

THE HIT ABC FAMILY ORIGINAL SERIES RETURNS

THE SECRET LIFE OF THE AMERICAN TEENAGER

“Par for the Course”

mondays at 8/7c

For Teens:

Here's some stuff to talk about from this week's episode:

- * Amy seems to be in a really bad mood these days. She's obviously overwhelmed by all her responsibilities – caring for John, figuring everything out with Ricky, dealing with her parents, keeping up with school, working at the day care, and trying to stay friends with her friends. Do you think any of this crossed her mind when she was with Ricky that night at band camp? Do most teenagers consider the consequences of the things they do? Why do you think so many people think it just won't happen to them?

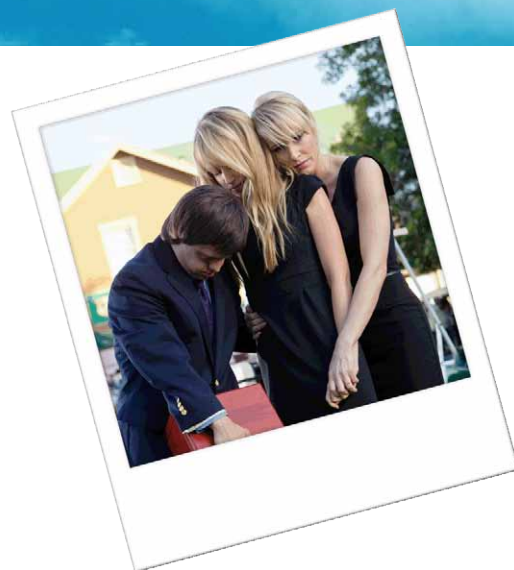
fact: *Half of all teens say they've never even considered how a pregnancy would affect their lives. Have you ever thought about it?*

- * When Reverend Stone (who is also Jack's dad – awkward!) is talking to Grace about the guilt she feels, he says that sex is “very complicated” and he thinks sex among young people in high school is wrong because it “can lead to an unwanted pregnancy or physical or emotional problems or worse.” What do you think of that? Do you think people (and the media) talk about sex like it's easy and not a big deal? How does that make you feel?

fact: *Most teenagers who have had sex (girls AND boys) say they wish they had waited longer before doing it. Not that they necessarily wish they'd waited until marriage, but just that they'd waited longer than they did. There are a lot of good reasons not to have sex – such as protecting your feelings and your body.*

- * At the butcher shop, when the Sausage King is talking to Ben about his relationship with Amy, he tells him that 15 is too young to be having sex. Ben, who's a virgin, is frustrated because Amy's had sex but he hasn't. Leo reminds him that it's “not a contest,” but Ben doesn't want to hear about it. Have you ever felt like Ben – that everyone else is doing something but you're not? How do you deal with it? Does it make a difference if one person in a couple is more experienced than the other? Does it matter if it's the girl who's more experienced than the boy?

fact: *Not everyone is doing it. Even though it may seem like everyone else is having sex, the truth is that about half of teens in high school are virgins and about half are not. And some are lying about it.*





- * Amy gets mad at Ben when she sees him comforting Adrian with a hug in the school hallway: “You better not be flirting with Adrian because you’re not getting sex from me!” He denies having any interest in sleeping with Adrian and says he’ll wait as long as it takes for Amy to be ready for sex. Do you think Amy had a right to be mad at Ben for hugging Adrian? Do you think Ben actually does want to sleep with Adrian? Were you surprised when Adrian later slapped Ben for trying to comfort her with a hug? Even if she was joking, is it ever OK to hit people like that?

tip: *The best way to deal with confusing boy-girl drama like this is to talk it out. It might be awkward or uncomfortable at first, but honesty is really the best policy when it comes to these things. If you can talk it out, you will learn more about the other person and are more likely to take their feelings into consideration.*

For Parents:

Watching a show like “The Secret Life of the American Teenager” with your teens is 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.

- * Adrian has always been the one on the show who is most comfortable with her sexuality, most aggressive when it comes to guys, and least apologetic about her behavior. But now she’s all of a sudden talking about not having sex anymore – she even tells Ruben that she knows Ricky doesn’t love her and maybe all of this is “God’s way of telling me I shouldn’t be having sex.” Do you think she means it? Do you think having a concerned father figure in her life will make a difference?

fact: *Children of all ages have a great need for close relationships with their parents. Guidance, approval, and support from mom and dad go a long way to helping a young person develop the self-esteem and self-confidence necessary to make wise decisions.*

- * Amy’s mom is trying to get her to understand the seriousness of her commitment to her job at the day care center and even joins her at work so the other employees are free to go to Dr. Bowman’s funeral. Amy gets mad and accuses Anne of wanting to help those women rather than help her own daughter. By accompanying Amy to work, Anne is sending a strong message about the importance of the job. How do you impress upon your kids the importance of honoring commitments they’ve made?

fact: *Supervising and monitoring your kids’ whereabouts and making sure they follow through on their promises doesn’t make you a nag. It makes you a parent.*

