

THE SECRET LIFE  
OF THE  
AMERICAN TEENAGER

# DISCUSSION GUIDE



## EPISODE FIVE

### SUMMARY

Ben asks Amy to marry him just as the Juergens's marriage is tested. Grace finds out the truth about Jack and Adrian. It seems like everyone's finding out about Amy's pregnancy. Ricky is getting interested in church. Amy is starting to get serious about pregnancy. And Adrian's mom's boyfriend is someone familiar.

### FOR TEENS

Stuff to talk about:

- Ben proposes marriage to Amy – even though they're only 15. Why do you think he proposed? Are they really ready to get married? Can you imagine someone in your school getting married so young? When do you think you'll feel ready for marriage? For a baby? Is it possible to be ready for a baby before you're ready for marriage?

**FACT:** In 1960, 85% of teen births were to married teens. In 2002 only 20% of teen births occurred within marriage. One-third of teen marriages in which the bride is younger than 18 end in divorce within the first 5 years. Unmarried teen moms are less likely to ever marry than women who delay childbearing until adulthood.

- After she spills the beans about what Jack really did with Adrian, Grace's friend says there are no secrets in high school. Then, Ricky tells Grace that people lie to make life more interesting. Do you think lying and dishonesty are a major part of high school? What kinds of things do people at your school lie about? Why do you think teens lie about sex?

**FACT:** About half of all high school teens have had sex, about half haven't, and some are lying about it. Boys say



Ben (Kenny Baumann) proposes marriage to Amy (Shailene Woodley) – even though they're only 15.

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*they are more likely to lie about sex to make it seem like they've had more partners than they really have; while girls say they lie to seem like they've had fewer partners.*

- For the first time since she found out she was pregnant, Amy is starting to talk about abortion as an option. Does it surprise you that she hasn't discussed it before? What do you think of the reactions she's getting on this topic – from Ben, Madison, and Lauren? What do you think her parents would say about it?

**FACT:** *Less than 20% of all abortions performed in the U.S. are to teens.*

- When Grace confronts Jack and Adrian in the hallway at school, she says Jack was her first boyfriend and since he lied to her she doesn't know if she'll ever trust another guy again. That's one of the ways a relationship stays with you, and changes you, even after it's over. Sex is another way. Do you have any past relationships that still have an impact on your life? How so? Has your boyfriend or girlfriend ever betrayed your trust? What happened? How did you handle it?

**FACT:** *Teens say that trust is the #1 most important part of a healthy relationship. 60% of teens who have had sex before age 18 say they wish they had waited longer. You can always say no to sex, even if you've said yes before.*



It seems like everyone's finding out about Amy's pregnancy, including little sister Ashley (India Eisley).

## FOR PARENT'S

*Watching a show like "The Secret Life of the American Teenager" alongside your teen is a good way to start a conversation about sex, love, and relationships. Even though teens say that parents most influence their decisions about sex, parents of teens underestimate their own influence in this area. Here are some ideas for talking to your kids after watching the show.*

- When Amy and Ben are walking to their picnic site, he insists on carrying everything because he's the boy, but since he's struggling with the heavy basket and Amy's books, she convinces him to let her carry some stuff too. Are there pre-set rules about what boys should do and what girls should do in a relationship? What falls into the "boy" category? What falls into the "girl" category? Have you ever talked with your son or daughter specifically about these expectations? When it comes to dating and sex, do parents have different standards and rules for their sons than for their daughters? Do you? Ask your teen what he or she thinks.

**FACT:** *65% of teens say that when it comes to sex, parents send one message to their daughters and another to their sons.*

- When Mr. Juergens is leaving home and Ashley is begging him to stay, he says that talking about his relationship with Mrs. Juergens is "not a conversation a father has with his daughter." What do you think of that? Should the Juergens openly discuss what's happening in their marriage with their children? How much do teens need to know about their parents' marriage anyway? How do teens learn about what makes a healthy long-term relationship? What messages do you think your adult relationships send to your teen? How do you model what you think a healthy relationship looks like?

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**FACT:** *Teen girls say their primary example of a healthy relationship is their parents; teen boys say it's their friends. Less than half of teens think divorce is the best solution when a couple can't seem to work out their marital problems. A majority of teens believe it's better to get married than to go through life single. More boys than girls feel this way. Research shows that children raised by parents in healthy marriages are more likely to be physically and emotionally healthier, are less likely to get divorced when they get married, and are less likely to get pregnant as teens.*

For more tips for parents, visit <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org>. To find out what teens are saying about relationships, go to <http://stayteen.org/whats-your-relationship-reality/default.aspx>.

**For more information, please contact [web@thenc.org](mailto:web@thenc.org)  
or visit us online at [TheNationalCampaign.org](http://TheNationalCampaign.org) and [StayTeen.org](http://StayTeen.org).**