



From Rumspringa to Marriage: An Excerpt from *The Amish* (The Companion to American Experience on PBS)

Donald B Kraybill, Karen M Johnson-Weiner, Steven M. Nolt

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Rumspringa, literally translated as “running around,” is a time when Amish youth socialize with their peers and are allowed some autonomy before officially joining the church as young adults. It has become one of the most recognized aspects of Amish life, both real and mythologized. During this time they face the two most crucial decisions of their lives: whether to join the church, and if and whom to marry. Rumspringa, an exciting adventure and at times a period of inner turmoil, commences at age sixteen—or seventeen in more traditional groups—and continues until marriage. With few exceptions, adolescents eagerly count the days until they are old enough to join the young folks. In this digital short, Kraybill considers the nuances of this important rite of passage into Amish adulthood.

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