



Sunday Q&A

Your Faith in Focus

BODY TALK WITH YOUR KIDS

I know there are important conversations that I need to have with my children about relationships, love, understanding, and what it means to be a boy or a girl. How do I get started? When do I start?

You might have had a talk with your parents during middle school that answered questions about developing bodies—and perhaps the whole big picture of life and love. Hopefully, it was more like an ongoing dialogue that helped you navigate your questions in a free, honest, and clear way. Even if this wasn't your experience, it's probably what you want for your children. Here are some thoughts from Aimee MacIver based on St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. To learn more about this topic, you can find many resources from Ascension.

“The Talk”

The talk shouldn't be a “talk,” singular. Rather, the topic should unfold over time. That's a HUGE premise of JP II's *Theology of the Body*. The *Theology of the Body* is often believed to be a chastity program, but it's much more about anthropology—who are we as male and female and what our bodies reveal about what we are made for. The facts about our bodies should flow from a prior foundation about the body-and-soul relationship, what the body is for, and more.

Most teachers of the *Theology of the Body* (me included) prefer using correct terminology and avoiding cute or confusing nicknames or euphemisms for private parts. This helps foster respect and wonder for the body instead of the shame that can be implied by avoiding direct talk about the body. If we can't even say the names of these parts, does that mean they are bad or shameful? It's truly amazing how God has made our male and female bodies with such differences! What an awesome gift! What a great God who gave us such wonderful bodies that can do so many things and, most especially, that can show love!

I have found that being honest but broad is a good tactic when talking with children about the body because there's no need to give more details than

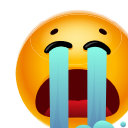
necessary. Kids are often satisfied with broad truth. Being broad gives information without burdensome or confusing details but also allows for follow-up questions.

Children are not always ready for the full answer to a question. Start by just answering the basic question that was asked, and allow them to guide the discussion with any follow-up questions that they have. If the discussion goes deeper than you or they are prepared for, it's OK to tell your children that's all they need to know for now and that you will give them more information when they are a little older.

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Ponder and Pray

- How did my parents guide me through the big questions I had about love, life, and my developing body? What was helpful? What do I wish happened a bit differently?
- How do I want to have those conversations with the next generation?



Make It Your Own

Anticipate some important topics that you want to be sure to pass on to your children, and take some time to work on how and when you would like to communicate them. To start, list 10 things you want to absolutely be sure to communicate to your children about life, love, and the human body.

Dive Deeper

Parents only: To read Aimee McIver's full article, scan the code or visit the URL: <https://media.ascensionpress.com/2019/11/18/the-talk-where-to-start-as-a-parent/>

