



Seasons *of* **PARENTING**

A PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE
FOR BIRTH THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL



CONTENTS

AGES BIRTH-TWO 04

AGES TWO-FOUR 06

AGES FIVE-SEVEN 09

AGES EIGHT-ELEVEN 12

AGES TWELVE-FOURTEEN 15

AGES FOURTEEN-SIXTEEN 19

AGES SIXTEEN-EIGHTEEN 24



As a parent who follows Jesus, you are responsible for your child’s spiritual growth. In every season, you can shape their heart to know who God is and how He wants them to live – if you don’t give up!

God has designed everyday moments for you to help your child grow in their faith by simply talking with them. Use these resources as a guide for having good conversations that grow your child’s faith in each season.



Birth – Two

A SEASON *of* **WONDER**

The first years of a child’s life are full of learning through wonder and exploration. As you provide for your child’s physical needs, you develop their ability to trust and instill the virtue of hope that they will need in the years ahead. Everything you do in this season establishes a foundation for good relationships with God and others.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

Talking to your baby about God may feel weird at first, but it is the best time to start laying a spiritual foundation.

- Tell your baby how much God loves them each time you change their diaper.
- Pray simple prayers with your baby before meals and bedtime.
- Sing simple songs about God throughout the day and especially at night.
- Read stories out loud from a picture Bible.
- Begin to point out God’s design for the differences we see in people and how He loves all of us.

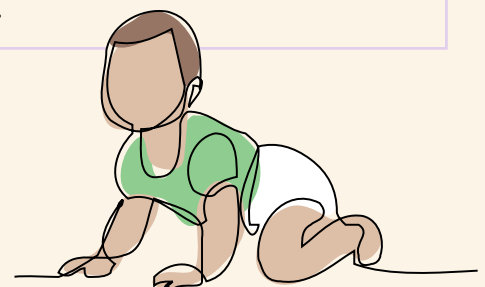
Just for you: You may feel like you don’t have time to spend with God each day, so take advantage of small spiritual moments with your child, and remember that He is with you always.

HEALTHY HABITS

Your baby has basic needs, and providing for those needs within a routine will establish order to your days (and nights) and help you make decisions as they grow.

- Prioritize healthy attachment and trust between you and your baby.
- Go outside every day, even if it’s just for five minutes.
- Make personal hygiene fun.
- When talking about food, stay neutral, remembering that all food has a purpose and doesn’t need to be labeled “good” or “bad”.

Just for you: Take care of your own needs so you can give your baby your best.



HONORING GOD WITH THEIR BODY

Help your baby understand who made their body and how special it is.

- Talk about how God made your baby's body in a special and one-of-a-kind way.
- Use anatomically correct terms for body parts.
- Teach your child about body parts that are private.
- Pray for your child's body to grow physically and spiritually.

Just for you: Be gracious with yourself, remembering that God sees you and loves you! Everything about your life is adjusting as you welcome this little one into your family and it will take time to find a new normal.

JESUS ON THEIR LEVEL

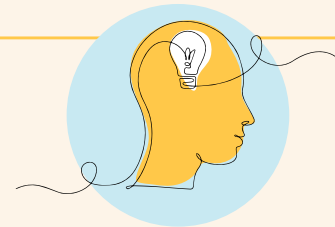
- Our nursery rooms are called Wonder Way because babies and toddlers grow in their faith as they wonder about the things God made and find joy in the people who love them. Your child will move up in these rooms as they grow in their physical agility.
- Our nursery volunteers help you lay a spiritual foundation for your baby's faith by praying for them at diaper changing time!

TECH BOUNDARIES

Decide how you will limit your technology so you can be present with your baby.

- Create technology free areas of your house.
- Set screen time limits for your baby.
- When your baby engages with technology, be sure you engage with them.
- Do your research before you download an app for your baby.

Just for you: Bonding with your baby during playtime and feeding time will be harder if your phone is nearby.



Resources

Check out the links below for a variety of resources we've found helpful for parents and kids in this season.



**VISIT OUR
AMAZON
STOREFRONT**



- [Aro Technology Box](#)
- [KidSpring Apps](#)

*As an Amazon Associate, we may earn a small amount for items purchased via our storefront.

Two – Four

A SEASON of **PLAY**



The preschool years are full of growth and fun! During this time, your child learns best through play and pretend. They imitate what they see you doing and saying, and you will always know how they are feeling!

As your child learns basic skills, you will often hear, “I can do it myself!” By encouraging their independence and reassuring them when they mess up, you help establish the virtue of will which grows their self-esteem and confidence. You do more training of their behavior in this season, so having a plan for discipline that shapes their heart to love God and others will be important.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

Keep your faith conversations about God simple.

- Have your child repeat simple prayers after you during meal times, happy times, and times when you need God’s help.
- Create traditions for special holidays and other family celebrations that point to God’s love for your family.
- Reinforce what your child is learning at church each week, and read stories from an age-appropriate Bible.
- Be intentional with talking about how God created us to look different. Purchase books and toys that represent different ethnicities and cultures.

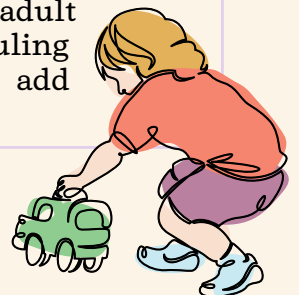
Just for you: Receive God’s love by giving yourself grace when you don’t parent perfectly. Use your mistakes as an opportunity to model repentance and ask for forgiveness.

HEALTHY HABITS

The earlier you introduce healthy habits, the more likely they are to stick.

- Decide on a routine to help your child move from one task to another, especially when separation from you is emotionally difficult.
- Give your child two choices in order to help them exercise their will while also obeying.
- Involve your child in simple chores, and encourage them as they help.
- Empathize with your child’s feelings by helping them name their emotions, and remind them of truths that help them love God and others.

Just for you: Prioritize adult relationships by scheduling time with people who add value to your life.



HONORING GOD WITH THEIR BODY

Develop a healthy view of the body and boundaries to protect it.

- Talk about how God made your child's body in a special and one-of-a-kind way.
- Use anatomically correct terms for body parts.
- Teach your child about body parts that are private.
- Model asking permission before giving safe touch to your child, and don't force them to give safe touch to others if they don't want to.

Just for you: Model God-honoring sexuality by the way you speak about your own body and the loving way you and your spouse treat each other.

TECH BOUNDARIES

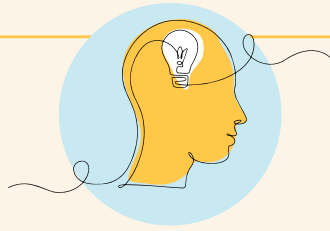
Establish screen time balance for yourself and your child.

- If you choose to allow screen time, establish a routine that incorporates it at a specific time of the day.
- Engage with technology together in relationship-building ways.
- Teach your child what to do if they see a "bad picture" while using technology.
- When you use your phone or computer, tell your child what you are doing.
- Take advantage of parental controls to help monitor the content your child sees.

Just for you: Don't be hard on yourself on days when your child gets more screen time than usual due to unexpected circumstances.



Be intentional with talking about how God created us to look different. Purchase books and toys that represent different ethnicities and cultures.



Resources

Check out the links below for a variety of resources we've found helpful for parents and kids in this season.



**VISIT OUR
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- [Article – “Creative Ways to Teach Kids About Race”](#)
- [Music – KidSpring Albums on Apple Music and Spotify](#)
- [KidSpring Apps](#)
- [Aro Technology Box](#)

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JESUS ON THEIR LEVEL

- Preschoolers in KidSpring go to rooms named for the places you would find in a town, like a mechanic’s garage or a toy store. At this age, church is fun because of the toys in the rooms, the leaders who love them, and the interactive small group and large group time where they learn about Jesus on their level!
- You can learn and sing KidSpring songs at home! We have several albums, including one in Spanish, that are available on all streaming platforms. We also have KidSpring Apps where you can watch Bible stories and music videos on your TV and personal devices.



Five – Seven

A SEASON of **IMAGINATION**

The early childhood ages are often called the “imagine” years. They have big thoughts and are often in awe of Bible stories that seem larger than life. Kids who are in this season love to play and initiate activities with others, but they also need to feel like they belong.

As your child tries new things, the virtue of purpose develops. They will grow more confident in their ability to lead others and make decisions, but they may also have a hard time following the rules. Kids will be more inclined to listen and obey when the people who care for them have spent time with them, doing things they love. Their big imaginations are great for planting seeds of scripture that show them how great God is and how He wants them to see others.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

Faith is rooted in imagination, leading to big thoughts and questions about God.

- Read and retell Bible stories from an age-appropriate Bible to help them establish an everyday relationship with Jesus.
- Memorize short Bible verses.
- Look for opportunities for them to serve others—or for you to serve together.
- Discuss God’s design for race and explain how sin has led to thoughts and actions that are unloving toward people made in His image.
- Help them identify right and wrong according to what God says.

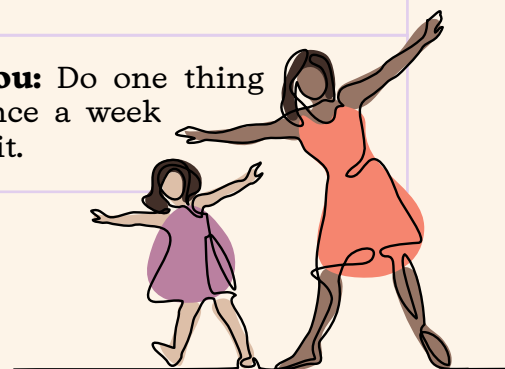
Just for you: Identify one way you want to grow in your relationship with God and ask someone else to hold you accountable.

HEALTHY HABITS

Verbally encourage the healthy habits you see your child forming.

- Establish a daily routine for snacks, school work, playing outside, reading books, and spending time with friends.
- Begin to involve your child in meal planning.
- Add to their list of simple chores.
- Teach them basic safety skills like calling 911.

Just for you: Do one thing you love once a week and stick to it.



HONORING GOD WITH THEIR BODY

Privacy and personal boundaries are essential at this stage.

- Talk about how God made different parts of our bodies on purpose and give simple explanations for how they work.
- Communicate that you want to answer your child's questions as they have them.
- Talk about how we love God and others by not touching, hitting, or doing anything to someone else's body.
- Teach your child to say "no" to hugs, kisses, tickling, and touching that makes them uncomfortable.

Just for you: If your child asks a question that surprises you, you don't have to answer right away. Let them know you will answer but at an appropriate time.

TECH BOUNDARIES

Stay diligent in guiding your child's digital engagement knowing that there are positive and negative influences.

- Set boundaries for where your child can and cannot be on technology, both in your home and when they are with others.
- Know when your child is on a device and what they are doing while on it.
- Model appropriate use of technology.
- Set up safety software on your devices, and do not allow your child to search without your help.
- Show interest in what your child does with technology.

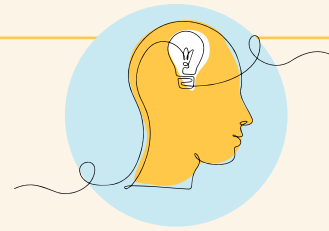
Just for you: Establish a room in your home that is tech-free for yourself.



Kids will be more inclined to listen and obey when the people who care for them have spent time with them, doing things they love.

JESUS ON THEIR LEVEL

- In KidSpring, we create series that are 6-8 weeks long around a biblical topic. Each series includes fun, themed activities, small group lessons, and a large group worship service specifically created by our KidSpring team with your child's stage of development in mind.
- We hope your child can answer two questions each Sunday as they leave church: Did you have fun? What did you learn?



Resources

Check out the links below for a variety of resources we've found helpful for parents and kids in this season.



**VISIT OUR
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- Website – [Got Questions Kidz](#)
- Article – [“When Someone Has ‘Different Pronouns’: Explaining LGBT Pronoun Usage to our Kids”](#)
- Tech Monitoring – [Bark](#)
- [KidSpring’s Guide to Salvation & Baptism](#)
- [KidSpring’s Baptism Chart](#)
- [KidSpring’s Guide to Communion](#)

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Eight – Eleven

A SEASON of **FAITH**

During the late elementary school years, kids are able to grasp abstract spiritual truths and are more likely to recognize sin and their need for a Savior. They will have questions about following Jesus, baptism, and communion. Friendship is also a big deal at this age, so you will likely see them express empathy and kindness toward others more often.

The virtue developing in kids this age is competence, as they desire more independence and grow in confidence. You will need to remind them that even if they feel like they don't need you, you are always there to help.

During this season, finding ways to connect what your child believes with the situations they face can really make a difference in their view of right and wrong.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

Encourage an everyday relationship with Jesus.

- Help your child find a time each day to read the Bible and talk to God.
- Be open to their questions about God—and when you don't know the answer, look for what the Bible says and discuss what you find out.
- Consider ways you and your child can serve in the church or community together.
- Discuss God's heart for all people and how to respond when racial and other forms of injustice occur.

Just for you: Be more transparent with your child. Let them know where you are asking God for help in your own life.

HEALTHY HABITS

Healthy body image is framed by the truth that God lovingly made each person in His image to be special and unique.

- Involve your child in planning and cooking meals that include healthy foods and portions.
- Find ways to stay active together.
- Continually affirm your child's inner beauty, reminding them that God made them and what He made is good.
- Prepare your child for the physical changes their body will experience, and involve them in selecting self-care products.

Just for you: Make sure you are modeling healthy habits you want to see your child making as they continue to grow up.

HONORING GOD WITH THEIR BODY

Talking about sex will be more uncomfortable but even more critical at this phase.

- Have regular conversations with your child, asking them what kinds of things they may have heard about sex.
- When they ask you a question about something they have seen or heard, lead by asking what they think it means, and reassure them that you are glad they asked.
- Discuss God's plan for sex. When it's handled God's way (between a man and woman inside of marriage), it is a blessing, but when it's not handled God's way, it has negative consequences.
- Discuss the difference between males and females and how God made your child a male or female on purpose.
- Ensure that your child knows there are boundaries with physical touch. No one should touch them without permission, and they should always respect others' bodies as well.
- Explain what pornography or graphic material is and discuss what your child should do if and when they see it.

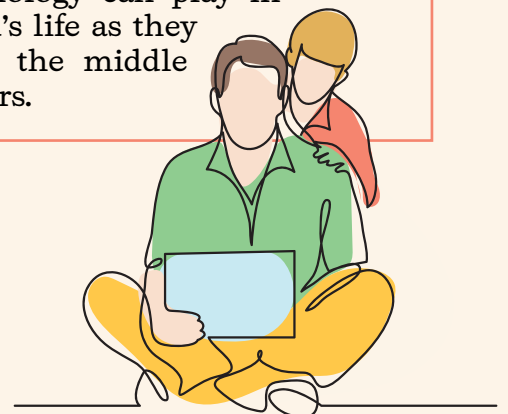
Just for you: Lean into your friends who are in this same season to find out what other kids are talking about and to gain wisdom from how other parents are having these conversations. You are not alone.

TECH BOUNDARIES

This is the age where clear boundaries and expectations are set with the lens that the way we use the internet will have a massive impact on our lives.

- Create a technology plan or contract with your child that you will both adhere to—follow-through on your end is just as important as their obedience.
- Discuss ways technology can be used to hurt them and others (bullying, pornography, online predators, etc.).
- Know which of their friends has a cell phone, and discuss what a friend should do with their phone if they bring it to your home.
- Use technology together to make meaningful connections (an encouraging text throughout the day, playing a game against each other, etc.).
- Delay social media as long as possible – as more and more research is conducted on the effects of social media on children, there is more and more evidence that it causes harm to kids' physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

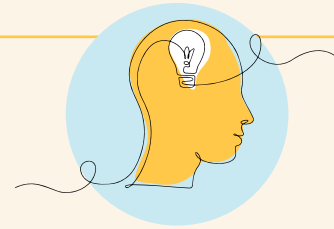
Just for you: Educate yourself on the role technology can play in your child's life as they head into the middle school years.



JESUS ON THEIR LEVEL

- Each week your child circles up with a leader and other kids their age for small group. During this time, they get to know each other, read a Bible story, discuss ways to apply what they've learned, pray, and memorize scripture.
- We want to partner with you in your child's faith decisions. We have resources to help you talk about salvation, baptism, communion, and having an everyday relationship with Jesus!

The virtue developing in kids this age is competence, as they desire more independence and grow in confidence.



Resources

Check out the links below for a variety of resources we've found helpful for parents and kids in this season.



**VISIT OUR
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- [Daily Devos – Kids Bible Experience on the YouVersion App](#)
- [Videos – The Bible Project](#)
- [Video Series – A Parent's Guide to Conversations](#)
- [Article – “When and How to Talk to My Child about Pornography”](#)
- [Tech Monitoring – Bark](#)
- [Facebook Group – Parenting in a Tech World](#)
- [Website – Defend Young Minds™](#)
- [Sample Tech Contract](#)
- [U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#)
- [KidSpring's Guide to Salvation & Baptism](#)
- [KidSpring's Baptism Chart](#)
- [KidSpring's Guide to Communion](#)

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Twelve – Fourteen

A SEASON *of* **BELONGING**

The early adolescent years are some of the most perplexing years of parenting. In one moment, your tween or teen is loving and fun; the next, sarcastic and reclusive. In this season, everything is changing, and while they want to be grown up, they aren't. They are searching for who they are and what they believe, and they want to fit in and feel like they belong.

The main thing kids need in this season is parents who show up and help them relate to God in their own way. Take time to cultivate your relationship with your adolescent child by prioritizing what best suits them, and remember to listen more than you talk! Your closeness with them will be foundational in the years to come.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

Look for opportunities to affirm their personal relationship with Jesus and how you see the time they spend with Him impacting the way they live.

- Read a scripture together each day and take 2-3 minutes to discuss what it means.
- Ask how you can pray for your child and their friends.
- Prioritize serving together at church.
- Be intentional about helping your child have deep relationships with friends who love Jesus as well as mentors they aspire to be like.
- Encourage your child to participate in a small group at church or in other Christian organizations where they can be encouraged by helpful outside voices to love God and others.
- Have honest conversations about your child's ethnicity and gender and how to use God's Word when facing opposition or taking a stand for others.

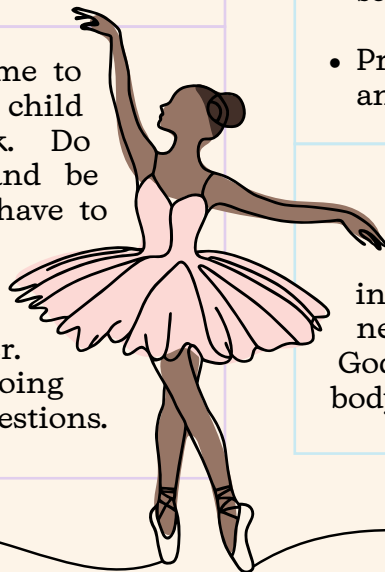
Just for you: Don't freak out when it seems your child is questioning their faith. Remember the questions you've had in times of doubt, and be understanding of theirs. Be honest if you don't know how to answer their questions and commit to discovering the truth together.

HEALTHY HABITS

Habits formed at this age should ensure your adolescent can take care of their own physical and mental needs.

- Find small ways to help and reward their organization at home and school.
- Limit their amount of screen time (even though they'll complain), and find ways for them to engage in activities that keep them active.
- Set a reasonable bedtime that ensures they get at least eight hours of distraction-free sleep.
- Discuss the importance of having good friends, and make sure they know how to be a good friend themselves.
- Regularly ask how they are feeling and listen with empathy to understand what they are going through.
- Begin implementing ways for them to learn budgeting and money management. Teaching them how to organize their money in give, save, and spend categories is a great place to start.

Just for you: Make time to engage with your child throughout the week. Do activities they enjoy and be attentive to what they have to say. Set up a regular date with them that creates an intentional space for you to have fun together. Keep the conversation going by asking open-ended questions.



HONORING GOD WITH THEIR BODY

God cares a great deal about our physical bodies and how we treat them, especially as they change in this season.

- Explain how we can honor God with our bodies by the decisions we make including what we wear, what we look at, and what we listen to.
- Intentionally tell your child that their body is good and beautiful, especially girls. Avoid minimizing the new feelings and changes they experience to establish openness and trust.
- Help them understand why sex is a good gift from God designed for a man and a woman inside of marriage.
- Talk openly and lovingly about your adolescent's view on LGBTQ+ topics and how it affects them as well as other kids at school.
- Help them set boundaries for their bodies to protect them in tempting situations, and explain what to do if someone tries to abuse those boundaries. Role play different scenarios to practice.
- Pray for your adolescent's protection and sexual integrity every day.

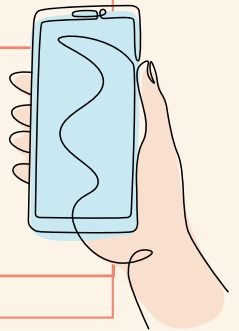
Just for you: What pressures do you place on your own body that are not in line with being made in God's image? Make changes needed to align your thoughts with God's truth so you can model a good body image.

TECH BOUNDARIES

Decide how you will limit your technology so you can model what you expect.

- Create technology-free areas of your house (especially bedrooms).
- Set expectations and boundaries for how they are to use technology. Consider having the same password for everyone in the family or using an app that stores passwords in a safe place where you both can access them easily.
- If and when they ask for social media, explain the risks to their mental health and safety. Delay as long as possible in this season, and if/when it is allowed, begin with one app and clear guidelines.
- Explain the dangers that come with sharing photos and how people may not be who they say they are online.
- Discuss the reality, harms, myths, and lies of pornography—let them know that if they see porn (intentionally or unintentionally), they can come to you for help.

Just for you: Be consistent with your expectations, and remember your child needs you to be lovingly firm now more than ever.



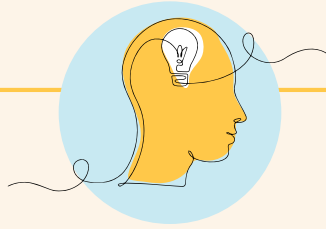
PARTNERING WITH YOU

The Fuse ministry helps students in this season build lifelong relationships.

- Fuse meets on Wednesday nights to provide a safe and fun space for students to develop lifelong friendships.
- Students are highly encouraged to join a Fuse group where they build relationships with peers, and are challenged to read the Bible daily as they grow in their everyday relationship with Jesus.
- Fuse hosts Family Nights where you are invited to experience Fuse, meet your child's group leader, and get to know the Fuse Pastor with other parents.



They are searching for who they are and what they believe, and they want to fit in and feel like they belong.



Resources

Check out the links below for a variety of resources we've found helpful for parents and kids in this season.



**VISIT OUR
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- Website – [Got Questions](#)
- Website – [Protect Young Eyes](#)
- Website for Teens – [412 Teens](#)
- Parent Guide – [Sexual Purity](#)
- Parent Guide – [Racism](#)
- Article – [“Three Keys To Helping Kids Launch into the Teen Years”](#)
- Money – [Ramsey Solutions](#)
- Videos – [The Bible Project](#)
- Video Series – [A Parent's Guide to Conversations](#)
- Video Series – [Technology & Your Middle Schooler](#)
- Video Series for Families & Teens – [The Holy Sexuality Project](#)
- Tech Monitoring – [Bark](#)
- Facebook Group – [Parenting in a Tech World](#)
- [Rites of Passage Ceremonies](#)
- [Sample Tech Contract](#)
- [U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#)

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Fourteen – Sixteen

A SEASON of **IDENTITY**

During this season, you may notice your teenager has a lot of opinions. Don't be surprised when their opinions differ from yours and they are embarrassed by everything you do and say! Staying present in their lives, even if you feel unwanted, is very important.

Your teen feels a lot of pressure in this season, and though they may not act like it, they need you to be steadfast *and* love them unconditionally. Your warmth toward your child will make you a safe place for them to land as they begin stretching their wings.

As the season for freedom is approaching, encourage good decision-making skills. When they mess up, stay calm and use it as a learning opportunity. And when you mess up, choosing humility and repentance will help restore your relationship.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

One of the best ways to talk about God may be to invite your teen into your everyday faith journey instead of inputting into theirs.

- Encourage your child to consistently prioritize spending the first part of their day with Jesus.
- Know that the ability to think abstractly appears during this age and allows your teen to draw more conclusions from what scripture says about their everyday life.
- Look for opportunities to affirm the way your teen is making decisions that line up with God's Word.
- Discuss your child's spiritual gifts and highlight ways you see those gifts adding value to your family and their group of friends.
- When your teen struggles with their faith or failures, assure them that God doesn't expect or even reward perfection.
- Encourage your child to participate in a small group at church or in other Christian organizations where they can be encouraged by helpful outside voices to love God and others.
- Discuss the importance of reflecting God's heart in how we treat people of different ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic statuses.

Just for you: It's important to trust that God is working in your teen's life in the same way He has worked in yours. If this season makes you feel inadequate, take those insecurities and doubts to God who promises to help you!

HEALTHY HABITS

When encouraging your teen to have good habits, it's best to set expectations together. As the parent, steer away from extremes.

- Continue giving guidance and setting boundaries on how they speak, what they wear, and what they do with their time.
- Encourage your teen to use a calendar to help manage their responsibilities and their free time.
- Lay a foundation of safe driving habits including wearing seatbelts, avoiding distractions, and obeying laws.
- Discuss what to do in unsafe/unhealthy situations such as parties, riding with someone who is impaired, and what to do when offered drugs or alcohol.
- Encourage your teen to get a part-time job and open a savings account for the future.
- Pay attention to eating and sleeping habits, and get help when you see signs of deprivation or fluctuation in your teen.
- Teach your teen to identify their emotions when they are upset and determine what it will take to get back to a healthy state by asking themselves, "What is it I am feeling? Why am I feeling this way? What do I need?"
- Friendships are an important part of these years. Encourage your teen to cultivate friendships with people who bring them joy and will point them to Jesus. Be available when they want to talk about friendship struggles—listen, comfort, and gently offer advice about how Jesus teaches us to handle different situations.

Just for you: Letting go and encouraging your teen's independence is hard. One way to remind yourself that God is with you is to say simple breath prayers like, "Jesus, I trust you," or "God, you're in control!"



HONORING GOD WITH THEIR BODY

Teenagers need and respect honesty from adults about sex.

- Reinforce your teen's identity as a son or daughter of God.
- Discuss how God, in His love for us, created sex as a gift to be enjoyed in marriage to protect us with the companionship, intimacy, and oneness that marriage gives.
- Discuss sex and porn calmly, biblically, and frequently.
- Establish dating boundaries by teaching them the purpose of relationships and creating a vision for what they want their relationships to look like – focus more on readiness than age.
- Talk with your teen about how the physical appearance of someone should never justify their decision to objectify or disrespect them.
- Educate yourself on LGBTQ+ terminology and remember to model Jesus' unconditional love for people who wrestle with their sexual attractions or gender identity.

Just for you: Topics regarding sex and purity are difficult! Commit to making sure your teen knows you are a safe place and that there is nothing they could do or say that would change how much you love and care for them.



Discuss the importance of reflecting God's heart in how we treat people of different ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic statuses.

TECH BOUNDARIES

Decide when and what technology freedoms you will give your teen and listen to what they say as you determine what they are ready for.

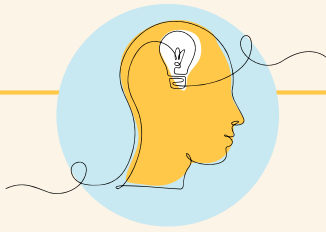
- If you allow social media, utilize parental controls for apps and devices, set boundaries for how your teen should interact with it, and monitor it frequently.
- Make sure your teen is aware of the dangers that can come from technology (such as cyberbullying, online predators, sexting, etc.), and discuss ways they can protect themselves.
- Regularly tell your teen to come to you if they encounter any issues online. It can be very uncomfortable for your child to approach you if they have found themselves in a difficult situation. Watch for changes in their behavior for how/when/where they are using technology.
- Do not be afraid to ask hard questions or check their devices to see if anything inappropriate is going on, but remember to be gentle and supportive in your responses.

Just for you: Be okay with using technology to connect on a different level with your teen. Look for articles, podcasts, or videos that they find interesting, then share and discuss those together.

PARTNERING WITH YOU

The Fuse ministry helps students in this season stand on God's truth.

- As students are stepping into the unique identity God has given them, Fuse desires to come alongside them. We're here to help create a biblical foundation for your teen to stand on. Fuse Groups are a space where your teen can safely wrestle with questions about faith, culture, and identity.
- Your child's Fuse group leader feels called to disciple the next generation and is ready to partner with you in the development of your teenager. They are trusted and background-checked. They're also expected to reach out to you with personal contact information so that you're aware of who they are and when their group is meeting.



Resources

Check out the links below for a variety of resources we've found helpful for parents and kids in this season.



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- Website for Teens – [412 Teens](#)
- Parent Guide – [Sexual Purity](#)
- Parent Guide – [Gender Identity](#)
- Video Series – [Dating and Relationships](#)
- Video Series for Parents – [Sex Talk 2.0](#)
- Video Series for Parents & Teens – [Gender Identity Conversation Kit](#)
- Article – [“Effects of Porn Addiction on a Teen Brain”](#)
- Article – [“Snapchat Parental Controls and App Review”](#)
- Article – [“4 Tips for Talking to Kids and Teens About Racism and Social Unrest”](#)
- Money – [Ramsey Solutions for Teens](#)
- Tech Monitoring – [Bark](#)
- Facebook Group – [Parenting in a Tech World](#)
- [SOAP Bible Study Method](#)
- [Sample Tech Contract](#)
- [U.S. Surgeon General’s Report on Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#)

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Sixteen – Eighteen

A SEASON of **FREEDOM**

Despite what you may have heard, you don't have to dread this transitional season of parenting! It will be full of opportunities for you to pursue, love, teach, and encourage your soon-to-be adult. These years are less about parenting and more about guiding your teen into the freedoms they want while you are still there to help. The warmth of your relationship with your teen will keep them coming back to you with their insecurities and questions.

So much of what transpires in this season will shape their future. The friends they make, the things they are good at, and what they choose to believe about themselves and their world will all play a part in what they do with their relationship with God. Encourage them by speaking to their potential and how you see God's purpose for their life unfolding.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

Timing for conversations about God is everything, and asking their opinion about spiritual issues may often be better than sharing yours.

- Continually remind your teenager how much God loves them and reassure them of His plan for their lives. Knowing who they are in Jesus will help them make choices as they exercise their freedom.
- Instead of giving answers to spiritual questions, give your teen the resources to discover what they believe, and then talk about it together. Ask questions like, "What have you been reading lately? What has the Lord been showing you in His Word?"
- Suggest a spiritual gifts test so your teenager can learn more about the way God gifted them for this season and discover His direction for their next season.
- Encourage your teen to participate in a small group at church or in other Christian organizations where they can be encouraged by helpful outside voices to love God and others.
- Discuss your teen's experiences with racism, sexism, and classism and what God says is the best way to handle those things.

Just for you: You may be winning or struggling in your relationship with Jesus. Know that it's good for your teen to see your faith in good times and bad. Authenticity is one of the best tools for teaching at this stage.

HEALTHY HABITS

Every choice your high schooler makes affects who they are becoming.

- Look for opportunities to train your teen on how to handle difficult life situations while you are present (car trouble, conflict, societal pressures).
- Encourage your high schooler to get a part-time job and practice using a budget for expenses.
- Be aware of your teen's sleeping and eating habits, and seek help if you notice any drastic changes such as excessive sleeping, extreme weight loss, or spending more time in isolation.
- Do a weekly (or daily) mental health check-in by asking compassionate questions like, "Is there anything you are excited about (or stressed about) this week?"
- Continue encouraging your teen to develop relationships with friends who are pointing them to Jesus and bringing them joy. Some friendships may be changing in this season as graduation nears, which can be good or sad, but encourage your teen to leave a positive lasting impact on others.

Just for you: Becoming familiar with common symptoms of depression, anxiety, and suicidality could equip you and your teen to recognize and label possible symptoms. Always respond with understanding, empathy, and a commitment to help.

Encourage them by speaking to their potential and how you see God's purpose for their life unfolding.



HONORING GOD WITH THEIR BODY

Help your teen understand God's desire for their purity is not about rules to follow but for their benefit.

- Reinforce your teen's identity as a son or daughter of God.
- Talk about how God's plan for sex and their body is counter-cultural, but it's designed to protect them and give them a gift of pleasure and intimacy that is beautiful inside the promise of marriage.
- Remind your teen that, whether they remain single or marry someday, God has a purpose for their life.
- Encourage your teen's input and ownership of their own relational and sexual boundaries.
- Continue to discuss the importance of saying no in any situation where they feel uncomfortable so they can protect themselves when faced with the threat of sexual assault – the goal is to prepare them to respond wisely and courageously.
- Educate yourself on how to lovingly engage in conversations where your teen wants to talk about LGBTQ+, transgender, and other sexual orientation topics.

Just for you: Be willing to talk about your own struggles and mistakes (past and present). If talking about sex is difficult for you, consider giving your teen a book on sex and incentivize them to read it and discuss their thoughts with you.

TECH BOUNDARIES

Understand that, for your teen, engaging with technology is not just something they do to pass the time but is a vital part of their world.

- Create a safe space for talking about apps, podcasts, and YouTube channels your teen finds value in.
- Talk with your teen about the addictive nature of porn and how millions of dollars are spent each year to target them through technology.
- Teach or remind your teen about the importance of digital privacy, including the harms of sharing personal information and the lasting impact of anything they post online.
- Utilize filters to protect your teens, but also have conversations with them about how and why they use technology. In this season, they need to learn how to take ownership of their digital stewardship.

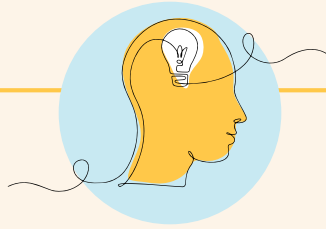
Just for you: Use technology to stay connected to your teen, and remember, you are not alone. There are resources and programs to assist you in doing what you can do to protect and prepare them.

PARTNERING WITH YOU

The Fuse ministry equips students in this season to graduate into a lifetime of following Jesus.

- In Fuse groups, we provide both spiritual and practical resources to help your teen learn how to operate on their own. We want to partner with you in helping your teen pursue what God is calling them to do after high school, including choosing a college, getting them plugged into a local church if they are moving away, and understanding career options that interest them.
- Throughout this season, we will challenge your student more and more to take ownership of their everyday relationship with Jesus. We also honor all of our seniors by commissioning them into the next stage of life.





Resources

Check out the links below for a variety of resources we've found helpful for parents and kids in this season.

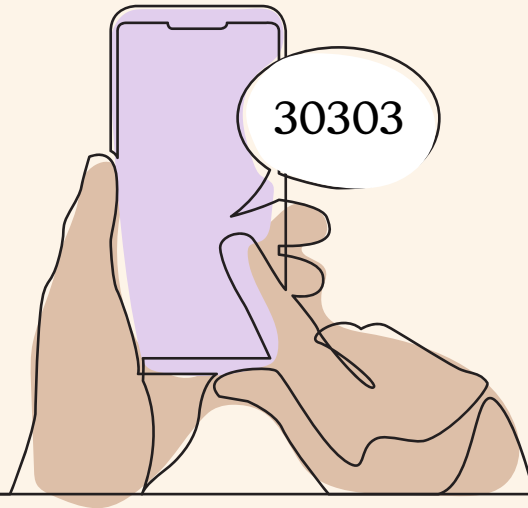


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- Ebook – [Can We Trust the Gospels?](#)
- Sermon – [“Is God Calling You?”](#)
- For Girls – [Live Original](#)
- Article – [“Effects of Porn Addiction on a Teen Brain”](#)
- Money – [Ramsey Solutions for Teens](#)
- Parent Guide – [Mental Health](#)
- Parent Guide – [Purity](#)
- Parent Guide – [Gender Identity](#)
- Parent Guide – [Talking About Race with Teenagers](#)
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Stay in the loop

To know more about what's happening in KidSpring or Fuse, text "**KidSpring Scoop**" or "**Fuse News**" to **30303**.



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