



5 Ways to Avoid Shaming Your Kid If They've Watched Pornography

1.

Be careful to not use SHAME as a deterrent.

Recognize that often times it is not the kid who went looking for pornography. Rather it probably found them. If we are quick to shame or respond with anger, we can cause our kids to hide and that hinders them from getting the help they need.

Unfortunately some kids may feel shame about having seen a video or image because they've been told it goes against their family values. However, to keep kids talking freely, we can find ways to speak to them so they know they are still loved no matter the choice made or forced upon them without their consent.

Shaming Language

"I can't believe you did this!"

"I'm so disappointed in you! Only bad kids get into stuff like this."

"What made you think this was okay?"

Helpful Behavior-Changing Language

"I'm sorry you were faced with this. What are some of the consequences of your decision?"

"Help me understand - how did you feel when you decided to do this? How did you feel after?"

"It is hard to know what to do in situations like this. If you could do this over, what do you think you'd do next time?"



2.

Don't hide from the problem.

Parents can feel both fear and even normalcy around a kid who watched pornography. However, neither of these are a good reason to remain silent. Speaking clearly, consistently, and lovingly is incredibly important.

Setting boundaries and speaking into the reality your son or daughter saw porn can be challenging and discomfoting but it will pay off. Sharing that the images or videos that were seen are unreal, disrespectful, and don't offer God's best will be important to communicate.

3.

Help your kids become better at using technology.

Taking away your kids technology right after seeing something is not the best solution. Limiting what they have access to is more effective.

When tweens and teen have grown up communicating with friends through texting, social media, and other chatting devices, then cutting off that access can breed isolation. If kids feel you will take away their technology completely, they will be more likely to hide their exposure to pornography in the future.

Removing the web browser when your kids are younger is always a good idea. So too is limiting the number of apps and games on an electronic device. This makes it more manageable for you to review. It also makes it less likely they will be exposed to more pornography in the future.

4.

Don't blame yourself or make assumptions.

A common response from parents is that they've missed something or not blocked enough points of access. The truth is pornographers will find a way to your kids if they are online. It is just a matter of time. That is why being proactive in what you share is so important!

When they do see porn it is important that you not blame yourself. Blocking all the doors is difficult, and as hard as we might try there will always be some door that we had no way of controlling.

5.

Have an ongoing conversation with your kids about sex, sexuality, and porn.

So often we think that if we have one conversation with our kids we can call it good. However, you need to have an ongoing dialogue, one that points to the richness of God's vast beauty as it relates to sex. After all, He is the sex-maker.

Pointing to the God's grander narrative surrounding sex will help kids understand its purpose and place. If we think only talking about this once or right after they've been caught looking at porn will do the trick, we are missing the point. The dialogue we start when they are younger (and before they've been exposed to porn) will only help us when we are talking to our kids after having seen porn.