

# PARENT CONVERSATIONS

Recently my six-year-old came home from his Lutheran elementary school, and I overheard him ask his older siblings, “What is ‘adultery?’” Apparently his class was memorizing the Sixth Commandment, and he couldn’t figure out what it was actually about. It was an eye-opening moment for me as a parent because I realized that we are asking our kids to memorize the commandments but we may not always be taking that next step to explain what they mean. Even the very Lutheran “What does this mean?” is not actually that helpful to a young child. So . . . how can we address this topic with our kids? Read on for perspectives from two parents and for some suggestions of resources that also might help.

—Nicole Balza

## HOW CAN I EXPLAIN THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT TO A YOUNG CHILD?

**GOD’S COMMANDMENTS** protect God’s gifts. When teaching and discussing the Ten Commandments, we often put the emphasis on what God says *not* to do. Yes, the Ten Commandments are there to show us our sin so that we see our need for a Savior, but we can use this opportunity to show our children the blessings God gives and how he protects us through his laws. Teaching the Sixth Commandment gives us just that opportunity.

It seems easy for children to understand, “Do not lie,” “Do not steal,” or even “Put God first.” But “do not commit adultery”? What does that even mean to a small child?

I thought back to how we’ve handled the topics of sex, marriage, babies, and “the talk” with our children. As a mother of three girls now in their teen years, it wasn’t always easy to navigate such conversations. In their childlike innocence, my daughters would often tell me they didn’t want to get married because they didn’t want to go through the pain of having babies. It was sweet that they believed it had to happen that way—like there was no other way than to be married first. I think they saw it this way because of the example they had in their own lives. They also regularly heard the truth from

God’s Word. I told them that children are a gift of marriage and that it will all be worth it.

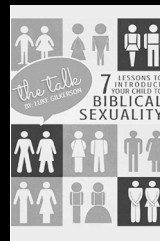
So how do you teach the Sixth Commandment to your young ones? Ask yourself, “What is God protecting in this commandment?” Be honest with your children and answer their questions truthfully, especially when it comes

to what the Bible says. It is equally important to keep it in terms that are appropriate for their age and development. I believe that if we start the conversations when they are young, the conversations will be easier as they grow and as the questions and answers become more complicated.

When it comes to the law and God’s commands, put the focus on what God is protecting and the blessings that come rather than emphasizing what not to do. The Sixth Commandment is all about God’s gift of family. In Genesis we’re told, “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone’ ” (2:18). God created us. He knows what is best for us. God designed marriage for us because he loves us enough to give us companionship. God says, “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). This means that they are now a new

### THE TALK

*“The Talk is an excellent resource that provides a step-by-step, biblically-based approach to talking with your children about sexuality,”* writes Sarah Reik, a licensed professional counselor and mom of four, who reviewed the book for **Conquerors Through Christ**, a subcommittee of WELS’ Committee on Mental Health Needs. For the full review and order information, visit [conquerorsthroughchrist.net/books](http://conquerorsthroughchrist.net/books).



family and that nothing should take them apart. When it comes to marriage, God puts it in simple terms: one man and one woman united for life. God is protecting family.

Ultimately, it always comes back to this: We tell our children the message of sin and grace. We sin. Jesus didn't. Jesus came and kept each and every part of God's law perfectly in our place. At the end of the day, always give them Jesus!



Amanda Berg and her husband, Mike, have three daughters. Amanda teaches K4/K5 at St. Philip, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**THE BIRDS AND THE BEES.** Where babies come from. "The talk."

It can be awkward and uncomfortable for parents and kids alike to have discussions about sex. But you can be sure that if you don't teach them, someone else will. Satan is itching to influence our kids through friends, movies, and the internet. So let's have a godly influence on our kids while we can. Here are my five tips for talking to your kids about sex.

#### START EARLY AND TALK OFTEN

Don't wait until your kids are in high school to have "the talk." That's too late. Talk about God's design for our bodies and the differences between boys and girls when your kids are still little. Keep it age appropriate, obviously. (When

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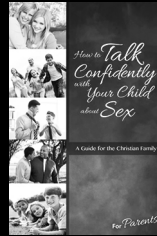
they're young, you only need to answer the questions they ask.) But "the talk" isn't a one-and-done conversation. ("Phew! Glad I never have to do that again!") So plan for it. Set aside time to talk to your kids openly and honestly. If you haven't started early and your kids are teens, that's okay. Better late than never.

#### DON'T TREAT IT AS DIRTY

The way our bodies are made, as male or female, is by God's design. "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). That design is amazing!

## HOW TO TALK CONFIDENTLY TO YOUR KIDS about sex

This series published by Concordia Publishing House includes two sets of books—one for boys and one for girls. Each set has five age-appropriate books and one for parents. Keeping Christ at the center, it highlights who we are by his grace and how we can honor him with our bodies for the way he gave his life for us. Learn more at [nph.net](http://nph.net).



Can you imagine if I could invent a car that could self-heal the way our bodies do? I'd be a billionaire! And that design includes our sex and sexuality, the way we procreate, and our sexual desires. These are not shameful and shouldn't be treated as such. But as with medicine or fire, we need to teach our kids to use them properly and responsibly, lest what is meant as a blessing harms or even kills body or soul.

#### FOCUS ON CHRIST

Maybe it's hard for some to talk about this subject because they haven't always used God's gift of sex properly. Take heart! Jesus never lusted, and he gave his perfection to you! Jesus paid for all sins on the cross, including sexual sins. Rejoice that you're forgiven.

Remind your kids that they will find forgiveness in Jesus. Teach them that forgiveness is what motivates us to want to live for him. If our talk about this subject is all in

the realm of the law, it's no wonder people come to think of sex as dirty or shameful. Let's talk about sins against the Sixth Commandment, but let's also talk about the Savior who redeemed us.

#### REMEMBER WHOSE YOU ARE

Focused on Christ, we can talk about more than just the "what" and the "how" of sex but also the "why." Why do we want to treat sex with special modesty and as the sacred thing that it is? Because "you are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). God not only made us, but when we rebelled, he redeemed us. We are twice owned by him. Let's honor him with our bodies.

#### GET HELP

No, I don't mean just make your spouse do "the talk" if you promise to teach the kids how to drive. I mean look for resources by others who have gone before you and done this already. Other Christian parents have already done this well. Learn from them as you talk to your kids about sex.



Rob Guenther and his wife, Becky, are raising four boys in New Ulm, Minnesota. Rob is pastor at St. John, New Ulm.

Interested in more? Visit [forwardinchrist.net/parents](http://forwardinchrist.net/parents) for more parenting resources, including articles, podcasts, and videos.

