

# Introductory Class

Grades 7 and 8, Lesson #1

## Time Needed

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One class period

## Student Learning Objectives

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To be able to...

1. Explain three of the five ground rules.
2. Contribute to a serious, considerate class climate.
3. Distinguish appropriate from excessively personal facts for public disclosure.
4. Express that standard terms are more appropriate in class than slang and baby-talk.

## Agenda

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1. Describe your unit agenda, and review class requirements.
2. Discuss the rationale for the unit.
3. Establish and explain ground rules, using *Introduction Transparency 1*.
4. Examine “privacy” through large group discussion, using *Introduction Transparency 2*.
5. Mention your availability for private discussion.
6. Examine vocabulary through large group exercise, using *Transparency 3*.
7. Generate anonymous questions.
8. Have students begin a FLASH notebook section.
9. Assign homework.

## **Materials Needed**

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### **Classroom Materials:**

- Ten labeled manila envelopes (“puberty,” etc.)
- *Introduction Transparencies 1-3*
- Overhead projector

### **Student Materials (for each student):**

- *Family Homework Exercise: An Introduction*
- *Family Homework Letter (Appendix B)*
- *The Introduction Worksheet*

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## Activities

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### 1. Describe your unit agenda, and review class requirements.

It may help to post a calendar. Some teachers assign homework, reading, or special projects. Some classes have speakers or field trips. Make sure your students know what is required of them, what the due dates are (if any), and how to get excused if they, or their parents, prefer that they not participate.

One way to motivate students is by offering points for participation, homework, and a unit test. For example: A student could earn up to five points a day for participating and following the ground rules (five points x 20 classes = 100 total possible participation points). A student could also earn five points per homework assignment. Since there is an introduction and 14 other topics, you will make about 30 assignments (approximately half are family assignments), so a student could do any 15 of those for credit (five points x 15 assignments = 75 total possible homework points). A final test could be worth up to another 25 points. Thus, a perfect score for the whole unit would be 100 + 75 + 25 200 points for an A+.

### 2. Discuss the rationale for the unit:

- That people make healthier decisions when they have thought about what they believe and when they have correct information.
- That it is important to learn how to talk about sexuality ... so you can talk with your family, your doctor, and even help a friend.

### 3. Establish ground rules.

You can use *Introduction Transparency 1* or blow it up into a poster... but the following are key issues to explain and discuss:

**ASKING** questions is critical to learning. Students may ask questions aloud, in writing or in private. They may think of questions or issues they want to discuss with their parents, their doctors, their clergy or others. Any question is a good question, even if they cannot think of the medical/standard term for something. Students should try to use medical/standard words, but it is better to ask a question using slang or baby-talk than not to ask it at all.

**PASSING** (choosing not to respond or participate) is every person's essential right. Acknowledge that sexuality is a personal issue, and that discussing it can feel awkward and embarrassing. Admit that you may occasionally decline to answer a personal or embarrassing question ... this models the important skill of limit-setting. Assure students that they also have permission to "pass."

**PROTECTING** peoples' feelings is critical to the building of trust. That means not laughing at classmates, not trying to figure out who authored an anonymous question, not putting people or groups down. It means respecting others' rights to disagree. Protecting one's own and other peoples' privacy means not sharing very personal issues in the large group, not using names or relationships when you talk about personal issues, and not quoting classmates outside of class.

**LISTENING** respectfully is essential. You deserve it, students deserve it and guest speakers deserve it.

ENCOURAGING others to follow these rules ... means positive peer pressure. Students can gently remind one another of the ground rules.

Examine “privacy.” It means different things to each of us, and for each of us there are degrees or levels of privacy. Using **Introduction Transparency 2**, give examples of the kinds of information a person might share at each level of privacy. For example:

<b>Who</b>	<b>What You Might Share</b>
Strangers ...	how you feel about the weather, who won last night's ball game, where the cafeteria is
Acquaintances ...	your name, your homeroom, your favorite music artist, how you feel about Math
Casual Friends ...	your hobbies, your nickname, your religion, where you live, how you feel about your Language Arts teacher
Close Friends ...	your nickname when you were a baby, how you feel about your brother or sister, what really makes you mad or sad
Best Friends, Family, trusted Friends of the Family ...	what really hurts your feelings, what really scares you
Yourself only ...	which grandparent you love most, the most embarrassed you have ever been

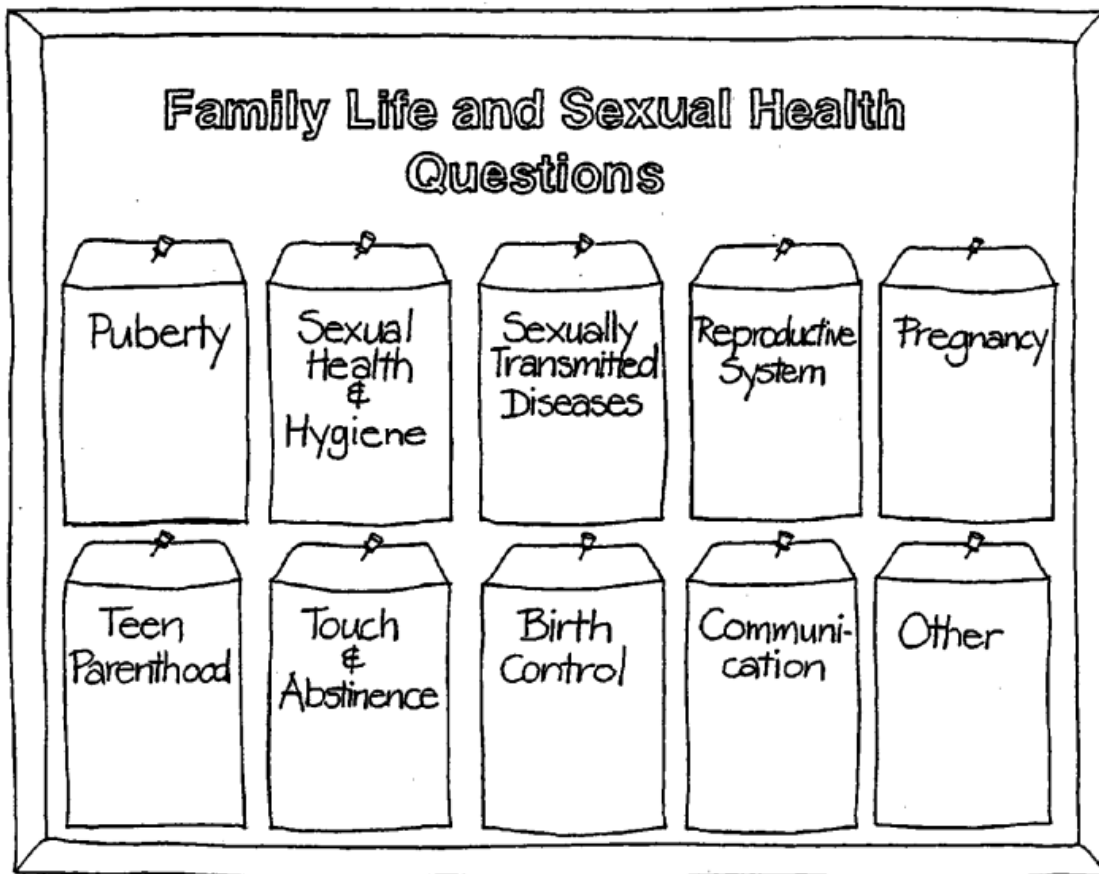
Get the class to add examples, and to recognize that each of us makes different choices about which things we will share on each level.

Share some personal anecdote about your own sexuality education to model that some sharing is OK ... then point out that your sharing was only from Level 2 or 3. You might share, for example, where you used to think babies came from, or how old you were when you learned that the doctor isn't always knowledgeable about sexuality. Emphasize that it is not appropriate to share the most personal things in a class. Refer back to the second “P” in “APPLE” (*Transparency 1*).

4. **Mention that, if there are very personal concerns someone wants to discuss with you, you will be available for private consultation.**  
You can then refer them to the appropriate professional (doctor, psychologist, etc.). Tell them when and how they can set up a meeting with you, and that Lesson 15 will introduce additional people to whom they can go.
5. **Introduce “vocabulary” by explaining that kids sometimes ask, “Why do we use such big words when we talk about sexuality in school?”**

By “big words” they mean medical/standard terms, as opposed to slang or baby-talk. Show the class the top section of *Introduction Transparency 3*. These are words most U.S.-born five-year-olds know. Have the class count the syllables in each one, and you can write the number in the blank (all are four or five syllables). Next, show the lower section. Read each word aloud, have the class count syllables and mark them in the blanks (they are one to three syllables). Help the class figure out why the second set of words might seem big and complicated [i.e., because we are less familiar with them]. “Standard terms” are not necessarily any more complicated than slang or baby-talk terms. That’s why we need a unit like this! To get more comfortable talking seriously.

**6. Introduce anonymous question envelopes.**



As a way of outlining the agenda for the unit, hold up each manila envelope and read the topic aloud. Explain that the class will spend one or more lessons on each of these topics: “Puberty,” “Sexual Health and Hygiene,” “Sexually Transmitted Diseases,” “Reproductive System,” “The Pregnancy,” “Decision-Making and Teen Parenthood,” “Touch and Abstinence,” “Birth Control,” “Communication” and perhaps “Other.” The manila envelopes can be posted on a bulletin board throughout the unit.

Give each student several slips of scrap paper and a pencil. If you have more than one class period that will be using these same question envelopes, we recommend providing a different color of paper to each class (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> period, yellow; 2<sup>nd</sup> period, white; etc.) to make it easier to sort out which class asked each question.

Ask students to write at least one question and drop it in the appropriate envelope. Explain that they should NOT write their name on the slip, unless they would prefer to talk with you privately about their question. Have students write one question on each slip (which makes it easier for you to sort the questions), but give them as many slips as they need. Explain that spelling does not matter at this point. Explain that, as each session arrives, you will answer the questions from the appropriate envelope, so it's OK to add questions whenever they think of them. If anyone is not sure which envelope is appropriate for a particular question, they can use their judgment and you can rearrange them later. Allow them 10 minutes to write questions. You may want to assist them by jotting some question roots on the blackboard:

“Is it true that ...?”

“What do they mean by ...?”

“What causes ...?”

“How do you know if ...?”

“Is it a problem if ...?”

“What should you do if ...?”

“Should you worry if ...?”

7. **Have students begin a notebook or section or folder where they can keep all their FLASH materials together, or distribute student handbooks, photocopied in advance.**

## Homework

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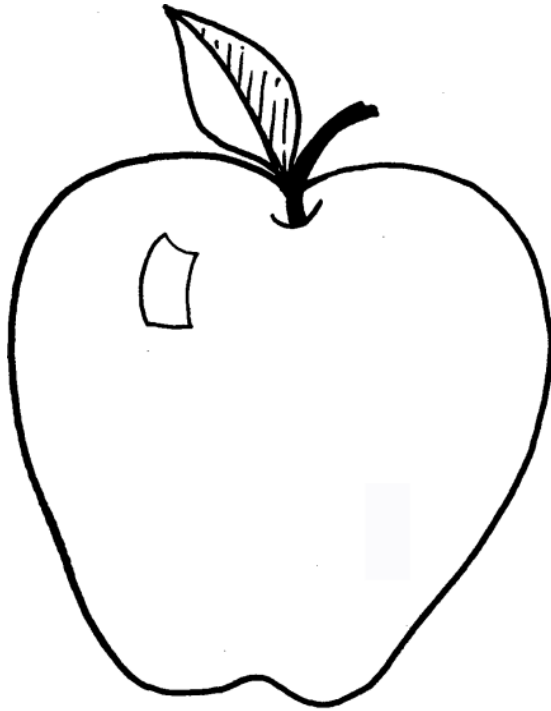
Students' options:

- **Family Homework Exercise: Introduction**  
Students will also need to take home the **Family Homework Letter** (Appendix B). They will fill out a **Family Homework Confirmation Slip** (bottom section of the Letter), along with their parent or guardian or other trusted adult, and return the slip to you for credit. They do *not* need to report on the content of their conversation, just that they have completed the activity together.
- Complete **The Introduction Worksheet**.

NOTE: If you assign a **Family Homework Exercise**, it is essential to offer at least one alternative assignment. There will be some students who do not have a family member with whom they feel they can discuss these issues. Also, allow at least a week for **Family Homework Exercises**, as many families are very busy.

# Introduction Transparency 1

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**A** **Ask** questions! In class, after class, at home...any question is a good question.

**P** **Pass** if a question or activity feels too private.

**P** **Protect** other people's feelings and protect your own and other people's **privacy**..

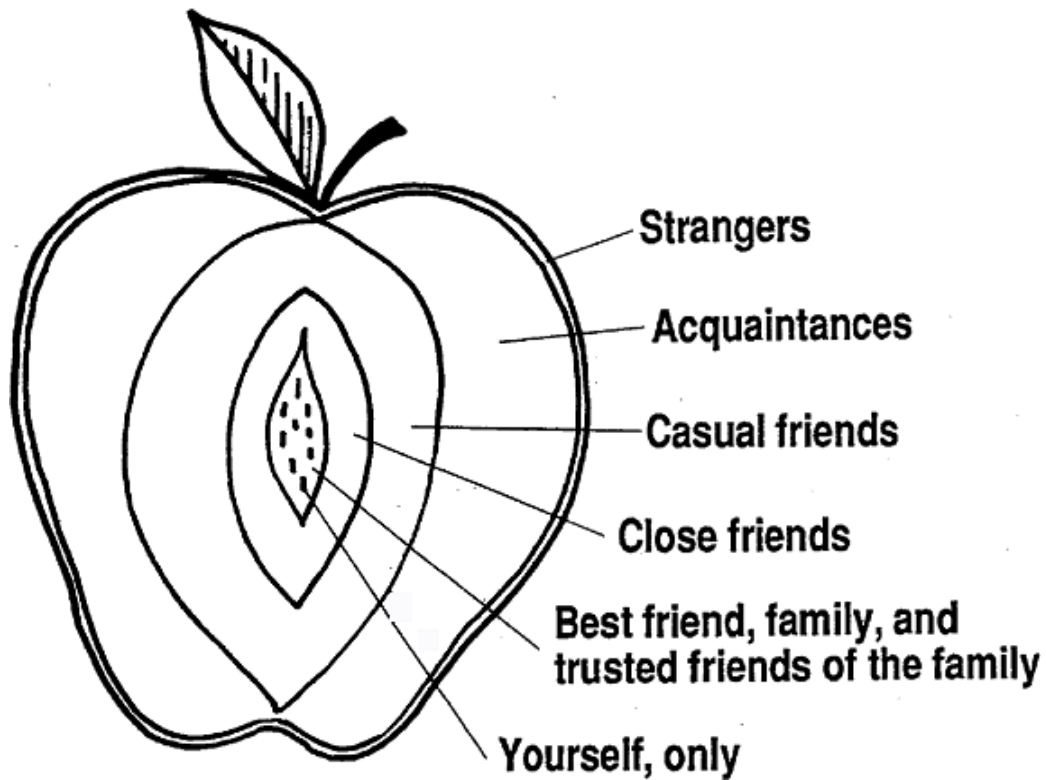
**L** **Listen** respectfully when other people are speaking.

**E** **Encourage** other people to do the same.

# Introduction Transparency 2

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## Levels of Privacy





# Introduction Transparency 3

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Why do we use such big words in class when we talk about sexuality?

## WORDS MOST 5-YEAR-OLDS KNOW:

kindergarten	_____	refrigerator	_____
Cinderella	_____	television	_____
watermelon	_____	macaroni	_____

## WORDS WE WILL USE IN THIS UNIT:

Penis	_____
Breast	_____
Scrotum	_____
Vagina	_____
Conception	_____
Virus	_____
Condom	_____
Testis	_____
Ovum	_____
Sperm	_____
Uterus	_____
Gene	_____
Touch	_____
Pregnancy	_____

# Family Homework Exercise: An Introduction

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## ALL FAMILY HOMEWORK EXERCISES ARE OPTIONAL.

First, read this aloud together:

Talking about family life and sexual health with your parent or child can be scary. Will I have to share private thoughts and information? Will talking make my parents assume I am having intercourse? Will talking encourage my child to go out and have intercourse? The answers, we believe, are no, no, and no.

To begin with, neither of you should share anything you are not reasonably comfortable sharing about yourselves. Sexual behavior is a private matter. Some of your feelings and beliefs are private, too. These exercises are NOT designed to make you talk about things you really do not want to share. They ARE designed to help you understand and trust each other just a little better. You both have permission to skip any question or exercise that makes you too uncomfortable... though a certain amount of discomfort is very normal and nothing to worry about.

Furthermore, talking about something does not mean you are doing it, or even that you will ever do it. You may talk about hang gliding or mountain climbing without ever doing them. You may read about drugs without deciding to use any. Talk helps people understand themselves better, as well as the people they love. That's all.

Second, exchange some kind of touch ... a hug, a handshake, a pat on the arm, a "high-five."

Third, think about the class ground rule ... "protect your own and other peoples' privacy." Since different people feel differently about what is private, talk together about specifically who falls into each category below. Then discuss your own and your families' feelings about the questions on side 2.

### Categories

Strangers

Acquaintances

Casual Friends

Close Friends

Family and Trusted Friends-of-the-Family  
(including clergy and counselors)

-- over--

## Questions

1. How private is your address? Which of the people above could you tell where you live?
2. How private is your family's cultural heritage? Who could you tell what countries your ancestors came from?
3. How private is your family's income? Who could you share that with?
4. How private is the color of your kitchen? Who could you share that with?
5. How private is your phone number? Who could you share that with?
6. How private are your family's beliefs about marijuana?
7. How private is the cost of your furniture?
8. How private are your family's beliefs about dating?
9. How private is your pet's age?
10. How private is your mother's age?
11. Are there other privacy issues you want to talk about?

NOTE: Turn in a Family Homework Confirmation Slip by \_\_\_\_\_ if you want credit.

# The Introduction Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Eighth Grade Social Studies: The History Of Transportation  
or “A Place For Every Word And Every Word In Its Place”**

Mrs. Smith was standing at the blackboard, discussing the history of transportation. “The first choo-choo was invented in 1804. It was ‘rad,’ man,” she said, “totally awesome.”

“Excuse me,” a student interrupted. “May I please go bye-bye? I have to use the potty.”

“Yes,” Mrs. Smith replied. Then she continued, “Who remembers the names of the dudes who invented the airplane?”

1. Which words make this story funny (odd, strange)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why are these words strange in this situation?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Write a sentence, using slang or baby-talk that a person would feel silly saying to a doctor.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Now *rewrite* your sentence in a more appropriate way.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What does this have to do with your class studying sexuality?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_