

MIDDLE SCHOOL SEXUAL INTEGRITY



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR SGLs

... for intentional conversations with students

As if middle school isn't challenging enough, students are also experiencing changes in every aspect of their lives—their friends, their style, their interests, their level of responsibility, and even their bodies.

Talking about friends and interests? Easy. Opening up about dating and healthy sexuality? Not so much.

When it comes to talking about sex and relationships with your few, your goal isn't to have all the answers. Instead, get your students talking so you can better understand their current realities and show them small group is a safe place to talk about anything. If they try to push you away, lean in, and keep the lines of communication open by carefully choosing your words and body language. You might be the only affirming voice they hear, so encourage them authentically and positively. And to help you get the conversation started, here are some words to say and not to say.

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WHAT TO SAY:

- "Thanks for telling me. This is a place where you can ask or talk about anything."
- Discuss relationship values by using words and phrases like:
 - » "Honor God with your body."
 - » "Think about things that are good."
 - » "Don't let anything or anyone control you."
 - » "Now's not the time to bring sexual conversation or actions into a relationship."
 - » "Respect yourself."
- "Sex is good because it's made by God for a certain time and place, but it's also harmful when done outside the boundaries He has for us."
- "Let's brainstorm together some guardrails that can help you make wise choices about sex."
- "Who's another adult or mentor, besides me, you can talk to about your questions and thoughts?"

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY:

- "We don't need to talk about that."
- "Sex is bad. It's a sin."
- "Sex is a line you can't recover from once you cross it."
- "You're not even supposed to be thinking about stuff like that."
- "Why aren't you dating anyone? You should be!"
- Avoid saying nothing. Keep the conversation going and avoid the impulse to disconnect.

Keep in mind there may be times you need to involve your ministry leader, students' parents, and professional counselors in the conversation.

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Your high schoolers only have a few years left before they leave the house, and they are becoming increasingly self-reliant as they work to form identities and independent thoughts. But as their small group leader, you still have a critical role to play when it comes to helping them guard their sexual integrity. Your goal isn't to have all of the answers. Instead, get your students talking so that you can better understand their current realities and prove that small group is a safe place to talk about anything. These are turbulent years, and your job is to coach them toward healthy relationships. If they try to push you away, lean in, and keep the lines of communication open by measuring your words and body language. You might be the only affirming voice they hear, so encourage them authentically and positively. Conversations may be challenging, but you need to be available for them. To help get you started, here are some words to say and not to say.

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WHAT TO SAY:

- "Thanks for telling me. This is a place where you can ask or talk about anything."
- "What are some of your favorite things about (name of person they're interested in)? Do you feel like he/she respects you?"
- "Some of the most important choices you'll make in dating are about your body and how to honor God with it."
- "God isn't trying to make you miserable. He's trying to show you something better. When God says 'no,' it's because He has something better in mind."
- "Have you talked to your parents about this? Do you have someone else, besides me, you can reach out to when you need help?"

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY:

- "I don't think we need to talk about that."
- "You'll forget all about him/her in year." (Don't minimize what seems significant.)
- "Sex is a line you can't recover from once you cross it."
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