

The PARENT Link

March 2011 For parents of teens – United Methodist Edition

Bible Focus

“When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.”

1 Corinthians 13:11

[Add Church or Youth Group Name]



Guide Teenagers on the Road to Independence

Recently, my 6-year-old daughter, Kendall, was sitting on my lap. I joked to my wife that I’ll miss this when she’s 13 and doesn’t want me around. “Daddy, don’t be silly,” Kendall said. “I’ll always want to sit on your lap.”

She doesn’t know this yet, but Kendall will pull away. All adolescents seek autonomy, asking, “How am I unique?” She’ll search for an identity apart from her family. She’ll also seek affinity, asking, “Where do I belong?” Through these quests, teenagers form identity.

You may get discouraged, thinking your teenager doesn’t want a relationship with you. But research shows that young people need and desire strong family relationships even when they’re pulling away the most. There’s no substitute for you!

Churches and parents must partner together to walk with teenagers. You can do this through prayer, volunteering, and speaking positively of the ministry and its leaders. What other ways can you be a partner in youth ministry? And how can your church partner with and help you?

—Hank Hilliard, Young People’s Ministries, hhilliard@GBOD.org



Practical Help

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Tips, statistics, and discussion questions to help you connect with your teenagers

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Musicians Kid Rock and Josh Wilson, the movie *Beastly*, and the video game *Limbo*



TIPS

Many rebellious teenagers are simply crying for help. Here are some ways to answer:

Model God's love and grace. "Human nature reacts to the moment, while grace looks at the big picture," says Tim Kimmel, author of *Why Christian Kids Rebel*.

Create a path to trust. Help troubled teenagers take small steps toward being responsible and earning back the trust they've broken.

Forgive and move on. Don't dwell on past failures. Help teenagers move toward new beginnings. Emphasize that God loves to give second chances.

Expect success. Teenagers usually live up (or down) to labels and expectations. Let them know by your words and actions that you expect the best from them.

While holding high expectations, also accept kids for who they are. If they don't find acceptance from you, they'll turn elsewhere.

Celebrate success. Take time to point out specific progress or change you witness in your teenagers.

THE VIEW

- 97% of teenagers say they get along with their parents reasonably well. This number is consistently high every year.

(Gallup Youth Survey)

- After 25 years of research into strong families, Dr. Nick Stinnett determined that regular involvement with one another is a key trait of close parent-child relationships.

(*Fantastic Families*)

- Almost 90% of Christian teenagers agree with this statement: "I'm fully convinced that God has created me for a particular purpose in life that will bring glory to him."

(*Group Magazine*)



For Discussion

Why do the words *teenager* and *rebellion* often seem to go hand in hand? Is that an unfair stereotype? Why or why not?

Why do you think most teenagers rebel against their parents? What, if anything, are they trying to show or prove?

What are some healthy, positive ways to declare your growing independence?

How can we stay connected with each other's lives, feelings, and needs as the years pass?



By Steve Merritt

GOING DEEPER

Expert Insight for Parents of Teenagers

In *Group Magazine*, counselor Steve Merritt provides these key insights about teenagers:

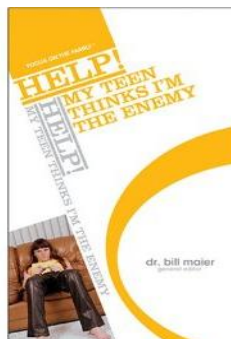
It's easy to fall into either of two traps: forget that teenagers are a work in progress and expect too much, or be consumed with the idea that they're a work in progress and expect too little. So remember:

They're drainers. Teenagers can look adult-like, but generally they still take more resources than they give. Because they're using tremendous energy just to survive adolescence, young people often don't have much extra for others. Of course, they're capable of significant caring, giving, and forgiving. But sustaining these attributes is almost impossible, with the many tasks of growing up.

Intimacy requires a solid sense of identity. That's tough for anyone in our fast-paced, fractured society. Finding your identity requires you to practice and try on different "selves." This process takes its toll on kids but also on adults who love and work with them. Because we're the fuelers, our relationships with kids are often nonreciprocal. This can lead to disappointment, resentment, and frustration.

They need to pull away. On the road to independence, teenagers must take this new life for a test drive, and adults don't get to ride shotgun. Parents often misread such pulling away as rebellion or ungratefulness. On the contrary, it's essential for kids to develop confidence in who they are without us and, more importantly, who they are in God—and who God is in them. Our job is to pour God's love into teenagers' tanks and give them room for self-discovery. Meanwhile, we can learn from kids as we allow God to continue to form our identity in him.

Resource



In *Help! My Teen Thinks I'm the Enemy* (Tyndale House), Focus on the Family psychologist Dr. Bill Maier offers parents advice for building healthy bonds with teenagers.

M MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

MAINSTREAM MUSIC



KID ROCK

Background: A 2003 album showcased Kid Rock's blend of rap metal and Southern rock. Since then, he's had multiple platinum albums that celebrate an "It's all about me" party lifestyle. His songs contain foul language, pot references, and sexual lyrics. Kid Rock has had many run-ins with the law.

Albums: *Born Free* (2010), *Rock n Roll Jesus* (2007), *Devil Without a Cause* (2003)

What Kid Rock Says: "I've surrounded myself with some bad people...went through some situations.... Now all the...drama's out of my life.... And I'm not gonna let it back in."

Discussion Questions: What things—both good and bad—influence you the most, and why? Read Matthew 6:5-18. How have you seen bad influences hurt someone? Was he or she aware of the influence? Why or why not? What influences might you need to purge from—or add to—your life? How have you been a positive or negative influence on other people?

CHRISTIAN MUSIC



JOSH

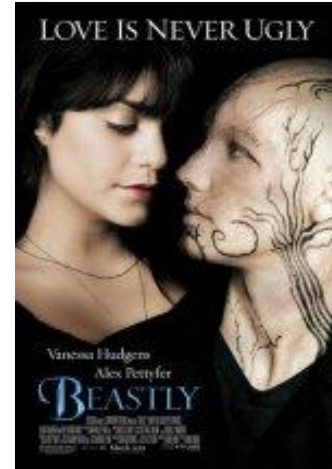
Background: Singer-songwriter Josh Wilson released independent albums before signing with Sparrow Records in 2008. His sound resembles that of Jason Mraz and John Mayer. Wilson recently gained attention when, during a blizzard, he broke out his guitar in an airport and led a Beatles sing-along. The clip became a hit on YouTube.

Albums: *See You* (2011), *Life Is Not a Snapshot* (2009), *Trying to Fit the Ocean in a Cup* (2008)

What Wilson Says: "'Forest Fire' is about the power of our words.... It came from the idea that we should be careful what we say because our words can hurt."

Discussion Questions: How are tongues like matches and ears like trees? How have you seen a small "spark" of words become destructive? Read James 3:3-12. What do these verses say about the power of words and how we should handle them? When are you most susceptible to speaking words of "fire"? How can you combat those tendencies and use your words for good, not harm?

MOVIE



Movie: *Beastly*

Genre: Romance

Rating: PG-13 (for language including crude comments, drug references, and brief violence)

Synopsis: In this modern-day take on the *Beauty and the Beast* tale, a New York teenager is transformed into a hideous monster in order to find true love.

Discussion Questions: What does the phrase "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" mean? How have you seen that reflected in society? What standards does our culture have about outward beauty? Read aloud 1 Peter 3:3-4. According to these verses, what is beauty, and where does it come from? How much should we pay attention to or work on appearances, and why?

For more media discussions and ideas, check out www.MinistryandMedia.com.

VIDEO GAME



Limbo (Xbox 360)—This game was atop numerous "Best of" lists for 2010, and for good reason: It's amazing. Players get no back story, tutorial, or clue as to why they're in this stark, black-and-white, puzzle-filled world. They just wake up and make their way through the haunting, creepy, and compelling environment. But know that the young protagonist does die, in horrible ways. The player's job is to try to keep him alive.

Letter to Parents

I think all parents would agree that the education of our children is critical to their success in life, and no matter how they complain we don't let them wiggle out of math, English, Science or other vitally important classes. My hope is that you believe that your children's Christian education is just as important.

The first denomination to employ Sunday school as part of their official church efforts was Methodism in 1790. By the 1830's Sunday school was no longer a means to educate the poor but rather a means to evangelize the young in particular denominational doctrines. Unfortunately Sunday school hasn't changed much since then and it has become a bit hum drum! **Until now, until April 3, 2011**

We will launch FLIGHT (Finding Life In God's Holy Truth) for all 7th thru 12th grades. Flight will take place in Barnabas Hall (building beside the garage) starting **Sunday, April 3** and will have a whole new look to it. We will begin with light breakfast items being served from 9:15-9:30, so don't be late! It will be filled with a song to get us started, followed by commercials, videos, guest speakers, and more. There will be time to separate out by grade levels to discuss in small groups the topic that has been introduced in the "big room". While in our small groups we will share prayer concerns and lift one another up. The small group leaders (I like calling them FLIGHT instructors) are very excited about the new format, the new curriculum and the new setting for what was once but will never be called again "Sunday School". Instead this is an opportunity for Christian education for youth on Sunday mornings.

We will kick off our first FLIGHT on **Sunday, April 3** with the telling of "God's Big Story" over a four week period, you won't want to miss this! We have some special things planned. We will be sending text message reminders to the youth (if we have their cell number and carrier) and parent emails to keep you informed as to what we are studying. Our hope is to make Christian education so fun and interesting that your youth are begging you to get them to church on time so they don't miss a thing!

Sunday, April 3 at 9:15 am in Barnabas Hall

"This isn't your grandmothers Sunday School", Michelle

Mission trip registration

Sunday, March 6

4:30-6pm on the boardwalk of the Education wing

All adults and youth planning to attend this summers mission trips need to register this Sunday, March 6. Come anytime between 4:30 and 6pm. We will be upstairs in the children's area (the boardwalk). You can pay your \$150 deposit either by check or this year you can use a credit card. **BRING YOUR INSURANCE CARD, AND CALENDAR TO SIGN UP FOR FUNDRAISERS!** If you miss this registration, the price goes up by \$25.

Rummage Sale

Saturday, March 19 7am-3pm

Pre-view sale for all church members Friday, March 18 7pm-9pm






We need lots of adults and youth to make this happen!

Springcreek BBQ dinner

Wednesday, March 16 5pm-9pm

Come eat dinner and bring all your friends, we get 20% of the nights proceeds.

March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
			BS 6:30	FF-Mex		SALT members work FYI 6-8pm
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SALT mtg Mission trip registration 4:30-6 UMYF 6-8				FF-Hamb		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
UMYF 6-8 Bigger and Better scavenger hunt	 spring break	 spring break	 spring break Spring Creek 5-9 Fundraiser	 spring break	 spring break Rummage sale Pre-view 7-9	Rummage sale 7am-3pm
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
UMYF 6-8			BS 6:30	FF-Italian		
27	28	29	30	31		
UMYF 6-8			BS 6:30	FF-Mex		