

The Parent Connection



The Changing Preteen Years

Do you have a child in fourth, fifth or sixth grade? Have you started to notice that they are different all of a sudden? Are you experiencing times when they don't want to be your little guy or little girl anymore? The world of your preteen is starting to change, and it can be scary for you and for them. As parents, we pray that our children have grasped God's Word, that they will follow Jesus' teachings, and that their relationship with God would be strong in this new stage of life.

Your preteen is changing physically, mentally, and socially. All of these changes affect their relationship with God. Up to this point, your preteen has been learning about God and Jesus through you and the children's ministry at church. Your child's spiritual growth and learning up to this point are vital parts of them knowing about God. Children are like little sponges soaking in all they can and believing it because it is coming from you and the church.

As your preteen is maturing, the way they think begins to change. Their brains develop, and their hormones are changing. As these changes occur, preteens start looking at God differently and questioning what they know. This is when times can get scary for us as parents. But we should take comfort in knowing that this is an exciting time for your preteen and their relationship with God. This is the time when your child is starting to own their faith and figure out their own personal relationship with God.

God designed all of us to be different, and being different means our relationship with God is also different. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:12-25 that we are all created to have different strengths and gifts for a purpose. If we all were the same, then the body of Christ would not work. God has blessed us with our children; He does not want another you or me. God wants all of his children to love Him and follow Him the way he has intended them to, which can be different for each one of us.

Just because we are letting our preteens grow in their relationship with Christ does not mean we should let them figure it out on their own. Our job now is to walk alongside of them with gentleness, love, and patience. As parents we should help guide them into having a personal relationship with Christ. Don't be afraid to allow your preteen to stumble at times because that is how we learn. This is not going to be easy as a parent, but remember it is just as much of a faith growing experience for you as it is for them. When they fall—and they will—be there to pick them up and lovingly guide them towards the right direction.