

The Parent Connection



Embrace Questions

Your preteen is beginning to own their faith and build their own relationship with God. This is an exciting time for them but can be a concerning time for parents of preteens. Your preteen may be saying or doing things that make you feel like they are walking in the wrong direction. Let's talk about how, as parents, you can be there to support your child and how you can develop a safe environment for your preteen to explore and develop their relationship with God.

Your preteen will start to ask hard questions. Their brains are developing, which means they are becoming critical thinkers rather than just concrete thinkers. Be prepared for some hard questions, but don't panic. Questions and pushing for answers are great things! They mean your preteen is making sure what they have known about God is true. Rather than just believing it because we as parents or leaders have told them it is true, your preteens are now making sure they understand and believe it, too. They are reaching out to God that He may speak to them personally. One of the best ways to build faith and develop a relationship with God is by asking questions.

When your preteen comes to you with questions, remember not to panic. The first thing you want to do is to be real with them. If you don't know an answer or can't explain something, tell them that. But, then take the time to find the answers with them, not for them. Walk them through the process of reading and studying scripture as well as praying with them. Encourage your preteen to talk to trusted spiritual leaders at church: Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor, and other leaders. Sometimes answers from Mom and Dad don't cut it, but seeking help from someone else they look up to for spiritual guidance is helpful.

Now that your preteen is asking questions and learning to walk their own walk with Christ, they are likely going to make mistakes and make wrong choices. We can't control all the choices our preteens make, but we can be there for them when they make choices that cause them to fall down in their walk with God. When they fall down, be there to pick them up and reassure them it's okay. Make sure they know you will always love them, and that God will always love them. Walk them through praying for forgiveness as well as looking up scripture to help give them wisdom for the next time. Let your preteens know that you make mistakes and that they are not expected to be perfect.

Our lives are full of good times and bad times, good decisions and bad decisions. Each of these is filled with things that God is trying to teach us. Preteens are starting to see what these trials are teaching them, and it is our job as parents and leaders to guide and to help them see what God is teaching them. Don't be afraid of this time in your preteen's life; be excited because God has great things in store your preteen.