

44 ideas FOR 'TWEENS AND TEENS

learning at home



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greetings, parents!

The title of “parent” is a great honor God has given us! How humbling it is to realize He chose each child for us to raise as vessels that are well equipped to be used by Him. What we do as parents in the training of our children truly will ring out in all eternity! Therefore, we need to put our hands to the proverbial plow. We can’t do this in our own human ability, but only by seeking the Lord for His grace, guidance, strength, and wisdom in our calling and duties of parenting. Yes, He can use us in the lives of our children, but only He is the one who calls our children to Him for their salvation and His glory.

The Coronavirus pandemic is a great time for us to re-evaluate our parenting. But, not to go toward defeat, discouragement, guilt, fear, or a host of other non-productive emotions or thinking cycles. Rather, our mindset needs to be one of excitement that we have the honor to responsibly encourage and equip our children in life and relationship skills, by the grace and power of Jesus. Let’s redeem this time and consider it a blessing, not a burden.

The time we have with them is so short!

The purpose before us is so serious!

And the rewards are so great!

My hope is this information will encourage you as parents! May you be inspired to know God cheers you on to continually be faithful in doing good works. I want to reassure you that most parents view themselves as failing as they try to figure out how to nurture their children at any age. This is what keeps us going back to prayer and asking God — Who knows and loves our children even more than we do — to direct us to a better way of parenting. Remember, God gives you the wisdom, the strength, and faithfulness to train your children in the ways they need at various seasons in their life. Hold on to His promise for you in His word. Isaiah 41:10 states, *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*

This means we as parents are kind and loving but we are firm in our standards of raising our children into productive adults. It’s okay if they don’t like it, argue with us, or tell us they will never speak to us again. They are reacting in their sinfulness. The key is realizing we can’t REACT in our sinfulness!

As I share this information, please hold on to the goal that we want to take on our rightful responsibility as parents to raise amazing adults who are focused on loving God above all else. Also, to love others above themselves. Yes, they need to know they are valuable to God and important to us!

In this ‘me, me, me’ society, it is very difficult for parents to resist the enemy’s temptations of giving in to their children’s wants and demands for the sake of peace in the home. It is important to remember we have one chance, one childhood, one opportunity to actually ‘parent’ our children. This is not always easy or fun. Nor do we see good results right away. We need to embrace the truth in God’s Word of how to raise children and try to train them in good choices. Colossians 3:21 warns us, *Fathers, (surely this includes mothers too!), do not provoke (exasperate possibly because of*

your high expectations they can never meet), *lest they become discouraged* (and just give up).

You are your child's first and best teacher at any age. No other person can take your place! Others can add to your teaching, but they are not meant to be your child's main mentor! The key is to enjoy being their 'coach' at every aspect in their life! How? By realizing it is 1) God, Who is guiding your efforts and 2) not focusing on their reactions to your training! It's all about what you focus on. This is where growing in your own relationship with God is critical. If you focus on pursuing God, He will enable you to train your children with a kind, compassionate heart, and then help you to realize your job is to please God and others! Before reacting to your children's attitude — stop your mindset and redirect it — relying on the Holy Spirit enabling you to possess these attitudes: *Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23).



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44 Ideas for 'Tweens and Teens Learning at Home

One of the concepts I share with parents in my consulting ministry is called “jurisdictions.” Parents continually tell me it is one of the foundational truths that they go back to when things get tough! It also encourages them to really think about how to help their children become well-grounded in all aspects of life. In other words, it gives their children the ability to make good choices no matter what the situation is because they are well equipped with biblical, practical wisdom.

The following are eight jurisdictions and their corresponding ideas to implement while building relationships with our 'tweens and teens. First of all, what is a jurisdiction? A jurisdiction is an area of responsibility concerning a person or thing, in this case the raising of our children. It is something we need to focus on and want to do exceedingly well. Parental jurisdictions are in the realm of duty, control, and provision regarding our children's character development, education in knowledge and skills, holistic health, and nurturing of their childhood and future adulthood. Our government and church have jurisdictions over our lives, but not in the upbringing of our children. We alone are responsible for that. Our responsibility is to help our children of all ages, particularly our 'tweens and teens, learn self-governance in these eight areas before they leave our home to begin their adult life on their own.

Jurisdiction #1 - Spiritual

2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

Every aspect of parenting should be founded on the Word of God, not the opinions of man, worldly psychology, trends of friends, or the latest and greatest popular Christian book or speaker. It is vital we know what deceit is entering our churches, youth groups, Bible studies, Christian friends we adore, or godly leaders we look to for guidance. We, as parents, must make sure all of our child training goes along with Scripture and help our 'tweens and teens learn the importance of the Word of God.

How do we make learning and memorizing Scripture verses fun and exciting? First, it's important our children understand that having a Bible and being permitted to speak about Jesus is a wonderful gift. Many countries do not allow parents to teach their children from a Bible or they will go to jail. Second, our children need to realize, Scripture training is not another chore. Rather, it is an honor to study God's Word and grow into a strong Christian who can change the world around them!

Ideas/Sources:

- 1 Enjoy dramatics. Listen to George Sarris reading the Bible with dramatics. Have your 'tweens and teens read stories of Heroes of the Faith from YWAMPublishing.com, using vocal dramatics in front of the family. Record it. Video them. Take pictures. Have fun with this!

- 2 Teach how to evangelize. Read with your teens *Jesus Only* by John MacArthur. With the world telling us there are many ways to Heaven, have your children be grounded in the salvation message shared in John 14:6 that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Have your children write a short essay on the steps to salvation with Scripture references. Then share with family members who are pretending to not be saved or to have doubts about salvation. Role playing is a great way to 'live out' the Scriptures!
- 3 Pray. *Prayer Portions* by Sylvia Gunter is one of my all-time favorites for getting in the mood to pray! This has a lot of Scripture and ideas of what to specifically pray for. Your children can go alone in their rooms and pick out a page to pray. Then come and share with the family what they chose. It is vital your children learn to pray Scripture into their lives all the time! Don't overlook the importance of praying together before family mealtime. Reciting a memorized "grace" prayer together is a good start. Adding a personal touch by each person taking turns to pray for others' needs is a more meaningful practice.
- 4 Research. Use OpenBible.info and type in any subject to find a list of Scripture verses. Make a booklet on various topics and how God teaches you about that subject. Teens need to know what God thinks about drinking alcohol to excess, pre-marital sex, and even complaining. Help them understand how to replace these sin issues with God's way of guiding us to make better choices. Put off the bad (old man) and put on the good (new man)!
- 5 Talk about controversial topics. Research viewpoints shared on talk shows and other media about current topics such as news events, politics, and popular culture. What does the world think versus what does God think? What do Christians disagree on and why? What should be your attitude and speech when disagreements arise? What do we do when family members disagree on certain subjects?
- 6 Discuss consequences. Find and discuss true life examples of people who chose to drink and drive, got pregnant before marriage, had an abortion, went to a party with someone and ended up sexually assaulted, or became addicted to drugs. Not as a point of gossip, but as a way to learn to discern. What scriptural warning did God give in regards to any of those hardships? (Hint: the Proverbs are full of them!)
- 7 Evaluate. What does it mean to truly love God with all your heart? Does your choice of friends, social media, and personal lifestyle show that you love yourself or others more?

Jurisdiction #2 - Social

Proverbs 18:24 states, *A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.* 1 Corinthians 15:33 shares, *Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals.*

I cannot begin to tell you how many grieving parents there are who have raised up their children in the ways of the Lord, but bad company ruined everything! What seemed to be innocent friendships or a great youth group eventually turned the hearts of their children, not only away from the family, but from the ways of God!

God warns us as parents that the bad friendships will ruin the good training we have worked

so hard to instill. There is so much pressure for parents to make sure their children are well-socialized, often meaning time spent with same age friends. There is indeed some importance to this. But, what kind of socialization? What kind of friends? This also includes movies, books, magazines, television, YouTube, and internet searches. Bad company sneaks into the minds of our children in many ways. Be alert! A parent must take seriously the responsibility of not allowing people of any age to pull their children away from godly teaching and loyalty to parents.

Proverbs 13:20 says, *Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.* Walking with wise people can come in the form of godly books and movies. Try replacing some of your children's free time typically spent with their same age friends by 'walking with the wise'. When in-person get-togethers are not possible, use of Facetime, Skype, or Zoom platforms may work for communicating with grandparents, aunts, and uncles in your extended family or community circle elders.

Ideas/Sources:

- 8 Read the book, *Do Justice* by Kristi Burton Brown. This book will give your family choices on how to minister to others. It is one of my absolute favorites and so needed in order to help teens focus on others instead of themselves. (And, yes, she is my amazing daughter!)
- 9 Discuss the question, "What does it mean to be a 'follower of Christ'?" Are our choices based on following our friends more than following God? Children need to learn that the type of friends they choose will have a tremendous impact on their life. Jesus chose people that were willing to be provoked to godliness. Until 'tweens and teens understand who they should be friends with and who they can be gracious to, but not spend a lot of time with, they will struggle with what will pull them down.
- 10 Read books or listen to audiobooks of autobiographies or biographies recounting the life stories of people considered "heroes of the faith". There are many good books on those who chose to live their life for Christ. 'Tweens and teens need to walk into the world of other strong Christians that can mentor their minds on how they, too, can do great things for Christ.
- 11 Host family read-aloud sessions with *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* by John Foxe. This is a great book to read together as a family and discuss the seriousness of the choices these Christians made. Add to your family read-aloud time present-day Christians who are suffering for the sake of Christ. Voice of the Martyrs, found online at Persecution.com, is a website that has lots of articles and a free magazine you can read together. When our 'tweens complain about not being able to be on their phones or computers, how would they feel about being torn away from their family because of simply believing in Christ? Sometimes kids need a reality check about what is really going on in other teens' lives! Other 'tweens and teens may be more soft-hearted and would benefit from inspirational stories of God's goodness.
- 12 Watch quality movies such as *Amazing Grace!* the story of William Wilberforce and John Newton. Or view historically accurate movies of the Civil War era that feature General Robert E. Lee, who was a godly man; or the courageous abolitionist, Harriet Tubman. Our society has become too embedded with purely entertaining movies instead of those which can teach and inspire. Our 'tweens and teens need to have role models with the behavior of Christ and His choices to glorify God.

- 13 Help your teen student develop a club or Bible study for younger children. My daughter, Kristi, formed a program called D.O.V.E.S for elementary-age girls. It helped her to focus on befriending younger sisters in Christ, encouraging them to love God and family. Helping younger children in Awana, Good News Club, or other Christian service-type ministries is a great way to help your 'tweens and teens get their focus off themselves and their social media.
- 14 Encourage mentor relationships with appropriate older men and women. Kristi made it a goal to be friends with my friends! Older women encouraged her to keep faithful in the ways of God. Older people in your teen's life are so important, rather than only being friends with their same age group. Be an example to them in your own friendships. Do you have a hobby you share with a friend, a ministry you work in together, books you discuss, or simply spend quality time talking to one another? 'Tweens and teens need to cultivate healthy friendships and your own example is a good model for them.
- 15 Read and discuss books such as *The Power for True Success: How to Build Character in Your Life* by Institute in Basic Life Principles. Consider focusing on one character quality a week. Other resources for reading and discussion of godly character include JC Ryle's *Thoughts for Young Men*, and *Disciplines of a Godly Man/Woman* by Ken and Barbara Hughes.

Jurisdiction #3 - Sexual

1 Corinthians 6:18 commands, *Flee from sexual immorality*. Matthew 5:28 warns, *But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart*.

It is truly sad when I hear in my consulting office of Christians succumbing to pre-marital sex, adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. I have personally seen many lives and family relationships devastated by sexual sin. There are best-selling books and very popular authors that have a secular worldview, instead of a Christian perspective, on these choices that are being made. It's important our teens know exactly what God says about each and every sexual subject so they aren't deceived by what the world — and even other Christians — are now accepting.

Remember when approaching this subject that age appropriateness is important. We want to keep our children innocent in sexual topics until they need to know about these delicate issues. But also be aware that someone else might enlighten them, and not in a good sense! Children need to know about their own body's development, how babies are made, and all that other good stuff that can sometimes be uncomfortable for parents to discuss. Be sure if you have teens, 'tweens, and younger children that you are careful to address these topics so that younger children are not unwittingly exposed to things beyond their comprehension. But sooner is better than later in our toxic culture where the average age of initial pornography exposure is now 8, and average age of first sexual encounter is 13.

Ideas/Sources:

- 16 Discuss the difficult topics. Subjects such as date rape, abortion demanded by a boyfriend, and friends who share they are homosexuals are important to address through Scripture. This is not about our opinions or the trend of our day to accept sinful choices, rather it is about

what God expects of us and how we love people despite their choices. How do we stay true to God in every area, including sexual choices or the sexual beliefs of others, by sharing biblical truth with a loving heart, not a harsh spirit? Invite your teens to do a Bible search on these topics and ask them to defend their position scripturally and winsomely.

- 17 Discuss and protect from pornography. It is shocking how many young girls are addicted to pornography, how many teen boys know graphic sexual acts, and how many parents themselves are struggling with this issue. Be sure to have internet protection in your home with products like CovenantEyes.com. Be willing to have specific discussions with your teens about this pervasive issue. Axis.org has excellent conversation kits to use with teens on current cultural topics like gender identity, sexuality, and pornography. *CAUTION: Be careful with the 'every person's battle' concept as this can lead to excuses as to why people make sinful sexual choices.*

Jurisdiction #4 - Physical

This includes nutrition, exercise, sleep, and chores. 1 Corinthians 10:31 instructs, *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Psalm 4:8 shares, *In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.* Proverbs 18:9 reminds, *Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.*

These are just basic things we need to do in life. Once we know how to approach these basic areas that help us function at our best, it is much easier to go out and do other things well.

Ideas/Sources:

- 18 Choose a sustainable exercise routine and implement it as a family. Scientific data shows that some form of exercise, which usually includes getting the heart rate up and the equivalent of 10,000 steps daily, greatly helps in how people deal with life. Find reasonable ways that everyone in your family can get exercise — and hopefully sunshine outdoors — such as a brisk walk after a meal, a family game of baseball or basketball on Saturday afternoon, or playing at a park after church are all fun, relationship builders, and beneficial exercise for each person. I've also made a regimen for myself that takes 20-30 minutes. If I get this done three times/week, then I am happy! BTW, I'm not officially recommending this as I am not a doctor. I'm just sharing how easy it can be if you don't want to go to the gym or spend hours doing exercise.
- 19 Use anatomy books to teach about muscle groups. Choose exercises that will strengthen those parts of the body. Set daily, weekly, and monthly goals for exercising different ones.
- 20 Research nutrition. Find super easy, super good snacks to make at home, such as green smoothies, power bars, and healthy granola. Put together a little recipe book that every family member can use to make hearty snacks..
- 21 Create a cookbook of family favorite meals for holidays, birthdays, and everyday foods from which your family together can prepare healthy, delicious meals, which are cost effective.
- 22 Enlist your teens to come up with the "5 Fab Foods." What this means is that they choose five fabulous breakfasts, five fabulous lunches, and so on for dinners and snacks. But they must

be nutritious. It makes grocery shopping and preparation so much easier. Be sure to assign your 'tweens and teens meals to prepare — they can learn to become responsible from start to finish of meal preparation, which will help to relieve Mom of those duties on her busy days.

- 23** Teach basic household chores! Hmmmm What's a more exciting way to phrase that? My goal when my children were still under my roof was to teach each of them the ability to do any type of chore regardless of their boy/girl gender. My boys were required to know how to cook, wash and fold clothes, vacuum, and clean a toilet, as were my girls. Girls should also be taught basic car maintenance, household repairs, and other skills often taught only to boys. You get the point. Put all the kids on a rotation method so each 'tween and teen has the opportunity to become experienced with a variety of chores and life skills.
- 24** Enforce good sleep habits. Sleep is vitally important for people of all ages to be able to function well. This might include learning what each one needs in order to go to sleep. Some people need down time, warm baths, book reading, or not as many hours of sleep. Forcing a certain number of hours of sleep can cause a lot of conflict among family members. It is helpful to have a set bedtime with a routine started in early childhood. This might include: screens off by 7pm, baths and pajamas on by 8pm, bedtime read-aloud story until 8:30, then prayer, kiss, and lights-out by 9pm. The point is that if bedtime is consistent, then everyone's body clocks will wake them up naturally in the morning when they have slept enough. It takes practice and consistency.
- 25** Insist on good grooming habits. These could include a study on skin care, hair care and styling, makeup, appropriate clothing choices for daughters; and shaving, showering, and deodorant use for sons.

Jurisdiction #5 - Financial

1 Timothy 5:8 warns, *But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.* 2 Thessalonians 3:10 reminds, *For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.* Proverbs 19:17 suggests, *Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deed.*

The financial jurisdiction has a lot to do with your children understanding the concepts behind jobs, working, and the different aspects of money. It is rewarding to work and manage our income biblically.

Ideas/Sources:

- 26** Teach and train for work. It's important your 'tweens and teens understand that God requires us to work. The Proverbs 31 woman is a great learning tool for young women to discover the many different aspects of work she understood. Young men should also be equipped with lots of skills. Doing a study on all kinds of college degrees, trade schools, and the use of gifts and talents is a must if teens are going to grow up being confident with their abilities in the workforce. It's important that both our sons and daughters are equipped to make money so they can help with the family economy, or support themselves as adults if they remain single.
- 27** Apply for scholarships to help with the financial hardships of higher education or training. This is a great process that will help your teens develop the skills they will need to apply for jobs

when they enter the workforce.

- 28** Teach your children about money management. Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace* is an excellent course the whole family could do together. Remind teens to save, give to charity, budget for their expenses, then have some leftover to enjoy spending on a movie or other treat. This also encourages a good work ethic when 'tweens and teens reap the rewards of their work and money management.
- 29** Study the biblical concepts regarding co-signing, lending, borrowing, and being in debt. Should they get a loan on a car or buy it debt-free? Help them develop a realistic budget for living on their own. Have your 'tween or teen interview a person who is a saver, not a spender; then make a list of the principles they espouse. Have them research and record the answers to these questions: How much do alcohol and cigarettes cost? Speeding tickets and tattoos? Car insurance if you have a lot of driving infractions? Get them thinking about the choices people make with money and how all areas of life are affected.
- 30** Help your 'tweens and teens start a home-based business. What skills do your teens have that they can become proficient in to earn income? With a bit of training they can be providing childcare, pet sitting, dog walking, and lawn maintenance. All generally have low start-up costs, are easy entry, and are often-needed businesses in most neighborhoods. Help them to write a business plan, then support them in launching their business with your supervision. Allow them to make mistakes now so they learn things to avoid in the future. AME has a blog and several resources on teaching young people about entrepreneurship at AMEProgram.com.

Jurisdiction #6 - Mental

2 Corinthians 10:5 states, *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.* Romans 12:1-2 instructs, *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Ideas/Sources:

- 31** Memorize Proverbs 23:7 and Romans 12:1-2 as a family. So many times we want to change the attitudes and behavior of our children and therefore that is what we focus on. But God says, *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he* (Proverbs 23:7 KJV). The concept behind this verse is, "What we think is what we become". In other words, if you are thinking lustful thoughts, you become a lustful person. If you think prideful thoughts, you become a prideful person. We need to start with the 'thought patterns' of our teens, instead of starting with their behavior. Really listen to what they are saying. Instead of instantly correcting them, care enough to ask questions. A wise parent draws out of their children what is going on inside of their head. But, in order for them to share with you their most personal thoughts, you must be trustworthy with what they share — no retaliation toward them for their confidentiality and no gossiping to your friends. Otherwise, why would they share their deeply held thoughts with us ever again?
- 32** Recognize and reduce NATs (Negative Automatic Thoughts). Have everyone in the family listen for NATs from their siblings, parents, or others. During family mealtime, talk about one NAT from the day without identifying who spoke it; discuss how that NAT lines up with Scripture.

- 33** On a sheet of paper, have your 'tween or teen create two columns. In the left column, they are to make a list of negative thoughts about God, themselves, or you. In the right column, have them write down Scriptures that replace those negative thoughts. Do the same for the lies, deceits, or partial truths they are believing and pair the truth of God's word with each.
- 34** Discuss as a family how bad behavior and bad beliefs start with a thought and how that thought turns into a choice. A good choice keeps us on the path of righteousness, but a bad choice can lead to a lifestyle with long-term bad, even dangerous, consequences. Read James 1:14-15 and discuss this same progression from thought to sin. Encourage your 'tweens and teens to think according to Scripture instead of thinking their own thoughts. This is what can deliver them (and you!) from a lot of painful consequences!
- 35** Help your 'tweens and teens discover and pursue their path of life beyond high school. These choices could include entrepreneurship, the military, or trade/vocational school. Find opportunities with them that back up your teaching and Christian worldview. Would it be appropriate for them to graduate early from high school? This might help them reach their goal sooner. For more information, go to <https://chec.org/just-beginning/high-school/>. The CHEC Guidebook for Homeschooling in Colorado has an entire chapter dedicated to helping teens during their high school years. Go to <https://chec.org/resources/chec-products/>.
- 36** Higher education can benefit strong students who seek a professional career in something such as Christian ministry, engineering, law, or medicine. Help them prepare for success by becoming a disciplined, independent learner during their high school years. Dual-enrollment means taking college classes online while still in high school. This can save a lot of money and time if your teen is capable of the work. Check out Christian universities with online dual-enrollment programs including <https://www.calvary.edu/>.

Jurisdiction #7 - Emotional

Psalm 34:18 shares, *The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.* God gave us emotions to use. He cares about how we feel, but as with all things He gives us, we are to be good stewards of our emotions, teaching our 'tweens and teens to do likewise.

Feelings are important and they need to be nurtured and taken care of. We can't minimize or maximize feelings, so we have to find the balance. One way to do this is to embrace the truth of how we feel and then deal with it in a godly way! Phillipians 4:6-7 instructs, *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

NOTE: This verse displays a concept of "putting off being anxious" and replacing it with "putting on prayer." This concept can be used with any emotion; for example, put off anger and put on self-control; put off frustration and put on patience; put off grouchiness and put on joy.

Unchecked emotions can totally control — even ruin — our children's lives. It is essential we teach our teens to always put biblical truth in front of emotions. Further, build a foundational Christian faith to overcome the fear usually attached to many of these emotions. Otherwise, our 'tweens and teens will make choices because of how they feel rather than based on what Scripture says regardless of how they feel.

Ideas/Sources:

- 37 Have your 'tweens and teens create a two-column list where negative emotions are listed on the left side and the biblical response is listed on the right, following the pattern of "putting off" and replacing with "putting on."
- 38 Use journaling to learn how to express feelings appropriately. Even Jesus became filled with anger, but He didn't sin. It's important your children know how to express their feelings without sinning. We don't want our 'tweens and teens to hide or mask their emotions, so how can they express what they feel in a healthy, positive way? Have them discuss with you — or write down — the emotions or feelings they struggle with. Was it another person that 'made' them feel that way? Was it an experience? What caused those feelings? Discuss with them how to deal appropriately with each type of feeling, i.e.: use your words instead of slamming doors or pouting in your room to avoid conflict resolution. Be empathetic as Romans 12:15 tells us, *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep*. Our children need to learn how to not only deal with their own emotions but with the emotions of others.
- 39 Read some books on the traumatic experiences of others. Read real-life stories of missionaries in dangerous areas of the world, soldiers in war time, victims who rose above abuse, and Holocaust survivors are all interesting and inspirational. How would your 'tweens and teens deal with the emotions of these people, or what if it happened to them, or someone they loved? How do we balance the acknowledgement of painful experiences without playing the 'victim role' for years and years?
- 40 Utilize animals to help teens deal with emotions. Consider obtaining a comforting pet cat or rabbit, or a puppy and have your teen train it as their therapy dog (many of the "doodle" breeds excel at this). Or, join a therapeutic equestrian center and learn to ride horses. If your child has a soft heart for animals and wants to volunteer their services, there are facilities where traumatized children can learn to trust and bring peace into their lives through working with animals. Job 12:7 informs, *But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you*. *Character Sketches* from the Institute for Basic Life Principles is another great resource that is a fun and godly way to learn about animals.

Jurisdiction - #8 Legal

Romans 13:1 instructs, *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God*. It is very important that our children respect governing bodies within our state and nation. Of course, the balance is that we never choose man above God. Acts 5:20 warns us, *We must obey God rather than men*.

By our own example, parents can best direct their children in the ways of government and the laws of the land that are to be obeyed. Do we complain and murmur against our officials and those to be respected, such as police officers, or do we willingly comply whether we like the rule of law or not? Our attitude as parents sets the stage for the respect our children can choose as adults. So much of this also reflects what we think about God's laws, especially the ones that we don't especially like to adhere to!

Ideas/Sources:

- 41 Teach driver's education yourself. Do your teens know the laws of the road including speed limits? Do they know why these laws are in place? What happens when those are not adhered to? Do they see you obey them? Show your 'tweens and teens pictures or videos of those who were maimed or killed because of high speeds and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Currently in Colorado, all students under the age of 18 applying for driver's permits are required to participate in the four-hour program, *Alive at 25*, which contains similar pertinent information.
- 42 Discuss controversial rules regarding things like marijuana use and drinking alcohol even if it is legal at a certain age. Help your teen decide what moral standards to have even if the government says something is acceptable. It is also important your 'tweens and teens have the freedom to express their doubts or unbeliefs, which may be different from yours. Your responsibility as a parent is to continually point them to God's Word in a kind way. Remember not to put an "adult head on a child's shoulders". In other words, remember you are way ahead of your child's learning curve. It will take time and experience (and, more importantly, God's grace) for them to come up with their own righteous conclusions.
- 43 Watch a trial or court case with your 'tweens and teens on television. Help them learn the difference between a prosecutor and a defense attorney, what the judge has the authority to do, how witnesses are called and sworn-in to testify, and the role a jury might play. In the future, if an opportunity arises, have them visit a real courtroom and watch the proceedings, if open to the public. Prepare them ahead of time for the potential stress and criminal behavior that might surface.
- 44 Study civics together. Do your 'tweens and teens understand the way our constitutional republic government functions? Would they possibly be interested in becoming a public servant of the people or helping an elected official? CHEC's *Colorado Civics Curriculum* is an excellent resource and can count as a high school credit if enough hours are put in through reading the text and other recommended resources, conducting the hands-on activities, and participating in the suggested field trips to total 120 hours (160 days of 45-minute sessions).



Dear Parent,

The idea behind this information is to help you enjoy each family member God has blessed you with, no matter what the difficulty may be at different seasons of life. Interacting with your children in a productive, positive manner is essential to the lifetime memories you will be creating with them. Praising your teens for the Christ-like character qualities they are developing is so important! You are their greatest cheerleader and life coach. You need to love and encourage them just the same when they fall and seem to fail. Nothing is a failure if they learn from it.

We need to be parents who are firm in our training but are such nice people that our kids can't help but like us. Be fun! Have board game nights where favorite foods and beverages are served or family traditions are implemented. There is already enough seriousness in training our teens in life and relationship skills, so please don't forget the fun!

Finally, remember that every day your 'tweens and teens are alive and with you is a gift from God. I don't say this to put fear in your hearts, but rather to help you realize that God could call any of our loved ones home at any time. Tomorrow is not promised, so make each day count. Point them to the love of Jesus and the truth of God's Word. My days with my own teens went by so quickly — how I miss them! So please, enjoy this season in your life. Believe me, you too, will miss them.

With love in Christ,

Debra L. Burton

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