Introduction

Heading into adolescence and becoming a teenager is a great adventure-filled journey into unfamiliar territory. Although there are some maps available that may provide general direction, no one really knows exactly what each individual’s journey will be like since God uniquely creates each one of us. Being unique means that the winding path from childhood through the teenage years and into adulthood will be different for every person.

So if the map for this foreign land called adolescence is incomplete, what else might you take along that would help you finish the trip successfully? The best answer to that question is: someone who has already made the journey—a competent guide; a trusted person who has been there before. We know of no better guides through the teenage wilderness years than a godly dad and mom. The role of the Christian parent as a guide reminds us of a demonstration Dennis gave the men and boys attending some Promise Keepers® events several years ago. Here’s how he remembered it:

The scene caused a chill to trickle down my back.

On an outdoor stage in Denver, Colorado, with fifty thousand Promise Keepers watching intensely, a fifteen-year-old boy—blindfolded and barefoot—began stepping cautiously toward a dangerous obstacle course filled with a dozen steel animal traps.

Directly in front of the boy lay the grim, gray jaws of a huge bear trap so powerful it could crush his leg, and so large that setting it had required three men. Several feet to the left of the bear trap lay a smaller device, a beaver trap—quick and potent.

Next to me, twenty-five feet away from the blindfolded young man stood the boy’s father. This unusual demonstration was my closing illustration and I wanted to make a visual point that children need their dads to guide them through the challenging terrain of adolescence and life. On each of the traps I had fastened labels representing the “traps” of adolescence; words like peer pressure, alcohol, drugs, media, sexual immorality, rebellion, and pornography.

The barefoot and blindfolded boy took two tentative steps and was about to take a third—directly toward the bear trap—when his father, Tom, screamed into a microphone, “Trent, stop! Don’t take another step. I’ll be right there!” His order echoed through cavernous Mile High Stadium. The air seemed to suck out of the arena as an eerie silence replaced the normal fidgeting and low-grade hum of the throng.

No one moved … except Tom.

Trent sure didn’t move. He waited obediently as his father circled the trap field and stepped in-between his son and the bear trap. Tom whispered instructions to Trent, and then he turned his back to his son. The young man eagerly placed his hands on his father’s shoulders.
Slowly, taking small and deliberate steps, Tom maneuvered through the trap field, his son nearly glued to his back. Trent’s hands gripped Tom’s shoulders, his shuffling feet often clipping his dad’s heels. Tom stayed as far from the traps as possible, not taking the slightest risk that Trent might bump a trap with his bare toes.

One man’s tentative clapping broke the silence in the stadium. Soon others joined in. A chorus of voices yelled encouragement to the father and son. With only a few yards to go, some traps remained.

When the two reached me and the blindfold was removed, Tom and Trent hugged each other. Applause and cheering started at one end of the field and swelled to a thunderous, standing ovation, rolling like a tidal wave across the stadium.

Above the roar I shouted over the sound system, “Men, that’s what God has called us to do as fathers—guide our children through adolescence, the most dangerous period of our children’s lives!” (from Dennis and Barbara Rainey with Bruce Nygren, Parenting Today’s Adolescent, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998)

For a young man or young woman preparing to venture into adolescence, a good guide will provide assistance in exploring new territory by:

- Helping decide what is essential to take along.
- Explaining the bad stuff and the good stuff about the unknown territory.
- Giving guidance for the journey—what parts will be scary, what the terrain looks like, how long the trip will last, what it will be like upon arrival, etc.
- Assisting in carrying supplies or burdens.
- Preparing you to avoid danger and protection from trouble.
- Leading the way.

The “Connection Guide’s” purpose is to help a preteen or young teenager and his or her parents understand its content and application for the “outfitting” phase of the journey, which ultimately winds through the unfamiliar territory of adolescence. A good guide does not just show up the day the expedition is about to begin and say, “Okay, everybody—let’s go!”

No, a first-rate guide will gather the adventurers together long before departure and start explaining what the journey will be like. Then each person will know how to prepare, what supplies to take, what new skills to learn, what training is necessary, and what to expect once the adventure begins.

This guide will also help a preteen or teen make sure the information in this book is clearly understood. There are a couple of ways the “Connection Guide” can be used:

1. Work together on one session on a regular basis—once every one or two weeks, for example. This approach gives both the preteen or teen and parent plenty of time to read one chapter in the book, write down answers to the questions, and then complete any special project.
2. Plan a concentrated time to go through the material—perhaps devoting an entire weekend to going through the book and guide, or maybe taking two or three Saturdays to complete the assignments. Perhaps dad and mom can split their responsibilities by letting one person work on some chapters while the other parent helps with the others. (If you might be interested in a prepackaged weekend kit designed for a parent/preteen “getaway,” visit www.familylife.com and click on Passport to Purity®. Or call 1-800-FL-TODAY for more information on this resource.

Using only one book may seem awkward—so each of you may decide to have your own copy. Otherwise, the two of you will need to take turns reading, and the publisher says it is okay if a dad or mom wants to copy the pages in the “Connection Guide” where both child and parent need to write their responses. Each session will include the following elements—plus an occasional surprise:

- **Outfitting**—Preparation list for a good connection. Normally this will include reading the chapter in the book before discussion and the gathering of supplies—if any are required—for the “Hands On” project. Parent and preteen/teen divide up the responsibility for collecting materials or supplies—or may take turns.

- **On Location**—Suggestions on where to hold each Connection.

- **Key Scripture**—A meaningful Bible verse related to the content of the Connection. It would be great if both parent and preteen/teen memorized several or all of these verses.

- **Hands On**—Some type of demonstration, object lesson, or activity that makes the content of The Connection memorable.

- **The Connection**—Questions for parent and preteen/teen to discussion.

- **The Main Thing**—Summary statement of content covered in The Connection.

- **Prayer**—A proposed closing for both parent and preteen/teen. Either pray what is written, or use it as a guide in forming individual prayers.

There are other possibilities for how this book and “Connection Guide” can be used—but commit to a shared experience! This guide does not attempt to cover every conceivable issue or question a preteen or teen might ask. Ultimately, the guide—Dad or Mom or both—will have to adjust the material to a son’s or daughter’s unique personality, needs, and maturity level. Both parent and child need to allow the Holy Spirit to tailor this experience to provide the greatest benefit.

The goal is to prepare a boy or girl, whether preteen or early teen, for one of the most exciting journeys ever undertaken—the road to becoming a young man or a young woman. Let’s not talk about this any longer—it’s time to get started!

Connection 1: The Box Top

Outfitting
Read Chapter 1.
For Hands On, parent or preteen/teen should find a jigsaw puzzle having at least one hundred pieces. Bring it to your Connection time.

On Location
For the first Connection opportunity, make sure to find a place that you both enjoy—an environment to encourage good discussion and some fun. It could be a picnic table in a park for breaks to throw a Frisbee, a stroll to find flowers, or just simply sprawling on the grass and looking at the sky. Or perhaps your location will be an ice cream or donut shop to treat your sweet tooth. You might just grab soft drinks and find a quiet room at home. The place isn’t as important as the mood; be comfortable and enjoy your time together!

Key Scripture
John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Hands On
At the beginning or end of your Connection, dump the jigsaw pieces on a table. For the first five to ten minutes, try to assemble the puzzle without looking at the box top. Then spend the next five to ten minutes using the box top as a guide.
Discuss the differences between not using and using the box top. How does this little experiment point out the importance of having the right “box top” for life?

The Connection
1. For parent: What do you remember about your own journey through adolescence that made life seem like putting together a large jigsaw puzzle without having the box top?

2. For parent: Give a summary of your experience in meeting the “box top Maker.” When? Where? How? At what age? What has this decision meant to you over the years?

3. For preteen/teen: Do you recall some of the details about when you met the “box top Maker”—Jesus Christ? If you do not think you have ever accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, would you like do that now? (If necessary, use the suggested prayer on page 13 of the book.)
4. For preteen/teen: What book is a great “box top” for helping understand your life and how to live successfully?

5. For parent: Why is the Bible such a great “box top” for life?

6. For preteen/teen: If you had been in Mr. Rainey’s Sunday school class on the day each person decided whether to look in the R-rated movie box or the G-rated movie box (see pages 15–18 in the book), which box do you think you would have chosen? Why?

7. For parent: Which movie box would you have looked in and why?

The Main Thing
To figure out the puzzle of your teenage years and have a successful and joyful journey now and all of your life, you need to know the “box top” Maker and use His “box top”—the Bible as your guide.

Prayer

For parent:
Dear God, thank You for this great discussion and fun time we have had. I am so glad I know You as my Lord and Savior. Thank You for Your faithfulness to me and for allowing me to be a parent to ________. Help me never to forget how much I need You and the wisdom about life found in the Bible. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

For preteen/teen:
Dear God, thank You for letting me have this time with my _______ (mom or dad). Thank You for loving me enough to send Jesus to die for me so I could know You and have eternal life. Help me to remember that the Bible will always be my “box top” guide to understand life and to know how to obey and please You. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
Connection 2: Traps and Choices

Outfitting
Read Chapter 2.

For Hands On, find a large handkerchief, dishtowel, or other type of soft cloth that you cannot see through when rolled up.

On Location
Since the Hands On for this Connection is probably best done in a room of your house or in your backyard, grab something to drink and find a comfortable place to sit and talk. If you really want to get out of the house or have a special treat, do your Hands On first and then head out to complete your Connection.

Key Scripture
Ephesians 6:1–3: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.”

Hands On
Parent: Place the cloth blindfold over your preteen/teen’s eyes. Make sure he or she cannot see around or through the cloth. Have your child sit down. Set up an “obstacle course” using chairs, pillows, and other non-breakable items. These will represent the “traps” discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 29 of the book).

Lead your child to the room where the obstacle course is, and after turning your child around several times, ask him or her to walk through the obstacles. Stand nearby to catch your preteen/teen if he or she trips.

After trying this for a few minutes, lead your child back to the beginning of the course. This time through, verbally coach your preteen/teen through the maze by giving instructions such as, “Take one small step forward and stop. Now sidestep two feet.”

After the preteen/teen makes it through the course, remove the blindfold.

Discuss the differences in this situation between being blind and alone and being blind and having a trustworthy guide.

The Connection
1. For parent: Like the story of Josh and the old house (pages 21-22, 33 of the book), do you remember a situation when you were young and you had to decide whether or not to obey your parents? What choice did you make? What happened or did not happen as a result?

2. For parent: Did you wonder if your parents had “lost it” when you were a preteen or teen—that they just did not seem to understand you or life? Did you later change this opinion of your parents?
3. For preteen/teen: What are some rewards that God promises to children who obey their parents? (See pages 25–26.)

4. For parent: How well did you obey your parents as a preteen and teen? How might you treat your parents differently if you could be a preteen or teen again?

5. For preteen/teen: What traps do you think will be waiting as you enter your teen years?

6. For parent: What traps were waiting when you were your son’s or daughter’s age? How were they different? How were they the same? What did your parents say about the traps? What do you wish they had done differently?

7. For preteen/teen: What “voices” will be yelling for your attention as a preteen and teen? Why is it so important to read the Bible and listen to what God says?

The Main Thing
Everyone will encounter dangerous traps during the teen years. That’s why it’s so important to obey and seek guidance from godly parents and to look to God’s Word for wisdom.

Prayer

For parent:
Dear Lord, thank You for helping me make it through the traps of my teenage years. Thank You, too, for how my parents helped me along the way. Please protect ____________ during this important stage of life and provide plenty of Your wonderful wisdom from Scripture. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

For preteen/teen:
Dear Lord, thank You that I have my parents to help me avoid the traps of the teenage years. Help me to obey and listen to them and keep a good attitude. I also need Your strength and the guidance found in Your Word. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
Connection 3: The Herd

Outfitting
Read Chapter 3.

Parent: Depending on where you go for the Connection, you will need access to three cups—one empty, one full of water, and a third containing some dark liquid such as soda, coffee, or tea.

On Location
A great place to do some research and observe the movements of adolescent “herds” is a large mall on a Saturday afternoon when many kids are roaming. Situate yourself in the food court or near the mall theaters and amusement arcades. Together make note of the differences in appearance, behavior, and language of various herd types.

Key Scripture
Colossians 1:18: “He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.”

Hands On
This experiment with three cups or glasses will show the impact of good and bad friends. Ideally, do this after you have had your Connection discussion.

Pour a little water into the empty cup. Observe how clean it is. This represents the preteen/teen. Add a bit more water to the cup. Note that the water is still pure. This represents the addition of a good friend to the preteen/teen’s life. Now add some of the dark liquid to the cup. What happens? Note how what was pure is now getting polluted. This represents adding a bad friend to the preteen’s/teen’s life. Add more dark liquid. This is another bad friend. If you pour more clean water in the cup, it helps. But the water is still not clean and pure.

Discuss why it is that good friends keep you on the right path, but bad friends lead you down the wrong path.

The Connection
1. For parent: What group or groups did you attach to when you were a preteen or teen? Why did you choose this group(s)? What did you learn by being a part of this group(s)?

2. For preteen/teen: What signs of peer pressure have you already seen at grade school or junior high—for example, with things like clothes, shoes, haircuts, music?

3. For parent: Do you remember an incident when you were young where you gave in to pressure from friends and did something foolish?
4. For parent: Can you recall an incident when peer pressure was positive and helped you do the right thing?

5. For preteen/teen: Can you think of some situation you may face where you are afraid you might find it hard to resist bad peer pressure?

6. For parent: How do you think you can help your son or daughter stand up to peer pressure?

7. For preteen/teen: (See pages 48-50 of the book.) How did each of your friends rate when you examined their brains, eyes, mouths, hands, hearts, and feet?

8. For preteen/teen: How do you think you can keep friends who are a good influence? How could you find other friends who would be a good influence?

The Main Thing
It’s impossible to avoid peer pressure, so the friends you choose to hang out with will largely determine what kind of person you become as a teenager.

Prayer

For parent:
Dear Father, thank You for Your promise that You will always be our Friend and available to help in any situation. I pray that You will help ______ to remember this as the herd comes near and wants to drag ______ away to bad choices. I pray also that You will fill ______ life with good friends who love and obey You. Help them all to have great fun together. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

For preteen/teen:
Dear Lord, thank You that You are my very best Friend and will never leave me alone. Please help me find and keep good friends who will help steer me away from evil and bad choices. Help me to be a good friend in the same way to them. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
Connection 4: For Girls Only—Changing and Growing Up

Note to parent: It probably will be best for this session to be between a daughter and her mom (or if Mom is not available, with a godly, mature woman). Although Dad certainly needs to know all of this information, he will not have the understanding and sensitivity of a woman on these topics.

Outfitting
Read Chapter 4.

For Hands On, parent may need to assemble some items ahead of time. (See Hands On section below.)

On Location
Since the topics to be discussed in this session are quite personal, find a safe, quiet place where you can be alone. Maybe sitting in a car or on a park bench, or in your kitchen or family room at home will do. Grab a soft drink or brew a pot of tea. Give yourselves plenty of time. These topics are worth careful attention—meet several times if necessary to make sure the content is understood.

Key Scripture
Psalm 139:13–14: “For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.”

Hands On
Parent: Decide how you want to do this. Since your daughter is growing up and needs to understand better the personal and grooming needs of a young woman, either assemble an assortment of items at home, or take your daughter to a large chain store and a drugstore for a field trip. Examine and discuss the multitude of undergarments and personal feminine hygiene products available.

The Connection
1. For Mom: What was it like when you began to develop physically? How did you feel? When did you first wear a bra?

2. For Mom: When did you first start shaving your legs? How old were you? What was it like the first time? What advice did your mother give you on this subject?
3. For Mom: Share some of the details of your first menstrual cycle. How old were you? What happened? How did you feel about it? What information seems most important to share now with your daughter?

4. For daughter: What questions do you have for your mom about having a monthly cycle?

5. For daughter: What was most interesting to you in the story Barbara Rainey told about her daughters and the beginnings of their periods at the vacation cabin?

6. For Mom: What memories do you want to share about the changes you experienced in body shape during adolescence?

7. For Mom: When do you first remember noticing your interest in boys? Was there a humorous incident related to a boy when you were your daughter’s age?

8. For daughter: What do you think will be the most exciting change in your body and life as you go through adolescence? Why do you feel this way?

9. For both mom and daughter: What are some of the things you both can do to make sure you are modest in your appearance?

The Main Thing
The changes our bodies go through in adolescence are amazing and wonderful. God is an awesome Creator!

Prayer
For Mom:
Dear Lord, thank You for bringing _______ to this wonderful time in her life. I pray that You will protect her mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally as she experiences many exciting changes in the coming months and years. Help me to be a good friend and coach to her as we walk through this time together. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
For daughter:
Dear Lord, I thank You that I am “fearfully and wonderfully made.” I know that my body and how I will feel about the changes in my body are all a part of Your loving plan for me. Thank You for Mom and her support and example to me. Help me to honor You in the way I dress and present myself to boys. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
Connection 5: For Boys Only—Changing and Growing Up

Note to parent: It probably will be best for this session to be between a father and his son (or if Dad is not available, with a godly, mature man). Although Mom certainly needs to know all of this information, she will not have the understanding and sensitivity of a man on these topics.

Outfitting
Read Chapter 5.
For Hands On, parent may need to assemble some items ahead of time. (See Hands On section below.)

On Location
Since the topics to be discussed in this session are quite personal, find a safe, quiet place where you can be alone. Sit in a car or on a park bench or go on a hike. Maybe your deck or family room at home will do. Grab a soft drink and give yourselves plenty of time. These topics are worth careful attention—meet several times if necessary to make sure the content is understood.

Key Scripture
Psalm 139:13–14: “For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.”

Hands On
Parent: Decide how you want to do this. Since your son is growing up and needs to understand better the grooming needs of a young man, either assemble an assortment of items at home or take your son to a large chain store or drugstore for a field trip. Examine and discuss the types of personal hygiene products that are available. If necessary, buy him his first athletic supporter. Although he probably will not be shaving for a while yet, it would be fun to look at various types of razors, shave creams, aftershaves, and colognes. It would not hurt to review how to use nail clippers. If you have time, give him lessons on how to shine his shoes and knot a tie.

The Connection
1. For Dad: Tell your son a story or two concerning adolescence, and what happened when your body started changing.

2. For Dad: Were you large, small, or average in height and weight during your early teen years? What was that like? How did you feel about your size and physical strength then?
3. For Dad: What sports, activities, or hobbies did you participate in during your preteen and teen years? Why did you do what you did? What was it like participating in those sports, activities, or hobbies?

4. For Dad: Do you recall any incidents related to private body parts that occurred in a locker room when you were this age? How did you feel about undressing in front of other guys? Did you compare the development of your body to other boys’?

5. For son: What questions do you have about the changes to your body that will occur during adolescence?

6. For Dad: About how old were you when you started noticing girls? Do you remember the first girl you really liked? Did any humorous event happen to you concerning a girl when you were a preteen or teen?

7. For Dad: What advice can you give your son on how to respond properly to flirtatious girls?

8. For both Dad and son: What can a man or young man do to keep himself pure and not fall into temptation when thinking about or looking at girls and women?

9. For Dad: What practical advice can you give your son on how he can responsibly control his sex drive?

The Main Thing
The changes our bodies go through in adolescence are amazing and wonderful. God is an awesome Creator!

Prayer
For Dad:
Dear Lord, thank You for bringing ________ to this wonderful time in his life. I pray that You will protect him mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally as he experiences many exciting changes in the coming months and years. Help me to be a good friend and coach to him as we walk through this time together. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
For son:
Dear Lord, I thank You that I am “fearfully and wonderfully made.” I know that my body and how I will feel about the changes in my body are all a part of Your loving plan for me. Thank You for Dad and his support and example to me. Help me to honor You in the way I think about and treat girls. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
Connection 6: What is Sex?

Note to parent: Once again, we recommend that the same-sex parent or mentor have this discussion with the preteen or teen.

Outfitting
Read Chapter 6.
For the Hands On, parent may wish to find an illustration in an encyclopedia and review the basics of human anatomy with the preteen/teen.

On Location
As with the discussion of body changes, this one should be held in a safe, secure, confidential environment.

Key Scripture
Genesis 1:27: “And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Hands On
If this is the wish of the parent, review an illustration or drawing that shows the basics of both the male and female anatomies.

The Connection
1. For parent: Share appropriately your memory of how you learned what sexual intercourse was—who, if anyone, gave you the “birds and bees” talk?

2. For parent and preteen/teen: Why is God not “down” on sex? How do we know that?

3. For preteen/teen: How many times does a couple have to have sex in order for the girl to have a baby?

4. For preteen/teen: Why is it best to wait to be married to have sex?

5. For preteen/teen: Is there anything you do not understand about sexual intercourse that you would like to have explained? Ask your parent.
The Main Thing
God created sex to be enjoyed by a couple, but only after they are married.

Prayer

For parent:
Dear God, thank You for the wonderful opportunity You gave man and woman to share the process of creating a new human being in the form of a baby. I thank You, too, that in Your will and timing You will allow __________ to enjoy sexual intimacy with a spouse. In Jesus’ name, amen.

For preteen or teen:
Dear God, thank You for the changes You will make in my body, which will include the opportunity in Your will someday to enjoy love making with my spouse and become a parent. You are awesome! In Jesus’ name, amen.
Connection 7: Dangerous Cliffs Ahead

Outfitting
Read Chapter 7.

Parent: For the Hands On section, obtain several strong, “helium-grade quality” latex balloons. These are usually available at a florist or party supply store. Fill at least two balloons with water. Also locate a sharp needle or pin.

On Location
Since this chapter concerns boundaries, avoiding dangerous places, and related topics, you may want to go on a field trip to a nearby park, office tower, or hotel, or some other location that has a trail or overlook with a steep drop-off. Or find another example of a boundary—such as a wall or fence around a prison or county jail. Such a visit could make the theme of this Connection more memorable. You will probably need to be back at home to do the Hands On.

Key Scripture
1 Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.”

Hands On
The purpose of this experiment is to show how many young persons lose their innocence and purity.

The balloon full of water represents any son’s or daughter’s innocence. Take the needle or pin and carefully prick the balloon. The balloon will shed a few drops of water (especially if you squeeze) or might even spring a larger leak. (If the balloon pops, put a small piece of clear tape on the second balloon and try pricking through the tape.) The water coming out illustrates what happens when a young person begins to “dribble away” his or her innocence.

The two of you can discuss examples of how this happens; for example, watching an R-rated movie with a sex scene, becoming too close physically or emotionally with a boyfriend or girlfriend, experimenting with sex, and so on. Every time you think of another example, squeeze the balloon. Obviously, if you lose more innocence every time there is an incident where purity is lost, or if you have experiences with multiple boyfriends or girlfriends, by the time you want to get married, there won’t be much—if any—innocence left.

That’s the point! If you want to be pure when you marry, you have to guard your innocence. Don’t dribble it away a little at a time. But the decision to stay pure must be made in advance.

The Connection
1. For parent and preteen/teen: What was most interesting to you about the story of the queen and the knights who carried her chair? (See pages 93-95.)
2. For preteen/teen: Why is it so dangerous to walk up to the edge of a steep cliff?

3. For the preteen/teen: If you have a choice, would you rather have a fence at the top edge of a steep cliff or no fence? Why do you say that?

4. For parent: In what areas do you wish you had had better boundaries when you were a preteen or teenager? Why?

5. For preteen/teen: Why would having sex before marriage be unwise?

6. For preteen/teen: Why do your friends not care as much for your safety and success in life as your parents do?

7. For parent: What do you think it means when the Bible says in Proverbs 4:23, “Watch over your heart”?

8. For parent and preteen/teen: What are some of the dangers of losing some of your innocence on the Internet? How can you avoid getting hurt while using the Internet?

9. For preteen/teen: In what areas of your life do you think you might need strong boundaries or fences?

The Main Thing
The best way to protect your innocence and to avoid potential trouble is to construct fences that protect you from temptation and danger.
Prayer

For parent:
Dear Lord, thank You for Your promise not to allow us to receive more temptation than we can handle and to always give us a way out. Please help ______ to draw on Your strength when times of temptation come. Help me to be alert and supportive in building strong boundaries that will protect ______ innocence. Guard this precious child through the power of the risen Christ. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

For preteen/teen:
Dear Lord, thank You that I have parents who are concerned about my safety and innocence. Help me to obey them and listen to the wisdom You have given them that helps me. Please help me to set up strong fences, make good choices, and keep my purity. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.
Connection 8: Dating?

Outfitting
Read Chapter 8.
   Note to preteen/teen: Before you begin this Connection, fill out the “Dating Questionnaire” printed in the Hands On section below.
   Both parent and preteen/teen: Look over the “Wait-to-Date Contract” printed below. If you are interested in making this commitment, pull that page out and have a signing ceremony at the end of this Connection.

On Location
This topic might be really fun to discuss on a date! Dad or Mom, get creative! This is a unique opportunity for a dad to take his daughter, or a mom her son, on an evening out to experience this Connection.

Key Scripture
Philippians 2:3–4: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Hands On
The preteen/teen should fill out the following questionnaire before this Connection.

The Dating Questionnaire

1. What is “dating”?

2. What is the purpose of dating?

3. How old should you be for your first date?

4. What type of person should you date?
The Connection

1. For parent: What did a “date” or “dating,” mean when you were a preteen or teenager?

2. For parent: Give a description of your first date.

3. For preteen/teen: What does dating mean to most of your friends?

4. For preteen/teen: What would you say is the purpose of dating?

5. For parent: What rules did your parents have concerning dating? Why did you agree or disagree with them?

6. For preteen/teen: At what age do you think you would like to start dating?

7. For parent: How do you respond to what your preteen or teen just said about the age to start dating?

8. For preteen/teen: What kind of person should you date—what qualities will you look for in the other person?

9. For parent: What would you do differently if you could redo your dating experiences?

The Main Thing

When you are young, learning how to relate to and serve persons of the opposite sex is more important than dating.
Prayer

For parent:
Dear God, I thank You for Your kindness to me in helping me through my own dating experiences that ultimately allowed me to marry __________ (husband or wife). Please guide _______ in learning how to relate to friends of the opposite sex. May these teenage years be filled with fun, joy, and purity. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

For preteen or teen:
Dear God, I am grateful that my parents have taken the interest and time to discuss dating with me. Help us to continue to talk often about this topic in the months and years ahead. I know I have much to learn and need their wisdom and Yours. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

Note: If appropriate, this is a good time to have the signing ceremony for the “Wait-to-Date Contract” (printed on the next page).
Wait-to-Date Contract

To My Parents:

Recognizing ...

❖ That God holds you accountable to raise me in the admonition of the Lord,
❖ That I am under your authority as a child in this home, and
❖ That you love me unconditionally and are committed to my well-being,

I agree to wait until you believe I am mature enough to go on a date.

____________________________________
Preteen/teen signature

____________________________________
Date

____________________________________
Parent’s signature

____________________________________
Parent’s signature
A Passport to Purity® Weekend

Some parents find it helpful to schedule a special “rite of passage” weekend to review the topics covered in this book in a concentrated, memorable way. To help facilitate such an experience FamilyLife has developed a resource package called Passport to Purity. This boxed kit includes:

- **Audio Tour**: Dennis and Barbara Rainey discuss five topics in this creative audio format. Drama and music are used to make the content captivating to a preteen. A special instruction tape for parents is included.

- **Tour Guide**: This manual for parents explains how to prepare for and conduct the weekend activities. It includes tips on meals, projects, and fun activities.

- **Adventure Journal**: This manual for the preteen contains a note-taking outline for each session and “make up your mind” discussion questions. Creative illustrative art aids content comprehension.

- **My Passport**: A unique document to help the preteen solidify the commitment made to purity. Both parent and preteen sign the passport in a special ceremony that concludes the weekend.

Although this material is ideally presented to a preteen, Passport to Purity is suitable for use with young teens as well.

If you are interested in more information on Passport to Purity, visit www.familylife.com or call 1-800-FL-TODAY (358-6329), 24 hours a day. A customer service representative will be happy to assist you.