

Series: Born to Be Me

Lesson 4: My Deep Dark Secret (For Boys)

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Identify pornography as a common struggle that is okay to discuss
- Identify the problems that pornography can cause now and in the future
- Identify some ways of tackling the problem of pornography

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Copies of page A-37 ad A-38 (Story)
- ☐ Question strips from page A-39
- ☐ Hat or bowl or other container for strips
- ☐ Copies of page A-40 and A-41 (extra info)
- ☐ Scrap paper
- ☐ Pens

Notes on this Session:

It is nearly impossible to underestimate the prevalence of pornography in our modern society. With the advent of the internet, people literally have limitless access to pornographic images at their finger tips. Most people are shocked to discover the large amount of boys and men who find themselves regularly viewing pornography. In a recent online poll, 77% of respondents admitted to looking at pornography at least once a month; 58% said they viewed pornography at least once a week. The church is by no

means safe from this infiltration of our culture. The difference in the church, however, is that unlike in the wider culture, in the church pornography is frowned upon. This means that for many teenage boys pornography truly is their “deep dark secret.”

Find a man who is open and not condemning to lead the lesson. The goal of the session is for boys to be able to open up to each other and to be accountable to one another, while at the same time making it clear that pornography is dangerous. This is a tricky balance, so approach the session with much prayer and willingness to listen, learn and share in a non-judgemental way. Some of the information may seem graphic, but it is important that guys hear some of the realities of what porn can do to them and to others.

Finally, the last thing that Jesus told the disciples in the Gospel of Luke was to proclaim “repentance and forgiveness of sins...to all nations.” (Luke 24:47) Repentance is the start to forgiveness and restoration. Be prepared with the names of some people that would be good confessors and counsellors for the students. This might be you, another man in the congregation, a pastor, or an older student who is trustworthy and wise. At the end of the lesson you are going to encourage the boys to seek out one of these people and to at least begin by confessing the deep dark secret.

Lead In:

Tell the boys that the lesson is called My Deep Dark Secret. Ask them to guess what the topic is. The answer is pornography.

Transition by saying something like, *Today many men and boys struggle with pornography, including people from church. There are probably some of you here who have looked at pornography or have had friends that do. Yet even though it can be so common, we are often ashamed to talk about our struggle. Today we want to talk about what is often a “deep dark secret” – pornography – so that we can be more aware of its dangers and so that we can help each other through the struggle we might have with it.*

Remember this is a safe place – share what you feel comfortable sharing and please feel free to be honest knowing that what is said in the room stays in the room and that we will be open and encouraging of each other.

Task One:

Tell the students that you are going to read them a story about a man named Charlie and that each of them is going to draw a question from the hat or bowl. The questions are from page A-39. Cut them into trips and put them into a bowl or hat. Have the boys draw a question and read it secretly. There are only three questions repeated several times, but they don't need to know that at the outset. Read the story that can be found on pages A-37 and A-38. When you are done, ask the students with question number one to read the question out loud and agree on an answer. Ask the other students to monitor for a quality answer. Then repeat with numbers two and three until you are satisfied with the answers.

Task Two:

Tell the boys that they are going to have a debate, like in a court. The point of doing a debate in the middle of the lesson is that it allows students to pretend to be passionate for and against the issue of pornography without exposing their personal feelings and failures. Choose one or two students to be the judges with you. Divide the other students into two teams, the pro-pornography side and the anti-pornography side. The people that are arguing against pornography are arguing that people should never look at pornography and are giving reasons why. The people arguing for pornography are arguing that it is acceptable for people to look at pornography. Give each side about ten minutes to prepare some points and to select a representative to make the points. Allow each side to make their case. Allow the judges to ask questions. Allow for final remarks from each side. Be playful with it. Don't get too caught up on the rules of order. Just keep the discussion moving. When the debate is over, have the student judges declare a verdict for one team or the other and have them share the reasons why they thought that team had stronger arguments.

Listed here are some common arguments for and against.

For	Against
Pornography provides a release so that people aren't tempted to actually have sex.	Pornography is hurtful to women. Pornography causes unrealistic expectations.
Pornography provides willing people with jobs.	Pornography hurts your sex life. Pornography hurts your relationships.
Pornography builds confidence because there can be no rejection.	Pornography leaves you "wanting more". Pornography hurts your relationship with God.
Pornography helps people learn about sex.	

For more detailed arguments against pornography, read page A-40 and A-41.

Hopefully, both teams will have argued well and will have thought of at least some of these arguments. Also, hopefully the opposition made a better case than the defence. Decide whether there are some arguments you need to highlight or guide more discussion on. The information on page A-40 and A-41 will help you with that.

Task Three:

Transition by saying something like, *You may hear arguments for and against pornography, and I would say that the arguments against using it are overwhelmingly stronger than the arguments for using it. However, the main opinion on the matter should come from God. The Bible doesn't specifically address internet porn of course, but it does have a lot to say about sexuality, human value, and keeping your thoughts pure and noble. In Philippians 4:8, the Bible says, "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." In Matthew Jesus says, "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart," making it clear that he takes lust, sexuality, and human dignity very seriously.*

On the other hand, the Jesus community is one of confession and forgiveness. Many people struggle with a deep dark secret—not just teenage boys, but all kinds of people—and in this community we care about honesty, support, and forgiveness. Remember Charlie at the beginning of the lesson? He used his bad experiences to offer forgiveness and guidance to his son and to others.

Let's work out some ways to counteract the problem of pornography. You are going to stay in your two teams and come up with a list of ways to keep pornography out of your life.

Make sure the judges from Task Two join a team. Give each team a piece of scrap paper and a pen. Give both teams exactly two minutes to generate a list of ways to keep pornography out of their lives. When the time is up, solicit answers from the teams; one answer from team one and then one answer from team two, until all their answers are exhausted. Put check marks next to duplicate answers. Have the students review the list and identify if anything important is missing. Here are some possible answers:

1. Keep a history on your computer. Have a friend/family member check it regularly.
2. Get a filter for your computer that doesn't allow any pornographic sites.
3. Put the computer in a very public place like the kitchen, instead of your bedroom.
4. Confess your problem to someone you trust who will be willing to help you.
5. Do some research on the problems related to pornography like rape, exploitation, and abuse.
6. Develop healthy and realistic relationships with members of the opposite sex, romantic or otherwise.
7. Pray about it.
8. If you have never looked at pornography, don't start.

Closing:

Close the session by saying something like, *God loves you and wants you to have a wonderful marriage that is spiritually, emotionally, and sexually fulfilling. Pornography is a strong temptation for all of us, but we want to avoid it so that we will be able to truly enjoy God's plan for us in our lives, our relationships and our sexuality. As kids we were often told not to eat a cookie before dinner so we would not "ruin our dinner." Pornography is a lot like that cookie; it may taste good for a moment but when a big steak dinner is on the way we want to be sure to wait for the real thing!*

Close in prayer, asking for God's spirit to help the guys to stand against temptation in a tough world.