

Questions children ask about sex

By SHIRLEY IDEN

Children are taught negative connotations about sex as much by what adults don't do as by what they do.

That's the view of Eve Kommel, a human sexuality teacher for many years.

She spoke to a group of mothers of students at the Beth Haysel Nursery of Congregation Shaarey Zedek recently on the questions children ask about sex.

Introduced by Gail Goodstein of Farmington Hills, chairman of the day, Mrs. Kommel said:

"The head of OB-GYN in Hawaii once asked when we will stop teaching our children that sex is dirty so they should do it only with someone they're married to.

"Each of us teaches our children in various ways, what's good, bad or acceptable. No one has to bluntly say that 'sex is dirty, but we all learned it.'"



EVE KOMMEL

Children are taught what is good, such as: Eat everything, stay clean, keep out of the street, and bad things like: Don't get dirty, she said.

"Then, there were things never talked of at all like not to touch yourself, and avoid sex play with other kids.

"By a mother's reaction to words, a child learns when to close communication."

"The most common question parents ask her is 'When should I teach my children the facts of life?'"

Her answer: "You are teaching children from the day of their birth about human sexuality."

MANY PARENTS ask what to do if a child walks in on the parents while they are having sexual intercourse.

"Even a child walking in on the sex act itself is only seeing a loving scene of closeness," Mrs. Kommel said. "If the child asks what you are doing, answer honestly and say you are making love."

Mrs. Kommel has been married 32 years to Richard Kommel. Parents of four grown children, they live in Huntington Woods. She has taught sexuality courses since 1956 to ADC women and in youth core programs.

Beginning in 1972, she taught sexual communication in the Wayne State University Graduate school and has been a member of a United Foundation Committee for the study of illegitimacy.

Presently she is the business manager for a medical clinic, a scuba diver, a skier and treasurer of the Great Lakes Yacht Club.

She cautioned her audience that everything she says must have a qualifier, that what she says today may be changed by later circumstances.

PARENTS MUST initiate sex education; they should not wait for their child

to broach the subject, she advises.

"Our opportunity came when our eldest child went to Sunday School and learned about the 10 commandments," she recalled.

"Naturally, he had to know what adultery meant."

She said a child too young to learn complex facts will be bored and shut out what he hears. "But he may come back and ask a question later."

"If the child does ask, don't be inconsistent or lie. Honesty and a good sense of humor go a long way in fostering a good parent-child relationship."

Questioned about modesty, Mrs.

Kommel said two things are operative: Your own degree of comfort and the effect on children.

"Some privacy is necessary and a child should be taught to knock before entering a closed door," she said. "But the parent must afford the same right to privacy to the child."

She said by time a child is 4 or 5, parents should get somewhat discreet.

On touching, she said parents have to draw the line, but must make the point that the body is a private thing, and that there are certain things one doesn't do in public.

Visitors welcomed to Mayfair Nursery

Parents of preschoolers who wish to visit Mayfair Co-op Nursery School are invited to call the school, 626-2719, for an appointment. The school is located in Orchard United Methodist Church, on Farmington Road, south of 14 Mile Road.

The school has openings for 3-year-

olds on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 9:30-11:45 a.m. and 3 and 4-year-olds on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:30-2:45 p.m.

Inquiries about the nursery and its operation will be taken by calling Edie Lovell, 478-7937.

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Brown-Shepherd

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Brown of Farmington Hills announce the engagement of their daughter Debra to Kevin J. Shepherd, son of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Shepherd of Kalkaska, formerly of Livonia.

The bride to be is a 1979 graduate of Clarenceville High School, employed with National Account Systems of Southfield. Her fiancé is serving with the U.S. Navy in Charleston, S.C.

A June wedding is planned in Charleston.

Waldorf's summer enrollment starts

Waldorf Kinder House, 16945 14 Mile Road, Birmingham, is now accepting applications for the summer program of creative workshops for children from 3½ to 7 years old. The program will run for four weeks, July 7 through Aug. 1, Mondays through Fridays.

Workshops conducted by trained teachers in Waldorf art are offered in woodworking, puppetry, toy-making,

water color painting, knitting, nature crafts, gardening, weaving and beeswax modeling.

Kinder House is a non-profit nursery and kindergarten which emphasizes the artistic and creative ability of children.

Minimum time of enrollment is one week. Registrations are taken by calling the school, 642-0102.



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