

BIG IDEA

The gospel should shape the way you parent your middle schooler and should affect every area of your middle schooler's life.



KEY SCRIPTURES

- *Jesus is the only way to salvation* (John 14:6).
- *The Scripture equips us to live for God* (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- *It is important to be involved with the local church* (Heb. 10:24-25).
- *We should be transformed by God, not conformed to the world* (Rom. 12:1-2).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- Is Christianity really true? How can I know?
- What does it mean to be a Christian?
- Why does it matter what I believe?



AT THIS AGE MOST MIDDLE SCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Have more exposure to other religious beliefs and worldviews.
- Begin to see a connection between one's thinking and one's behavior.
- Begin to connect faith to real life.
- Be excited to be part of the youth ministry.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- Many of the attitudes, beliefs, and values that middle schoolers develop during these years remain with them for life. They move from blindly accepting the convictions of significant adults to developing their own personal values. However, they usually embrace the values of parents or key adults.
- Middle schoolers are usually able to think through ideological topics, argue a position, and challenge adults' thinking and perceptions. Older middle schoolers are able to go deeper than you would expect in a theological discussion about Scripture and the gospel.
- Middle schoolers are eager to learn about topics they find interesting and useful, especially ones that are personally relevant. They like active learning experiences, visual illustrations, and prefer interactions with peers during educational activities. This should shape the way we teach them the Bible.



COACHING TIPS

- Through observation and conversation, assess your middle schooler's relationship with Christ. If she had a salvation experience as a child, watch for fruit of that decision and be prepared to discuss what it really means to follow Jesus. If she's still yet to receive Christ, pray for the Holy Spirit to make her need evident as you clearly present the gospel. Don't pressure her to make this decision, but at the same time, don't procrastinate sharing the gospel.
- Intentionally make connections between biblical truth and everyday life experiences. Help your middle schooler to see his own feelings, words, and actions in light of Scripture.
- Point out the benefits of walking in God's truth: protection from harmful and hurtful consequences of sin, a clean conscience, a good witness to others, and so forth. Remind middle schoolers that God's truth will triumph over false philosophies, ideas, arguments, and religions.
- Guide your middle schooler to understand that she will face opposition as a Christian and to be prepared to stand firm. Pray with your middle schooler about how she can stand firm on the truth of the gospel.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?** This will help you gauge where your middle schooler is in his relationship with Jesus. Be an active listener and give him plenty of time to share his thoughts before you begin to share yours.
- **DO YOU HAVE ANY FRIENDS WHO BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU?** This question will help you know the other religious beliefs and worldviews your middle schooler is being exposed to. While you want to make sure your middle schooler knows the truth, be careful not to seem harsh or condemning of his friends.
- **WHAT STORY IN THE BIBLE IS YOUR FAVORITE?** Guide this conversation to talk about the importance of Bible study and growing as a Christian.



SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that your middle schooler will embrace the truth of the gospel. Pray that her life will reflect words, actions, and attitudes that demonstrate Christ.
- Pray with your middle schooler daily about friends and family members who need to know the truth of the gospel. Ask God to provide opportunities for you to share truth with them.
- Encourage your middle schooler to talk about the ways God is working in his life each week.