

THE SECRET LIFE
OF THE
AMERICAN TEENAGER

DISCUSSION GUIDE



EPISODE 21 – "Whoomp! (There It Is)"

FOR TEENS

Stuff to talk about:

- Max admits to Adrian (and to their dad!) that he's falling in love with her, but she doesn't say it back. She liked him enough to have sex with him, and he seems to be a very sweet and caring guy, so why do you think they're in different places emotionally? Should they have waited to have sex? Should they have talked about the love thing before they did it? Was this a healthy way to start their relationship? Does it make sense that Adrian thinks sex is less of a big deal than love?

TIP: *You're in charge of your own life. Don't let anyone pressure you into something, physically or emotionally. It doesn't matter if you're a guy or a girl -- there are lots of reasons to wait to have sex, and protecting your feelings is one of them.*

- Madison and Lauren have obviously felt neglected over the past few months because Amy's been preoccupied with her pregnancy, and they tell Amy as much when they're looking for invitations to the shower. It's good that they're getting their feelings out in the open -- friends should be honest with each other. What do you think will happen to Amy's relationships with her friends after the baby is born?

FACT: *Almost half of teens have never considered how a pregnancy would affect their lives. Try to imagine all the things that would change: friends, family, activities, school, sports, jobs, goals ... EVERYTHING!*

- Shawna had a feeling Jack was cheating on her, but when she breaks it off with him she says it's because she met his friends and now realizes they (and he) are too "teenagey" for her. Shauna is four years older than Jack -- is that too much? Would it be too much 10 or 15 years from now -- when she's 35 and he's 31? What are some of the reasons this sort of age gap doesn't work with teens?

FACT: *When teens are involved with someone more than two or three years older (or younger), the difference in age can lead to a difference in power within that relationship. This can lead to unwanted sex or sex without protection.*



- Amy isn't the only pregnant one on the show -- Mr. Molina's wife is pregnant too! Think about the differences in their lives and what that will mean for their babies' lives: Amy is 15 and still in high school, while Mrs. Molina is older and married. Will having a teen mom affect Amy's baby? What kind of advantages will the Molinas' baby have as a result of being born into a more stable, mature family?

FACT: *Statistics show that children of teen moms are more likely to grow up poor and suffer neglect than children of older parents. Daughters of teen moms are more likely to become teen moms themselves, and sons of teen moms are more likely to end up in prison than sons of older mothers.*

FOR PARENT'S

Watching a show like "The Secret Life of the American Teenager" with your teens 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.

- After the Sausage King sees Ben and Amy kissing and warns them that sexual activity like that could induce labor, Henry makes a crack about his dad not knowing about that sort of stuff. Obviously Henry and his dad have never talked about sex. Have you talked to your kids about it? Have you discussed both the facts and the feelings behind sex?

FACT: *Parents have more influence over their kids' attitudes about sex than anyone else, so it's important that your kids know what your views and values are about sex, love, and relationships.*

- The theme of infidelity runs through this episode -- Jack kisses Grace behind Shawna's back (and Shawna suspects he's cheating), and Adrian accuses her father of cheating on Max's mom. Have you ever talked to your kids about these issues? Do they know how you feel about relationships that fall apart? If your teen was in a relationship that ended over infidelity, would they feel comfortable telling you about it? What would you say if it was your teen who was unfaithful?

FACT: *Teens say "trust" is the most important part of a healthy relationship and "honesty" is second most important.*

- When Adrian is making phone calls to invite people to the shower, no one seems to know who she is beyond her reputation with boys. As viewers, we all know there's more to Adrian than her sexual past (and present ...), but to her fellow students she's known for just one thing. What do you think of that? What do your kids think? Do they know people who are judged similarly to Adrian? How does it happen that someone gets a reputation like that? What can they do to change it?

TIP: *Talk to your kids about how easy it can be to judge others, and encourage them to look beyond the basics. Remind them that reputations and rumors aren't always true. ASK them what kind of reputation they think they have among their fellow students.*