

ON THE MOVE

And is just a kiss?

Meghan Murphy proudly admits that she's an old-fashioned romantic.

"I really like to kiss and hold hands," said Meghan, 17, a parishioner at St. Patrick's Church in Owego.

Meghan, who said she has dated since junior high school, enjoys kissing on the lips — but she also thinks it's special when a boy kisses her on the cheek, or even on the hand.

"A past boyfriend did that, and it was very sweet. I'm into that (traditional) stuff," Meghan said. "A lot of guys don't do that anymore."

Meghan clearly recalls her first romantic kiss, back when she was 14. It occurred as she and her then-boyfriend were leaving school, just before they got on the bus. On a dare from their group of friends, he leaned over and planted a quick kiss on her lips.

"I was, like, 'That was so awesome, that was so cool,'" Meghan said. "It doesn't seem now like it was that big a deal, but it was then."

However, despite the pleasure that comes from kissing, Meghan and other diocesan teens agreed that it's wise not to go overboard.

"I think we're losing a lot of that romance. I feel like we're rushing in a little too quickly," Meghan said. "The second date now, people start making out."

Mark Potter and Marissa Anastasi, both 17, moved cautiously when they began dating a year and a half ago. They exchanged a good-night hug on their first date, and their only lip contact on the next date consisted of a quick kiss. Longer kisses, Mark noted, evolved very slowly.

"I don't think either one of us were thinking about that for a long time," Mark said. He and Marissa are from Church of Christ the King in Irondequoit.

Marissa and Mark agreed that the gradual pace allowed the couple to build a solid foundation.

"I knew I could trust him to go slow. At first I didn't know what to expect, because I didn't know him and didn't know what he was looking for," Marissa said.

Mark said that if they'd been preoccupied with making out on early dates, "that's where the relationship would have been at — nothing else."

On the other hand, Meghan said that it's not necessarily wrong to kiss on the first date "if it went really well. I think you should go with what you feel."

Of course, acting on your feelings doesn't guarantee that the other person will be receptive, Meghan added.

"Usually I am not one to initiate anything," Meghan said. "I'll think, 'I'm scared."

Wait, what if he doesn't want to kiss? I'll feel like a fool."

Even though Mark has had a long-term relationship with Marissa, he said that his first kiss with her was a leap of faith as well.

"I could have gotten slapped in the face. I took my chances," he said.

Then again, Meghan said she doesn't mind taking that risk if she likes the person.

"You don't know unless you try," she pointed out.

Once that barrier is broken, Meghan added, it's advisable for couples to exercise good taste when informing the public about their relationship.

"If a person is eating someone's face out, I'm like, 'Well, why don't you take that somewhere else?'" Meghan commented. "If it's kissing like that, it should be private."

Based on what she saw recently at Seabreeze Amusement Park, Marissa agreed that excessive public kissing can be a turn-off.

"These two kids were all over each other. And they had friends there, who just sat and waited for them to finish. They probably felt like a third wheel," Marissa commented.

Meanwhile, 13-year-old Andrew DePotter is still awaiting his first romantic kiss. When that historic moment arrives, he said, he imagines that it won't occur on his very first date with a girl.

"That would be a little too fast. Maybe the second or third date. I guess I'd want to slow down a bit," said Andrew, from Rochester's Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward.

In the meantime, Andrew will stick to kissing his favorite girl in the world — his mother. Andrew said he makes a practice of kissing her goodbye whenever he leaves the house.

"It shows that I love her and I'm going to miss her," Andrew said.

lip science

Whether you're an experienced kisser or not, you might find some interesting tidbits about the subject in the 1991 book, *Kissing: Everything You Wanted to Know* by Tomima Edmark.

For instance, the book speculates that the first kiss may have originated as a way for early humans to lick salt off another person, because salt has a cooling-down effect on hot days.

"Have you ever cooled off from kissing?" the author queries.

The book also notes that kissing customs vary greatly around the world:

- ♥ Kissing is allowed in several African cultures as a maternal kiss between mother and child, but not as a romantic kiss among adults.
- ♥ The Chinese, for the most part, do not kiss in public.
- ♥ Men kiss both cheeks — of women and men — as sign of greeting in France.
- ♥ Austrians are noted for kissing on the hand.
- ♥ Greeks like to greet each other by kissing hello on the mouth — between any combination of sexes.
- ♥ Finland natives consider mouth-to-mouth kissing obscene.

In addition, the book contains such pieces of kissing trivia as:

- ♥ The average American woman has kissed 79 men before she is married.
- ♥ Men who kiss their wives goodbye in the morning live five years longer than those who don't.
- ♥ Onetime laws in Connecticut prohibited kissing on Sundays and fast days, even between married people.
- ♥ The written "X," symbolizing a kiss, originated in the Middle Ages because illiterate people who couldn't sign their names to contracts would mark an "X" and then kiss the document to reflect sincerity.
- ♥ The longest kiss in movie history lasted 5 minutes, 5 seconds (Rogie Toomey and Jane Wyman in "You're in the Army Now" of 1940).



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