

**TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT SENSITIVE TOPICS:
SEX, DRUGS AND AIDS**

"Teachable Moments"

1. when a question is asked
2. when you are both in a situation that would naturally lend itself to a discussion of sexual facts or values, ex. seeing an animal giving birth, celebrating a wedding or birth, witnessing animals copulating.
3. T.V. shows, commercials, magazines, songs are constantly addressing sexual themes. These are opportunities for discussion, asking questions, sharing attitudes or experiences.

"Heart-to-Heart Talks"

1. setting aside a special time to discuss an issue
2. prepare ahead, thinking what information you feel you need to convey, what misconceptions you feel your child may have.
3. set a time and place where there will be few interruptions... turn off T.V., take phone off hook, close door, go for a drive, etc.
4. be prepared to listen as well as share but do not be put off with "I know all about this" remarks from child. They may have all the information, but it hasn't been shared by you with your understandings, values, concerns, and love.

Be an "Askable" Parent

1. When a question is asked, take a deep breath and realize that the most important things your child needs to know are in your possession.
2. Stay calm and try not to overreact.
3. Try to be an effective listener.
4. Be aware of your child's developmental level.
5. Speak clearly, simply and honestly at your child's level.
6. Always use proper terminology.
7. If you are not sure of the answer, tell your child that he/she asked a good question and that you'll find out or look up the answer together.
8. Be prepared to "review" many times.
9. Remember the axiom: "Better one year too soon than one second too late."
10. Acknowledge own discomfort, embarrassment or ignorance, honestly without apology stating that you want to discuss this because it is important, even though you feel uncomfortable. Explain why you feel uneasy.

"The parents role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it...Hence, the family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs."

(Vatican Council II, Declaration on Christian Education, No.3)