

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. Parents 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 nine to 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.
- **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.

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Intentional Faith Path Plan

Child's Name: _____

How will you be intentional this next year?

- Pray daily for my child.
- Consistently spend time in God's Word.
- Bless my child daily.
- Schedule and have regular family times.
- 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 eleven. Request the *Purity* kit by emailing Emily@waterlooroad.org

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles that Can Radically Change Your Family by Paul David Tripp

10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask (and Answer) about Christianity by Rebecca McLaughlin

Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul David Tripp

God's Design for Sex series by NavPress

Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story by Christopher Yuan

Mama Bear Apologetics: Guide to Sexuality by Hillary Morgan Ferrer and Amy Davison

Preparing for Adolescence by Dr. James Dobson

The Talk: 7 Lessons to Introduce Your Child to Biblical Sexuality by Luke Gilkerson

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