



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Teaching Kids About Sex – Part 2

Guest(s): Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Today we will be continuing our classic conversation recorded several years ago about how to talk to your kids about, well the birds and the bees. So if you are raising children, you will certainly be glad you stopped by our program today as we'll be tackling this pretty sensitive subject. It's important that moms and dads share with their kids what their moral beliefs are about sex and its appropriate role in life. That includes the science and physiology behind it as well. We pray that today's program will be an encouragement to parents who are getting ready to have "the talk" with their kids to make it a priority when the time comes.

As many outside factors will be attempting to influence children at younger and younger ages, it's even more important to provide our kids with a godly view of sexuality. On today's program, Dr. James Dobson will once again be joined by his guests, Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell. Dr. Leman and Kathy co-authored a book entitled *A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey with Your Kids About Sex*. This book is designed to equip parents to have those uncomfortable yet very important conversations about a most crucial subject. Dr. Kevin Leman is an international speaker and the author of over 50 books. He's been a friend of Dr. Dobson's for quite some time. The two have been together in the studio about a dozen times over the years.

Kathy Flores Bell is the co-founder of the Carondelet Health Network's Youth Sexuality Program in Arizona. She's also the co-founder of Team Lizzie Bell, an organization dedicated to raising awareness about pediatric medical needs. Kathy is a national speaker and an educator and also a mother of four. Now due to the nature of the content being discussed on today's program, please keep in mind it is not intended for young listeners. Parental discretion definitely advised. And now let's join Dr. James Dobson and his guests Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell. Dr. Dobson begins our broadcast by asking Kathy about why it's important to watch what you say to your kids. Let's listen now for the start of today's Family Talk broadcast.

Dr. James Dobson: You all talk in your book about the dangers of making snide remarks to your kids when they're younger and embarrassing them. That translates over into sensitivity when you get to a point like this where you need to talk to them about sex.

Kathy Flores Bell: Well, isn't it just odd? It's odd that a of things that these kids remember something that was said in second grade or third grade. And when you have some girls that are menstruating in third grade, they'll remember their body process. That mind is maturing. So many things are happening that they'll remember what you've said and how you said it. Even more than that, the one thing we have to talk about is people's facial expressions. Kids will remember your facial expression and that will determine whether or not they take that next little step to ask you a question or anything.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Now let me be the little guy.

Kathy Flores Bell: Okay, you be the little guy.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And I'm 10 years old and I come home to you and I say, "Mommy, what's a condom?" And you say, "We don't talk about things like that in this house." What does that do to a kid? What is that message?

Kathy Flores Bell: Well, in the program, one of the things that we prepare our team... We have high school interns and we say to them, "Watch the questions we ask, but you watch the parents for reactions." So we've planned it. We say to them, because we know, "Little third graders, fourth graders want to shave their legs. They're looking to do things two years and three years ahead." So they come into the class and we have a whole activity that introduces shaving on a balloon with shaving cream, and we have very specific skills.

Dr. James Dobson: Without popping it, right?

Kathy Flores Bell: Without popping. Actually the students don't know we've gone to Raytheon and found out the thickness of the balloon so that it won't pop. But we teach the parents to watch the child for some very specific cues. But in that moment when we make the announcement, 99% of the parents lean into their kids and they'll say, "There is no way you are going to shave your legs until you are in sixth grade." Now when we have the mom, only time, we said, "We set you up just to watch a reaction because we want you to call attention to the fact that we're not even talking about sex."

We're talking about a hygiene process that 90% of American girls we will enter. And you looked at your child and you cut them off. They've already learned, don't come home to talk about shaving. Not only can you not come home to talk about shaving, what else can you not come home to talk about? In that split second, we have the light, the dawn, the light bulb goes off and the parents realize how I present what I say is key in the simplest hygiene process is a

gateway. It's the door that opens to sexuality that eventually gets us to the subject of sex.

Dr. Kevin Leman: The old Proverb, Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he's old, he will not depart from it." Train up the child. I think so many parents really diss, to use the kid's terminology, they put the kids down, you're not going to do that. You're never going to do this.

Kathy Flores Bell: You can't use hair gel.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Yeah. And we really have all the aces so to speak as parents. We are an healthy authority. Kids can't do this without our permission and we have some power, but I think so many times we abuse it and I think what kids are asking for is they want to belong and if they feel like they're belong and accepted by us... I don't know if you know this Dr. Dobson, but I'm doing a book called *Home Court Advantage*.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes, I do know that.

Dr. Kevin Leman: In that book I make this tremendous point about, "Hey parents, you don't get it. Your kids want to hang out with you. They want to belong." 70% of teenagers recently interviewed, ask them what they would like to do on a weeknight. You know what they'd like to do? Hang out with their family. And I think parents have to understand that. We're the ones that push them out the door.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, they don't believe it, Kevin.

Dr. Kevin Leman: No

Dr. James Dobson: Kathy. Your illustration about the balloon takes me back to a conversation I had with a waitress a few years ago and I was alone and I was eating breakfast and she recognized me and she came and she says, "I just really got to ask you a question." And I said, "Sure." And she said, "I've just had an awful time with my daughter. She's 12 years old and we are fighting tooth and nail." And she said, "Every day is a struggle." And I said, "what are you fighting about? What is there that's creating all this conflict?"

And she says, "My daughter wants to shave her legs." The exact issue that you talked about. And I said, "Do you realize in just a few years your daughter's going to be making all kinds of decisions about her life and she's going to need a relationship with you? My advice to you is go buy a razor as quick as you can get there. This has no moral significance. This is not important yet. Decide what you need to fight over and fight over those things. Don't fight over non-essentials." But it's really interesting that's right where you're talking about.

Kathy Flores Bell: Parents have always seen that these early subject issues, hair gel and how you handle the shaving and what kids wear is the gateway into all sex discussion. And it's an incorrect thought process.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Leman, you said in the book that you actually went with your daughter to buy her first bra.

Dr. Kevin Leman: I did.

Dr. James Dobson: That's a little strange.

Kathy Flores Bell: I show that to dads. They die when I show that part of the book to them.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Well, as you know, there's a wonderful connection between a daddy and a daughter and a mother and a son. And daddy-daughter relationships are well-chronicled. They're very, very special relationships. Well, we were sitting around the dinner table and we were talking about, well, she had to get a bra and Sande was busy and she couldn't go. I said, "Honey, I'll take her." I said, "I know where there's... In fact, I just saw bra this afternoon. I said it was orange and had white dots on it. I think it'll do real good. I mean, I think we can find it." Well there she is, rolling her eyes, dying. Well, we went down and we purchased her a bra. And in the book we give-

Dr. James Dobson: She was not embarrassed to be standing there with her daddy?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Oh yeah. Yeah. She was somewhat embarrassed. But you know what? I think it goes back to the parents' reaction. You know me, I like to have fun and fun is sort of the middle name of all of our family activities. And so we went there and I asked her if she wanted to walk just a few steps ahead of me after we had it in a bag and if she actually wanted to carry it herself or I'd carry it. I have to tell you, it looked like it was going to grow up and become a bra someday. It was the training bra and there was nothing to train. Let make that observation. But the point is that that kid today will come in and sit on my lap. She'll come in the evening and sit on the edge of our bed and if she wants to talk, she's going to talk. And what Sande and I have learned is just shut up and listen.

Dr. James Dobson: And listen.

Kathy Flores Bell: And listen.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And they'll talk.

Dr. James Dobson: You have also kind of gone counter to common wisdom with regard to the fathers talking to their sons about sex and the mothers talking to their daughters. And you've sort of talked about the possibility at least of flipping that around.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And there's something marvelously healthy about a dad talking to a daughter about life because I think daddies are acutely prepared to tell a daughter how men view women. And from the male standpoint, and conversely mommies with sons. I mean, mommies need to tell sons that little girls growing up, they don't like boys who push them and shove them. But if a ten-year-old girl is liked by a ten-year-old boy, the best prediction is that ten-year-old boy is going to shove that girl on the shoulder. That's how ten-year-old boys tell ten-year-old girls they like them. So there's a lot of interesting learning that goes on between daddies and daughters and mothers and sons. And an admonition to all you mommies who are raising sons, you don't take any guff from your son because you represent to your son what women are all about.

Kathy Flores Bell: Early on.

Dr. James Dobson: But a mother is far more equipped to talk about menstruation, for example, with the daughter than the father. So you can kind of play that by ear.

Kathy Flores Bell: Well, I think what you got to keep in mind, parents, is your kids are always watching. There's all kinds of things being caught as kids are observing life.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Leman, we go back 22 years, that's where we started. *Sex Begins in the Kitchen*. It doesn't mean that the sex act begins in the kitchen. It means that your kids are watching and the way you relate to each other is profoundly related to your sex life.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And what I found out as a young husband is you can make love to your wife without ever setting foot in the bedroom. It's all the things you do outside the bedroom that make a difference. Our kids snicker and laugh. They just think it's profoundly funny that Sande and I-

Kathy Flores Bell: You two separate.

Dr. Kevin Leman: ... still do it. I add a little humor to it. I say, "Well, semi-annually, but we still do it." But there's times when Sande is so different than me. She likes nice restaurants. I don't like nice restaurants. I like places like Waffle House. It's got one fork. I'm a happy guy. She's a five-forker. You know what I'm saying? And so once in a while I'll take Sande out to a really nice restaurant. And then we started this maybe 15, 20 years ago now, and I took her to a really nice resort. Well, long story short, I took her in there and she spent the night in the hotel room by herself. I went home and babysat the kids. I had two books for her to read, three roses to represent our three kids. It's healthy and good to know that your kids understand the little things you do to make life nicer for-

Dr. James Dobson: You're modeling, aren't you?

Dr. Kevin Leman: You do. That's part of it. Kathy and I, you can see Kathy's passionate about this subject. And I'm telling you, I've seen all the research what's happening to the

families and hey parents, I got news for you. One of the major obstacles to making a marriage, a real marriage, is struggles in this vital area of sex. Sex is not from Satan. It's a wonderful gift from our Maker. And if Christians aren't willing enough to stand up and tell our kids that sex is this wonderful gift and give those kids something to look forward to, but always with those boundaries that kids need, we're fooling ourselves.

Kathy Flores Bell: The other thing that was really interesting too is parents want that relationship, but by fifth, sixth grade they're connected. Seventh grade's getting a little rougher. Eighth grade, these kids are on their way out the door and they know it. So when the kids get into high school, it's a little bit more difficult to continue to hold those reins. Parents, they're astonished when I ask them, "Look at this teen magazine, look at what's happening on prom night. Look at what happens after the football games. Think now, when your child's in sixth grade, what is it going to be like in your home. Practice now what you believe." Friday night, every Friday night, there's not a kid in America that doesn't want to go out and do something.

So what will you do? So in our family thinking like this, we said, "Let's drive to Tucson. Let's find the best places for kids to hang out." Because we knew our kids would want to go out. As a family, we decide we had to find the best little strip mall that was out there. We found one that had a toy store in it, had a Hallmark store in it, had a Starbucks coffee shop. It had a movie theater. We had to find out what our kids were going to look for because we had to say on Friday night, what's okay, what's not okay? We will always be around and this is how it will be.

Any party you go to, we get to go to too. You may arrive with somebody else or we'll take you in. And there were very specific things. And then dating our kids was another way that we brought up the subject. John's in seventh grade, eighth grade graduation's coming up. "John, what do you hear the kids are talking about? What are they going to be doing for eighth grade graduation?" John's sitting there eating at the restaurant. He's talking about what he's hearing. I said, "Well, guess what, John? What do you think you're going to be doing next year when it's your eighth grade graduation?" Because by eighth grade graduation, there was already the stay the night parties, gone for the whole night.

Dr. James Dobson: We must not go any further without talking about, so-called safe sex ideology, what's taught in the schools. They're calling it now more safe sex.

Kathy Flores Bell: Less risky sex.

Dr. James Dobson: It's still not safe. I mean, there are some diseases that condoms lower the incidence of infection for, but there are other diseases that they don't help at all with. And so when you give the kids the impression that it'll be all right if you simply do it right, it is not true. And what do you say to them in addition to the fact that there's a moral and immoral way to behave?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Well, you do point out the big lie, but I go back to this whole concept of planting the seed in a child's mind. Treat a child in the way you expect and behave and it'll behave that way. And when you plant that seed and you make it firm and clear that this is how I expect you to behave... Now this is premised on the fact you've got a great relationship with your son or your daughter. I think that helps give that kid the inner strength to say to the peer group who says, "Hey, be like us, be cool. Do this, do that." Where they pull back and they don't do that. Let me give you real life, seventeen-year-old kid getting ready for her date to come and pick her up. The seventeen-year-old daughter isn't ready yet. So the mother greets this kid and has him sit in the family room and the mother is busy in the kitchen. The seventeen-year-old boy walks into the lady and says these exact words, "Hey, Mrs. J, can I ask you a question?" "Sure." "How come I ain't getting anything from your daughter?"

Dr. James Dobson: You're kidding?

Dr. Kevin Leman: No. Now this woman who I would give the mother of the year award to if I could did not reach for a knife. You know what she said? She said to this seventeen-year-old kid, this is an exact quote. She said, "When I was 17, I hated sauerkraut." That's the first thing she said to this kid. I would've loved to have been there to see the expression on his face. And she said, "But you know, I'm 41 years of age today and I love sauerkraut." And then she went into the fact that she and her daughter had a very close relationship and that they had actually talked earlier that day about her thinking of breaking up with this young boy this same evening. And she says, "She's been very candid with me that you have been pestering her and bothering her for sex. She tells me straight out that she told you she's not interested in sex." And she says, "The truth of the matter is it's really sad because I think my daughter really likes you." Now think of the great relationship that exists-

Dr. James Dobson: What's the sauerkraut?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Well, she was saying she hated sauerkraut when she was 17. Now she loves sauerkraut. So she was conveying that now at 41 being married that she loves sex. And I didn't explain that very well, did I? But you do get the-

Dr. James Dobson: I just never thought of sauerkraut and sex in the same context.

Dr. Kevin Leman: No, I haven't either. But the point is that it's the relationship that counts, and I just know that too many parents are doing too many things away from their kids. The kind of stuff that Kathy comes up with about finding a strip mall, finding an area where we can do things together as a family. It sounds like something out of the Waltons. But I'll tell you, that's what makes families stick.

Kathy Flores Bell: I have told my mother and my father that the things that they taught me in their examples of two people that really didn't know what they were doing, had not read a parenting book per se, had examples of parenthood that were stories

that you could write about. My father hugging me in the mall and looking at clothes and asking me what I thought about clothes and then hugging me even tighter and saying, "Well, let me tell you what the boys think about those clothes and that's why you won't wear those." My mom doing her thing with the baggy and just everything that she ever talked about sex. She wanted us to know that this was one of the greatest gifts that God had given us. I'll never forget that.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I was blessed in the same way. We talked earlier about the preparing for adolescence tapes. That idea came from my parents. We were taking a long trip in the car and I was 11 years old and they chose that moment for the three of us. It was nighttime. We were driving late and we talked for an hour or two about what was coming.

Kathy Flores Bell: Life. Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: All about adolescence. I remember my dad saying, "Just remember this. I want you to remember this. There will come a time when a girl will offer herself to you. What are you going to do in that moment?"

Kathy Flores Bell: That is so good.

Dr. Kevin Leman: I had a kid in my office, he's 14 years old, and I'm trying to be paternal with him and give him this advice. And he was really nice and listening to me, and I'm giving him essentially a sex education talk that his parents had asked me to engage him in. And he was very quiet and polite and stupid me, I said, "Well, do you have any questions?" And he, "Well, yeah, what do you do when the girl puts her hand in your pants?"

Kathy Flores Bell: That's exactly what the boys asked me. Come on, Mrs. Bell.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And that's the question. I'm sitting there going, "Well-"

Kathy Flores Bell: What are we supposed to do?

Dr. Kevin Leman: "... Let me go through the book here, page 32. We talked about that."

Dr. James Dobson: They actually ask you that, Kathy?

Kathy Flores Be...: Oh, sure. Because they want to know. In fact, we had a class the other night where we were talking to parents of middle school kids and my high school interns are part of that parent-only program. And the question came up about what are you telling your daughters about boys and male erection? And the mothers were just shocked that that was even a discussion that they needed to have. And the teenage girls looked at these mothers in the audience and said, "The boys at school are telling us when they're having erections." You need to be talking to your sons about this.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you tell them to do, for example, slap their faces maybe?

Kathy Flores Be...: Well, that was... Yeah, that becomes the point of our court systems are clogged with sexual harassment suits. These young boys saying things, doing things that as one judge said, "Hey, these are things that we would do in high school back in our day and now they are grounds for lawsuits." And these kids need to understand that that's what's happening. But that was exactly the point is that all of these subjects are things... There are cards on the table anytime, anywhere you go, and yet the parents are still the ones that are sitting back trying to figure out how you say that. That's why it's so important as parents, you have to know.

Dr. James Dobson: It is a tough time to be a teenager.

Dr. Kevin Leman: It is.

Dr. James Dobson: The society helped you do better things, wise things when I was a kid. And now the kids get thrown into things they're not prepared for and circumstances that they have not been told about. And if the parents don't do their job, these kids are on their own. And that's why you wrote this book, isn't it?

Kathy Flores Bell: Right. What do you do?

Dr. James Dobson: To help the parents do what we're talking about.

Kathy Flores Bell: Yes, what to do, what to say.

Dr. James Dobson: The title of it is *A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey with Your Kids About Sex*. A lot of very practical stuff in this book that I have not been able to, for the reasons of time limitations, ask about here. But it's all in here and I appreciate you all asking the questions and providing the answers and the concepts that are in here are tested with kids,

Kathy Flores Bell: Thousands of kids, thousands of parents.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. There is a lot of strong feeling here about this subject. We are sexual creatures and our kids need to know that and need to understand how to deal with that part of their nature. And you all have gone a long way toward making that possible. Thank you all for being with us.

Kathy Flores Bell: Thank you so much.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Thank you for everything you do. We love you.

Kathy Flores Bell: Oh man, absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: After 22 years, will you come back?

Dr. Kevin Leman: 22 years, it's been that long.

Dr. James Dobson: It has been that long.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Here I am near death and I still got the 12-year-old...

Dr. James Dobson: God's blessings to you.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Thank you.

Kathy Flores Bell: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what great insights that both of these guests have shared with us over the past couple of days here on Family Talk. Our prayer and our hope is that the discussion you've been listening to has been very helpful to you if you're a parent who is not exactly sure where to start when it comes to teaching your kids about the so-called facts of life. Now you've just heard the conclusion of a two-part conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and his guests Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell. If you'd like to learn more about them or their book, simply visit us online at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. If you look around on the news or on social media, it's easy to see that we are definitely living in some challenging times, and that can seem quite overwhelming, especially for parents as we hang on tight to the Lord through all of the chaos.

And that's why the Dobson Culture Center was created. The purpose of the DCC is to help families and individuals live spiritually rooted lives, and to engage culture with a Biblical worldview, exposing darkness and exalting the light of Christ. Make sure you sign up for the free newsletter, "Lighting Up Culture" that'll keep you updated on all the latest issues when you go to the Dobson Culture Center. You can find more information when you visit drjamesdobson.org/culture-center. Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you have a wonderful and peaceful weekend. From all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we thank you for listening today and for making us a part of your day. And be sure to join us again on Monday right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.