

Courting the idea of dating...



One of the most difficult decisions parents face with teens is when to allow dating to begin! A lot of parents and teens find themselves on opposite ends of the spectrum on a variety of dating topics such as the age to begin dating and exclusive dating. While locking your teen in their room until he or she is thirty may have crossed your mind, it only delays the inevitable. With this in mind, here are some practical things you can do to bring about a peaceful resolution. First, encourage your teen to go out in groups. This builds strong accountability and eases the pressure of temptations that could come if two teens are alone. Second, get to know your teen's friends by making your house the "hangout" spot. This will also build in some additional accountability with your teen and their friends. Third, when your

teen is ready to go on their first exclusive date, always meet their date BEFORE the date begins. Make the most of this first meeting by giving your full attention to your teen's date and by asking questions that will allow you to know them more. Fourth, make sure your teen and their date know what you expect. Asking a few practical and basic questions such as, "Where are you going?" and "What time will you be back?" will send the message loud and clear that your permission must be received before decisions are made with or for your teen. Fifth, **PRAY** and ask God to protect your teen as well as keep you from having a nervous breakdown during this season of change and growth.

Here are some practical ways to help teach your teen about dating:

- 1. Take your teen out on a date.** The best way to teach your teen how to treat their date is to actually take them on the "perfect" date. Set the bar high by opening the door for your daughter and talking about subjects that are God-honoring. NOTE: Start this as early as possible! The more you do this, the more your teen will learn what to expect.
- 2. Watch TV with your teen.** Sit down with your teen as they watch a TV show that may have some questionable relationship content. After the show is over, talk about the incident and how everything was handled. This is a great time to discuss how he/she would handle this situation if ever faced with this issue.
- 3. Talk about your past relationships.** One of the greatest tools God has given you to teach your teen about dating is the lessons you learned from dating in your high school years. Be honest with your teen and talk about your mistakes. There will be much laughing and learning happening all at the same time!

Pulse

Here are some interesting polls on what parents and teens think about dating. How would you answer?

1. Parents were asked, "At what age should teens be allowed to start dating?"

- 9% - 12 years old
- 9% - 13 years old
- 12% - 14 years old
- 17% - 15 years old
- 40% - 16 years old
- 10% - No set rule.



(about.com)

2. Teens were asked, "Are teens mature enough to really fall in love?"

- 71% - Yes
- 13% - Not sure
- 15% - No

(teenadvice.about.com)



The topics of dating and relationships are constantly on a teen's AND the parent's mind! Start communicating with your teen about this topic by asking the following questions:

1. What qualities or attributes are you looking for in a spouse? Rank your answers in order of importance.
2. How old do you think you should be to go on a group date? How old do you think you should be to go on a date alone? Why do you think this way?
3. What boundaries do you have in place to keep you protected on a date? What happens and what will you do if someone steps over the boundary line?
4. Do you believe it's OK in a dating relationship to say the words "I love you" to the person you are dating? Why or why not?

PRAY THAT:

1. God will give you wisdom and discernment as you make the hard decision of allowing your teen to begin dating.
2. God will protect your teen on every aspect of a dating relationship, including what they do and where they go.
3. God will prepare your teen's heart as they interact and understand how relationships work.
4. God will provide the perfect mate for your teen, and that when they get older they will have a successful and fruitful marriage.

Verse of the month

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children...But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people." Ephesians 5:1a,3 (NIV)

Imitation is the greatest form of flattery, and God reminds us that as His dearly loved children we are to imitate Him in all that we do. How do we do this? We are called to imitate Him in speech, in action, and in attitude. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task, especially in a teen's dating relationship. God reminds us that there should not be even a HINT of sexual immorality in any area of our lives. That is why it is so important for teens to know that where they go with each other and what they do when no one else is looking is so important to their personal holiness. Sexual impurity can happen to anyone including your teen. Parents must get on their knees and pray for their teens to stand firm in their faith and remain pure in all areas of their life.



* Today, the average age for a person to begin dating is 13. In 1924 the average age was 16. (more4kids.info)

* One-third (33%) of 16-18 year-olds said sex is "expected" of people their age who are in a relationship. 31% of teens who have been in a "serious" relationship agreed with this statement. (loveisnotabuse.com)

* The U.S. Attorney General reports that 38% of date rape victims are girls between the age of 14 and 17. (msnbc.com)

* Nearly one in four teens in a relationship (24%) communicated with their partner via cell phone or texting hourly between midnight and 5:00 AM. One in three teens (30%) say they are text messaged 10, 20, and 30 times an hour by a partner inquiring where they are, what they're doing, or who they're with. (loveisnotabuse.com)



MUSICSPOTLIGHT



Background: SPUR58 was born from the heart of its front-man, Aaron Ivey. Ivey began vocational ministry as a student pastor/worship leader in Houston, Texas. He says, "Leading worship was my job, but I felt like I was supposed to share that outside just one church." He then recruited the other members, one from his own student ministry, who all had hearts for worship. In 2003, SPUR58 relocated to Murfreesboro, TN, and after considering numerous labels, the group signed with Indelible Creative Group because, "They didn't want to make us into something else; they believed we were already doing what God called us to do." SPUR58's heart for leading worship and truly leading others to worship is evident throughout their music. Their debut album, "Sleepwalkers", is the group's "hope that people will hear God's call, wake up, and respond with worship through their own real life stories." (musicfaith.com)

Albums: "Sleepwalkers" - 2007

What Parents Should Know: "Aiming to create community among music fans, believers as well as non-believers, SPUR58 shares honest thoughts on worship through a powerful, melodic blend of guitars and piano."

What SPUR58 has to say: "Our heart is leading worship. That's what we love to do and are passionate about, but that doesn't always mean getting people to sing along," Ivey says. **Q:** What does it mean to lead worship? How can you do that in your daily life?



Background: Radiohead was one of the few alternative rock bands of the early 90's to mimic the "grandiose arena rock that characterized U2's early albums." The English group began while students at Oxford University. Their debut came in 1993 when one of their singles became an international hit and left people wondering if they would be a one-hit-wonder. Their second album, however, released to rave reviews and they began building a strong fan base. To date, the group has made seven albums and has received multiple accolades including number one debuts on both the US and UK charts while reaching gold album status and several Grammy nominations. In 2007, the group released their seventh album, "In Rainbows" and gave fans a chance to purchase it for whatever they wanted to pay for the album. The release went surprisingly well and was done without the involvement of a record label. (billboard.com)

Albums: "In Rainbow" - 2007; "Hail to the Thief" - 2003; "Amnesiac" - 2001

What Parents Should Know: Radiohead continually uses foul language in interviews. Some of their albums have a negative feel.

What Radiohead has to say: Colin Greenwood says, "I don't think music influences people in a direct-action kind of way, but it does help to shape tastes and perhaps that has a part to play in growing up. If we make people think, then we've achieved something." (uwire.com) **Q:** Do you agree? Why?

FILMWATCH

Title	Rating: Red Flags	Genre	Starring
The Hottie and the Nottie	PG-13: For crude and sexual content	Romantic comedy	Paris Hilton, Joel David Moore, Christine Laken
Semi-pro	PG-13: For some sexual references	Comedy	Will Ferrell, Woody Harrelson, Will Arnett
Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins	PG-13: For crude and sexual content, language, and some drug references	Comedy	Martin Lawrence, Margaret Avery, Jay Bryant

