BEFORE YOU CONNECT

Understanding Sex, Soul Ties & Sexual Health

A real conversation for young people about choices, boundaries, relationships, and protection.

Your body deserves protection. Your heart deserves care. Your future deserves informed decisions.

You deserve facts, not fear. You can ask questions, say no, change your mind, and seek support without shame.

1 | The connection you cannot see

Imagine Alex has sex with Jordan. Jordan previously had sex with Casey, and Casey has had other partners. This creates a **sexual network**: people connected through sexual contact, even if they have never met.

Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can pass through these networks. But having a connection does **not** mean everyone has an STI, and you do not automatically acquire an infection from every person in the network.

2 | What are “soul ties”?

In some faith communities, a “soul tie” describes a deep emotional or spiritual bond. It is a spiritual belief, not a medical diagnosis or a scientifically proven transfer of another person’s spirit through sex.

Intimacy can bring strong feelings, but everyone experiences attachment differently. Your past does not make you damaged or less worthy.

3 | Know the facts. Protect your health.

STIs may have **no symptoms**. Testing is the only way to know your status for many infections. Condoms and other barriers lower the risk of many STIs, though they do not eliminate it. Vaccines can prevent HPV and hepatitis B.

If you choose to be sexually active, talk about protection, testing, and boundaries. A healthcare professional can help you decide which tests and prevention options fit your situation.

4 | Consent and boundaries

Consent must be freely given, specific, and ongoing. Pressure, threats, intoxication, or silence are not consent. You can stop at any time. You never owe anyone sexual access to prove love.

5 | Questions worth asking

Do I feel safe and respected? Can I say no without consequences? Am I making this choice for myself? Do I know how to protect my health? Is this relationship good for my emotional well-being?

6 | If something already happened

You still deserve respect and care. Talk with a trusted adult, school nurse, counselor, or healthcare professional. If there was coercion or assault, it was not your fault. Medical support can help with time-sensitive care.

Where to learn more

CDC: cdc.gov/sti | Planned Parenthood: plannedparenthood.org/learn | Sexual assault support (U.S.): rainn.org or 800-656-HOPE

Reflection: “I can honor my values, set boundaries, learn the facts, and make choices that protect my future.”

Youth education resource • Faith perspectives are identified separately from medical facts.