



P.O.V.

Season 18

Discussion Guide

The Education of Shelby Knox

A Film by Rose Rosenblatt and Marion Lipschutz



www.pbs.org/pov



Letter from the Filmmakers

NEW YORK, 2005

Dear Colleague,

Inspiration for a documentary often comes like a bolt from the heavens: significant, awe-inspiring, astounding. You read an article or editorial about some great injustice happening in a corner of the universe or you hear your sibling or child utter some remarkable, fantastic misguided notion, and suddenly you are off on a journey. That is the way it was with ***The Education of Shelby Knox***.

"If I don't have an orgasm, I can't get pregnant, right?" "If a girl pees directly after intercourse, she can't get pregnant, right?" "Masturbation causes cancer, doesn't it?" "Abortion can lead to sterility and suicide." These are some of the things we heard coming out of kids' mouths when we decided to make a film about sex education.

When we first met Shelby Knox, she was pledging in a church ceremony to be chaste until marriage. She had also just joined a group of teens fighting for better sex education in their Lubbock, Texas, school district. Through Shelby and the other teens, we found a way to make the facts come alive, a way to show how the federal government had gotten into the business of funding abstinence sex education, and how faith-based groups were shaping educational policies. In Lubbock, the teens were sure that the abstinence-until-marriage sex education was failing: the county's teen-pregnancy and STD rates were soaring. When Shelby was fifteen, there were three pregnant girls in her math class. When she asked one of them a question about homework, the girl looked at her in shock and said, "I can't believe you talked to me. You're popular. No one's talked to me since I got pregnant." A few weeks later, Shelby joined the sex education fight. Soon afterward, we started to follow her story. Over the next three years, we watched a courageous, religious girl struggle to make her notions of tolerance and compassion jive with those of the adults around her. We watched her wrestle with her faith, her politics, her pastor and her family. We often did not know what Shelby would become, but we had faith that we had found a remarkable young woman who was willing to take us along on a turbulent ride through all the ups and downs of adolescence, with her family in tow.

Five years after we began, we finished our film. We have been thrilled to find audiences responding to Shelby as a girl in whom, momentarily, the harsh realities and divisions now plaguing the United States could be bridged. We hope that with your help, ***The Education of Shelby Knox*** will have impact beyond broadcast and will encourage people to question what should be taught in schools, what the role of government and religion is in secular life, and how religion will define our national dialogue.

Thank you again for being our audience,

Rose Rosenblatt and Marion Lipschutz



Marion Lipschutz and Rose Rosenblatt



Letter from Shelby Knox



Dear Viewer,

My hometown of Lubbock, Texas, has some of the highest rates of STDs and teen pregnancy in the state. The abstinence-only sex education curriculum is not unique; schools across the nation employ the same methods in order to receive a portion of the more than half a billion dollars in federal funding that has been given out since 1997. My town was willing to silently watch the STD rates rise until we, the youth activists, decided to take our education into our own hands. Lubbock was also willing to ignore the issue of gay rights until local youth demanded that the school recognize it. Sometimes it takes the voices of youths standing up for themselves and their peers to make adults listen.

The Education of Shelby Knox raises important questions about faith, family, and tolerance. There has been a tremendous response to the words and actions of my parents, who were able to support and love their child even as she moved toward the opposite end of the political spectrum. Teens come to a point in their lives when it becomes important to distinguish their own beliefs from those of their parents. Although I turned out differently than they may have expected, the love and encouragement my parents have offered me has fueled my activism work.

When I started fighting for comprehensive sex education, I never dreamed I would end up featured in a documentary film. So, when Rose and Marion approached me with the film's concept, I had no idea what to expect. It's not every day that someone wants to follow you with a camera and eavesdrop on your life; it was one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life. I found wonderful people in the two filmmakers, who always made me feel comfortable and included. I am extremely pleased with the film and grateful for the opportunity to be the face of such an important issue.

I want this film to inform parents, educators, and concerned citizens that there is a lack of responsible sex education in this nation. I also want people to realize the plight of gay high school students, whose fight for equality has led them on a public and private struggle for acceptance. Most of all, I hope budding activists see the film and realize that they too can make a difference. **The Education of Shelby Knox** is not just my story; it is the story of every teen that has ever fought for something they believed in and found themselves changing and growing in the process.

Sincerely,

Shelby Knox



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Shelby Knox



Introduction

In the fall of 2001, Shelby Knox, then a fifteen-year-old high school sophomore, budding opera singer, and politically conservative Southern Baptist, joined the Lubbock Youth Commission, a group of high school students empowered by the mayor to give Lubbock's youth a voice in city government. Knowing that Lubbock had one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease in the nation, the Youth Commission questioned Lubbock's abstinence-only sex education policy. Shelby, who had pledged abstinence until marriage, became the group's most vocal proponent of comprehensive sex education, and an unlikely soldier in the culture wars.

Shelby's journey into advocacy for a policy opposed by her parents and most members of her community provides viewers with much more to ponder than simply the debate over abstinence-only versus comprehensive sex education:

- The portrait of Shelby's home life illustrates a family's struggle with teen independence and how parents can be clear about their own values while continuing to be supportive of a teenager who comes to believe things that contradict those values.
- Shelby's struggle to make sense of her faith leads her to ask what it means to be a Christian, and how a committed Christian should treat those who don't share her religious beliefs.
- Shelby's deepening understanding of the world leads her to make connections between sex education and other issues, such as the creation of a Gay/Straight Alliance at her high school.
- The metamorphosis of the Youth Commission reveals the impact of competing political strategies, as well as the consequences of giving youth a voice and then not being prepared to listen to what they have to say.

- The Lubbock School Board's desire to reflect community sentiment juxtaposes historical support for local control over school policy with the democratic tradition of separation of church and state.

Perhaps most importantly for outreach purposes, *The Education of Shelby Knox* shows us passionate people who work through contentious issues without yelling or trash talking. The



Shelby Knox with parents Danny and Paula

film echoes the Youth Commission's challenge to their community to re-think assumptions and avoid simplistic answers to a complex problem. As they put it in one of their public-service video spots, "Not interested in having kids? Don't want an STD? Don't have sex. It's that simple. Or is it?"



Potential Partners

Key Issues

The Education of Shelby Knox is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Groups that have discussed previous PBS and P.O.V. films relating to parent-child relations and values, including *Family Fundamentals*.**
- **Groups focused on any of the issues listed to the right**
- **Legislators**
- **School boards**
- **High school students**
- **Faith-based organizations and institutions**
- **Academic departments and student groups at colleges, universities, community colleges, and high schools**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as P.O.V.'s national partners Elderhostel Learning in Retirement Centers, members of the Listen Up! Youth Media Network, or your local library.**

The Education of Shelby Knox is an excellent tool for outreach because the people featured in it find ways to engage in respectful dialogue while remaining steadfast in their beliefs. The film will be of special interest to people interested in exploring or working on the issues below:

- **Adolescence**
- **Education policy**
- **Gay rights**
- **Health education**
- **Parenting**
- **Political strategy**
- **Psychology and social work**
- **Public health**
- **Religion**
- **Separation of church and state**
- **Sex education**

Event Ideas

Use a screening of *The Education of Shelby Knox* to:

- **Convene a small group of school board members, student leaders, school administrators, parents, and health educators to review your school district's policy on sex education and either affirm it or recommend revisions. Then arrange for a public screening of the film, followed by a discussion and review of the proposed policy. Wrap up the series of events by having the school board adopt the policy at an open meeting.**
- **Convene a public panel of scholars representing all the major religious traditions found in your community. Ask the scholars to comment on the film and to share their own faith's teachings about sex and sex education.**
- **Host a debate about federal funding for abstinence-until-marriage sex education. Invite your legislators to attend.**
- **Gather parents of teens to discuss how they can best address the issues raised in the film and to consider what they might learn from the example of Danny and Paula Knox.**
- **Brainstorm with teens ways to deal with issues like teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.**



Background Information

Federal Policy

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the United States has the highest rate of teen pregnancy of all developed nations. To address that situation, the federal government has funded a variety of sex education initiatives. Over the last twenty years, those initiatives have increasingly focused on abstinence-until-marriage approaches.

In 1981, the Adolescent Family Life Act was enacted into federal law. It earmarked \$11 million dollars to prevent teen pregnancy by promoting abstinence until marriage. In 1996, the government added a similar provision to the welfare reform law, providing \$50 million to the states for sex education that restricted discussion of disease and pregnancy-prevention strategy to abstinence.

Since each of these laws was passed, funding has steadily increased. According to the Washington Times (Feb 9, 2005), since President George W. Bush took office, "federal funding for abstinence education has climbed from \$80 million a year to \$167 million." The president's proposed 2006 budget requests \$206 million dollars for abstinence-only education programs.

The Essential Debate

Abstinence-only sex education is so named because it teaches that abstinence is the only sure way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, and that no other prevention strategies (like condom use or contraception) should be presented because such information encourages unhealthy or immoral behavior. The approach, advocated primarily by



*Lubbock School Board praying
Courtesy of "The Education of Shelby Knox"*

Evangelical Christians, is also sometimes termed "abstinence-until-marriage" and teaches that no one should have sex outside of marriage.

Comprehensive sex education presents abstinence as a positive choice, but it also recognizes that other choices exist. This approach provides a wide range of information on contraception and sexuality in the belief that accurate, factual information is essential to making responsible lifelong choices. In addition, many advocates of comprehensive sex education object to an abstinence-only approach as an illegal intrusion of religion into classrooms, crossing the line that separates church and state.



Background Information



Public Opinion

In January of 2004, the Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and National Public Radio released a research report on American's views on sex education in public schools. They found that of those surveyed:

- 7% say schools should provide no sex education
- 15% prefer an abstinence-only approach
- 36% believe that teens should be given all relevant information and that sex education should be focused on making responsible decisions about sex
- 46% prefer an abstinence-plus approach, i.e., the notion that abstinence is best, but not everyone will abstain so teens also need information about condoms and contraception
- 55% believe that giving teens information about condoms and contraception will not lead teens to engage in intercourse any earlier than they would have without such information
- 39% believe that giving teens information about condoms and contraception encourages teens to have intercourse
- 77% believe that safe-sex information increases the likelihood that teens will practice protective behaviors whenever they decide to engage in sex (either currently or later in life)
- 30% of middle and high schools are currently using an abstinence- only approach
- 74% of school principals say that no one in their community has raised concerns over sex education policy, indicating that most parents are satisfied with whatever their school district is doing

You can find more detailed information at:
www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/pomr0129040th.cfm.



Background Information

Selected People Featured in *The Education of Shelby Knox*



Shelby Knox Conservative Christian high school student turned liberal activist, Shelby is now a sophomore at the University of Texas in Austin, where she is studying public policy. She continues her activism for comprehensive sex education.



Danny and Paula Knox Shelby's parents.



Reverend Ed Ainsworth "Sex Ed," an educator who lectures widely using an abstinence-until-marriage approach to sex education, called "True Love Waits."



Corey Nichols Mayor of the Lubbock Youth Commission. Corey is now a sophomore at Texas A&M University. He continues to write about sex education.



Ricky Waite Gay teenager who Shelby worked with to found a Gay/Straight Alliance club at their high school.



Rene Caudillo Gay teenager who Shelby worked with to found a Gay/Straight Alliance club at their high school.



Using This Guide

This guide is designed to help you use *The Education of Shelby Knox* as the centerpiece of a community event. It contains suggestions for organizing an event as well as ideas for how to help participants think more deeply about the issues in the film. The discussion questions are designed for a wide range of audiences. Rather than attempt to address them all, choose one or two that best meet the needs and interests of your group.

Planning an Event

In addition to showcasing documentary films as an art form, screenings of P.O.V. films can be used to present information, get people interested in taking action on an issue, provide opportunities for people from different groups or perspectives to exchange views, and/or create space for reflection. Using the questions below as a planning checklist will help ensure a high-quality/high-impact event.

- **Have you defined your goals?** With your partner(s), set realistic goals. Will you host a single event or engage in an ongoing project? Being clear about your goals will make it much easier to structure the event, target publicity, and evaluate results.
- **Does the way you are planning to structure the event fit your goals?** Do you need an outside facilitator, translator, or sign language interpreter? If your goal is to share information, are there local experts on the topic who should be present? How large an audience do you want? (Large groups are appropriate for information exchanges. Small groups allow for more intensive dialogue.)
- **Have you arranged to involve all stakeholders?** It is especially important that people be allowed to speak for themselves. If your group is planning to take action that affects people other than those present, how will you give voice to those not in the room?
- **Is the event being held in a space where all participants will feel equally comfortable?** Is it wheelchair accessible? Is it in a part of town that's easy to reach by various kinds of transportation? If you are bringing together different constituencies, is it neutral territory? Does the physical configuration allow for the kind of discussion you hope to have?
- **Will the room setup help you meet your goals?** Is it comfortable? If you intend to have a discussion, can people see one another? Are there spaces to use for small breakout groups? Can everyone easily see the screen and hear the film?
- **Have you scheduled time to plan for action?** Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even when the discussion has been difficult. Action steps are especially important for people who already have a good deal of experience talking about the issue(s) on the table. For those who are new to the issue(s), just engaging in public discussion serves as an action step.



Using This Guide

Facilitating a Discussion

Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. By their nature, those same topics also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can create an atmosphere where people feel safe, encouraged, and respected, making it more likely that they will be willing to share openly and honestly. Here's how:

Preparing Yourself

Identify your own hot-button issues. View the film before your event and give yourself time to reflect so you aren't dealing with raw emotions at the same time that you are trying to facilitate a discussion.

Be knowledgeable. You don't need to be an expert on the debates about sex education to lead an event, but knowing the basics can help you keep a discussion on track and gently correct misstatements of fact. In addition to the Background Information section above, you may want to take a look at the suggested websites and books in the Resources section, p.19.

Be clear about your role. You may find yourself taking on several roles for an event, e.g., host, organizer, or even projectionist. If you are also planning to serve as facilitator, be sure that you can focus on that responsibility and avoid distractions during the discussion. Keep in mind that being a facilitator is not the same as being a teacher. A teacher's job is to convey specific information. In contrast, a facilitator remains neutral, helping move along the discussion without imposing his or her views on the dialogue.

Know your group. Issues can play out very differently for different groups of people. Is your group new to the issue or have they dealt with it before? Factors like geography, age, race, religion, and socioeconomic class can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles, and prior knowledge. Take care not to assume that all members of a particular group (e.g., Baptists, Republicans, Democrats, etc.) share the same point of view. If you are bringing together different segments of your community, we strongly recommend hiring an experienced facilitator.

Finding a Facilitator

Some university professors, human resource professionals, clergy, and youth leaders may be specially trained in facilitation skills. In addition to these local resources, groups such as the NCCJ may be able to provide or help you locate skilled facilitators.



Using This Guide

Preparing the Group

Consider how well group members know one another. If you are bringing together people who have never met, you may want to devote some time at the beginning of the event for introductions.

Agree to ground rules around language. Involve the group in establishing some basic rules to ensure respect and aid clarity. Typically, such rules include no yelling or use of slurs and asking people to speak in the first person (“I think . . .”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that . . .”).

Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard. Be clear about how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak. Plan a strategy for preventing one or two people from dominating the discussion. If the group is large, are there plans to break into small groups or partners, or should attendance be limited?

Talk about the difference between dialogue and debate. In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand each other and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and actively listening to one another. Remind people that they are engaged in a dialogue. This will be especially important in preventing a discussion from dissolving into a repetitive, rhetorical political or religious debate.

Encourage active listening. Ask the group to think of the event as being about listening, as well as discussing. Participants can be encouraged to listen for things that challenge as well as reinforce their own ideas. You may also consider asking people to practice formal “active listening,” where participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then re-phrase to see if they have heard correctly.

Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of his or her own experience. Who we are influences how we interpret what we see. Each person in the group may have a different view on the content and meaning of the film they have just seen, and all of them may be accurate. It can help people to understand one another’s perspectives if people identify the evidence on which they base their opinion as well as share their views.

Take care of yourself and group members. If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. You might also consider providing a safe space to “vent,” perhaps with a partner or in a small group of familiar faces. If you anticipate that your topic may upset people, be prepared to refer them to local support agencies and/or have local professionals present. Think carefully about what you ask people to share publicly, and explain things like confidentiality and whether or not press will be present.



General Discussion Questions

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you may want to pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question, such as:

- **If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would you ask and what would you ask them?**
- **Did anything in this film surprise you? If so, what? Why was it surprising?**
- **What insights, inspiration, or new knowledge did you gain from this film?**



Lubbock, Texas

Courtesy of "The Education of Shelby Knox"



Discussion Prompts



Pregnant student at Shelby's high school
Courtesy of "The Education of Shelby Knox"

Sex Education

- In the opening of the film, the filmmakers quote singer/songwriter Butch Hancock's description of one of the lessons he learned from life in Lubbock, Texas: "that sex is the most awful, filthy thing on earth and you should save it for someone you love." How does this message compare to the things you learned about sex growing up? What were the sources of your information? How well did those sources serve you?
- Listen carefully to the arguments that Ed Ainsworth ("Sex Ed") makes against pre-marital sex. Are there any that you find compelling? Are there any with which you disagree? If you were an advisor to a group of teens, what would you tell them about having sex and why?
- Ed Ainsworth says that those who have pre-marital sex will get hurt, "physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and financially." Consider each of these consequences separately. What is the potential impact of having sex outside of marriage on each? How do you know?
- What reasons do people in the film give for Lubbock's high teen-pregnancy rate? Which of those reasons do you find most convincing and why? (To the facilitator: Some possible answers to the first question include: There is nothing else for teens to do in Lubbock so they have sex; abstinence-only education isn't working; Lubbock's teens need to be more involved in church; parents aren't paying enough attention; kids are experimenting with sex in order to get the information that they need but aren't getting from parents or school; teens believe that nothing bad will happen to them.)
- The film presents competing perspectives on sex education in schools. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the abstinence-only approach? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the comprehensive approach? What kind of sex education do you think your school district should offer and why?
- If you had been a member of the Lubbock school board, how would you have voted on the Youth Commission's request for comprehensive sex education and why? Thinking carefully about the specifics of respectful language, how would you have explained your vote to Shelby and her supporters? How would you have explained your vote to those who opposed the request?
- What does Shelby see as the link between advocating for comprehensive sex education and supporting students who are fighting to establish a Gay/Straight Alliance at the school? Do you see the issues as linked? Why or why not?
- In supporting the inclusion of homosexuality as part of comprehensive sex education, Shelby tells the Youth Commission, "I don't think that they [gay students] should be put more at risk just because we're scared, or someone's scared, or that someone's going to get angry." Do you find Shelby's arguments compelling? Why or why not?



Discussion Prompts

Politics and Strategies for Making Change

- Corey, the teen who defeats Shelby in the Youth Commission Mayoral election, agrees with Shelby on the need for comprehensive sex education, but isn't so sure about Shelby's strategies. Consider the quotes below and describe the difference in how the two teens approach the political process. Which do you think is most effective and why?

Shelby: *"The problem with Corey is that he is a politician above all else. He's really smooth and slick. He figures out what people want, and then uses that to get what he wants. He's a great compromiser."*

Corey: *"The problem with working with Shelby is that she's a limelight chaser and likes doing an issue to get spotlight attention . . . She's very energetic, very ready-to-go. Sometimes that's a problem. You have to keep her at bay because she wants to jump the rules, but you can't let her."*

- In a bid to stay alive, the Youth Commission drops the sex education issue altogether. Shelby accuses Corey of "selling out." Corey felt that he was taking appropriate responsibility as a leader to save his organization. What would you have done in Corey's place and why?
- The Youth Commission was intended to give youth a voice, but when a budget deficit provided an easy excuse to silence the teens, city leaders pulled the group's funding. Have you experienced situations in which people say they want input but then don't want to listen when they don't like what they hear? What did you do? How can you let people know that you have heard them even when you don't accept their ideas?



Shelby making an abstinence-until-marriage pledge
Courtesy of "The Education of Shelby Knox"

- Ed Ainsworth believes that an important part of being a devout Christian is being intolerant of behavior that he thinks the Bible defines as un-Christian. Shelby believes that "Christianity is about being tolerant." How does each of these approaches serve to help communities flourish in a democracy? How might each of these approaches make it harder for a community in a democracy to flourish?
- Shelby says, "I am a Christian and I don't think the church should control anything that has to do with the schools or any government or anything, because that's what we got away from, and it should never go back to being the way it was." In your view, is the sex education issue about separation of church and state, local control over school policy, or something else? What should happen if the local community wants to impose a religious-based practice in a public school?
- When the Westboro Baptist Church, "God Hates Fags," comes to town to protest the creation of a Gay/Straight Alliance at Lubbock High School, Shelby says, "You can almost hate



Discussion Prompts

them as much as they're hating everybody else." How do you deal productively with groups that make you angry?

- Shelby's mother notices that Shelby seems healthier and happier after resigning from the Youth Commission. How can leaders, who often focus on what's wrong in their communities and who bear the brunt of community reaction, take care of themselves? How can supporters help their leaders care for themselves?
- Shelby says, "I think God wants you to question, and God wants you to do more than just blindly be a follower. Because He can't use blind followers. He can use people like me, who realize that there is more in the world that can be done, and good things that can be done." It is clear that Shelby is inspired by her faith to take political action in her community.
- What inspires you to action?

Parents and Children

- Shelby's parents don't agree with her position on sex education, but they love their daughter and want to support her as a person. What did you notice about how they did that? Which of Danny's and Paula's choices or actions seemed like good ideas to you, and which did you object to and why?
- How does Shelby explain her path away from some of her parents' ideas and toward beliefs that conflict with those of her parents? How much of her experience is healthy adolescent development and how much should be actively discouraged by her parents? If you were Shelby's parent, where would you draw the line in terms of acceptable activities and forbidden activities? Would you allow her to participate in the Youth Commission, give interviews, join in a



Shelby Knox with parents Danny and Paula

public protest, etc.? Why or why not? If you were Shelby and you were trying to make a case to your parents that they should allow you to do the things that Shelby did, what would you say?



Discussion Prompts



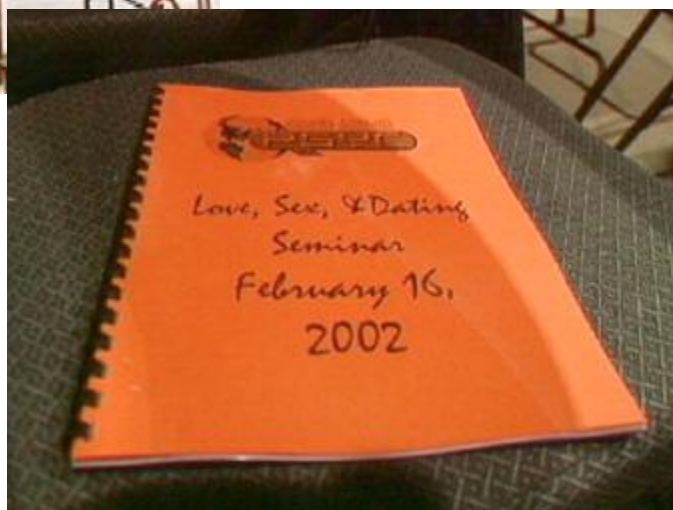
can make people nervous because “the term liberal and Christian, it’s like oil and water.” Do you think the terms “liberal” and “Christian” are incompatible? Why or why not?

- The title of the film is **The Education of Shelby Knox**. Who was doing the teaching? What do you think Shelby learned? What do you think others learned from her?

Church on the Rock in Lubbock, Texas
Courtesy of “The Education of Shelby Knox”

Personal and Spiritual Journeys

- When her father asks her about her priorities, Shelby repeats what is clearly a family mantra: “God, family, country, in that order.” What are your priorities? How do you express these in actions?
- Imagine yourself having a conversation with Shelby. What would you say in response to the following comments:
 - “Sometimes the Bible is not clear enough for me.”
 - “I think some people, they never get their heads out of the Bible to look at the real world, and that’s sad but it’s understandable because maybe it’s safe.”
 - “All those [gay] people, that are wonderful people, can’t be going to hell . . . I just don’t think that He would create so many people and then not let many of them into heaven.”
- Ed Ainsworth says to Shelby that being a liberal Christian



Church pamphlet
Courtesy of “The Education of Shelby Knox”



Taking Action



*Shelby doing a radio show in Lubbock
Courtesy of "The Education of Shelby Knox"*

- In the film, the Youth Commission videotapes public-service spots to gain support for their cause. Decide what messages are most important for your community to hear and make your own public-service announcements. Arrange to have the PSAs broadcast on local radio and television stations, as well as public-access cable channels.
- Convene a team representing various viewpoints to review your school district's sex education policy and make recommendations for needed changes or reaffirm the existing practices. Be sure that the review includes examining the textbooks used.
- Find out current rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease in your community and determine whether those rates are increasing or on the decline. Convene public meetings to develop an action plan that addresses the issue. Be sure to partner with your school district's health educators as well as community organizations already working on related issues.
- Research a faith's teachings about sex and sexuality with which you are not now familiar. Think about how you might craft a sex education policy that would accommodate both your beliefs and the beliefs or traditions of others in your community.
- Use the film as a way to get parents and teens talking to one another. On a retreat, or in living rooms, convening small groups of teens and parents to discuss the film can be a great way to help parents talk with their kids about sex. The relationship between Shelby and her parents can also provide a model for healthy communication.



Resources

Websites

The film

P.O.V.'s *The Education of Shelby Knox* Website

www.pbs.org/pov/shelbyknox

Access the *The Education of Shelby Knox* website at www.pbs.org/pov for trailers, an interview with the filmmaker and more -- including these features:

Facts & Stats

Although a substantial majority of Americans agree that sex education should be part of the curriculum in public schools, they are sharply divided over what kind of education is appropriate. Get a background on the policy issues behind *The Education of Shelby Knox* and the differences between abstinence-only, abstinence-plus and comprehensive sex education.

Sex Education in the Schools

What can we do to help teens avoid pregnancy and remain disease-free? In these interviews, find out what teachers, researchers and policymakers have to say about teens, sex education and the approaches that are working.

In Support of Abstinence-Only Sex Education

www.lifeway.com/tlw

True Love Waits, is the Christian, Bible-based, pro-abstinence-only program promoted by Ed Ainsworth (who is featured in the film). The website includes abstinence pledges, advice for parents, Bible-based teachings on sex, and more.

www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title05/0510.htm

This page on the Social Security Administration's website provides the government's definition of what constitutes abstinence-only sex education.

What's Your P.O.V.?

*P.O.V.'s online Talking Back Tapestry is a colorful, interactive representation of your feelings about **The Education of Shelby Knox**.*

Listen to other P.O.V. viewers talk about the film and add your thoughts by calling 1-800-688-4768. www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback.html

www.cwfa.org/library.asp?category=education

The website of the Concerned Women for America, a group dedicated to bringing Bible-based principles to public policy, includes a variety of downloadable articles supporting abstinence-only sex education.

abstinence.net

The Abstinence Clearinghouse, also an associate of abstinence advocates, aims to promote the appreciation for and practice of sexual abstinence (purity) until marriage through the distribution of materials.

www.whatparentsthink.com

The Coalition for Adolescent Sexual Health is comprised of the Christian Coalition of America, Concerned Women for America, Eagle Forum, Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, National Abstinence Clearinghouse and the Traditional Values Coalition.

www.family.org/cforum/fosi/abstinence/

Focus on the Family is the organization of Dr. James C. Dobson, one of the most influential American evangelical leaders. Today Focus on the Family is an international organization with 74 different ministries. On their website you can read about their Biblical view on abstinence and sex education and their policy agenda.



Resources

www.medinstitute.org/

The Medical Institute for Sexual Health seeks to "improve lives by enabling individuals to make informed, responsible decisions regarding sexual behavior and its effects on their health and well being." They are advocates of abstinence-only education in America's schools.

projectreality.org/reality/index.php

Project Reality provides middle and high school students, health educators, community agencies and parents with abstinence and character education programs relating to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

www.silverringthing.com

Silver Ring Thing is a sexual abstinence program using sketch comedy, high-tech club-style lighting and music videos to promote faith-based abstinence. Participants take a vow and wear a ring to represent their commitment to abstinence. (Listen to a NPR documentary that goes inside SRT at <http://www.insideout.org/documentaries/withthisring/>)

Worththewait.com

WTW, a moral purity/abstinence program, began as an initiative endorsed by the General Youth Division of the United Pentecostal Church International, but has now expanded to reach into both Christian and secular realms.

Worththewait.org

Started by an OB/GYN at Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Texas, Worth the Wait® is an abstinence sex education program that promotes abstinence as the healthiest choice for adolescents. The program reaches over 100,000 students in more than 50 school districts in Texas and other states.



*Lubbock Youth Commission meeting
Courtesy of "The Education of Shelby Knox"*



Resources

In Support of Comprehensive Sex Education

www.getthefacts.org

This website is created by the Othmer Institute at Planned Parenthood of New York. It is a simple-to-navigate compendium of resources supporting comprehensive sex education and critiquing an abstinence-only approach. The site includes links to most other related groups and is a good starting place for those new to the issue.

www.siecus.org

The Sexuality and Education Council of the United States is one of the best-known proponents of comprehensive sex education. The website includes "Quick Facts" sections as well as descriptions of what they believe should be included in an effective sex education program.

www.guttmacher.org

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, a supporter of comprehensive sex education, gathers statistics on family-planning issues, including teen pregnancy and contraception. The website also provides an overview of state education standards related to sex education.

www.advocatesforyouth.org/abstinenceonly.htm

Advocates for Youth, a supporter of comprehensive sex education, focuses solely on adolescent sexual health. The site includes reviews of research on the efficacy of abstinence-only education.

www.ama-assn.org

As the nation's largest physician's group, the American Medical Association advocates on issues vital to public health. Their position on sex education states that the AMA "urges schools to implement comprehensive, developmentally appropriate sexuality education programs" and "endorses comprehensive family life education in lieu of abstinence-only education, unless research shows abstinence-only education to be

superior in preventing negative health outcomes." Read the AMA policy, "Sexuality, Education, Abstinence, and Distribution of Condoms in Schools" at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama-noindex/category/11760.html> (H-170.968). [Requires that you agree to their search terms and conditions first.]

pub.etr.org

ETR Associates is a leading publisher of comprehensive sex ed curricula and also conducts training and research on sexuality and health education. Their website features curricula on abstinence, birth control, HIV and safer sex as well as other life skills topics. Includes over 100 Spanish and bilingual materials.

www.kff.org/youthhivstds/sexeducation.cfm

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent voice and source of facts and analysis for policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public. Their website features materials on sex education policy and politics, teen sexual activity and their public education media projects.

plannedparenthood.com/pp2/portal/

The Planned Parenthood Federation was founded by Margaret Sanger, a pioneer of the American birth control movement. Their position is that "abstinence-only programs are inadequate to ensure sexual health." To that end they provide comprehensive education on sexuality and reproductive health (<http://www.plannedparenthood.com/pp2/portal/education-outreach/sexualityeducation/>) to more than 1.3 million clients, according to their figures. Their website Teenwire.com is their source for sexuality and relationship information for teens.

sexetc.org/

SEX, ETC. is a national newsletter and website written by teens, for teens, on teen sexual health issues. SEX, ETC. is developed by the Network for Family Life Education, an organization that supports balanced, comprehensive sexuality education.



Resources

Non-partisan or Bi-partisan Sources

www.teenpregnancy.org

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is a bipartisan organization dedicated to reducing rates of teen pregnancy. They support combining strong messages supporting abstinence with practical prevention information for those who are sexually active. The website includes state-by-state statistics on teen pregnancy rates, descriptions of a variety of approaches to sex education, chats for youth, and more.

<http://womensissues.about.com/od/healthsexuality/i/isabstinenceonl.htm>

This short article by Nikki Katz provides a good overview of the issues, including statistics on teen pregnancy, research on what parents want, government funding policy for sex education, and more.





How to Buy the Film

For information on ordering

The Education of Shelby Knox

please email info@incite-pictures.com



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and entering its 18th season on PBS, the award-

winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running series on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through September, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought over 220 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and now has a Webby Award-winning online series, P.O.V.'s Borders. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information about P.O.V. is available online at www.pbs.org/pov.

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P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. provides Discussion Guides for all films as well as curriculum-based P.O.V. Lesson Plans for select films to promote the use of independent media among varied constituencies. Available free online, these originally produced materials ensure the ongoing use of P.O.V.'s documentaries with educators, community workers, opinion leaders and general audiences nationally. P.O.V. also works closely with local public television stations to partner with local museums, libraries, schools, and community-based organizations to raise awareness of the issues in P.O.V.'s films.

P.O.V. Interactive **www.pbs.org/pov**

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, P.O.V.'s Borders. It also produces a Web site for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of P.O.V. films through community-based and educational applications, focusing on involving viewers in activities, information, and feedback on the issues. In addition, www.pbs.org/pov houses our unique Talking Back feature, filmmaker interviews, and viewer resources, and information on the P.O.V. archives as well as myriad special sites for previous P.O.V. broadcasts.

American Documentary, Inc. **www.americandocumentary.org**

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying, and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic- engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, on-line, and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

All photos are courtesy of Robert Maass

Front cover photo: *Shelby Knox*



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Deserves Great Art**

