



INTRODUCTION

Why did we write these books?	2
Stop and think 1.....	2
Who are these books designed for?	3
Stop and think 2.....	3
Why do we need an online resource?	4
How should the books be used?	5
Should they be read in a particular order?	5
Are these books for children or parents and carers?.....	5
What is the ideal age to read these books with my child?	5
How do I start?.....	5
What is the best time or place to read these?	5
What if my child confesses to something?	5
Stop and think 3.....	5

WHY DID WE WRITE THESE BOOKS?

These books provide an age-appropriate, biblical, Christ-focused view of the body, brain, identity and sex, for parents and carers to read with children.

Children of today grow up in a wireless, hyperlinked, user-generated world where they are only a click away from any piece of knowledge. Relationships are forged in cyberspace and identity is influenced by it. Living in this cyber-connected global village, the boundaries between reality and fantasy are blurred, and video games, music videos, advertising, comic books, and even pornography offer a new norm for friendship and sexual behaviour.

Your children are the most connected, socially aware, advertised to and sexualised generation that ever walked planet earth.

This means that you can no longer protect your children and keep them naïve and innocent of sex and intimacy.

You have a choice.

You can provide accurate sexual values and information to your children, or allow friends, television, social media and pornography to be their educators.

If you are the primary source of information, you will have children who grow up with values you give them (Proverbs 22:6). They will be confident and self-assured in sexuality and life, and continue to communicate with you as they grow.

If not, your children are likely to grow up confused and misinformed, without a clear understanding or value system of healthy relationships, and may end up with a misrepresented view of beauty and of the purpose of their body and sexuality.

The Bible clearly points to the role of parents in the early nurturing of children (see Deuteronomy 11:18–20; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

Research¹ reveals that early sexuality education from parents and primary carers influences children's values and attitudes to relationships and sex; and can reduce the likelihood of sexual risk-taking behaviour, protect against sexual abuse and benefit healthy sexual development.

1. Research references on the role of parents in guiding children to wise choices in sex and sexual behaviour can be found in the attachment '[Parents and early sex education](#)'.

Stop and think 1

Consider these questions.

If possible, discuss these as a couple.

When was the last time you discussed issues of sex and relationship with your primary school-aged children?

What keeps you from discussing sex with your children?

By not saying anything about sex, you're actually saying something. You're saying it's a topic that's not supposed to be talked about. In the silence, your children's views of sex and sexuality begin to be shaped and moulded, with no gauge of what's healthy, good or godly.



WHO ARE THESE BOOKS DESIGNED FOR?

These books are designed for parents and carers of primary school-aged children.

Our primary goal in producing *Birds and Bees by the Book* (the books and the online resource) is to help children understand and embrace the gospel of Christ, and understand their relationships, bodies and lives, including their sexuality in this context.

To do this, the books and accompanying online resources will:

- help parents understand that sex education is about more than ‘just sex’; it’s about character. It’s about teaching personal integrity and relational faithfulness within God’s pattern for life.
- present information in the overarching context of creation—sin—redemption/forgiveness—new creation
- provide age-appropriate scientific information on the topics
- provide resources for parents/carers to discuss issues relating to relationships, body, brain, sexuality, identity, pornography and gender with their children in this context
- enable parents to help children understand current cultural trends, and develop emotional and practical skills to critique and resist unhealthy and ungodly influences.

Stop and think 2

Consider these questions.

If possible, discuss these as a couple.

Where do your children get information about sex?

What messages are these sources of sex education teaching your children?

What effect do you think these messages have on your children?

Children today are exposed to hypersexualised material in images, television shows, music videos, video games, social media, comic books, sexualised toys and even pornography at increasingly younger ages. They are sold the idea that they have to look and act ‘sexy’ and ‘hot’ if they are to be popular. Children’s young brains socialised by the internet and pornography develop unhealthy and often problematic beliefs of what constitutes relationships and sex, often making them vulnerable to abuse and inappropriate behaviour.

The Bible tells us that sex was an important part of God’s plan right from creation.

We read about this in Genesis 1 and 2—the very first chapters of the first book of the Bible. Let’s look at it together. In the New Testament, Jesus himself goes back to both these passages when asked about marriage and divorce (in Matthew 19:4–5). Later, the Apostle Paul refers to Genesis 2:24–25 when talking about marriage (Ephesians 5:31).

We learn from the Bible that:

- we are created male and female, as humans in God’s image (Genesis 1:26) for relationship with him and with each other
- our bodies are uniquely male or female, created by God for a purpose, and that purpose is to ultimately honour him (1 Corinthians 6:13–15).

God gives us marriage as a place for man and woman to come together. God wanted Adam and Eve to come together as ‘one flesh’. This means God intended sexual activity to be something that a man and a woman enjoy together, in a special relationship. Sexual activity in marriage binds man and woman together. Every act of intercourse is potentially procreative. Further, marriage is a model of the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32).



WHY DO WE NEED AN ONLINE RESOURCE?

Our primary goal in producing this online support site is to enable parents and carers to develop a level of comfort in discussing selected areas of sex and relationships, so that they are able to read the books confidently and share these with their children.

Most parents would agree that they should provide their children with guidance and education in the area of relationships and sex.

However, many mums, dads and carers, having never had any sex education at home themselves, feel woefully unprepared as to how and when they should start.

Some still believe the myth that talking to children about sex will make them likely to experiment. We have evidence² that this is not so.

Children are naturally curious about sex, their bodies and the bodies of others, and they should never feel ashamed for this. The older our kids get, the more curious they become, and the more questions they have.

Take the time to start the conversations with your kids, as early as 3, 4 and 5 years old. You want them to know that you are their first and best source of information. That way, they are more likely to come to you with concerns and questions in the future. Consider your child's age, development stage and personality in conjunction with what you are talking about. Use your personal values to guide you.

2. See the references in the attachment '[Parents and early sex education](#)'.

The resources in this site will provide:

- the opportunity for parents and carers to examine their own values and beliefs in the area of sex and relationships, and develop a level of comfort to discuss these with their children
- extension discussion points referenced to the books (called 'Teaching Moments') that will provide the opportunity for deeper discussion at the discretion of the parent or carer
- extension resources and websites that could be used if the parents and carers feel the need to delve deeper into any specific area
- information on specific 'sensitive' topics that may arise in discussion.



HOW SHOULD THE BOOKS BE USED?

There are six books in the *Birds and Bees by the Book* pack. Each book covers a separate topic, and is written such that it can be used as a stand-alone read. The topics are:

1. Me and My Family
2. Me and My Body
3. Me and My Brain
4. Learning about Sex
5. Learning about Gender
6. Learning about Pornography

SHOULD THEY BE READ IN A PARTICULAR ORDER?

You may choose to start with the book at the top of this list and work down, or else you may choose to read them in the order you think is appropriate for your child.

Don't make this a 'one-off' experience. Keep the books handy and return to them when there is an opportunity. Sometimes it has to be deliberate, at other times it can be opportunistic.

ARE THESE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN, OR PARENTS AND CARERS?

The books are written for parents and carers to read with their child. Don't be afraid to share your values and experiences and ask your child how he/she feels about the topic. Be open and non-judgemental.

The books are based around the experiences of four children and their families. The main character in each book is shown on the cover.

Your child may want to name the characters.

WHAT IS THE IDEAL AGE TO READ THESE BOOKS WITH MY CHILD?

The books are written for children aged between 7 and 10 years of age. However, as their parent or carer, you are in the best position to gauge the emotional and cognitive maturity of your child. You may start to use these books earlier, or use them with children over 10 years of age.

HOW DO I START?

Read the online resources that go with each book. Familiarise yourself with the 'Teaching Moments'. Then, go for it. Stop in places and ask questions to see how much and how well they understand.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OR PLACE TO READ THESE?

Proactive sex education: Set apart a specific time to read the books. It may also be helpful to have a special place

where you read with your child. Some parents report that this 'special' place becomes the 'go to' place when the child has something difficult or sensitive to discuss.

It may also be useful to have a 'code phrase' that your child can use when they want to talk about something.

Reactive sex education: There may be times that you use the books in response to a question or situation. In this situation it is best to:

- clarify the question 'Are you asking ...?'
- ask 'Where did you hear that?'
- ask 'What do you know about it? What do you think it means?'
- explain in an age-appropriate manner and use the relevant book.

WHAT IF MY CHILD CONFESSES TO SOMETHING?

Children are not perfect (neither are you). The gospel of grace is central to your parenting. Each act of disobedience from your child can become an opportunity for you to point your children to Jesus. Keep telling your children that they can tell you *anything*. Make sure you explain that God loves them always and in every situation. Discuss how Jesus came and died for them and you. God forgives—and so can you.

Stop and think 3

Consider these questions.

If possible, discuss these as a couple.

How do I feel about discussing this topic with my child/children?

Does the material online make me feel more confident? Does it make me feel more comfortable?

If you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable, your children will pick this up. Take the time to discuss this with other godly Christians. You need to be convinced that you are the primary sex educator(s) of your children and develop confidence in your communication.

You are now ready to start the discussion with your child or children.

