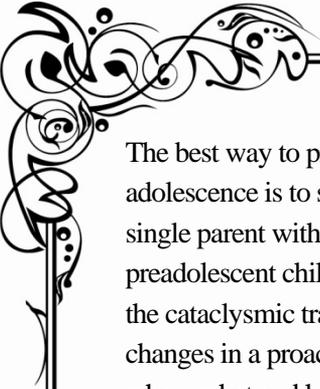


**FAITH
PATH**

**Preparing for
Adolescence**

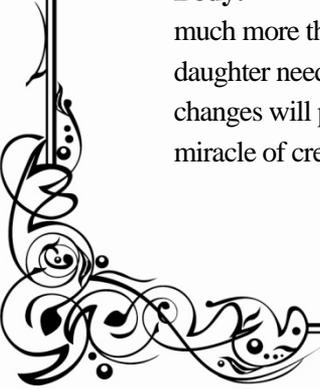
Assist Your Child During Times of Change



The best way to prepare your child for the changes and challenges of adolescence is to set the stage. Mom with daughter, dad with son or a single parent with either sex should spend time giving their preadolescent child a basic understanding of what's coming before the cataclysmic transition begins. Help your child prepare for coming changes in a proactive and positive way. Here's a quick guide to the when, what and how of that time together:

When: Often parents are concerned that they will overwhelm their preteen or encourage premature curiosity if they jump the gun in preparing them for adolescence. A greater concern, however, is the likelihood that someone else will beat you to it. Children are typically ready before their parents are, usually around eleven years old. Of course, not all children are the same. That's why it's important to spend time with your preteen getting a sense of where they are developmentally. Ask God for wisdom about the timing of your conversations.

What: You should plan to address the many areas of change your son or daughter will encounter during the transition to adulthood, especially bodily changes, decision-making and the changing relationship to you.

- **Body:** It's important to frame the physical changes ahead as much more than a plea for sexual abstinence. Your son or daughter needs a vision for how these internal and external changes will prepare the body for the joys of marriage and the miracle of creating new life.
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- **Decision-making:** Increasingly, your child will need to make and assume responsibility for his or her own decisions. As you maintain your overall family values in media choices, individual responsibilities (chores, homework, etc.), drugs and alcohol, you also need to direct your son or daughter in how to make wise decisions in areas of health and integrity. The first nine chapters of Proverbs can help guide an early teen on choosing wisdom over folly.
 - **Relationship to you:** Consider explaining to your preteen that over the next decade your role will progressively change from a teacher to that of a coach. You will begin to guide him or her in the transition toward independence. It is also a great time to intentionally foster relationships with other Godly adults who can influence your child's life.

How: Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Set aside a special time or trip with your child to go through one of the recommended resources for joint discussion.
- Listen to the audio titled *The Talk* included with this kit for examples of what to say.
- Create an environment for open communication for your child to share, talk and discuss with you.
- Listen! Allow your child to share thoughts and questions without being judgmental or quick to give a lecture.
- Have fun. Your child is much more likely to listen and be open with you if you have established a good relationship by creating fun times.

Intentional Faith Path Plan

Child's Name: _____

How will you be intentional this next year?

- Pray daily for and with my child.
 - Consistently spend time in God's Word.
 - Bless my child daily.
 - Create a habit of worship with my child.
 - Serve together as a family.
 - Schedule a special time to discuss the upcoming changes.
- _____

The next step on the Faith Path is *Purity*, recommended at age thirteen. We will offer a free *Purity* kit to guide you. If you feel you need the *Purity* kit before thirteen, please feel free to request it at lezah.maitland@fbcallen.org

Recommended Resources

Preparing for Adolescence by Dr. James Dobson
Emergency Response Handbook for Parents by Group Publishing
So You're About to be a Teenager by Dennis & Barbara Rainey
Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul David Tripp
Five Conversations You Must Have series by Vicki Courtney
Ready for Adolescence Family Night Tool Chest from heritatgebuilderspublishing.com

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children.fbcallen.org

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Early Adolescence

Frequently Asked Parenting Questions

QUESTION: How early should I talk to my child about relationships, purity and dating?

ANSWER: Every child is different, but you know it is time to discuss purity if any of the following is true...

- Your adolescent child shows interest in having a girl/boy friend
- You notice texts, emails, Facebook posts, etc. from the opposite sex
- Your child has any sort of online access including a home computer, mobile phone, iPod Touch, iPad, and other electronic devices

QUESTION: How can I talk to my daughter about modesty in a fun way?

ANSWER: Go on a shopping trip together and discuss fashion and basic guidelines to tell if something is modest or not. Let them go through the list and tell you what they feel comfortable with. Suggested guidelines:

- Fingertip length on shorts/skirts
- Practice sitting (watch the back of bottoms)
- Swimsuit (jump up and down and make sure everything stays in)
- Tops must fully cover breast/cleavage even when bending forward

QUESTION: How do I help my child set good boundaries for internet/online social media?

ANSWER: Set a time to discuss the following questions with him/her:

- What is a healthy/appropriate amount of time per day to spend online?
- What guidelines will keep our identity and personal information private?
- What kinds of pictures are/aren't appropriate to post? (i.e. no swimsuit or pajama pictures or pictures with too much skin showing)
- Emphasize the importance of never responding to someone online we don't know in person.

QUESTION: How do I protect and help my child in the temptations they face with technology and media?

ANSWER: Even if you believe your child is not yet tempted, take the following proactive steps...

- Do not allow your child to have a computer or television in his/her room.
- If your child has a mobile device or phone, have them turn it off and plug it in the kitchen a certain time each night.
- Limit and monitor all text messages.
- Put parenting controls on your television.
- Be careful of the shows/television that you watch in the company of your child to avoid sending mixed messages.
- Check services such as *pluggedinonline.com* for content details on any movies, music and television shows they want to watch.
- Set controls/accountability on all computers, phones and other electronic devices in your home using services such as the following...
 - *covenanteyes.com*
 - *xxxchurch.com*
 - *bsecure.com*
 - *clearplay.com*
 - *TVguardian.com*

QUESTION: How can I expose my child to the influence of other Godly adults to reinforce what we are teaching at home?

ANSWER: When a child enters the adolescent years it becomes important to help him or her glean from the example and influence of other Godly adults, some of whom may become important voices into your child's life when he/she reaches the rite of passage step of their Faith Path. A few suggestions...

- Start with extended family including grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. Invite Godly relatives to take an interest in your child's activities by attending his/her concerts, games, award assemblies, etc. Ask them to invite your child to breakfast or ice cream once in a while to connect and speak into his/her life.
- When you eat meals with Christian friends invite your adolescent son/daughter to sit at the adult table rather than with the kids. Simply including him/her in these conversations can help establish a bond with other Godly adults.
- Introduce yourself to the student pastor and/or a small group leader and ask who he/she considers Godly leaders and volunteers in the student ministry program. You might consider offering to volunteer in the student ministry in order to get to know other adult leaders who might be willing to take a special interest in your child.
- For more ideas on inviting the influence of other adults into your child's life read *Parenting Beyond Your Capacity* by Reggie Joiner and Carey Nieuwhof.

Older Children

Opening Dialogue With Your Teen

Best Use

As a “cheat sheet” for a parent trying to open up meaningful communication with his or her teen.

Nutritional Value

Helps parents push past the sometimes awkward process of talking to a teenager by sincerely listening to what matters to them.

Advance Preparation

Schedule a short road trip with your teen with a fun destination such as hunting, camping, shopping, hiking, or whatever he/she would enjoy. Bring the list of twenty questions on the reverse side. Use or edit whichever of these questions seem to fit your situation.

Drive-Time Communication

While driving to your destination, ask several of the following questions. It is sometimes easier for a teen to open up while you both watch the road than it is face to face.

1. What is something you want me to know about you?
2. In what ways do you feel that I do not understand you?
3. How do you hope that our relationship can improve over this next year?
4. How can I do a better job listening to you?
5. What are several ways I can be a better parent to you?
6. What are some new things that our family can do together for fun?
7. In what way would you like for me to consider giving you more responsibility and freedom?
8. Who are your most important friends right now and why?
9. Who do you look up to right now?
10. What is your biggest worry?
11. What do you think that I think about you?
12. What one word best describes you?
13. If you could change something about your school, what would you change?
14. When do you feel most alive?
15. What would be the best day of your life? The worst day?
16. If you could have one super power, which super power would you have and why?
17. What is your strongest emotion?
18. What do you want to be remembered for?
19. What is your best childhood memory?
20. How can I do a better job serving you?

Keep in mind, the goal is to listen and learn – not to correct their impressions or “fix” anything too quickly. Also, remember that your teen may feel awkward talking to you about some of these concerns if you have not had similar chats before. Be patient, and don’t worry if they struggle opening up. Simply move on to whatever fun experiences you’ve planned and try again later.