

From “Sacred Values: A Multifaith Celebration of Freedom, Health, and Justice,” held on 2/8/2007 at the Indiana Statehouse, sponsored by the Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Clueless: A Real-Life Story

Intro: Rev. Steve Clapp is the Director of the Christian Community, a research and program development organization based in Fort Wayne. Rev. Clapp is the author of *Faith Matters: Teenagers, Sexuality, and Religion*. *Faith Matters* is the result of a large and unprecedented survey of thousands of religious teens on how their different faiths affect their decision-making relating to sexuality. The study concluded that teens need and want comprehensive information and guidance about sexuality. Shortly after the publication of *Faith Matters*, Rev. Clapp had a fascinating conversation with a Lutheran pastor and his 15-year-old daughter in a shopping mall.

Pastor: Now if I understand the statistics right, your research shows that about a fourth of the religious teens who are juniors and seniors in high school have had oral sex.

Steve: That’s very close. The actual figures are 26.4% for females and 28.9% for males.

Pastor: The youth group in my church has about 20 kids in it, and almost all of them are juniors or seniors. So that would mean that at least five kids in my youth group have had oral sex or will have it before they finish high school. Is that right?

Steve: Well, of course, those are national statistics and there would certainly be differences from congregation to congregation. Some would have lower rates than that, and some would have higher rates.

Pastor: Well, I’m glad to hear you say that, because I just can’t believe there are five kids in my youth group who’ve had oral sex.

Daughter (rolling eyes and sighing in exasperation because her dad is so clueless): Dad, a lot of the kids in the youth group and at school have had oral sex. I’d say it’s way above 25% for our group. That’s what you do to stay safe, to be faithful to the Bible. After all, when you have oral sex, you aren’t really having sex, and you aren’t going to get pregnant or get AIDS.

(Pastor has shocked look on his face)

Steve: Ummmm, you have some misinformation there. You’re right that you can’t get pregnant from oral sex. But you sure can get HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases from oral sex unless you’re using protection.

Daughter: Are you serious?

Steve: Oh yes, I’m telling you the truth.

Daughter: Why doesn’t anybody tell us this stuff? You could get killed not knowing that!

Daughter & Pastor: You could get killed not knowing that!

Daughter & Pastor & Clapp: You could get killed!

(Adapted from Adult Guide to The Gift of Sexuality: Empowerment for Religious Teens by Steve Clapp, c2006 LifeQuest. Used by permission. For copies of this and other publications on faith, teens, and sexuality, contact Christian Community, 6404 S Calhoun St, Fort Wayne IN 46807. 800-774-3360. www.churchstuff.com.)