

Communicate to stay connected to your teenagers



Last month's topic was helping your kids stay connected to God. This month, we turn to parent-teen communication, which is notorious for breaking down. But it doesn't have to be that way. With some insight, strategy, and patience, you can keep the lines of communication open with your teenagers, who need you now more than ever.

Most importantly, you must be willing to work hard at really communicating. Because language is always changing, what adults say and what kids hear—and vice versa—sometimes aren't close to the same thing. Be ready to hear things you aren't so sure you want to hear, and listen without getting ahead of yourself when you don't know how to respond.

Although it's a cliché, communication really is a two-way street. The more honest and transparent you are, the more your kids will open up. Maintain an "open door" policy about any and all topics. Instead of pushing for information, share fun activities together so your teenagers feel comfortable about opening up. And assure them that you'll keep what they say private.

Listening well to your teenagers shows that you respect their feelings and value their opinions, even if you don't agree with them. Read on for helpful ideas about keeping the lines of communication open.



It's already time to register for camp! Submerge is our annual **FUSE Summer Youth Camp**. This year we will be going to Camp Kulaqua near Gainesville. It's 4 days of fun, friends, and fuego worship sessions!

Some of the cool activities include: Water park, Go Karts, Swimming at Hornsby Spring, Canoeing, Softball, Volleyball, Basketball, Shuffleboard, Soccer, etc.

Every night we will gather as one Youth Group from many campuses to worship and hear a great message.

*** THERE IS LIMITED SPACE-REGISTER EARLY! ***

When: August 8-11, 2010 **Cost:** \$250 per student. Includes everything but snacks.

REGISTER AT FUSEYOUTHEVENTS.COM

LOOK UNDER "SIGNUP" AND CLICK ON "YOUTH SUMMER CAMP 2010."

Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Connect with your kids by asking these questions:

1. What are the most important requirements for good communication? What often gets in the way of it?
2. What can happen when communication breaks down? How can people restore good give-and-take?
3. How would you rate our family's communication skills? What do we need to work on the most, and why?
4. How can you tell when someone's really listening to you? How does that make you feel, and how does it affect your relationship?



FOCUS ON PRAYER

PRAY THAT:

1. Communication lines stay open between you and your teenagers as they grow.
2. God will help you be an active listener who strives to understand what your kids are saying.
3. You can use good communication to resolve family conflicts.
4. God will help you effectively communicate your love—and his love—to your teenagers.

Verse of the Month

"Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!"
(Romans 12:16)

God places people in families so they can nurture and support each other. One way we do this is by communicating our experiences, thoughts, and feelings. When family members feel free to express themselves and truly listen to one another, homes are more harmonious.

UPCOMING SERIES...



In the month of June and July we will be studying the amazing life of Elijah.

Even the most committed of God's servants may at times experience discouragement, pessimism, and a desire to withdraw from their calling. 1 Kings tells the story of how the mighty Elijah succumbed to human weakness, and how the remarkable grace of God renewed this once fearless prophet and restored him to his ministry.

Tips for strong communication:

1. **Start with nonthreatening, easy, open-ended questions.** Ask questions that have more than one right answer, not closed questions, which are leading or limiting.
2. **Remember that feelings aren't right or wrong; they just are.** Stifle the inclination to shut down, neutralize, or "solve" most negative feelings. Give kids the freedom to say things that may not make sense.
3. **Give kids enough time to respond.** Remember the advice in James 1:19 to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Don't be afraid of silence. Learn from it.
4. **Ask follow-up questions without evaluating.** Vary your response pattern, using reflection, summarizing, probing, and comparing and contrasting.
5. **Don't ask questions if you aren't ready to listen.** Resist the temptation to stop listening when you anticipate what kids are about to say. Listen with your eyes and your heart.