

Your Passion Becomes Their Passion



"Like father, like son" and "Like mother, like daughter" may not apply very often to you and your teenagers. But you're having more of an influence on your kids than you may realize. We've always known that parents' faith is important for kids' spiritual development. Now some landmark research shows just how crucial your beliefs are.

The National Study of Youth and Religion recently found that three out of four religious teenagers consider their own beliefs to be similar to those of their parents. What's more, 77% of teenagers who belonged to a congregation said they expected to be part of a similar congregation at age 25.

Teenagers aren't likely to come right out and admit that their parents are serving as role models. Sometimes you probably feel like your kids don't even want to associate with you. But another major NSYR finding is that most teenagers desire to have stronger relationships with their parents. They just aren't sure how to make it happen. So that's where you come in!

It's up to parents to take the lead with faith discussions in your home. When you're passionate about your beliefs, that passion will be contagious. Academic studies and real-life examples prove that parents who strive to live out a devoted Christian faith raise kids who tend to do the same. Read on for tips and ideas about developing and passing along this passion.

Helpful Hints

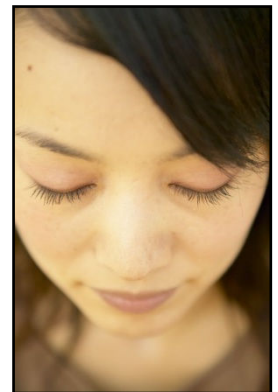
NSYR researcher Christian Smith, author of *Soul Searching*, offers this advice for parents of teenagers:

- 1. Don't be afraid of your kids or afraid of teaching them.** Don't worry about not seeming "cool" when you relate substantial truths. Teenagers desire to be challenged in their faith walk.
- 2. Work on your overall relationship with your teenagers.** Organized youth groups are important, but kids benefit the most from significant bonds with mature, loving adults. Kids long to have respected grown-ups spend time with them "through the stuff of their ordinary lives," Smith says.
- 3. Play an active role in youth ministry.** For better or worse, you're the most important "pastors" your kids will ever have. Instead of handing off all the responsibility of spiritual development to your church or a youth group, look for ways to get involved with these faith-formation efforts.

Pulse

Here are some more results from the NSYR:

- Half of the teenagers surveyed said faith is "very important" or "extremely important" in their lives.
- Only 8% of teenagers said they're "spiritual but not religious."
- Teenagers who say their parents love, understand, or pay attention to them are more likely to be religiously devoted than are their peers who say their parents don't love, understand, or pay attention to them.
- Of the teenagers who attend worship services, 70% rate their congregation as a "very good" or "fairly good" place to discuss serious issues or problems.



(National Study of Youth and Religion; *Soul Searching*)

Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Although adolescence is a crucial time for faith formation, the process is never complete. Use these questions to talk with your kids about their under-construction beliefs:

1. How important is your faith to you? Would you say it's your No. 1 priority? Why or why not?
2. What aspects of believing in God are the easiest and the hardest for you, and why?
3. Do you know someone who's passionate about God? If so, what do you admire most about him or her?
4. Are you being a spiritual example, or mentor, for anyone right now? Explain.
5. If you could change one thing about our relationship, what would it be, and why?



Focus on Prayer

Pray that:

1. God will strengthen your own faith and keep you focused on your relationship with him.
2. God will help you be a good spiritual example for your family and a trusted mentor for your kids.
3. Your teenagers will desire to grow closer to God and to you.
4. Your teenagers will remain passionate about their faith throughout their lives.

Verse of the month

"Praise the Lord! How joyful are those who fear the Lord and delight in obeying his commands. Their children will be successful everywhere; an entire generation of godly people will be blessed." (Psalm 112:1-2)

As our heavenly Father, God is worthy of our honor, respect, and love. This mirrors the ideal relationship between earthly parents and their children. Parents aren't perfect (just ask your teenagers!), but moms and dads who strive to live godly lives leave a lasting legacy for their kids—and for many generations to come. Obedience, whether it's to God or to parents, results in joy and growth. Because God promises eternal "success" to those who trust in him, a spiritual heritage is the best gift you could ever give your kids.

What's Up With Kids

Great News, Mom and Dad!

It's not car keys, cash, an endless supply of entertainment, or invites to killer parties that make today's teenagers the happiest. It's not even hobbies or popularity. According to the latest research, it's spending time with family!

Yes, it's true. Research conducted by the Associated Press and MTV (yes, MTV!) found that chillin' with the fam ranked first on the happy-meter. Spending time with friends finished second, followed by spending time with significant others. Did you catch that? The top-three sources of happiness for kids today are based on relationships! Honorable mentions include "sports" in 10th place and "achieving success" in 20th.

The happiness survey, more than 100 questions long, pried into almost every area of kids' lives. It measured everything from money to spiritual experience to pets. Want the best news yet? Of the 1,280 young people polled (ages 13-24), 73% said Mom and Dad make them happy. Told you it was good news!



(SimplyYouthMinistry.com)

MUSICSPOTLIGHT



Background: Teenage recording artist Chris Brown began singing at age 11. Two years later, while Brown was working in his dad's gas station, a local production team discovered him. His 2005 self-titled debut album featured the hit single "Run It!" Brown's newly released second album, *Exclusive*, scored another No. 1 hit with "Kiss Kiss." Now 18, Brown also has an acting career. He appeared in the dance movie *Stomp the Yard* and in TV shows such as *The OC*, *My Super Sweet 16*, and *The Suite Life of Zach and Cody*.

Albums: *Chris Brown* (2005), *Exclusive* (2007)

What You Should Know: Brown's music addresses relationships, often with inappropriate and sexually explicit lyrics.

What Brown Has to Say: When asked how he keeps the fun in success, Brown says, "I think just by being myself. You don't have a whole bunch of dummies around you. Keep the people that you like around you, and just be yourself."

Discussion Questions: Is it good to hang out only with people who you like and have stuff in common with? Why or why not? In your life, who keeps you grounded? Are you able to "just be yourself" around your friends? Why or why not?

Background: Deitrick Haddon began leading worship at age 11, when he gave a sermon at his father's church. He led the choir at age 13 and later led the singing group Voices of Unity. In 2002, Haddon launched his Christian R&B solo career with *Lost and Found*. It reached No. 1 on Billboard's Top Gospel charts and earned much radio time on gospel and mainstream R&B stations. While continuing his own musical career, Haddon, 25, also produces for other artists, including his wife, Damita.

Albums: *Lost and Found* (2002), *Just the Hits* (2005), *7 Days* (2006), *Voices of Unity* (2007)

What You Should Know: Haddon's energetic praise-and-worship music has many influences: bluesy, soul, big ballads, and dance gospel.

What Haddon Has to Say: "Every time I do something, I seek to do it better and do something I believe God is calling me to do," Haddon says. "I just do what God gives me; I don't try to be anybody else. I don't let the industry or people dictate what I do."

Discussion Questions: What do you think God wants you to do with your life, and why? How can you know God's will and plan? When you're making decisions, how much do you let other people sway you?

FILMWATCH

Movie: *Prom Night* (released April 11)

Genre: Horror/suspense

Rating: PG-13 for violence and terror, some sexual material, underage drinking, and language

Synopsis: Donna's senior prom is supposed to be magical. But when the night turns murderous, only one man could be responsible. To survive their prom night, Donna and her friends must escape the rampage of an obsessed killer. (This is a remake of the 1980 horror film.)

Discussion Questions: What types of feelings do you have about the prom or other school dances? What might make them "magical"? What might make them difficult? How can you avoid some of the challenges kids often face at these big events?



April 2008

		1	2	3	4	5
		3:45 PM Confirmation Class	3:45 PM Confirmation Class Happy Birthday Matt Guido			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
8:00&10:30 Worship Services 9:10 Jr. & Sr. High Sunday School Class		3:45 PM Confirmation Class Church Clean Up and Pizza with Scott	No Confirmation Class			Happy Birthday Andrew Waddington
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
8:00&10:30 Worship Services 9:10 Jr. & Sr. High Sunday School Class 11:30 PM Pasta/Dessert Auction	7:00 PM Senior High Belize Summer Mission Team Meeting	3:45 PM Confirmation Class	3:45 PM Confirmation Class			Happy Birthday Caitlin Rourke
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
8:00&10:30 Worship Services 9:10 Jr. & Sr. High Sunday School Class		School Vacation NO CONFIRMATION	School Vacation NO CONFIRMATION			
27	28	29	30			
	7:00 PM Senior High Belize Summer Mission Team Meeting	3:45 PM Confirmation Class				

LOOKING AHEAD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 3rd Spring Clean Up & SHELCS with Pizza and Laser Tag
(9:00 AM & SHELCS followed by pizza and laser tag)

May 16th-18th Senior High Spring Fling @ Camp Calumet

May 30th-June 1st Graduating Senior Surprise Get Away Weekend

The Parent Link Newsletter

In an effort to enhance communication and information our Youth Ministry is taking on a new direction. We will be sending out our own Youth Ministry Newsletter called The Parent Link. It will be a monthly newsletter that is full of current events, communication tools with teenagers, devotion material, movie and music reviews, and up to date information on events that are taking place in the SHELCL Youth Ministry. I hope you will find this information and newsletter helpful as we seek to be a support to the family. This newsletter will be sent via e-mail, posted on the youth bulletin board in the hallway, and copies will be available in the narthex.

Pasta/Dessert Auction @ SHELCL Sunday April 13th

Our annual Pasta/Dessert Auction is set for Sunday April 13th following the 10:30 worship service. We plan to kick off the afternoon with a delicious pasta lunch approximately at 11:30-45A.M. Following a hearty lunch with all the trimmings our delicious dessert auction will take place. Come prepared to bid on the best desserts in town. All of the proceeds will be used to support both of our summer mission trips. Our Senior High students are heading to Belize on June 28th-July 6th with Group Work Camps. Our Middle School students are heading to York, PA for a Week of Hope Work Camp. The Hartford Chapter of Thrivent will match what we raise.

Belize Summer Mission Team Meetings in April

Students mark your calendar for our mandatory mission team meetings in April. The dates are Monday April 14th and 28th. These meetings are important to attend as we cover information that is necessary for our success in Belize. The meetings will be held at SHELCL and begin at 7:00PM and will last about an hour in length.

Confirmation Schedule Changes in April

Parents of confirmands please note that next week there is only confirmation on Tuesday April 8th. There is no confirmation for Wednesday April 9th. Pastor McGurn is away and Scott is only available on Tuesday April 8th. We have planned a spring cleaning of the church with pizza to follow. So please bring your bucket of cleaning supplies. Also, be reminded that there is no confirmation during school spring recess during the week of April 21st-25th.

30 Hour Famine Date Change

Due to schedule conflicts our annual 30 Hour Famine that was scheduled on April 25th-26th has been changed due to schedule conflicts. The date of our famine will be during the month of October.