

## 5 Ways to Prevent the 50 Shades of Middle School

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School bells ringing, lockers slamming, and teacher's teaching... Those are a few of the sounds that you'll hear when you walk through the halls of a middle school today.

However, there are a few other sounds that you won't hear. You won't hear the discreet whispers and giggles from students as they show each other the sext messages they just received on their phones. You won't hear the notifications go off when a student receives an anonymous inbox message from a stranger they met online asking them what's their "ASL", which stands for age, sex, and location. You also won't hear the questions circling the minds of the teens as they walk through the hallways "Am I ready to have sex?", "Why is everyone else having sex, except me?", "Am I sexy?"

If your child has access to the Internet, they have access to a plethora of sexual images and nudity... all day, every day. As a former school guidance counselor, and a current national life coach and teen expert, I can recall several instances where teens either met someone online via an anonymous social media outlet, sent and received sext messages believing that they were going to be for the eyes of only one person, but we all know that that isn't true, and I can also recall a time when a young 13-year-old girl asked me "Is sex really like what it looks like in the Fifty Shades of Grey movie?" Yes, that happened. This young lady received a few video clips from the movie via text messages that had been circulating around her school. She asked me this question because she was considering losing her virginity, and she wanted to know if she should expect to be whipped and tied up when she has sex for the first time.

### Welcome to the Fifty Shades of Middle School

If you are a parent with a child in middle school, it just got real. It's time to have serious sex talks with your teen, because although he/she may be acting like they don't know much about sex, or that they aren't interested in sex, it's around them. Every time they turn on their phone, visit a social media site, or surf the Internet, it's there... and their peers are curiously talking about it too.

Here are a few quick tips for talking to teens about sex:

#### 1. Have short talks, not marathons:

Most teens are really nervous when it comes to talking about sex with their parents. Weren't you? Teens typically want to avoid this conversation at all cost. So, since it's already an uncomfortable topic, don't make it worse by belaboring the talk and making it last longer than it should. Try inserting short talks, with teachable moments, here and there. This will lessen the "sex talk" blow, and it could possibly prevent your teen from rolling their eyes during the talk.

#### 2. Role play pressure situations:



Myth: My teen won't be in a pressure situation regarding sex

Fact: Your teen will likely be pressured to either have sex, watch sex on TV or online, or send/receive a sexual message, and if it doesn't happen to your teen, it's going to happen to their friends, who will talk to your teen about it; so it's best to make sure that your teen is prepared when those pressure situations arise. Role-play with your son or daughter. Act out different situations and give your teen suggestions and strategies on how to react to that situation. Try role-playing the following:

What do you do when someone asks you to send them a sext?

What do you do when you receive a sext?

What do you do when you arrive at a party and the parents are not at home?

### **3. Talk about consequences:**

Don't assume that your teen knows about safe sex, STIs, and how to prevent teen pregnancy. Nowadays, sex education is rarely taught in public schools, and if it is taught, it's a brief topic in class. Unfortunately, some teens believe that oral sex is not sex, and that if they only engage in oral sex, they can still remain a virgin and not suffer any of the negative consequences that having sex can bring. This is not true. STIs can still be transmitted during oral sex... and oral sex IS sex. When talking with your teen, be sure to dispel any myths that they might have about what is considered sex and what isn't, and make sure that they know the real deal. Think about it: Wouldn't you rather them hear the real facts about sex from you, rather than from that cute boy or girl trying to persuade them?

### **4. Teach them to guard their reputation.**

Tell your teen that despite what is constantly being displayed on TV, on social media, and in music, everyone is NOT doing it. Encourage your teen to not feel pressured by the sexual images and messages that they see and hear throughout the day. Instead, encourage them to focus on their own character, morals and values. When having conversations with your teen about sex, also discuss their thoughts, belief systems and actions, and how those actions represent them. Let them know that it's time to start thinking about how they want to show up in the world, and how they want to be perceived. Then, discuss potential actions such as posting provocative pictures and anonymously participating in racy conversations on a social media site, while challenging the teen to think about what those actions say about their character and values.

### **5. Don't just talk about it, be about it.**

Take action. Be proactive. If you don't want your teen to be able to access pornographic sites online, install software that blocks these sites from your home. If you don't want your teen to access certain social media sites, have conversations with them and ban them from those sites. If they still continue to visit them, then contact your cellular provider to block certain sites and apps from your teen's phone. Also, initiate a technology curfew, meaning that all electronics must be shut down at a certain time every night, and I strongly suggest that parents



have their teens store the electronics on the charger in the parent's room to take away the temptation to be online all night. Finally, be sure to conduct frequent phone checks on your teen's phone to monitor the messages that they are receiving, sending, and viewing.

### **Truthbomb:**

The teens of today are growing up in a different world compared to the world that we grew up in. There is a large, shaded, inappropriate grey area that teens have access to and are secretly, curiously talking about. Parents are the best tool for properly educating and preventing premature sexual activity. If you want to protect and prevent your teen from engaging in sexual activity too soon, be sure to have real sex talks with them, discuss the consequences, role play and then take proactive action.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/keisha-howard/5-ways-to-prevent-the-50-shades-of-middle-school\\_b\\_8741636.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=parents-teens](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/keisha-howard/5-ways-to-prevent-the-50-shades-of-middle-school_b_8741636.html?utm_hp_ref=parents-teens)

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