

# Faith

Your teen is in a phase when the complexities of the world, and their life in particular, are becoming more obvious than ever before. The answers that seemed simple in their childlike faith aren't cutting it, and the black and white certainties that once seemed rock solid feel a little crumbly and gray. And that's okay. As their way of viewing the world matures and grows, the way they understand faith should grow, too. Allowing them to ask questions and evaluate their faith will help them make it their own.

## Your role during this phase is to...

Fuel passion so they will keep pursuing authentic faith and discover a personal mission. This guide is designed to help you connect with your high schooler, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of faith. You're becoming more of a coach now than an active advisor, but your teenager still needs you to guide them along the way. Some of these conversation starters will overlap or need to be repeated at different ages. But as the conversation progresses, always keep the end goal in mind: Authentic faith is trusting Jesus in a way that transforms how I love God, myself, and the rest of the world.

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future.

## REMEMBER:

Look for ways to prioritize church connection, and stay engaged in their faith journey by having conversations at home. Also, a faith community can help them find significance by giving them opportunities to give, serve, and love others. Your high schooler will never get over seeing how God can work through them in meaningful ways.

# Tips to Help High Schoolers Navigate Faith

## To high schoolers...

### SAY THINGS LIKE

*How can I pray for you today/this week?*

*I don't know. (Be honest if your child asks a question you don't have the answer to.)*

*When do you feel closest to God?*

*What do you like about church/youth group? (Talk about the value of a faith community.)*

*Are there ways you would want to serve in our church or community?*

*That's a good question. I'm not sure I will ever know the full answer, but I believe... (Let them know it's okay to talk about hard questions.)*

*What's something you feel like God is teaching you right now?*

*Lately, I'm finding I connect best with God when I'm...*

*There's nothing you will ever do that could make God stop loving you.*

*When you told me about...it made me think of a verse in Proverbs. (Share Bible verses that relate to their present circumstances.)*

## Enhance the Conversation

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

### Normalize conversations about God and faith.

Share what you read in your devotional or ask how you can pray for them during the week. Don't be afraid to text the occasional quote or Scripture reference and ask your teenager what they think about it. Make it so faith isn't something reserved for Sunday mornings, but a part of your everyday rhythm.

### Share your faith story with your high schooler.

And not just the highlight reel, either! If you haven't already, it's important your student hear the struggles, obstacles, and doubts you've dealt with on your faith journey. Be transparent about past mistakes. Share appropriately but transparently. Make this conversation intentional by taking them on a hike or to a quiet coffee house to share how God has shown up in your life.

### Practice what you preach.

Your high schooler is a skeptic. That's normal. But that means if you're not practicing what you're preaching, they probably won't take you very seriously. You don't have to make a huge production out of it, but consistently modeling healthy spiritual disciplines is one of the most important things you can do to encourage your high schooler to build a faith of their own.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling Tips to Help Preschoolers Navigate Faith classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to understand this phase, check out the Parenting Your... book series at [parentcuestore.org](http://parentcuestore.org).

For more information on The Phase Project and other parent resources, visit [theParentCue.org](http://theParentCue.org). ©2019 The reThink Group, Inc. All rights reserved.