

Adventures in Parenting: The Middle School Years

4.24.24





Why middle school?

- Because middle school students are totally underestimated!

Tonight's Topics

- Cognitive, Physical, Social/Emotional Development
- Life Skills
- Freedom & Responsibility
- Risk vs Danger
- Transparency
- Identity & the Formation of Faith

Table Talk #1

1. Name & ages of kids
2. What brought you here tonight?
3. Currently, what is your biggest parenting struggle?
4. Finish the sentence: Middle school students are...
5. Describe your middle school self in three words.
6. When I think back to middle school, I remember...

Child Development: 11 years old

Cognitive

- Beginning to develop ability to anticipate
- Beginning to see gray, rather than just black and white
- Understand thoughts are private
- Greater sense of responsibility

Child Development: 11 years old

Physical

- Signs of puberty - growth spurts
- Increased need for sleep and increased appetite

Child Development: 11 years old

Social/Emotional

- Hormonal changes = emotional roller coaster.
Expect moodiness.
- Shift from parents to peers
- Group identity
- Wanting to be cool
- Experimenting with identity - hair, clothing, hobbies and friends

Child Development: 12 years old

Cognitive

- Abstract thinking, problem solving & logic (sometimes)
- Prefrontal cortex still maturing = impulse control and organizational challenges
- More aware of concepts like justice & equality
- Begins to understand cause-and-effects sequences
- Critical thinking just starting to kick in

Child Development: 12 years old

Physical

- Signs of puberty (if they haven't already)
- Increased skill in sports
- Growth spurts (keep buying all that food)

Child Development: 12 years old

Social/Emotional

- Love their parents and want nothing to do with them
- Heightened self-consciousness
- Increased concern about being liked
- Emotional yo-yo
- May begin to question family values and develop personal morals

Child Development: 13 years old

Cognitive

- Incredibly self-conscious
- Brain rewiring = lack brain capacity to think ahead or anticipate consequences
- No one understands me
- Think they are immune to bad things happening to them
- Questioning authority

Child Development: 13 years old

Physical

- Most girls are well through puberty
- Boys, not necessarily
- Grappling with the physical changes and hormones can cause appearance related issues: acne, weight, body image

Child Development: 13 years old

Social/Emotional

- Pulling away from family. Experimenting with different looks or styles
- Greater concern about physical appearance
- Strive for independence
- Push parents away but still want/need to know you are there

Table Talk #2: Life Skills

1. What skills do you think kids need to have upon entering middle school?
2. What skills do they need to develop during middle school so that they are ready for high school?
3. What keeps us from allowing kids to develop those skills?
4. What is one thing you can do in your home to foster skill building?

Life Skills

- Wake up to an alarm clock
- Make their own breakfast
- Pack their own lunch
- Do their own laundry
- Change their own bedding
- Plan & make a meal
- Order their own food
- Clean the bathroom

Life Skills

- Read labels
- Use basic hand tools
- Pack their own bags
- Be responsible for their own sports gear
- Advocate for themselves with teachers & coaches
- Walk places with friends
- Look after siblings

Life Skills

- Money Matters: Spend, Save, Give
- Time Management: set priorities, make a to-do list, create a schedule

Table Talk #3: Freedom & Responsibility

1. What is the relationship between freedom & responsibility?
2. How do you navigate it when your child approaches you wanting more freedom?
3. What worries you about giving your child more freedom?
4. What happens when they demonstrate they aren't ready for those freedoms?
5. How you think you are doing as a parent when it comes to giving freedom? What expectations do you have for your son/daughter in terms of responsibility?
6. Do your kids have a clear path to earning the freedoms they want?

Freedom & Responsibility

Table Talk #4: Risk vs Danger

1. What the difference between risk and danger?
2. Why is it important to keep these as two separate categories?
3. What risks do you let your kids take? Which ones make you uncomfortable but you still let them do it anyway?
4. Give an example or two of a dangerous activity (something you don't want your child to do.)
5. How well do you think you are doing when it comes to allowing your child to take risks and to build confidence in his/her own risk assessment?

Risk vs Danger

Transparency

- Share your stories
- Own your mistakes
- Share how you are continuing to grow and change

Identity & Faith

- I am a beloved child of God intentionally created for a purpose.

Identity & Faith

1. Pray It
2. Say It
3. Do It
4. Discuss It

Identity & Faith

1. Intergenerational connection
2. 5:1

Survey: Help us improve by telling us your thoughts!



SCAN ME

