

Retreat Intro

Preteens: lots of stuff is changing in your world and you probably feel like a new person; not a kid...not quite an adult

Parents: lots of stuff is changing so you probably feel like you're living with a new person; not a kid...not quite an adult

Purpose: create a connection and a conversation that will endure the next 7-8 years (till graduation)

Pray

Main Session #1: COMMUNICATION

Family Activity: Telephone

Round 1: loud music, race against other team, complex message

Round 2: silence, no race, say message out loud, face-to-face, simple message

Discussion:

- 1) What made Rd 1 difficult?
- 2) How does this compare to real life?
- 3) What made Rd 2 easier?
- 4) Is this possible in your life?

COMMUNICATION—connecting our minds *and hearts* to exchange ideas, emotions, and experiences

Every family wants to have great conversations, but we're busy. Our schedules make us wonder when we have time to talk, what we could talk about, and all those questions. We're going to dissect communication by using **Why? When? What? & How?**

Why?: Importance of Communication

This is pretty simple. Communication is a necessity for life, and it is a necessity for a healthy family.

Parents: Your son or daughter needs to speak to you, and they need to hear you speak to them. It doesn't matter what study you reference, every single one says the same thing, ***You are the most powerful influence in the life of your child!***

Preteens: You need to listen to your parents. First of all, ***no one cares more about you than your parents.*** You can always trust that your parents have your best interest at heart. Second, ***your parents know much more about being a 5th grader than you know about being a parent!*** They've been there and lived to tell about it! You can learn from their experiences—good and bad.

When? & Where?: A Place to Talk

Busy, Busy, Busy. We're all busy. We run from commitment to commitment, and we barely have time to sit down with our family. Some of that may need to change, but even if it doesn't, can't conversations happen in a busy schedule?

Communication in your family needs a specific time and designated space. There are many conversations that will just happen during the day, but we can't really leave that to chance. ***Make it a priority by putting it on the family calendar!***

Discussion:

Brainstorm some "bad" times to talk

Brainstorm some "good" times to talk

Choose Top 3 "Good" times to talk (circle them on your brainstorm sheet)

What? & How?

Making time to talk is a great start, but it's not the end. If you're going to intentionally make time in the schedule, then you need to have a design for what to talk about. Having a set time and a set topic will help you think before hand about what you'll say and how you'll say it. Everyone likes to be prepared!

Here are 3 things that you might want to talk about:

1) Life—changes & challenges, events, stories. Listen and Speak—preteens needs to hear about your life at 12!

- It is healthy to share stories and feelings about everyday things. Discuss feelings that go with life issues—happy, nervous, tired, busy, etc.

2) Faith—Scripture, Church, small groups, Devotionals

- Use resources from church, Scripture Memorization, Devotionals, etc. to build a stronger faith. This is not a teaching time! (we'll talk about this more later)
- Samples Resources: Jesus Calling Devotion, iShine, Big Truths for Young Hearts

3) Pray—talk about things to pray for & pray for one another

- Never underestimate the power of prayer—specifically praying with your son or daughter.
- 30 Days of Prayer for Your Child, Prayer Journal

Discussion:

Assign a talk topic to each of your top 3 times

This can change, but think about creating a routine that will work for your family.

"Home"-work

Make a Communication Calendar!

Use this calendar to write your times and topics for the month of May.

For each Life & Faith time, decide as a family on a topic that you will discuss. Maybe it's just a Scripture, maybe it's a devotion book for the whole month, divide the Life segments to focus on parents stories in odd weeks & preteen stories in even weeks. Think of a Bible verse to memorize. Make it fun with rewards or "punishments."