

TWELVE WAYS TO GUARD YOUR CHILD'S HEART FROM PORNOGRAPHY

Reasonable parents are concerned today about the influence and prevalence of Internet pornography. It is widely believed the median age of exposure to pornography has fallen to age eight or nine. Research into children's neurological development reveals that exposure to sex and violence in early childhood is especially damaging. No longer a "men's issue," pornography in any form, sexually assaults boys and girls.

Still, it is interesting to note that developing healthy, transparent relationships at home is the best way to protect your child from pornography. Healthy sexuality rests within the context of spirituality, where people are valued as image-bearers of God rather than objects of personal gratification.

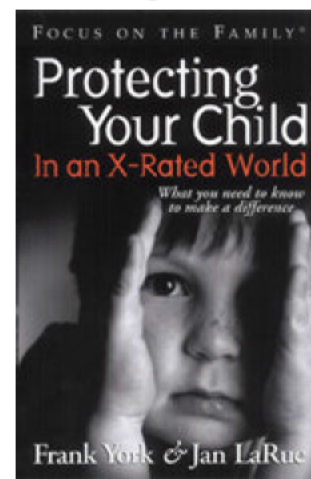
Regardless of your child's age, it's never too late to teach *what* to think and *how* to think about sexuality. This important issue spans cradle to grave, portraying Christ's love for the church in a way that a husband and wife can only begin to grasp.

1. **Teach the attributes of God's nature.** A child needs to learn about his Creator, and the supremacy of God. He needs to learn that his God is bigger than anything that will ever challenge him.
2. **Teach the nature of man.** A child needs to learn about humankind's perfect union with God before the fall, and how our wounded nature seeks independence from God.
3. **Make your physical home a sanctuary.** A child's home needs to be warm and caring, free of injury and turmoil. Home needs to be a refuge from the variety of assaults found at school, on the playground, and within peer groups.
4. **Consider the culture.** A child's parents need to be realistic about the culture. Because the youth culture pushes the limits of what is appropriate, today's parents have to take the initiative in training their children with a Christian worldview.

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5. **Teach your child to guard his heart by your example.** A child needs good parental examples. Each child will absorb whatever he finds in his mom and dad, and how parents regard sexuality will be modeled both verbally and non-verbally.
6. **Take a proactive, common-sense approach to the media.** A child needs her parents to oversee the types and amounts of media that she sees and hears. Responsible parents consider the amount of time, the nature of the content, and the development needs based on the age of their children.
7. **Embrace teachable moments.** A child can't be sheltered from everything and grow up with the life skills needed by a healthy adult. His parents can make the most of difficult moments by teaching what pleases God as revealed by the Holy Spirit and the Bible.
8. **Teach loyalty to Christ based on his great love towards us.** A child needs to learn early that God's love is so wonderful that loving him in return is a delightful, natural response. Once a child discovers an intimate relationship with God, all other loves will be secondary.
9. **Equip your child to integrate his body, mind, and spirit to the glory of God.** A child needs to marvel at the creation of her body, mind, and spirit, learning that like God she has a tri-part design. Once a child regards herself as the temple of God, living life responsible becomes a joy.
10. **Keep the lines of communication open.** A child needs to be able to talk about anything, knowing that his parents care. Sensitive parents share from their life experiences with empathy and relevance.
11. **Initiate sex education that parallels your child's age, personality, and relational needs.** A child needs to hear how sexuality is good – it's a part of God's wonderful design. He needs to marvel at the equal value found in males and females, and how a husband and wife become one in body and spirit.
12. **Keep the spousal analogy of Christ and the church central to your child's sex education.** A child needs to learn that God commends sexual expressions between husbands and wives as a sacred way of imitating the spiritual union between Christ and the church.

For additional information, consider this excellent resource, *Protecting Your Child in an X-Rated World* by Frank York and Jan LaRue. Published by Focus on the Family/Tyndale House



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