

THE HIT ABC FAMILY ORIGINAL SERIES RETURNS

# THE SECRET LIFE OF THE AMERICAN TEENAGER

"Summertime"

mondays at 8/7c

## For Teens:

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

- \* Ricky doesn't want Adrian being friends with Ben or even talking to him on the phone or at school. He's obviously jealous, and it's also obvious he doesn't trust her. What do you think of that? Should a guy or girl be able to decide who their boyfriend or girlfriend is friendly with? Should someone take their partner's feelings into consideration when choosing friends to spend time with? Do you think Adrian is trustworthy? Is Ricky? Do they give each other reasons to be doubtful?

**fact:** *When it comes to relationships, teens say it's all about trust. Forty percent of guys and 48% of girls say that trust is the most important part of a healthy relationship. The second most important factor is honesty. Less than 3% of teens say that looks or popularity matter most.*

- \* Ben doesn't want to have to work at his relationship with Amy. He would rather it just come easily and naturally. The thing is, relationships can be hard work, but when they're good, they're worth it. Have you ever been in a relationship that felt like a lot of work? Have you ever been in one that felt easy? Even though Ben says all the couples he saw in Italy didn't seem to be working on their relationships, he didn't have the opportunity to see these couples in their day-to-day lives, where a lot of that "work" takes place. It's like when you see a celebrity who looks gorgeous and perfect – but you didn't see the time they spent in the makeup chair.

**fact:** *The "work" of being in a relationship doesn't always seem like work – it can mean being able to be open and honest, making time for each other, and accepting each other with an open mind and an open heart. Just like anything -- such as sports or careers or hobbies – when you love what you're doing it and love the results, it doesn't necessarily seem like work.*

- \* While the teacher was lecturing about how plants reproduce, almost everyone in the classroom was daydreaming about sex. Alice was thinking how great things have been with Henry recently. Henry was worrying about how to keep things great with Alice. Madison was wondering if she should regret not sleeping with Jason. Other kids were wondering if they were the only ones in the room thinking about sex (definitely not!). And Amy and Ben were



obsessing about their situation, as usual. Do you find yourself distracted by thoughts of sex and relationships? Why do those topics make it hard to concentrate on other things?

**fact:** *Thinking about sex is totally normal and natural, especially for teenagers. Talking about it is normal too -- just make sure you get advice and information from a trusted source and someone who cares about you. These kinds of conversations (with others and in your own mind) help you decide how you feel about things and prepare for what lies ahead. It's important to have a plan and to know what you'll do and say in the heat of the moment.*



## 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.

- \* Before she leaves for her first day of high school, Ashley gets a talk from her father about not getting pregnant like Amy did. George is partially joking, but there's some truth to what he's saying – younger siblings of teen parents often find themselves getting pregnant (or getting someone pregnant) as teenagers too – in fact, they're two to six times more likely to become pregnant as teens than other kids. Why do you think that is? Also, the children of teen parents are more likely to become teen parents themselves. Teen pregnancy is not hereditary. Why do you think it almost seems to be passed down from generation to generation?

**tip:** *Having an older sister who's a teen mom has a strong effect on sexual attitudes and behavior. It may seem that younger siblings like Ashley – who know firsthand how hard it is to be a teen mom – should be more inclined to avoid pregnancy, but that isn't usually the case. Parents need to be even more dedicated to helping reduce the risk of pregnancy with their younger children by building close connections with them and talking about relationships, sex, contraception, and their own values.*



- \* Madison and Lauren want boyfriends this year – even though Madison is still upset about her breakup with Jason. Lauren tries to convince Madison to keep the Jason thing in perspective and reminds her that he wasn't her true love, he was just someone to go out with. Even so – because Madison's inclined to look at the drama in every situation – that isn't easy to do. Do you think your teens have trouble putting feelings and relationships into perspective? How can you help them deal with this part of growing up?

**fact:** *Parents often make the mistake of telling their kids they are “too young to be in love!” The truth is, a teenager's feelings are as real and valid to them as yours are to you – and no less important. The key is to help your kids understand what they're feeling, put it in perspective, and make responsible decisions. As a parent, you have a wonderful opportunity to share your knowledge and guide your child – but putting them on the defensive or being dismissive of their experience is a bad way to begin.*