

THE HIT ABC FAMILY ORIGINAL SERIES RETURNS

THE SECRET LIFE OF THE AMERICAN TEENAGER

"Born Free"

mondays at 8/7c

For Teens:

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

- * One of the things Betty says to Ben when she's trying to make small talk and be friendly with him is that he should get a new supply of condoms before he goes to Italy. Apparently the condoms he has – which his dad and Betty have been using – are expired. Did you know that condoms don't last forever, and that you have to treat them with care?

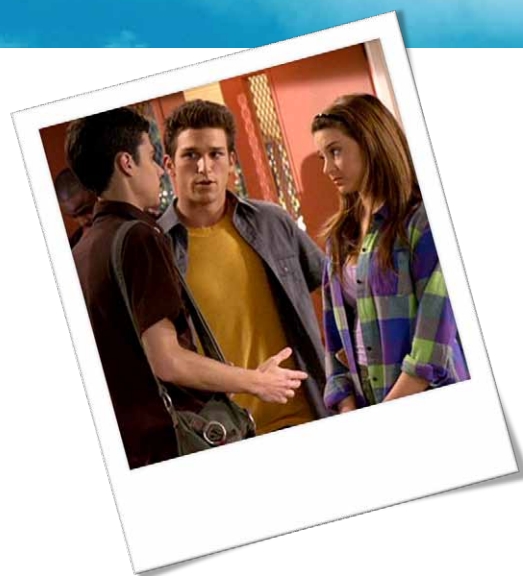
fact: *Condoms should be kept in a cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight. If you keep one in your wallet or purse, make sure to replace it periodically even if you don't use it, because wear and tear on the wrapper can damage the condom itself. Also make sure when you use a condom and take it out of the wrapper not to tear it or damage it before use. Condoms are an effective method of contraception – but only when you use them carefully and correctly every single time.*

- * Ricky's foster mom is surprised that Amy's mom is pregnant and assumes it's unplanned, which of course it is. She makes the snarky comment that the Juergens women are fertile and irresponsible. Did you know that half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned? It isn't just a teenage thing.

tip: *Every single time you have sex, there is a possibility of pregnancy; the first time (like what happened to Amy), and every time after that. That's why it's critically important to have a plan – either don't have sex or use protection carefully and consistently if you do have sex.*

- * Ricky is trying really hard to be a good father to John and a good co-parent with Amy. He takes his responsibility seriously, and he really wants what's best for his son. Sadly, most young fathers are not like Ricky. Most babies born to teen moms grow up apart from their dads, and without their fathers being involved emotionally or financially. Why do you think Ricky is so committed to being a good dad?

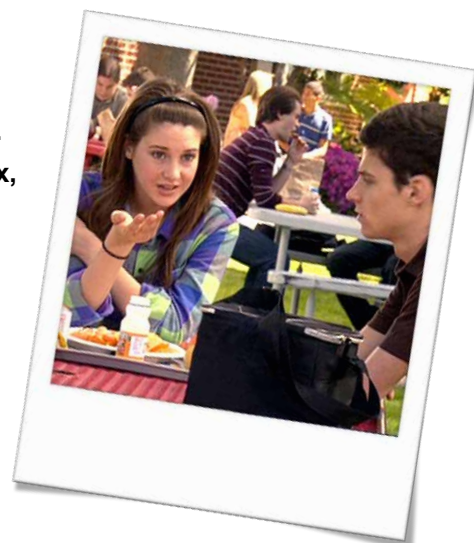
fact: *Eight out of ten fathers don't marry the teen mother of their child, and most don't have the means to pay child support.*



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.

- * Amy really wants to go to Italy with Ben, and she’s trying desperately to find someone to take care of John so she can go. When it doesn’t look like anyone will take her up on it, she talks about taking John with her to expose him to new cultures (despite the fact that he’s just 10 weeks old). Even though Amy is doing a lot of the hard work that comes with being a parent, it seems like she might not be convinced of how serious a commitment this is. Do your teens know what kind of a lifelong, 24/7 responsibility it is to be a parent?



fact: *Half of teens have never thought about how a pregnancy would affect their lives. Making sure they understand the task of parenting and the responsibility that comes with it is as important as making sure they know about the birds and the bees.*

- * Nearly every scene in “The Secret Life of the American Teenager” involves young people and sex – they’re thinking about sex, wondering about sex, regretting sex, trying to find someone to have sex with, worrying about having sex, worrying what other people think about sex, etc. It may seem like a lot to an adult, but teenagers are very curious about sex and all of the mysterious emotions and actions surrounding it. Talking to your kids about sex in a normal, natural way – like when you see something on television or there’s a story in the news – is a good way to demystify it for them.



fact: *Talking about the sex lives of characters on TV can be a lot less stressful than talking about real-life people. It’s much safer to be judgmental or critical of fictional characters’ choices. Bringing up sex in this context makes it more normal and less like a version of “The Talk.” Also, nearly two-thirds of teens (64%) say they share their parents’ values about sex. Do your kids know what your values are?*