

Abundant Living

MINISTRIES

Encouraging Christian Living Since 1978

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When Adolescence Looms

Question: *Our oldest child is about to become a teenager. I admit I'm apprehensive... actually, I'm worried about what the next years might bring. Can you offer any suggestions for navigating this season successfully?*

Response: Many parents fear the teen years. They envision their little sweethearts turning into rebellious trouble-makers on their 13th birthday. Dads and moms hope they can just survive those turbulent years without their children rejecting them (and God!) and causing irrevocable heartache and grief.

While change is inevitable as children transition from childhood to adulthood, parents should take heart. Those changes are necessary and also a positive part of growing up. Perhaps some of the following proven strategies will help you navigate the teen years, as you look forward to some great decades ahead!

PLAN. Don't wait until your child hits the teen years to formulate standards for your household. Start when your children are still young, discussing how the Bible's principles apply to topics such as dating, parties at the homes of non-Christians, use of technology, drugs, alcohol, etc. Encourage and coach them in formulating convictions based on God's Word, so they will have a positive framework for decision-making even before they reach puberty. (Proverbs 14:22)

PREPARE. When they are 10 or 11 years old, schedule a weekend away with the same-gender parent and, during that retreat, discuss some of the changes they may soon experience. As they navigate these years, they will probably find themselves questioning authority, becoming more materialistic, struggling with self-esteem... these are all normal struggles of adolescence.

But assure them that God will help them with every one of these struggles. Provide Godly resources to help them deal with these changes from a Biblical perspective: Christian magazines, devotional books, excellent music and literature. (Proverbs 29:18)

PROTECT. Encourage good peer relationships. Friendships become so important during adolescence and can be a powerful force... for good or evil. Get your kids to church, encourage their involvement in a good youth group, invite other solid families to your house, make your home a fun place for your children's friends to hang out. Take your children to Christian concerts, or on a missions trip. Enroll them in church camps, youth retreats, conventions, etc...



Be wise about the company they are keeping and courageous enough to prevent them from attending functions that would be questionable. Sometimes parents may feel that they are alone in monitoring their children's music, TV, videos, video games and social media... but your child will possibly not make the best adult decisions for several more years, so love them enough to establish healthy standards and hold to them. (1 Timothy 4:7)

LINK PRIVILEGE WITH RESPONSIBILITY. As children grow more independent, teach them that they will be given privilege as they demonstrate responsibility. Give them plenty of practical jobs and do less pampering. As they assume greater levels of responsibility and successfully master important life skills, you can confidently and joyfully allow them greater privileges. (Luke 12:48)

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE. Youth are quick to spot the inconsistencies between what a parent preaches and what they practice. If fathers and mothers desire that their children make wise, Godly choices, they need to be modelling this same trait themselves. Live a vibrant Christian life in front of your teens. Grumpy, joy-less parents don't provide much motivation for their children to follow in their steps. (Joshua 24:15, 1 Tim. 4:12)

INVESTIGATE. Kids don't always volunteer what is happening in their lives, so parents must ask questions. Make use of time in the car, or at meals, to ask thought-provoking questions. Are they having a daily time of Bible reading? What are they struggling with? Talk with teachers, youth leaders, etc. to gain further insights about your teens. Take your teenager out for breakfast to have some special one-on-one conversation time. (Proverbs 20:5)



PRAY. A child's spiritual development is undoubtedly the most crucial factor in determining the course of their future. Pray daily *for* your child and *with* your child. Get together with other parents to pray. Thank the Lord for working in the life of your child, even before you see lots of evidence of God at work! (John 15:24)

HAVE FAITH! Just as God has been faithful in your own life through many years, He can be trusted to work in your child's life. Don't throw in the towel over some bumps in the road, or a turbulent few months. Stay the course, trusting the LORD to bring your child victoriously into adulthood. View these years through HIS eyes... He loves your young man or woman and has destined him/her for great things as they follow the Lord's path.

As Scripture assures us, “In due season, you will reap a harvest, if you don’t give up” (Galatians 6:9). So, put fear aside. Instead, anticipate the teen years with lots of love and laughter as, together, you all discover God’s exciting and amazing plan!

Written by
Sharon Charles



Two weeks ago, our family (19 of us) had an informative and inspiring visit to the *Creation Museum* and also the *Ark Encounter*, in Kentucky. What a great time we had!

At the museum, I was pleased to see so many displays of geological and fossil records, evidence of the DIVINE creation of the heavens and earth. Sharon and I were so pleased that our grandchildren were exposed to this scientific support of the Biblical account of creation.



And the ARK... incredible! At 510 feet long and 85 feet wide, it is similar in dimensions to the ship which took our family to Brazil in 1960. Although the Bible is not specific about every little thing, it allowed us to visualize that, YES... such an ark really could have served as the “LIFE-boat” just as scripture records!

I encourage you to consider visiting these amazing places with your family!

Sorry... I’m out of space... have a wonderful summer!
John Charles, for Sharon and the rest at ALM

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