

My 11-Year Old Daughter Asked The Facts Of Life, What Do I Say?

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I'm at a loss for words when it comes to my eleven-year-old daughter's questions concerning the facts of life. She pals with a girl from the same Catholic school whose mother seems to tell her everything. Yesterday my daughter asked me about adultery. That did not give me any intention of telling her about these things yet. Later I wish to explain sex in a way that isn't disgusting and cheap. Isn't she still too young for such questions?

Like many good Christian parents, you seem to have the right intentions but the wrong approach in this matter. Obviously, it is a grave mistake to try to protect your young girls from the negative aspects of sex or to its various deviations before they are old enough to have acquired a positive understanding and appreciation of the facts and values involved.

You rightly question the propriety or need to discuss the subject of adultery with your eleven-year-old daughter. Besides, it would be a waste of time. Until she has some positive understanding of love and marriage, she can have no balanced view of infidelity.

On the other hand, I am puzzled by your reference to "later." Haven't you completely undervalued the rate of your daughter's intellectual and physical development? If she is a normal girl, she has probably been talking about where babies come from since she was three. It is likely that she will start menstruating within the coming year.

You still regard her as your baby, but she's a growing girl. Following the normal pattern of growth and intellectual development of all little girls. When questions arise, she looks for answers.

Sex is only one of the great things about which she is curious, and will show no undue interest in it, provided she is told what girls her age are expected to know.

It seems to me that the first thing you should now do is to find out what your daughter knows about sex and related phenomena. If you have neglected her education on such matters until the present, chances are that she knows many things that aren't so, and you will have to start the process of reeducation at once.

Keep in mind that there is nothing to be gained by making a mystery out of the biological facts of life. The physical process of human reproduction is neither mysterious, unthinkable, or unmentionable.

This does not mean that you have to use charts and diagrams or give her a rapid resume of the Kinsey reports. Find out what her questions are, correct whatever false information she may have picked up from her classmates, and then arrange your program of education accordingly. Young girls differ a great deal in the questions they ask and most are satisfied with relatively simple but correct answers.

Unless their curiosity is unduly stimulated by conversation with others, there's no need to go into details. However, if you discover that your daughter has been exposed to wild stories and lurid details, you should calmly explain whatever facts are necessary so that she will feel confident that what you tell her in all such matters is reliable and trustworthy.

Further, since your daughter is approaching puberty, you must prepare her for the bodily changes and new experiences she is about to face. Help her to regard these as both normal and desirable. She is now entering the final



stage of physical development toward mature womanhood. Point out to her that these changes indicate that she is coming into mature possession of a great privilege, the power to create and bear new life; that sex and everything related to it have a special dignity and sacredness precisely because new life is involved. You will succeed here to the extent that you help your daughter feel proud to have been born a woman. It is well to keep in mind that the so-called facts of life have personal meaning and significance, with the result that one of the primary aims of sex education must be the development of balanced, Christian attitudes towards these facts. It is not so much the fact as the attitude toward the fact that is important. Indeed, knowledge of the facts without correct attitudes, that is, without understanding their personal implications in terms of love, moral standards, and the Creator's plan can work great harm, as modern experience shows all too well.

Family Library Of Ten Books

Union City, N.J.—Ten basic books could get the average Catholic started on a "good family reference library" and the cost would be "less than one major appliance."

The Sign, national Catholic magazine, published here, tells in its August issue how "any family may easily, quickly, and inexpensively acquire basic books—some relatively expensive, others very inexpensive."

Dan Herr and Joel Wells, staff members of a mid-western Catholic review, list the following books "carefully selected from the plenitude of available reference works to meet the specific needs of today's Catholic family." They are books which "can be purchased one at a time as the family budget permits."

- (1) The Family Bible, according to Herr and Wells, "should be a reading Bible that in format and size of type is inviting to the eye."
- (2) A Dictionary. It's just as important in the 1950's, and in the age of the author, to have an up-to-date dictionary as it is to have a modern family car.
- (3) A Catholic Dictionary. They recommend the third revised edition by Donald Attwater.
- (4) Lives of the Saints. "Happily, modern writers are presenting them in the manner they deserve," not as they were in "old style biographies."
- (5) An Etiquette Book. "A good one by Frances E. S. Benton, for only \$1, is more down to earth and filled with far less fol de rol than its more expensive competitors."
- (6) The National Catholic Almanac. "No other single book offers so much useful information and so many facts about the Church. Best of all, the cost is only \$2.75."
- (7) The Columbia Encyclopedia. As a one-volume encyclopedia it is "outstanding." Its 2,307 pages should serve the needs of the entire family.
- (8) An Atlas. "Unless you go out-of-date even faster than dictionaries, so don't rely on an old one."
- (9) A Life of Christ. "A continuing study of the Life of Christ is the most logical subject for family reading if that laudable custom has not been entirely lost." Recommended are: "Jesus and His Times" by Daniel Rops; "The Life of Christ" by Giuseppe Riccardi; and "Jesus Christ" by Ferdinand Prat.
- (10) An Apologetics Handbook. Herr and Wells recommend "The Faith Explained" by Father Leo J. Trese, a popular and detailed commentary on the "Baltimore Catechism"—thirty-nine brief and clear explanations of Catholic dogma.

Erected in Rome
Rome—(RNS)—Vatican and Filipino dignitaries attended the blessing of the cornerstone for the Philippine Ecclesiastical College to be erected here for the training of Roman Catholic priests.

Council Eyed With Interest

Rhodes, Greece (RNS)—The World Council of Churches' Executive Committee declared in a report here that it will continue to follow with interest developments in the Ecumenical Council to be convened by Pope John XXIII.

"As leaders of a movement which stands for church unity," the report said, "we cannot be indifferent to an event which affects so large a number of Christians and which cannot avoid having bearing on relations among several Churches."

THE REPORT was made at the annual meeting of the World Council's Central Committee, a 90-member body which determines WCC policy during intervals between General Assemblies. Affiliated with the WCC are 171 Protestants, Anglicans and Orthodox bodies in more than 60 countries.

East January Pope John issued a call for an Ecumenical Council at which one of the subjects to be discussed will be religious unity. Scheduled for 1961 the council is being planned by a special commission set up by the Pope.

Teenagers Lack 'Depth'

Milwaukee (RNS)—A Roman Catholic priest-social worker blamed secularism in public education, welfare and recreation for what he termed in an address here the "moral shortage" of U.S. youth today.

Although American youth are people are healthier and better educated than ever before, they lack "depth of conviction" and "moral fibre," declared Msgr. A. Clouston of St. Ignace.

STATE BOARD
Jean Paul Cossette, O.P., was nominated as one of the nine members of the State Committee on Mental Health by Gov. Clinton.

England Minister Ousted For Using Mass Rite

London—(RNS)—Dr. Mervyn Stockwood, Anglican Bishop of Southwark, has dismissed and publicly denounced a 72-year-old minister of his diocese for using Roman Catholic rites in parish services.

Removed from St. Andrew's mission church in nearby Canning Town, was the Rev. Rice Althorpe Harris, who had charge of the congregation for 32 years. Before leaving on a vacation in western England, Mr. Harris admitted being "pro-Roman" but denied any intention of becoming a Roman Catholic.

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D. Pseudo-leather adds the fun of a zip-on, pile lined hood! Beige with two-tone lining of luxury-warm pile. 8 to 14 29.95

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