



A resource to spark biblically-centered conversations with your kids about the issues they face in today's youth culture.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE HOME

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God has given each parent the gift and responsibility of guiding, nurturing, and shaping their child. Parents are called to be the primary discipler of their child. Due to God's good design, parents can have a tremendous impact on their child's faith. Teenagers are constantly learning and growing. Adolescence is an important time period in a person's life as identity, purpose, and values form and take root. During this stage of growth, parents need to pursue their children by explicitly teaching and implicitly modeling the ways and truth of Jesus Christ.



WORLD

What is Happening?

The world and culture is constantly vying for a young person's attention. Someone is always teaching children what to value and pursue. Someone is always shaping and molding how young people view the world, view themselves, and how they view themselves in the world. The question is not if, but who. Young people need guidance, and actually often desire it. By nature they are curious and will look for answers to their questions.

Sources of information and knowledge include their family of origin, friends, peers, the church, the internet, school, and more. What and who we watch, listen to, and read also impacts values and core beliefs. Time spent on screens is significant and plays a bigger role in shaping people. Many teens spend around 7 or 8 hours a day with a screen. With the amount of information encountered it is challenging for young and old people alike to discern what is true, helpful, and good and what is false and harmful. The situation may seem bleak at times, but there is hope! The family unit will have the biggest impact on a child's beliefs.



"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness."

(Psalm 145:3-6)



WORD

What Does God's Word Say?

Psalm 78 is a beautiful reminder that parents are to be the primary discipler in their child's life. They are to teach children about who God is and how He has proven to be faithful. The chapter includes clear directives to teach the *"the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."* God commanded *"fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know [the testimony of Jacob and law in Israel] ... and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."*

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 instructs:

"these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Spiritual nurture is to take place constantly.

Set aside specific times to teach about God and His ways and seek to daily model faithful discipleship. Take one step at a time seeking obedience and faithfulness, not perfection. Continue pursuing your child even when they don't seem to desire it. This is a high calling that is not always easy. There are no guaranteed formulas or outcomes therefore parents must continually rely on God and His sovereignty as they seek to shepherd their child's heart.





SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE HOME



WALK

Conversation Starters and Questions:

There are two aspects for a parent to consider when it comes to being the primary discipler of their child. The information that is explicitly *taught* and the values that are implicitly *caught*. There is often overlap, and what a parent is teaching a child needs to be consistently modeled with their actions and values. Because children and teens absorb values and beliefs without realizing it, parents must seek to explicitly teach truth at home.

TAUGHT - Intentional instruction about specific topics.

Ranging from how to walk through conflict with a friend to sexuality, there are many topics a parent needs to specifically teach a child. Some may occur on a regularly scheduled basis around the dinner table while others happen spontaneously while driving home from soccer practice. The key is that a specific topic is being discussed as a parent relays what the Bible says a follower of Jesus values, what the Bible knows to be true, and how the Bible instructs believers to act. Here are a few questions to consider:

- What do you purposefully teach your child?
- Does your family spend time praying or reading the Bible together?
- Do you discuss why regular church attendance and serving at church is important?
- Do you take time to explain why there are rules and expectations?
- Does your family have any technology boundaries you have discussed and explained to the family?
- *The Life and Faith Field Guide For Parents* and *What do I say When...: A Parent's Guide to Navigating Cultural Chaos for Children & Teens* can provide guidance on topics to consider.

CAUGHT - Values and beliefs observed and learned over time, often without realizing.

A parent's values are on display by how they live and conduct themselves. What is valued is observed by children. Therefore, it is important that a person's life is consistent with what they claim to believe. Children and teens are quite adept at observing and pointing out our hypocrisy or inconsistencies. Here are a few questions to think about what your child is "catching" from you:

- What would your child say is important to you?
- What spiritual practices do you personally enjoy?
- When was the last time your child walked in on you reading your Bible or praying?
- Does your family enjoy healthy rhythms, such as regular meals together or sabbath rest?
- How does your family spend its time and money? A family's calendar and budget reveal much about what they value.
- How does your family view church engagement on a deeper level? Does your child see you joyfully participating in the life of a church body or does it appear to be drudgery or of little importance?



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