

BIG IDEA

Your high schooler's identity is to be rooted in and defined by who he or she is in Jesus.



KEY SCRIPTURES

- *When we receive Christ, we become children of God* (John 1:12).
- *As children of God, we are becoming more like Christ* (Rom. 8:29; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:18).
- *Our acceptance of others isn't based on their actions. It's based on Christ's acceptance of us* (Rom. 15:7).



KEY QUESTIONS YOUR HIGH SCHOOLER IS ASKING

- Who am I?
- Where do I fit in?
- Why is there so much pressure to perform?
- Is it wrong for people to change genders?



AT THIS AGE MOST HIGH SCHOOLERS WILL ...

- Have numerous influences shaping their identities, including parents, family, church, peers, and culture.
- Feel more pressure to live up to expectations set by themselves, parents, coaches, friends, and so forth.
- Still often feel strange about who they are and their bodies.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- High schoolers experience a changing relationship with parents as they try to balance independence with connection. They struggle with the desire to separate, while not wanting to let go of their parents' comfort and protection.
- At this age, your high schoolers' relationships with friends competes with the relationship with you. The peer relationships will exert a greater influence than parents in many situations, including identity formation. This is especially the case in romantic relationships.
- A high schooler is becoming better equipped to make important decisions. However, continued brain development and lack of maturity can lead to making rash decisions without considering the consequences.



COACHING TIPS

- Recognize the changing relationship with your teenager as he stretches toward leaving your home. Find ways to provide him more independence in his decision-making and responsibilities without totally cutting him loose.
- Your high schooler is being bombarded with the wrong definitions the culture is voicing about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. Model and teach biblical manhood and womanhood. Discuss this in dedicated times of instruction and in spontaneous teachable moments.
- While encouraging your high schooler to excel in academics, sports, music, and other activities, caution her about getting so consumed with these things that she finds her identity in them.
- Do all you can to teach and reinforce that your high schooler's identity is based on who she is in Christ. To do this, you're going to need to understand what that means for yourself.
- It's OK to encourage and challenge your high schooler to reach high. However, be careful not to demand he reach unattainable goals. You don't want to give the impression that your love or your high schooler's worth is based on his performance. Also, make sure you're not vicariously living life through your high schooler.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **TO YOU, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MAN? TO BE A WOMAN?** Listen closely to gauge whether the culture's voice or the biblical voice is louder in your high schooler's life. Work to make this an ongoing conversation.
- **WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU REALLY LIKE ABOUT YOURSELF? IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT YOURSELF, WHAT WOULD IT BE?** These questions will help you evaluate how your high schooler feels about herself. Continue to remind her that her worth and value are found in Christ.
- **WHAT LABELS ARE PLACED ON PEOPLE AT SCHOOL?** You can steer this discussion to find out if your high schooler is being labeled and how those labels are affecting him.



SAY OR PRAY

- Pray that your high schooler will find her true identity in Christ.
- Acknowledging the amount of influence friends have on your high schooler, pray that he would surround himself with godly friends who will encourage him toward Jesus.
- Repent of placing undue pressure on your high schooler and basing your love and affection on her performance. See her and love her as Christ does.