



Parent Guide for 6th Grade Family Experiences

It's time. You knew it was coming, but you had no idea how fast it would actually get here. I am talking about the day when your sweet baby actually grew up and is now beginning the process of changing into a young adult.

It's time. It's not time for fear of the future but of daring to lead your preteen into this new phase of their life. We as parents can't let them stumble their way through. We have the great privilege of sharing with them who they are at this moment and what they can become in the future.

It's time. The time has come to ask the hard questions and to answer the harder ones with love and with truth. If our preteens can't trust us to give them straight answers, who can they trust?

It's time. It's time to speak to our 6th graders, but mostly it's time to listen. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 tells us that there is a time for everything and now is your time to gently but truthfully lead your preteen into the wonderful journey of the Family Experience.

It's time.

Here are some tips to help guide you through the 6th Grade Family Experience:

We encourage you to talk with your teen and let them know that you want to help them be

prepared for what they will be experiencing over the next few years.

If at all possible, it is best if the same parent or guardian has all five conversations with the teenager. Teenagers tend to respond better when things are consistent.

Explain to them what the Family Experience is and why you have chosen to use this resource to encourage a strong bond between the two of you.

Discuss with your teenager that you would like to schedule five different days to have a 10-15 minute, uninterrupted discussion with them regarding what changes they will be going through in the near future.

Pick five days that work for both of you. If you let your teen help determine those days, you may find that they will take more

ownership in it. Every Saturday, twice a week, or even once a month will work if you both are in agreement on the timing.

It's a good idea to allow your teen to determine where these discussions will take place. They know where they will be most comfortable having these conversations with you, whether it's in their room, at the kitchen table, or on the front porch swing.

Agree that there will be no outside distractions during this period of time. No TV, no cell phones, and no other family members. Your teen needs to know that you value the time you get to share with them.

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to our 6th graders,
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We have prepared discussion questions for both you and your teenager to answer. We encourage you to download them and then place them in an envelope marked "Parent" or "Teen" and do not look at them ahead of time. This allows your teenager to feel as if they are on an even playing field with you.

Each scheduled day, pick one question out of each envelope and ask away!

Agree to answer the questions as honestly as possible.

With each Family Experience, we have included a Kickstarter that you can share with your teenager. This conveys the biblical context of the maturing process and includes encouragement for parents as well as an

explanation of the purpose of each Family Experience. Your teen's spiritual growth is happening just as quickly as their physical and emotional growth, and we want to address that, also.

Included in each Kickstarter is a list of suggestions for practically incorporating the themes of each Family Experience into your daily lives. Some of these ideas involve a bit of adventure for you to share together!

These first discussions will, by no means, be easy. And they will probably be met with snickers, grins, and one-word answers. But you have made a path to true communication with your teen, and that is priceless. Don't give up!