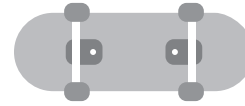


It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It

As a parent, you want to invest your time in things that matter. Like having the right conversation with your child at the right time, with the right things to say at your fingertips. These conversation guides will help you navigate the critical issues you face at each phase, as you imagine the end for your child. They are based on research from **The Phase Project**, a collaborative, ongoing effort assembling classic and innovative research with practical application.



Middle School

FAITH

PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

... for great conversations with kids

Middle school is a new and exciting time in the life of our kids that's accompanied by lots of change. And with all that change comes the opportunity for a lot of growth in key areas—including faith. As our kids make their way through the middle school years, they're transitioning from a time when their faith has primarily been a by-product of their parent's faith, and mostly reactive rather than proactive. But these are the years when they take initiative and create a faith of their own. The best thing you can do is be a coach, not a teacher. Encourage and affirm them in their personal faith journey. In this phase your role is to:

Provoke
DISCOVERY



So they will . . .
**TRUST GOD'S CHARACTER
& EXPERIENCE GOD'S FAMILY**

This guide is designed to help you meet your middle schooler where they are now, giving you some words to say and not to say as you navigate the critical issue of faith. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal in mind for your kids:

Authentic Faith: trusting Jesus in a way that transforms how I love God, myself, and the rest of the world.

WHAT TO SAY:

"If you have doubts or questions, that doesn't mean you're doing faith wrong."

"Can you put words to some of your doubts or things you struggle with?"

"I'm glad you asked me."

"I'm not sure, but we can find out."

"Now is the time to begin creating good habits to grow your faith. Want to pick out a Bible or a devotional for you to use?"

"I've always known you had _____ in you, and I love to watch it grow as your relationship with God grows. I can't wait to see what else God is going to do in you and through you."

Ask questions to invite them into your own faith:

"I feel like God has been bringing the idea of serving others (or another topic) to my mind a lot lately. Do you have any ideas of things I could do, or things we could do as a family?"

Ask questions that help them personalize their faith:

"What do you think?"

"How is that true in your own life?"

"One of the best things you can do for your faith is to be surrounded by a small group of people who are on the same journey as you. What can we do to make it easier for you?"

At times the best thing to do is to say nothing. Let your student see you model what a "grown up" faith looks like. This will speak louder than any directive.

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

"Have you had a quiet time today?" (In other words, don't treat time with God as an assignment.)

"Don't ask/say that. You just need to believe more."

"If you really had a relationship with God, you wouldn't do/say/think that."

"When you have a relationship with God, everything just works out. If it feels like it's not working out, just pray more."

JUST REMEMBER

Every PHASE is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The middle school years are discovery years where you'll want to affirm their personal journey. Support them in making time for a weekly small group or serving opportunities. When the time is right, share some of your own doubts and struggles and what you do with them. Remember that their journey may look different from yours, but no matter what, you want to continue to keep the lines of communication open.