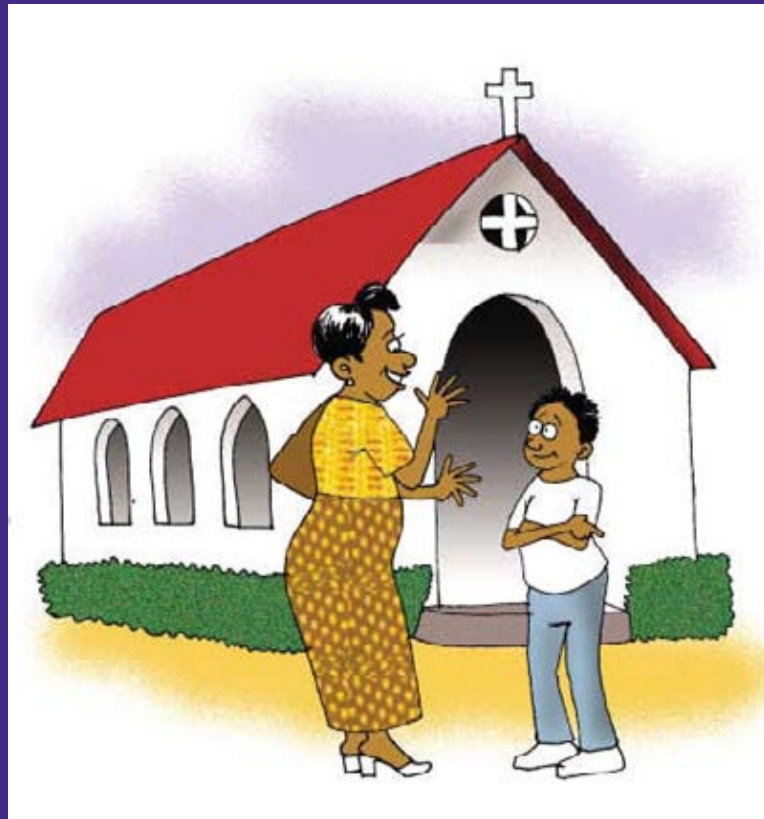


Family Life Education: A Handbook for Adults Working with Youth



from a Christian Perspective



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Family Life Education:

A Handbook for Adults Working with Youth
from a Christian Perspective



Acknowledgments

Family Life Education: A Handbook for Adults Working with Youth from a Christian Perspective appeared originally in 2006 in a slightly different format as the *Participant Handbook for Family Life Education: Teaching Adults to Communicate with Youth from a Christian Perspective*.

The 2006 handbook, compiled and authored by Maryanne Pribila of FHI, was developed in Tanzania as part of a field-testing process by a group of dedicated public health workers, pastors, reverends, and youth leaders in the Christian community.

Ideas for handbook images and key messages were developed by Willy Hyera and Father Lameck Luoga of the Anglican Church of Tanzania; Florian Mwano, Severine Njelekela, and Father Walter Mgaya of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Njombe and Iringa; and Paul Husurupia of the Tanzania Presbyterian Church.

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The 2006 publication, developed by FHI/YouthNet, was funded through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Cooperative Agreement with FHI for YouthNet, No. GPH-A-00-01-00013-00. YouthNet was a five-year program to improve reproductive health and prevent HIV among young people ages 10 to 24. The YouthNet team was led by FHI and included CARE USA and RTI International.

This adaptation is funded with USAID Youth Global Leadership Priority (GLP) funds to FHI through USAID Cooperative Agreement No. GPO-A-00-05-00022-00. The activities under these Youth GLP funds are part of the USAID Interagency Youth Working Group (IYWG). The IYWG seeks to provide global technical leadership to advance the reproductive health and HIV/AIDS outcomes of young people ages 10 to 24 in developing countries. The information and views in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of FHI or USAID.

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Introduction

Family Life Education: A Handbook for Adults Working with Youth from a Christian Perspective – or “CFLE Handbook” for short – is designed to assist adults in providing correct life-skills information to youth.

The CFLE Handbook seeks to encourage open discussion about sexuality, reproductive health, and HIV in the context of faith communities. It provides accurate public health information on sensitive issues in the context of faith values. The material is not meant to promote religion.

The tool provides factual information related to topics and typical questions and answers that will be helpful to youth, along with Bible verses as a context to frame discussions in a Christian context. Additional verses from the Bible for CFLE topics are listed. These may expand participants’ knowledge relating to the decisions young people make as they grow. The tool uses fun and simple illustrations to enhance learning.

A connection to religion is a protective factor for healthy youth behaviors. While many youth attend churches, faith leaders often do not address issues related to sexuality. Church groups have taken a leadership role in helping HIV orphans, but few have worked as vigorously with youth regarding prevention of HIV and pregnancy.

The CFLE Handbook provides an introductory resource tool for adults working in a faith context. It includes 20 sections, grouped into five topic areas:

- Part I. Communicating with Young People
- Part II. Growing and Changing
- Part III. Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV
- Part IV. Safety and Your Future
- Part V. Family Life

The CFLE Handbook is adapted from a larger publication produced in 2006, *Family Life Education: Teaching Adults to Communicate with Youth from a Christian Perspective* – or “CFLE Manual” for short. That 188-page manual includes six day-long workshops and an accompanying participant handbook. This CLFE Handbook contains the same material as the participant handbook used with that manual – grouped according to the first five workshops.

In a 2007 survey, FHI found that the CFLE Manual was being used in many cases as a resource for information, not as a six-day training tool. This expensive, large tool was being used to try to reach large numbers of people with basic information. In addition, discussions with the World Council of Churches, which wrote an introduction to that curriculum, noted the need for a shorter, more accessible

resource. Recasting the participant handbook from the CFLE Manual as a self-contained document emerged as a useful approach that could reach more people at a lower cost.

As groups use this CFLE Handbook, some may desire more in-depth training, determining that they can invest the time needed for the full six-day training. The objectives of the six workshops are to:

- Learn and practice the steps of Christian Family Life Education communication and accompanying skills to be able to discuss family life topics with young people
- Learn essential youth reproductive health information, including sexual development, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS, pregnancy, family planning, and gender roles
- Build communication skills to guide youth to make informed decisions about engaging in sexual activity, seeking professional medical services when needed, choosing a partner, using drugs or alcohol, continuing one's education, and developing a livelihood
- Examine personal beliefs and use the Bible to discuss their values on reproductive health and HIV prevention with young people
- Identify and map local resources available in the faith and medical communities
- Develop an action plan for individual outreach with youth, following completion of workshops

The CFLE Handbook was developed for a global audience. It is intended to be adapted as appropriate to a local environment, cultural context, and specific needs of adults working with youth. If you are using these materials in a community with a high HIV prevalence, for example, you may decide to add additional information about care and support for people living with HIV and AIDS.

For more information on using the CFLE Handbook or the full CFLE Manual, contact FHI at youthwg@fhi.org.

Communicating with Young People

Integrated into each section are questions or concerns that might be raised by a young person and possible responses to those questions by an adult. *These are not intended to be the best or only responses.* They are suggested responses that help adults, including parents and youth leaders, to prepare for the questions youth might ask. Always use the five CFLE communication steps when discussing family life education (see Section 2).

Keep in mind that your role is not only to respond to questions, but to listen to young people. *You will not have all of the answers.* Do not be afraid to admit this and find the answers from reputable resources in your community.

Most importantly, remember to support young people in a safe, confidential, and trusting way.

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment... Romans 14:1



Section 1. Skills to Communicate with Young People

Positive

- Listen
- Ask questions
- Understand the problem or issue
- Give facts and correct information
- Be able to say, “I don’t know”
- Share your values
- Be patient
- Share your faith
- Respect their opinions
- Assure confidentiality, build trust
- Share alternatives and options
- Give choices
- Develop their decision-making skills
- Give guidance to live long, healthy lives
- Help them identify their feelings and opinions
- Build their confidence and self-esteem
- Tell them where they can access services



Negative

- Lecturing or preaching
- Not listening
- Using punishment or anger
- Judging their actions
- Telling them what to do without providing options or discussion
- Forcing your own values
- Forcing your own faith
- Talking to them condescendingly or without respect
- Telling them wrong or incorrect information
- Making them feel badly about themselves
- Sharing personal information without consent
- Laughing at them or making their questions seem silly



Confidentiality and Safety

Communicating with young people is an important role with serious responsibility. Educators who work one-on-one often develop trusting relationships with young people. They become confidants and learn very personal information.

All information should be kept confidential *except* when the young person is in danger or involved in illegal activity that puts people at risk, especially in cases of rape, incest, or other abuse. Appropriate authorities must be notified and actions taken to protect the rights of every young person.



Section 2. Five CFLE Communication Steps

1. Understand the question being asked.

- Make sure you understand what the young person is asking or what information he or she needs.
- Think about why the question is being asked, but do not ask why. The young person may become defensive or stop talking.
- Ask questions that will help you understand what the young person wants to know.
- Listen to the young person's response(s).
- Do not ridicule or judge the question. Be supportive of the effort to get more information.



2. Give a clear and simple answer.

- Give a response according to the age and needs of the young person.
- Use language the young person can understand.
- Keep your answers short and simple, but allow the young person to ask other questions.
- If you do not know an answer, do not be afraid to say that you do not know. Tell the young person that you will find the answer and let her or him know. For example, "That is a good question. I am not sure about the answer. Maybe the doctor could help us." Be sure to follow up as soon as possible or go together, if possible, to find an answer.



3. Share your values and use your faith.

- Let the young person know what you think and feel about the issue.
- Use your Christian faith to help describe your values.
- Do not lecture or expect all young people to share your values.
- Listen to what the young person has to say and do not judge. Guide the young person, using the Bible.



4. **Check for understanding of the answer.**
 - Ask if the young person understands your answer. Ask him or her to repeat it back to you.
 - Listen to his or her response.
 - Correct any misinterpretations.



5. **Build confidence and trust.**
 - Thank the young person for coming to you with a question.
 - Give the young person your full attention and time in a comfortable place.
 - Let the young person know that it is normal to have questions.
 - Assure the young person that you will not share this information with others (unless it will put him or her at risk or he or she gives permission to share).
 - Tell the young person that he or she is special and unique and that God loves him or her. Build the young person's confidence and self-esteem at every opportunity.



Communicating with Young People

Youth: Whom should I talk to about sex and relationships?

Adult: Talking to knowledgeable adults you trust and have a special relationship with — such as your parents or relatives — can help you get information that will help you make healthy and safe choices regarding your sexual development and other personal matters.

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. Proverbs 4:1–2

Youth: How can the church help me with my questions about sex?

Adult: In learning from the Bible and developing a relationship with God, you will be empowered to make healthy and safe choices regarding your sexual development and life. Ultimately, it is the strength of your relationship with God and the understanding of His love for you that will guide you through some difficult times and help you make hard decisions.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. Psalm 119:9



Section 3. Sexual Development of Boys

Boys develop sexually from ages 10 to 24. Every individual will experience these changes at different times; this is normal. However, the majority of young people will see the following changes.

Physical Changes for Boys Ages 10 to 14

- Growth spurts occur
- Muscles enlarge
- Voice deepens
- Acne develops
- Sperm matures, wet dreams begin

Emotional Changes for Boys Ages 10 to 14

- Values and beliefs primarily determined by family
- Experience mood swings, behavior driven by feelings
- Confused about emotional and physical changes
- Begin to have sexual feelings and curiosities
- Begin to seek acceptance by peers through competition and achievement



Physical Changes for Boys Ages 15 to 19

- Development continues
- Genitals enlarge
- Hair grows around genitals, under arms, and on chest

Emotional Changes for Boys Ages 15 to 19

- Challenge rules and test limits
- Feelings contribute to behavior but do not control it, can analyze potential consequences
- Compare own development to peers, become concerned with self-image
- May have a girlfriend and want to experiment or act on sexual desire
- Peers influence leisure activities, appearance, substance use, and initial sexual behaviors



Physical Changes for Ages Boys 20 to 24

- Development finishes

Emotional Changes for Boys Ages 20 to 24

- Develop more serious relationships, may commit and marry
- Understand consequences of behaviors
- Struggle with adult roles and responsibilities, modern versus traditional values
- Can make own decisions, peers have less influence
- Cope with the competing demands of school, family, spouse, community, livelihood, and self



Communicating with Young People

Youth: Does the size of a penis make a difference?

Adult: Boys and men often worry about how tall or muscular they are and about the size of their penises. They compare themselves with others, although most are about the same size. The size of the penis does not relate to how good one will be at sex, but it can relate to how one feels about oneself. It's something you don't have any control over, so it is best to accept your body as it is. These feelings are very common. No one wants to feel different, but you're not alone.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good ... Genesis 1:31

Youth: One of my testicles is bigger than the other. Is something wrong with me?

Adult: No. One testicle, usually the left one, normally hangs lower than the other one. This is the way that the body protects the testicles from being painfully pressed together.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:13-14



Section 4. Sexual Development of Girls

Girls develop sexually from ages 10 to 24. Every individual will experience these changes at different times; this is normal. However, the majority of young people will see the following changes.

Physical Changes for Girls Ages 10 to 14

- Grow taller, bigger (often before boys)
- Breasts begin to enlarge
- Hips widen
- Acne develops
- Hair grows around genitals and under arms
- Ovaries mature, menstruation begins, able to become pregnant



Emotional Changes for Girls Ages 10 to 14

- Values and beliefs primarily determined by family
- Experience mood swings, behavior driven by feelings
- Confused about emotional changes, preoccupied with physical appearance
- Self-esteem determined by others
- Seek acceptance by fostering relationships with peers

Physical Changes for Girls Ages 15 to 19

- Development continues
- Breasts enlarge, hips widen, hair grows around genitals and under arms



Emotional Changes for Girls Ages 15 to 19

- Compare their development to peers, determine self-image
- May challenge rules and test limits of gender norms, desire more control over life
- Increased interest in sex, aware of own sexuality
- Desire to be loved may influence decision-making in sexual relationships
- Peers influence leisure activities, appearance, substance use, and initial sexual behaviors

Physical Changes for Girls Ages 20 to 24

- Development finishes

Emotional Changes for Girls Ages 20 to 24

- Develop more stable relationships
- Understand consequences of behaviors, prepare for parenthood
- Clearer about self in relation to others, including spouse
- Cope with the competing demands of school, family, spouse, community, livelihood, and self
- Able to recognize and seek help when needed



Communicating with Young People

Youth: Is it normal for my breasts to be different sizes?
Why are my breasts so small (large)?

Adult: Breasts may look slightly different in size as they grow. Some women and girls have big breasts, others have small breasts. They are all fine.

He has made everything beautiful in its time ...
Ecclesiastes 3:11



Section 5. Menstruation

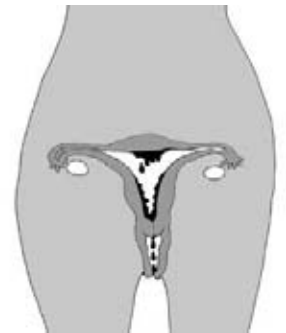
A menstrual period is the normal, healthy shedding of blood and tissue from the lining of the uterus through the vaginal opening. Menstruation:

- Is the first visible sign that a young girl can become pregnant and have children
- Is often irregular in the beginning but will become more regular with age
- Can start as early as age 9 or as late as age 16
- Has started when a little blood comes slowly out of the vagina, which may feel wet and be absorbed in the panties
- Can last from three to seven days and happens about once a month for most girls
- Varies widely in flow and amount of blood, which can change in amount and color throughout a period

Physical symptoms associated with menstruation:

- Cramps, pain, bloating, weight gain, food cravings, swollen or painful breasts, swollen hands or feet, skin problems, headaches, dizziness, or irritability

Relief can be found with pain relievers, hot water compresses, herbal teas, or other local remedies. If these do not help, she should visit a health provider (clinic nurse or doctor) to discuss the matter.



Communicating with Young People

Youth: When will I begin to menstruate and what should I do once it starts?

Adult: You may begin to menstruate any time between 9 and 16 years of age. Everyone is different. You will bleed from your vagina for three to seven days. There are different products that can absorb blood, such as sanitary napkins, clean rags, or towels. It is important to change the products regularly to avoid odor or itching. I am glad you asked about the changes going on with your body.

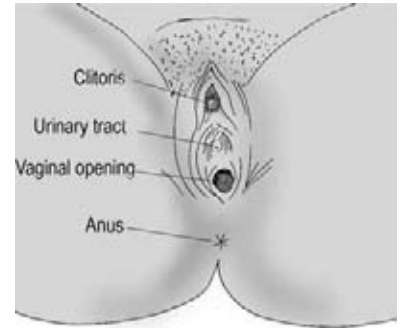
He has made everything beautiful in its time. Ecclesiastes 3:11



Section 6. Preparing for Reproduction

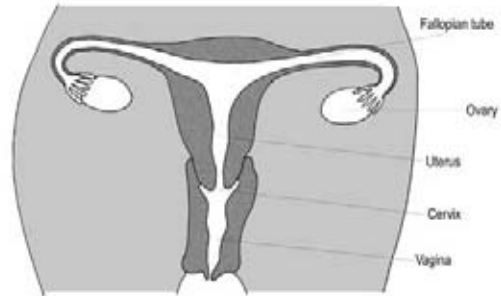
Female External Genitalia

- The **clitoris** is the area of sexual arousal for a woman. About the size of a pea, it enlarges during stimulation.
- The **vaginal opening** is where:
 - › menstrual blood and tissue leave the body
 - › the penis is inserted during sexual intercourse
 - › expansion occurs during delivery, to allow the birth of a child



Female Internal Genitalia

- **Ovaries** contain thousands of immature egg cells
- Monthly, the ovary releases a mature egg, which travels through the **fallopian tube** to the uterus
- If an egg is fertilized by sperm, the fertilized egg generally attaches to the wall of the **uterus**, which supports the growth of a fetus. If the egg is not fertilized, the egg, tissue, and blood are shed during menstruation.



Communicating with Young People

Youth: Can a girl masturbate?

Adult: Yes, girls and boys can masturbate. Masturbation does not cause any kind of sickness or infertility. It is normal and not harmful unless a person becomes overly preoccupied with it.

Male External Genitalia

Males can be circumcised or uncircumcised. Circumcision can be done safely by professionals with clean medical instruments. In circumcised males, the foreskin of the penis is removed, exposing the tip of the penis. In uncircumcised males, the foreskin covers the tip of the penis.



circumcised

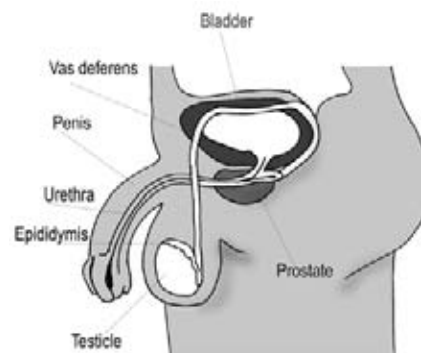
Erections occur when the penis fills with blood and becomes hard and straight.

- Erections in young boys can happen for no reason at all or as boys develop sexual desire and think about sexual things.
- Erections begin in infancy; younger boys do not have control when erections occur. As they grow older, boys learn to control them better.
- It is very common for a boy to wake up with an erection. While he is asleep, a boy's penis can become erect five to seven times. This is healthy and normal.
- Having an erection is not a sign that a boy must ejaculate (release sperm) or have sex. If he waits, the erection will go down on its own without causing any harm.
- When a boy has an erection, he will find that he cannot urinate easily because a muscle blocks off the bladder. He will have to wait for the erection to go down before he can urinate easily.



uncircumcised

A **wet dream**, or nocturnal emission, happens when a boy's penis becomes erect and he ejaculates while sleeping. This causes the boy's underwear or the bed to be a little wet when he wakes up.



Male Internal Genitalia

- **Testicles** produce sperm. Males have two testicles, which are contained in a sac called the scrotum.
- The **vas deferens** carries sperm from the testicles to the penis during stimulation.
- Sperm and fluid are ejaculated from the penis through the **urethra**.
- Beginning with his first ejaculation, a man is fertile for his whole life.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: Why do boys have wet dreams?

Adult: A wet dream is when a boy's penis becomes erect and ejaculates while he is sleeping. It is part of male sexual development. If a boy does not know about wet dreams, he could become worried or confused. Wet dreams are completely natural and normal. A boy cannot stop himself from having wet dreams.



Section 7. Sexual Desire

As young people mature and develop, they will begin to notice feelings for the opposite sex. This is common and normal. However, it may become a problem when a young person acts on these desires prematurely. A young man or woman may simply not be ready to have sex and take responsibility for the result, such as a child or a disease.

Young people should know that in a healthy relationship, based on loving feelings, sex is never pressured, forced, traded, or coerced.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: Sometimes I touch my sexual parts. Does this mean I'm strange or doing something wrong?

Adult: Getting pleasure by touching or rubbing our sex organs — our penis or clitoris — is called masturbation. It is normal and not harmful unless we become overly preoccupied with it. This is one of the ways we discover more about our bodies. The good thing about this act is you are safe from any sexually transmitted diseases. However, some churches and individuals feel that masturbation is driven by lust, and is, therefore, an act of adultery.

Youth: Sometimes I dream about sexy things. Is there something wrong with me? Does this mean I'm perverted?

Adult: Many people have sexual fantasies. Sometimes people have sexual urges and desires, but they know that acting on these urges would be inappropriate, so they experience them in their imagination instead. While this can be healthy and helpful, it can also be a sign of emotional problems when people are unable to think about anything else. Or they may lose sight of what is real and what is fantasy and may try to live out their fantasies, hurting themselves and others in the process.



Section 8. Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually transmitted infections are passed on by any type of genital (penis and vaginal area), oral (mouth), or anal (bowel opening) contact with another person. The penis does not have to enter the vagina, mouth, or anus for some of these infections to be passed on. But there may be contact between these parts of the body during which an infection can spread.

A young person who is concerned about his or her sexual health after having unprotected sex should be referred for a medical exam and STI testing.

STIs often do not show symptoms.



Signs of STIs in males include:

- A wound, sore, ulcer, rash, or blister on or around the penis
- A discharge, like pus, from the penis
- Pain or a burning feeling when passing urine
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Pain and swelling of the testicles
- Abnormal swelling or growths on the genitals



Signs of STIs in females include:

- A discharge from the vagina that is thick, itchy, or has an unusual odor or color
- Pain in the lower abdomen
- Pain or a burning feeling when passing urine
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Abnormal, irregular bleeding from the vagina
- Itching in the genital area
- Abnormal swelling or growths in the genitals
- Sores around the genital area

Any young person who is experiencing symptoms of an STI should be encouraged to seek immediate medical care from an experienced doctor or nurse.



Communicating with Young People

Youth: What are the chances I'll get an STI? I don't know anyone who has had one.

Adult: You cannot get an STI unless you have sexual contact. If you have sex without using a condom consistently and correctly, you have a much higher chance of getting an STI. We cannot tell who has an STI or HIV just by looking at them. Most people may not even know they are infected. Almost half of all new cases of HIV are in young people. Not having sex at this time in your life is the safest protection against becoming infected with an STI or HIV.



Section 9. HIV and AIDS

H = Human (only found in humans)

I = Immunodeficiency (weakens the immune system)

V = Virus (a type of germ)

A = Acquired (to get something that you are not born with)

I = Immuno- (the body's defense system, which provides protection from disease)

D = Deficiency (a defect or weakness, lack of or not enough of something)

S = Syndrome (a group of signs and symptoms in a disease)

HIV and AIDS are not the same. HIV is the virus; having HIV means that the person is infected with the virus. AIDS comes as a result of becoming infected with HIV. AIDS is a syndrome of symptoms and various diseases that results from a weakened immune system. A person can be infected with HIV for a long time before developing AIDS.

HIV Transmission

HIV can be transmitted:

- When having unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected partner (anal, oral, or vaginal)
- During delivery when the mother is HIV positive
- During breastfeeding when the mother is HIV positive
- By sharing needles or sharp objects with someone who is HIV positive

HIV can be transmitted when a person comes in contact with:

- Blood
- Semen
- Vaginal fluids
- Breastmilk



potential transmission methods

HIV cannot be transmitted by:

- Hugging, shaking hands, or sharing a home with an infected person
- Eating with or sharing utensils used by an infected person
- Sharing toilets used by an infected person
- Having an infected person kiss, spit, sneeze, cough, breathe, sweat, or cry on you
- Being bitten by mosquitoes

Communicating with Young People

Youth: Can I get AIDS from a mosquito? After all, they take blood from one person's body and inject into another person's body.

Adult: No, you get AIDS from a virus called HIV. HIV cannot live in a mosquito's body. HIV can be transmitted in blood by sharing needles or razors and through sexual intercourse. I'm glad that you are asking questions to better understand HIV and AIDS.



NOT transmission methods



Section 10. ABCs of HIV Prevention

Young people are at greatest risk of HIV infection through unprotected sexual intercourse. “ABC” is a menu of choices a young person can make to avoid sexual transmission of HIV. Each letter represents a different behavior, as described below.

A = Young people should abstain from or stop having sex.

For more on abstinence, see *Section 13. Helping Youth Choose Abstinence before Marriage*.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: If I shouldn't have sex, what should I do with my boyfriend (girlfriend)?

Adult: There are lots of ways to show someone you care without having sex. I can help you think of some ideas. What kinds of things do you enjoy doing with your boyfriend (girlfriend)? (Share ideas for activities you both feel would be fun and safe, such as dancing; playing cards or games; going for a walk; talking; listening to music; or being part of a club, choir, sports, school activities, or community projects.)



Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

Youth: Sometimes my girlfriend and I like to touch each other. We don't have sex, but we have come very close.

Adult: Sex does feel wonderful and God made our bodies so that we enjoy those feelings. But He tells us that sex is for married couples. It is very easy to be carried away, and it can be difficult to stop. It is important to set limits on what is right for this time in your life.

Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires. Song of Solomon 2:7

B = If the individual cannot abstain, she or he should remain faithful to an uninfected partner.

For more information on faithfulness, see *Section 16. Helping Young Couples Understand Faithfulness*.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: My girlfriend and I are thinking about getting married. We plan to have sex only with each other. We are safe from getting infected with HIV, right?

Adult: Sex before marriage is against God’s teaching. Also, we cannot tell who has an STI or HIV just by looking at them. Many people may not know they are infected. Not having sex at this time in your life is the safest protection you have against infection with an STI or HIV. When you are ready to get married, you should both get tested for HIV.



C = And if abstinence or remaining faithful is not possible, individuals should protect themselves by using condoms every time they have sex.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: I feel so confused. I want to have sex. My girlfriend (boyfriend) wants to have sex. We know about condoms and would be totally safe. Why shouldn’t we have sex?

Adult: The consequences of sexual activity can be long lasting and life changing. The Bible teaches us that sex is preserved for the covenant of marriage and not before. If you and your boyfriend (girlfriend) care very deeply for each other, despite what the Bible says, you may weigh the risks of pregnancy or STIs together and decide to be intimate. If you choose this, protect yourselves by using condoms correctly every time.

Youth: Why would God make sex feel so good and then tell us not to have it?

Adult: God does not forbid us from having sex. God has made sex to be a pleasant thing, but it has a place in marriage. Sometimes it is not always clear to us why God does what He does. But He does instruct us through Paul’s words that sex in marriage is sacred and good. He also reminds us that sex outside of marriage can have negative consequences — pregnancy, jealousy, and the breakdown of families and communities.

The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 1 Corinthians 7:4–5



Section 11. Voluntary Counseling and Testing

If one has had unprotected sex or is at risk for HIV, one should find out one's status by being tested. Testing is becoming more widely available.

HIV counseling and testing centers can help young people:

- Be tested
- Know their HIV status
- Receive counseling on their results
- Plan for healthy living, whether one tests HIV positive or HIV negative

People Living with HIV

Being HIV positive is difficult, but everyday life does not need to change drastically. Remember, HIV is not transmitted through common interactions. In fact, remaining connected to the community and feeling supported by others are important parts of continuing with life. A person with HIV can live for years without severe symptoms.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: What should I do if I have unprotected sex with someone? What happens if I test positive for a disease?

Adult: If you think you have been exposed to HIV or an STI, being tested is a good idea. You can be tested at a voluntary counseling and testing center, clinic, or local hospital. The clinic will probably counsel you regarding your test results.





Section 12. Ten Ways Young People Can Avoid Unwanted Sex

Tell young people that they can avoid unwanted or pressured sex.

- 1. Trust your instincts.**
If someone makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened, pay attention to your feelings and act on them.
- 2. Do not be alone with someone whom you do not know well enough to trust.**
Go out with a group of trusted friends or stay with the group.
- 3. Do not go to someone's house if no one else is home.**
Do not go to places where no one else is around.
- 4. If you are going out, make sure other people know where you are going and when to expect you home.**
This could be friends, parents, or other family members.
- 5. Know your own limits.**
If you do not want to have sex, explain this clearly to your friend when a relationship starts to ensure you both have the same expectations.
- 6. Always have money when you go on a date.**
You can get home safely on your own if necessary.
- 7. Split the costs of things with friends.**
Do not let him or her think that you owe any sexual favors in return for money spent on you.
- 8. Do not take alcohol or drugs.**
Alcohol and drugs can make it difficult for you to be clear about your limits. They can make it hard for you to explain yourself.
- 9. If you are pressured, do not be afraid to say "no" and mean it.**
Give a firm, strong refusal. Look him or her in the eye. Do not smile or look away shyly. Do not give the person the impression that you want to be coaxed or convinced.
- 10. If someone tries to force you, try to run away and scream for help loudly and continuously.**
Sexual violence or coercion is never the fault of the victim.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: Sometimes I like to get dressed up when I go out. I'm still a virgin and it doesn't mean I want sex just because I wear a short skirt and high heels.

Adult: How you dress can send messages that you may or may not intend to send. Your beauty is found in who you are, not in how you dress. There are many people who may take the way you dress as a signal to pursue you sexually. What are some ways that you can show how truly beautiful you are without being sexual? (Discuss ideas together.)

Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse. Proverbs 2:11–12

Youth: I don't know what to do about a family friend; he hugs me in a way that makes me feel uncomfortable. He also asks about who I am seeing and what I do with boys for fun.

Adult: You have a right to say no to something you do not want to do. It is okay to let him or your parents know that you are uncomfortable. Be strong about how you feel and what you don't want. What are some ways you can tell him this?

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7

Youth: I've heard about a teacher who threatens to fail girls if they do not have sex with him.

Adult: It is important that these young women say "No!" to this teacher. It is wrong for him to continue this. It can affect their health — they may be exposing themselves to becoming pregnant or infected with an STI or even HIV. They can also start to feel very bad about themselves and may become very depressed. Together, we can help them refuse this teacher if they don't feel they are able to do it themselves. What do you feel would be the best way to help them say "No!" to this teacher? (Discuss ideas. Identify steps. It is important that this teacher be stopped!)

Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways. Proverbs 2:12–15



Section 13. Helping Youth Choose Abstinence before

Marriage

Part IV

Benefits of Abstinence before Marriage

Physically, a young person is:

- Completely protected from pregnancy, without side effects
- Completely protected from STIs, including HIV

Emotionally, a young person:

- Demonstrates maturity, that one can resist peer or social pressure
- Is without worry, guilt, or shame
- Develops deeper friendships and love
- Can concentrate on personal goals and desires



Communicating with Young People

Youth: Is it ever okay to have sex?

Adult: When two people are married, sexual intercourse is a beautiful expression of their love. It is a way in which a husband and wife can give each other pleasure and intimacy. It is also the way in which a couple can take part in the creation of a new life. God intended for sex to be enjoyed in marriage.

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Genesis 2:24–25

Youth: Do many people have sex before marriage? What happens if they do?

Adult: While many people do have sex before marriage, that does not make it right. God teaches us to enjoy sex within marriage, where faithfulness and commitment are more permanent. By having sex before marriage, people risk emotional hurt, pregnancy, and diseases.

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:18–20

Spiritually, a young person:

- Respects God’s gift of sex within the covenant of marriage
- Preserves virginity for the sacrament of marriage
- Honors his or her body



Choosing When to Have Sex

Having sex for the first time can be an important emotional event. There are many questions that should be considered before having sex, such as:

- Am I really ready to have sex?
- How will I feel about myself after I have sex?
- How will I feel about my boyfriend (girlfriend) afterward?
- Am I having sex for the right reasons?
- How will my parents and friends feel about me having sex?
- What do my religion and culture say about sex and sex before marriage?
- How will I protect myself from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections?
- If I have sex, will I have to lie about it later?
- Will I feel guilty?



Communicating with Young People

Youth: What is it about sex that I need to learn?

Adult: You need to learn about good things and bad things because sex is more than an act that can produce a child or pass a disease. It is complicated and also includes your growth, development, personal safety, and relationships. I can help with some of the information you may be looking for.

Youth: I don’t plan to get married until I have finished school and saved a lot of money. This probably means I won’t get married until my late 20s or early 30s. Are you saying I should wait to have sex until then?

Adult: It is wonderful that you have goals and a vision for your life, but the Bible teaches us that sex is preserved for the covenant of marriage and not before. If you and your boyfriend (girlfriend) decide to be intimate, protect yourselves by using condoms every time.



Section 14. Common Drugs and Alcohol

Alcohol

Alcohol is an active ingredient in wine, beer, distilled spirits, and local brews. Chemically, alcohol functions as a depressant, making people feel sedate, calm, mellow, intoxicated, and sometimes sleepy.

Alcohol can affect young people (as well as adults) by:

- Impairing decision-making abilities
- Slowing reaction time, slurring speech
- Giving them a false sense of confidence



Long-term alcohol use can cause:

- Addiction
- Cancers and diseases of the liver, stomach, colon, breasts
- High blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes
- Impotence and infertility
- Birth defects, including retardation and low birth weight

Communicating with Young People

Youth: Adults like to drink beer or alcohol sometimes — why shouldn't I?

Adult: Drinking beer affects the body, especially when you are young and developing. It can give you a false sense of confidence and affect your ability to make decisions clearly. Adults sometimes do not drink responsibly. The age when people are considered old enough to drink responsibly varies by culture. But even after reaching that age, people need to drink responsibly.

Youth: What do I do if I have a friend who drinks when he goes out with his friends? He acts very different and has done some crazy things. Whenever I try to talk to him about it, he walks away or changes the subject.

Adult: Watching friends do things that hurt themselves or others is difficult. How can you let him know you care but don't want to be around when he drinks? We can think of some ways together. (Discuss different messages that could be used in this situation.) I am proud that you care enough to let him know how you feel. Your friend may not be ready to change, but you will have taken an important step in letting him know you care.

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Galatians 6:1

Marijuana

Marijuana (cannabis) is a plant; most commonly, its leaves are smoked. Chemically, it functions as a depressant, making people feel sedate, calm, and mellow. Sometimes users think marijuana relieves stress.

Marijuana can affect young people by:

- Slowing brain function, such as memory, judgment, perception, and motor skills
- Impairing concentration and overall performance
- Causing breathing problems

Long-term marijuana use can cause:

- Lung cancer
- Increased blood pressure



Stimulants

Stimulants are drugs that increase blood pressure in the body. When used, they often make one feel high and give one a temporary rush of energy and artificially good feelings. After use, one often feels depressed or sad, making one want to use more.

Common stimulants are cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin. Adolescents also use products such as glue or paint. Young users will know these drugs by their slang names, such as speed, coke, or ecstasy.

Stimulants can be taken in the form of pills, inhaled, or injected. Injecting drugs is especially risky when needles are shared — drug users pull blood into a syringe before injecting; thus, they are at high risk for diseases found in blood, such as HIV.

Stimulants can affect young people by causing:

- Addiction
- Hallucinations, nightmares, or mental illness
- Anorexia or loss of appetite
- Restlessness and anxiety

Long-term stimulant use can cause:

- High blood pressure
- Heart attacks, stroke
- Seizures
- Brain damage



Tobacco

Tobacco is a plant; most commonly, its leaves are smoked as cigarettes or chewed. The nicotine in tobacco makes people feel relaxed or more alert.

Tobacco can affect young people by:

- Causing addiction, often quickly
- Reducing lung capacity, slowing breathing ability

Long-term tobacco use can cause:

- Cancers of the lung, throat, mouth, stomach, and cervix
- Poor circulation
- High blood pressure, heart attacks, stroke
- Impotence
- Low birth weight in babies born to mothers who smoke



Communicating with Young People

Youth: Look, it's not like I do drugs; it's just smoking cigarettes.

Adult: Tobacco is a type of drug too. Smoking hurts your body in many ways; it can cause disease and even death. Thousands of chemicals are present in smoke, some of which are known to cause cancer.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Youth: I don't feel like I can do anything in this town without everyone knowing my business. I want to be able to go somewhere without you asking where I'm going and who I'm with. Are you worried that I'll be using alcohol or drugs?

Adult: The reason I ask these questions is because I care about you. Young people today face a lot more challenges than I did growing up. When I do not know where you are or whom you are with, my fears start to surface. I don't need to be with you wherever you go, but I do want you to know that I am thinking of you because I care about you.

Youth: Sometimes I don't feel like being around other people my age who smoke and drink, but my friends like to hang around with these boys who do. How should I handle it when they want to go see these boys?

Adult: It sounds like a challenging situation. What can you say to your friends to let them know you don't want to go with them when they visit these boys? (Help to find an acceptable way to address this problem and provide support.) It's brave to stand up for what you know is right.

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. Proverbs 13:20



Section 15. Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships bring happiness to both people involved. They include:

- **Time** — Healthy relationships often start as friendships and develop over time.
- **Mutual respect** — Each person genuinely values the other, promotes greater self-esteem in the other, and respects the individual needs and wishes of the other.
- **Trust and honesty** — There is confidence that each person is being truthful and faithful in the relationship.
- **Support** — Couples provide companionship and strength to each other in good and bad times.
- **Fairness** — Couples strive for an equal balance of both giving and taking in the relationship.
- **Separate identities** — Each person retains his or her individual personality and sense of self. In healthy relationships, there is compromise, but that should not mean losing oneself in the process.
- **Communication** — Couples are able to talk openly and honestly about their feelings and thoughts.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: I feel very strongly about my boyfriend — I think about him all the time. Does this mean I should marry him?

Adult: Being strongly attracted to someone can make you think you belong together, but without love it may not be the right choice. It is a good thing to be strongly attracted to someone; however, it is important that you are able to differentiate between true feelings of love and lust or infatuation.

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God. 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5

Youth: Did you have sex before you got married?

Adult: This is very personal, so I would rather not answer that about myself. Tell me why you want to know. Do you want some guidance about making a decision on whether to have sex?

Note: The answer to this question may not be easy. If you want to share your experience, perhaps in terms of regret or negative outcomes, please be sure that your answer and own experience keeps the focus on the needs of the youth. If your answer to this question is no, tell the young person about how you felt deciding to abstain until marriage. Encourage him or her to wait until the right time by explaining that you went through difficult decisions. Sometimes you felt good about your decisions; sometimes you made mistakes.



Section 16. Helping Young Couples Understand Faithfulness

Part V

Faithfulness means:

- Complete devotion to your wife or husband
- Remaining monogamous in your relationship; resisting temptation
- Respecting the vows of marriage

Benefits of faithfulness in marriage:

- Creates peace of mind and trust in your relationship
- Develops stronger commitment and deeper love
- Preserves God's gift of sex within the covenant of marriage
- Provides security in knowing each other's sexual health status and risk of infection (following STI and HIV testing)

Communicating with Young People

Youth: Sometimes it's really hard to be married. I have been with my wife for three years now and feel as though we have become brother and sister, not husband and wife.

Adult: Marriage is not always as easy as it appears, but your commitment and love for each other can help you through challenging times. Communication about your feelings with your wife is very important; perhaps she is feeling the same way. Have you talked to her about these thoughts yet?



In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.

Ephesians 5:28–29

Youth: Does it hurt to have sex? If so, why do people have sex?

Adult: Sexual intercourse is generally pleasurable for women and men. God created our bodies to have sex, and our bodies prepare for it to feel good. The first few experiences of intercourse can be uncomfortable for both the woman and the man, generally due to the breaking of the woman's hymen and their general nervousness and inability to relax. Also, intercourse is more pleasurable for a woman if there is sufficient lubrication. If a woman is rushed, intercourse can be painful.



Section 17. Preparing for a Baby

A young man and woman should ask themselves the following questions before becoming pregnant:

- **Are we emotionally ready for a baby?**
A child needs attention 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It takes much patience and attention from both the mother and the father.
- **Are we financially ready?**
Parents would have to find a source of money to pay for the baby's daily needs — food, medicine, clothes, and childcare — in addition to their own needs.
- **Are we willing to compromise our future goals?**
It can be very difficult to raise a baby while going to school or working. Many young girls find that they have to drop out of school and ultimately give up their plans for the future after having a baby.
- **Can we trust each other to be good parents?**
Raising a child alone is very difficult. Single parents often struggle to support themselves and their children at the same time. They are often forced to rely on others, such as parents or family members, for assistance.
- **Will we have the support from our families to raise this child?**
Will they help you? If young parents need to stay in school or work, they will need help taking care of the baby.
- **What does my culture say about a young woman having a baby?**
In some places, a young unmarried or divorced woman with a child is discriminated against or even banned from the family.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: I think having a baby would give me respect in my community. What could be so bad about having a baby at my age?

Adult: Having a baby is an adult thing to do. It's understandable for young people to want to do adult things. But while babies are cute and loving, they are also a tremendous responsibility. By waiting until you are financially, emotionally, and physically ready, you will be able to realize God's plan for you and your family-to-be.



Section 18. Fertilization

Girls are born with a supply of immature egg cells. Once a month, the ovaries release a mature egg, which travels down a fallopian tube. Ovulation happens about halfway through the menstrual cycle, at about day 14. A woman's body prepares for fertilization by collecting nutrient-rich tissue and blood along the lining of her uterus.

Boys begin to produce sperm during puberty. Once a boy begins sperm production, he will continue for the rest of his life.

Using foreplay, caressing each other's bodies, kissing, and fondling arouses men and women. A woman's body prepares for penetration by producing secretions; her vagina becomes wet. These secretions help sperm to travel through the uterus to the fallopian tube, where fertilization occurs.

A man gets an erection. Often, a small amount of pre-ejaculate is released before orgasm (release). Ejaculate is made of sperm and fluid. When a man reaches orgasm, he releases the sperm and fluid. When sperm is ejaculated into a woman's

vagina, it travels to her fallopian tube and meets an egg, and fertilization occurs.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: Is there a certain time a woman can become pregnant?

Adult: Yes. A woman has the ability to become pregnant when she is fertile. A woman is fertile only during a certain time of her menstrual cycle — usually 14 days after the beginning of her menstrual period, for 12 to 24 hours. However, due to differences in women's menstrual cycles, the fertile period can begin as early as the eighth day and last as long as the nineteenth day after the beginning of menstruation. A woman can become pregnant during these days of the menstrual cycle if a contraceptive method is not used.

While a woman is only fertile for about 12 to 24 hours during ovulation, fertilization can occur anytime between about day 8 and 19 of the menstrual cycle because ovulation occurs at different days for women and because sperm can survive in the woman's body for up to five days.



Section 19. Pregnancy

Pregnancy is the period when a woman carries a fetus in her uterus, usually for nine months.

Facts about Pregnancy

- A girl can become pregnant the first time she has sex.
- A girl can become pregnant even if her partner does not completely ejaculate inside her vagina.
- A girl can become pregnant even if she has never had a menstrual period.

When an egg is fertilized by sperm in the fallopian tube, it then travels to the uterus, where it implants in the lining of rich nutrients. It develops there over a period of nine months until delivery.

Signs of Pregnancy

The most common sign of pregnancy is a missed menstrual period for girls or young women.

Other signs are:

- Tenderness of breasts
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- More frequent need to urinate

If a young woman has had unprotected sex and thinks she may be pregnant, she should see a provider (nurse or doctor) and find out. If she is pregnant, the provider can instruct her about how to best care for herself and prepare for the baby.

Communicating with Young People

Youth: How is a baby actually born?

Adult: The mother's vagina expands and muscles contract in the uterus to push out the baby. These contractions are called labor. The baby comes through the uterus into the vagina, usually headfirst.



Section 20. Family Planning

Young married couples can decide to plan or space pregnancy by using family planning. If needed, couples can consult their church leaders for religious guidance and visit a local clinic.

Many family planning methods are available. Those that are most recommended for use by young people are effective and temporary. They will not cause permanent infertility.

Most importantly, when any young couple is deciding on a method other than condoms, they should consult a health care provider to guide them through the process and make sure that they understand completely the side effects and dosage.

The most recommended family planning methods for use by young couples are:

- Male or female condoms
- Oral contraceptive pills
- Hormonal injections

Please note that natural methods, such as the rhythm method, are *not* recommended for youth. Though widely accepted by most churches, they are complicated for young couples to use correctly, require long periods of abstinence every month, and have a high failure rate.

Male condoms

Male condoms provide a barrier that prevents pregnancy and protects against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. For this reason, it is often the ideal method for youth who are sexually active and are at risk of STIs.

- A male condom is a soft, thin sheath, made of latex or polyurethane, that a man puts over his erect penis before having sex. When a man ejaculates, his sperm is caught in the condom and prevented from entering a woman's vagina.
- To be effective, condoms must be used correctly and consistently every time a couple has intercourse.
- Male condoms are found in pharmacies, shops, and health clinics at a relatively low cost and are sometimes free.
- A new condom should be used every time a couple has sex. They cannot be washed or reused.
- For exact instructions, follow package drawings or ask an experienced user to demonstrate using a penile model.



THEY'RE NOT JUST FOR HIV AND STIS. CONDOMS PREVENT PREGNANCY TOO.



Female condoms

Female condoms also provide a barrier that prevents pregnancy and may provide protection against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

- A female condom is a soft, thin sheath, made of latex, polyurethane, or nitrile, that a woman inserts into her vagina before having sex. When a man ejaculates, his sperm is caught in the condom and prevented from entering a woman's vagina.
- Female condoms are not as widely available as male condoms, primarily because they cost more. They are sold or distributed free of charge by health clinics, community-based distributors, or nongovernmental organizations; some pharmacies also sell them.
- The female condom is intended for single use. However, certain types can be reused with careful cleaning and storage. Consult a health care provider for instructions.



Pills

Pills are a hormonal method of family planning that prevents the monthly release of an egg from the ovaries.

- A woman continues to have her period while taking the pills, but it may be lighter and less painful.
- When taken as prescribed by a provider, every day at the same time of the day, pills are very effective. However, if a woman misses more than one day, she may be able to become pregnant.
- It is important to note that pills do not protect against STIs or HIV.
- Pills are usually inexpensive and can be found in clinics and pharmacies. They typically come in one-month packages.
- People interested in using the pill should seek guidance from a health care provider, who can give complete instructions on use and side effects.



Injections

Injections are a hormonal method that prevents ovulation in a woman's body.

- A woman can get a regularly spaced injection at a clinic or hospital.
- Within 24 hours of the first injection, a woman is protected against pregnancy. Protection lasts for three months, depending on the brand of the injectable. Injections are convenient for women who find it difficult to take a pill every day or use a condom before having sex each and every time.
- Injections are private. No one can tell when a woman has had an injection.
- Injections can make your period lighter and less painful.
- On average after stopping injections, fertility (ability to become pregnant) will return in nine months.
- It is important to note that injections do not protect against STIs or HIV.
- When considering injections, one should seek guidance from a health care provider, who can give complete information and administer the injection in a safe way.



Communicating with Young People

Youth: What is family planning?

Adult: Family planning is a term that refers to using a contraceptive method. Using contraception can prevent pregnancy and control when to have children. A health care provider can help an individual or couple decide the best method. Condoms, one method of family planning, also prevent HIV and other STIs, when used consistently and correctly.

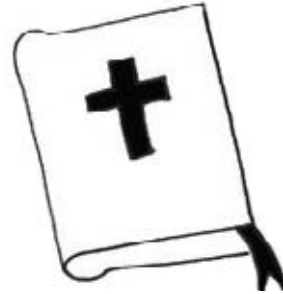
Additional Sources for Reflections

Use the following list of Bible verses to reflect further on topics related to family life education.

God's Gift of Sexuality

Genesis 1:26–27, 31

Song of Solomon



Sex and Marriage

Genesis 2:18

Genesis 2:24–25

Matthew 19:5–6

Mark 10:6–9

1 Corinthians 7:1–5

Ephesians 5:31

Premarital and Extramarital Sex

Exodus 20:14

Proverbs 7:13–27

1 Corinthians 6:12–20

Colossians 3:5

1 Thessalonians 4:3–5

Hebrews 13:4

Sexual Development, Sexual Anatomy, and Gender Roles

Genesis 2:7 and 2:20–25

Genesis 5:2

Galatians 3:28

Ephesians 5:21–33

Personal Safety and Drugs and Alcohol

Romans 13:13

Ephesians 5:18

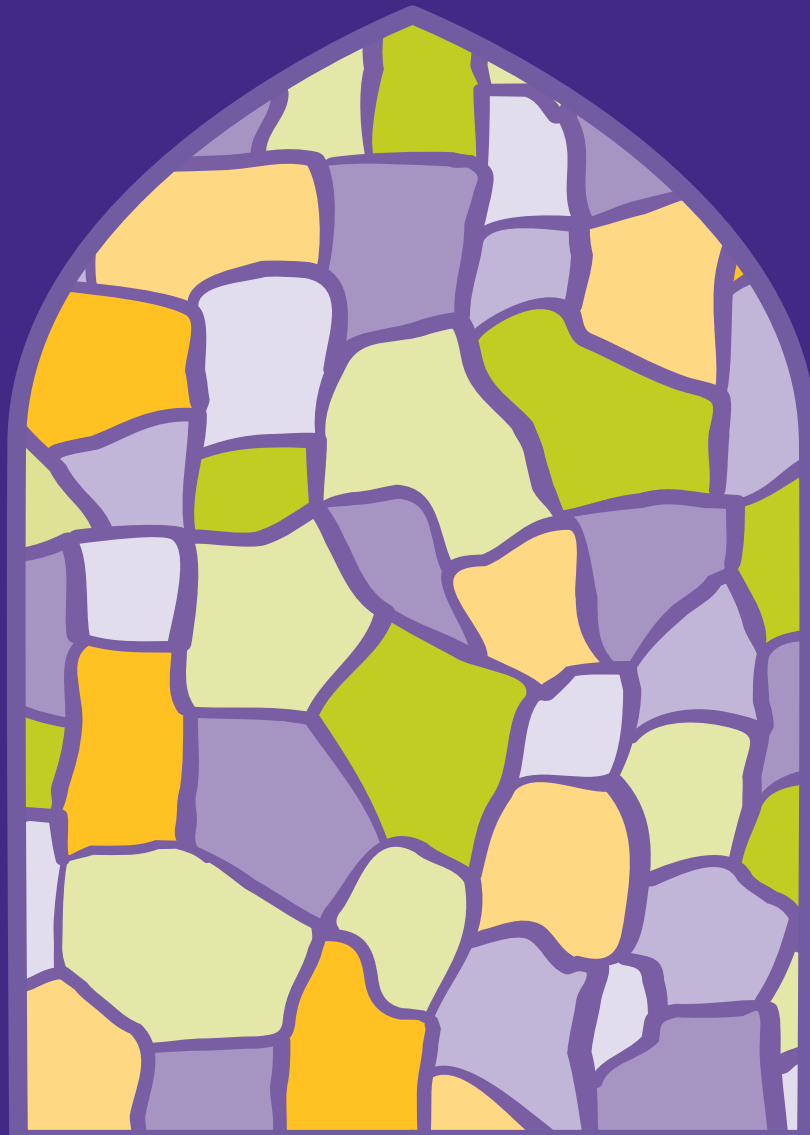
1 Corinthians 6:10

Relationships and Dating

1 Corinthians 6:12–20

1 Thessalonians 4:2–8

2 Timothy 2:22



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