

The Buzz on the Birds & Bees

Great Sexuality Books for Parents and Kids, Part 2

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PUBERTY & BEHAVIOR

Changing Bodies, Changing Lives: A Book for Teens on Sex and Relationships

Ruth Bell

The students in the junior high sex ed class I teach all receive copies of this book. We encourage parents to read it also, so they're up on the latest information, too. It's a straightforward presentation on physical and emotional changes that occur during adolescence in addition to anatomy, sexual behavior, sexual orientation, sexual health.

Deal With It! A Whole New Approach to your body, brain and life as a gurl.

Esther Drill, Heather McDonald & Rebecca Odes

You may be shocked by this book's frankness, but your teen will love it. Reading parts of this book aloud became a favorite slumber party activity for my daughter and her friends. The book includes lots of factual information peppered with quotes by real teens about topics ranging from acne creams to pros and cons about sexual activity.

Everything You Need to Know About Virginit

by Michael A. Sommers & Annie Leah Sommers

This book for teens discusses virginity, dispels myths, and suggests safe ways for youth to express their sexuality. It includes anatomically correct illustrations.

From Boys to Men: All About Adolescence and You

Michael Gurian

This Q&A book explores the physical, emotional, sexual and social changes that teenage boys undergo during adolescence, including puberty and sexual identity. This is a good choice for boys in grades 5-7 because in addition to physical changes, it mentions developing romantic and sexual relationships, friendships, peer pressure, and even nutrition and wellness.

Growing Up: It's a Girl Thing

Mavis Jukes

Written for girls age 8 and up, this book is a younger edition of *It's a Girl Thing: How to Stay Healthy, Safe and In Charge*. It includes signs of what to look for as your body begins to go through puberty. Unlike many books, it includes a description of what menstrual fluid looks like, which can be helpful.

How You Are Changing

Jane Graver

This book is part of the Learning About Sex series for Christian families, and it was written for 8-11 year-old kids. The author presents the changes that occur during puberty as part of God's plan. The text includes an interesting section on genetic traits, which is

usually missing from kids' books. Parents are strictly male and female, so this book would not be helpful for children with same-gender or single parents.

Ready, Set Grow! A What's Happening to My Body Book for Younger Girls

Linda Madaras

Madaras taught health and sex ed for more than 20 years, so she knows how to speak in language kids relate to. The text includes tips on nutrition, hygiene, quotes from other kids, and adorable illustrations. Great for girls ages 8 and up.

(Note: Madaras has written many books for boys, girls and parents. You can't go wrong with any of them.)

Sex, Puberty And All That Stuff: A Guide to Growing Up

Jacqui Bailey

This book is great for boy and girl teens, answering a host of questions, like, "Can I use tampons and still be a virgin?" and "Is it true you can't buy condoms until you're 16?" Great coverage of important information, with the nice addition of reassurance that even if a teen has had sex, it's OK to make a different decision in the future.

The Care & Keeping of You: The Body Book for Girls

American Girl Library

This breezy book covers everything from personal grooming to periods, bras and the importance of not comparing yourself to other girls. I like the inclusion of practical tips, like how to dispose of used sanitary products (hey, sometimes moms forget to explain that!)

The Period Book: Everything You Don't Want to Ask but Need to Know

Karen Gravelle and Jennifer Gravelle

Written by an aunt-niece team, this book handles the physical, emotional and social changes associated with puberty, using menstruation as the focal point. I appreciate that the authors put to rest the idea that periods are gross or scary.

The Teenage Guy's Survival Guide: The Real Deal on Girls, Growing Up, and Other Guy Stuff

Jeremy Daldry

This humorous guide for boys ages 10 to 14 offers advice on dating, sex, body changes, social life and homosexuality. It's designed for middle school boys. The book's honesty may be too frank for some households, i.e., it includes slang terms for masturbation, brief instructions on how to masturbate, and the assurance that looking porn magazines on occasion "is natural and fine."

What's Going on Down There? Answers to Questions Boys Find Hard to Ask

Karen Gravelle, Nick Castro & Chava Castro

This book explores the physical and emotional changes that occur in boys during puberty, with additional information about sexual activity and AIDS. Humorous, anatomically correct cartoon illustrations.

What's Happening to Me? The Answers to Some of the World's Most Embarrassing Questions

Peter Mayle

First published in 1975, this is still a good book for kids entering puberty. It's great for boys and girls who aren't ready for more sophisticated coverage of the mental and physical changes that take place during puberty.

Melanie Davis is a communications professional and sexuality educator. She teaches sex ed classes for a Unitarian Universalist congregation in New Jersey. Her independent workshops help parents speak comfortably with their children about sexuality, and they help teens distinguish between risky and safer behavior. She also speaks on sexual harassment, relaxation techniques and Reiki. For more information, visit www.melaniejdavis.com.

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