

Paragraph 14

[Footnote]

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HELP FOR THE FAMILY | PARENTING

How to Talk to Your Teen About Sexting

THE CHALLENGE

You have heard that sexting is common among young people. 'Would my teenager do that?' you may wonder.

You want to discuss the matter with your child—but how? Before answering, consider why some young people have become involved in sexting and why you should be concerned.

WHY IT HAPPENS

- Some teenagers send sexually explicit messages to flirt with someone they like.
- In other cases, a girl sends an explicit photo of herself because she is pressured by a boy to do so.
- Sometimes a boy will mass forward an explicit photo of a girl either to entertain his friends or to retaliate after a breakup.

Whatever the cause, a teenager armed with a cell phone can get into a lot of trouble. "In the click of a button," says the book *CyberSafe*, "lives are changed forever."

Many people fail to realize that once a photo goes into cyberspace, the sender loses control over how the photo will be used. In one case, reports a bulletin from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), an 18-year-old girl "committed suicide after a nude photo she had transmitted via her cell phone to her boyfriend also was sent to hundreds of teenagers in her school. Other students, who apparently continued to forward the image, allegedly harassed the girl."

Sexting also raises legal issues. In some places, for example, minors who have sent sexually explicit images to other minors have been charged with child-pornography offenses and have been required

to register as sex offenders. As a parent, you too can be held liable if your name is on the cell-phone contract or if you fail to take measures to prevent your child from sexting.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Set clear rules. Although you cannot fully control your teenager's cell-phone use, you can make sure that he or she knows your rules—as well as the consequences for breaking those rules.

Remember, too, that as a parent, you have the right to monitor your teenager's cell phone.—Bible principle: Ephesians 6:1.

Help your teenager to reason on the problem. You could say: "There are many opinions as to what constitutes sexting. How would you define the term?" "What kinds of photos do you think are inappropriate?" "In some places the law considers a minor who sends a nude photo of a minor to be guilty of a crime. Do you think it's that bad?" "Why would sexting be morally wrong?" Listen carefully to his or her reasoning, and help your teenager to think beyond the send button.—Bible principle: Hebrews 5:14.

Present hypothetical scenarios. You could say to your daughter: "Suppose a girl is being pressured by a boy to 'sex' him. What should she do? Give in so that she does not lose the friendship? Refuse the request but flirt with him anyway? End the relationship? Tell an adult?" Help your daughter to reason on the matter. Of course, you can use a similar approach with a son.—Bible principle: Galatians 6:7.

Appeal to your teenager's sense of goodness. Ask questions such as these: How important to you is a good reputation? What traits do you want to be known for? How would you feel about yourself if you humiliated someone by forwarding an inappropriate picture? How would you feel if you took a stand for what is right? Help your teen to "hold a good conscience."—1 Peter 3:16.

Set the example yourself. The Bible says that godly wisdom is chaste and free from hypocrisy. (James 3:17) Do your values reflect those words? "We need to set good examples ourselves and not view

images and Web sites that could be viewed as unsavory or illegal,” says the book CyberSafe.

explicit photo was forwarded all over her school. Does this kind of thing really happen?”

[Footnote]

“Sexting” refers to the act of sending sexually explicit messages, photos, or videos via cell phone. For more information, go to the jw.org Web site and read the online article “Young People Ask—What Should I Know About Sexting?”—Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.

[Picture on page 4]

[Picture on page 4]

[Blurb on page 5]

Think beyond the send button

[Box on page 5]

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Children, be obedient to your parents.”—
Ephesians 6:1.

“Mature people . . . have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.”—
Hebrews 5:14.

“Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.”—Galatians 6:7.

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SUGGESTION

If talking about sexting will be awkward for you or your teen, you might try this approach:

First, have your teen talk about what others are doing. Then say: “I’ve heard a lot about sexting. Is this practice common?”

Next, find out how he or she feels about what others are doing. You could ask: “Do you think people grasp the consequences of sexting?”

Then, discuss what your teenager would do. Respond by saying: “Let’s talk about what you should do if you receive an explicit text.”

Tip: You could use a news report to start a discussion. For example: “I read about a girl whose

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[Footnotes]

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21 BLOOD FRACTIONS AND MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Blood fractions. Blood is made up of four main parts—red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma. These four main parts of blood may be broken down into smaller parts, called blood fractions.

Christians refuse transfusions of whole blood or of any of its four main parts. But should they accept blood fractions? The Bible does not provide specific details. So each Christian must make his own decision based on his Bible-trained conscience.

Some Christians choose to refuse all blood fractions. They may reason that God's Law to Israel required that any blood removed from an animal be poured "out on the ground."—Deuteronomy 12:22-24.

Others make a different choice. Their conscience allows them to accept some blood fractions. They may reason that small fractions no longer represent the life of the creature from which the blood was taken.

When making decisions about blood fractions, consider the following questions:

- Am I aware that refusing all blood fractions means that I will not accept some medicines that fight diseases or that might help stop bleeding?
- How would I explain to a doctor why I reject or accept the use of one or more blood fractions?

Medical procedures. As Christians, we do not donate blood, nor do we store our own blood weeks in advance of surgery. However, there are other procedures that make use of a patient's own blood. Each Christian must decide for himself how his own blood will be handled in the course of a surgical procedure, medical test, or current therapy. During the course of such procedures, the patient's own blood may be completely separated for a time from the patient.—For more information, see *The Watchtower*, October 15, 2000, pages 30-31.

For example, there is a procedure called hemodilution, in which immediately before surgery a portion of a patient's own blood is removed and replaced with a volume expander. Later, during or shortly after the surgery, the blood is returned to the patient.

Another procedure is called cell salvage. In this procedure, a patient's own blood that is lost during surgery is collected, cleaned, and then returned to the patient during or shortly after the surgery.

Each doctor may perform these procedures slightly differently. So before accepting any surgical procedure, medical test, or current therapy, a Christian needs to find out exactly how his own blood will be handled.

When making decisions about medical procedures that make use of your own blood, consider the following questions:

- If some of my blood will be diverted outside my body and the flow might even be interrupted for a time, will my conscience allow me to view this blood as still part of me, thus not requiring that it be poured "out on the ground"?—Deuteronomy 12:23, 24.
- Will my Bible-trained conscience be troubled if during a medical procedure, some of my own blood is withdrawn, modified, and directed back into (or onto) my body?
- Am I aware that refusing all medical procedures involving the use of my own blood means that I would not accept a blood test, hemodialysis, or the use of a heart-lung bypass machine?

Before making decisions about blood fractions and medical treatments that make use of our own blood, we need to pray for Jehovah's guidance and then do research. (James 1:5, 6) After that, we must use our Bible-trained conscience to make our decision. We should not ask others what they would do if they were in our situation, nor should others try to influence our decision.—Romans 14:12; Galatians 6:5.