




**FORMING FAITH AT HOME  
WITH TEENAGERS**  
Jolene Roehlkepartain



**BRINGING OUT THE  
BEST IN TEENAGERS**

Congregations want to nurture teenagers' spiritual growth and their spiritual journey.

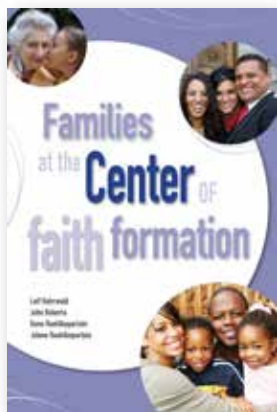
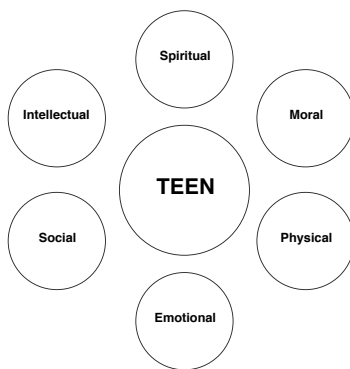


**BUT BEFORE WE  
CAN ENCOURAGE  
FAITH  
FORMATION, WE  
NEED TO  
UNDERSTAND  
ADOLESCENT  
DEVELOPMENT**

## **WHY STUDY ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT?**

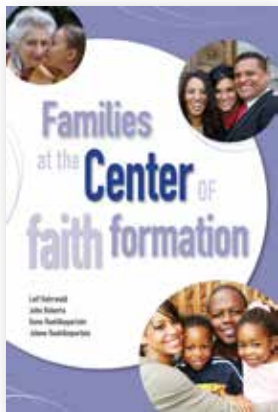
1. We learn more about teenagers and what makes them tick: how they think, feel, and act.
2. We discover how to interact with teenagers more effectively and strengthen our relationships with them.
3. We can help teenagers grow spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally.

## EVERY ASPECT OF THE TEENAGER MATTERS



## CHAPTER 5

- Part 5A: Young Children: Birth to Age 5
- Part 5B: Older Children: Ages 6 to 10
- Part 5C: Young Teens: Ages 11 to 14
- Part 5D: Older Teens: Ages 15 to 18
- Part 5E: Emerging Adults: Ages 19 to 29



## **CHAPTER 5: OUR FOCUS TODAY**

Part 5C: Young Teenagers:  
Ages 11 to 14  
(Pages 127-135)

Part 5D: Older Teenagers:  
Ages 15 to 18  
(Pages 136-144)

## **FORM SMALL GROUPS**

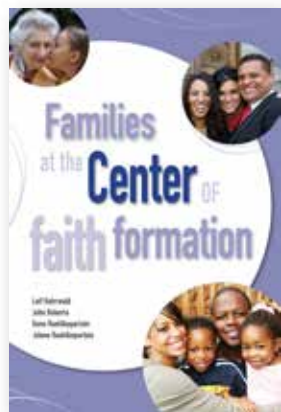
1. Form groups of 3 to 4 people.
2. You'll talk and work with this group for this session.

## **DISCUSS: IN YOUR SMALL GROUP**

1. Say your name.
2. Say where you're from.
3. Say what you love most about working with teenagers.

## **THE TEN FAITH FACTORS**

1. Feeling valued and accepted
2. Developing caring relationships
3. Engaging in learning
4. Celebrating milestones
5. Praying and meditating
6. Serving, volunteering, and helping
7. Attending worship services
8. Finding meaning and purpose
9. Examining a personal religion and spirituality
10. Developing an integrative faith



## **THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR YOUNG TEENAGERS (AGES 11 to 14)**

Part 5C: Young Teenagers:  
Ages 11 to 14

See pages 127-135

## **THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR YOUNG TEENAGERS (AGES 11 TO 14)**

1. Yearns to be part of a group that matters
2. Craves support and fights it
3. Feels conflicted about learning
4. Celebrates milestones while resisting them
5. Wonders about meditation and prayer
6. Balks at some service; deepens others
7. Attends worship services with resistance
8. Longs for meaning while wondering about it
9. Desires religious and spiritual belonging
10. Experiments with ways to integrate faith into life

## **YOUNG TEENAGERS (AGES 11 TO 14): THE JOURNEY OF SEARCH**

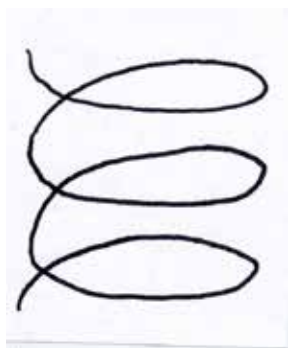
“The faith of a teenager is a journey of search. It is a journey that questions those childlike assumptions.”

Stephen Jones  
*Faith Shaping*

## **CYCLES OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Disequilibrium**

- ◆ Breaking-up behavior
- ◆ Inward behavior
- ◆ Conflicted behavior



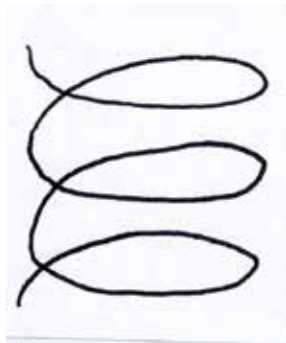
### **Equilibrium**

- ◆ Smooth and consolidated
- ◆ Rounded and balanced
- ◆ Vigorous, expansive behavior

## CYCLES OF DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUNG TEENAGERS

### Disequilibrium

- ◆ 11 years
- ◆ 13 years



### Equilibrium

- ◆ 12 years
- ◆ 14 years

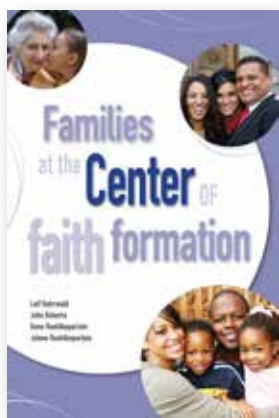
## KEY MESSAGES FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUNG TEENAGERS

- ◆ Young teenagers are at a push-pull stage.
- ◆ They can be very moody: Very up one moment and then their world is falling apart.
- ◆ Young teenagers are full of energy, and they're often impulsive.
- ◆ They're resistant. They often question authority and traditions.
- ◆ Young teenagers are very hard on their parents.



## **TIPS FOR FAITH FORMATION FOR YOUNG TEENAGERS (AGES 11 TO 14)**

- ◆ Recognize how important their friends are.
- ◆ Be sensitive to how young teens want closeness and distance—often at the same time.
- ◆ Their new abstract thinking shakes up their beliefs and learning.
- ◆ They're interested in connecting with God in new ways.
- ◆ Service projects help them put faith into action.
- ◆ Encourage them to bring a friend with them to worship.
- ◆ Link them with mentors of faith.
- ◆ Allow them to act on their idealism.
- ◆ Create safe ways to allow them to ask tough questions.



## **THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR OLDER TEENAGERS (AGES 15 to 18)**

Part 5D: Older Teenagers:  
Ages 15 to 18

See pages 136-144

## **THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR OLDER TEENAGERS (AGES 15 TO 18)**

1. Discovers a balance between acceptance and independence
2. Redefines meaningful support
3. Yearns to learn and succeed in meaningful ways
4. Enjoys meaningful milestones
5. Meditates and prays with questions
6. Creates a commitment to service
7. Participates in worship in ways that reflect a personal faith journey
8. Explores meaning and purpose
9. Questions religious and spiritual beliefs
10. Deepens faith integration while continuing to question

## **OLDER TEENAGERS (AGES 15 TO 18): SEARCHING FOR MEANING**

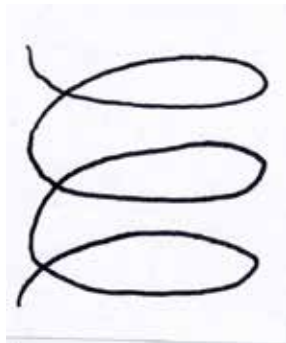
“Faith must provide a coherent orientation in the midst of a more complex and diverse range of involvements.”

James W. Fowler  
*Stages of Faith*

## CYCLES OF OLDER ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT (AGES 15 TO 18)

### Disequilibrium

- ◆ 15 years
- ◆ 17 years
- ◆ 18 years (if going through great change)



### Equilibrium

- ◆ 16 years
- ◆ 18 years (if not going through great change)

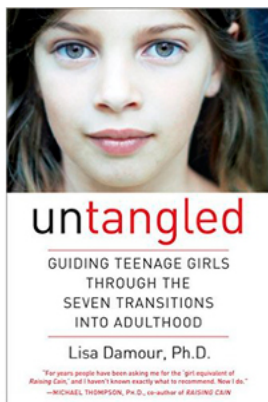
## KEY MESSAGES FOR UNDERSTANDING OLDER TEENAGERS

- ◆ They're maturing, but they're still quite impulsive.
- ◆ They often want to do things that they're not quite ready for yet. Break down their new desires into more achievable steps. (For example, once they get a driver's license, it doesn't mean they can take a road trip out of state.)
- ◆ They thrive better when they're connected with caring adults, but they're very resistant to their parents.
- ◆ They're looking for adults to model after.

## TIPS FOR FAITH FORMATION FOR OLDER TEENAGERS (AGES 15 TO 18)

- ◆ Go to their turf. They're often busy, and it's often easier to go to them rather than expect them to always come to us.
- ◆ Be interested in what they care about.
- ◆ Connect them with other teens and adults who care about their interests.
- ◆ Allow teenagers to find their own way as part of their faith journey, but don't let them drift too far.
- ◆ Show teenagers how faith is relevant in their lives. Grapple with them over their tough questions.

## 7 KEY SKILLS TEENAGERS NEED



As teenagers move to adulthood, they need to master key skills:

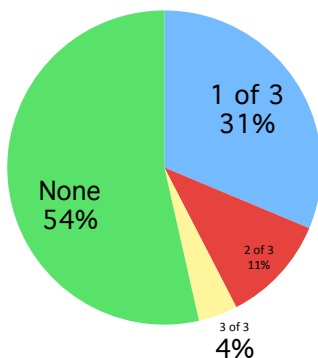
1. Parting with childhood
2. Joining a new tribe
3. Harnessing emotions
4. Contending with adult authority
5. Planning for the future
6. Entering the romantic world
7. Caring for yourself

## FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Family factors (economics, family interactions, faith practices)
- ◆ Environments (home, clubs, teams, programs, work, school, congregation)
- ◆ Genetics (temperament, height, skin color, etc.)
- ◆ Health (physical, mental, nutrition, and access to high-quality health care)
- ◆ Trauma and/or loss
- ◆ Relationships

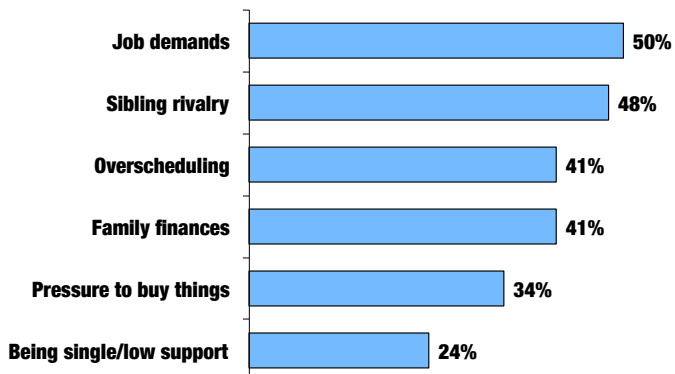
The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

## PARENTS: HOW MANY SOURCES OF SUPPORT?



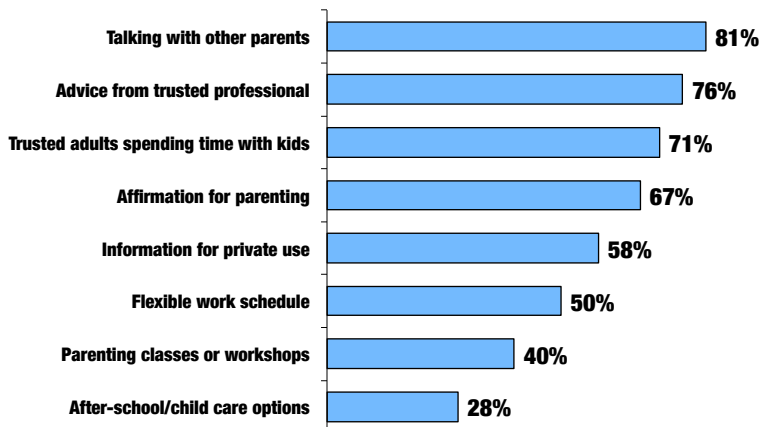
Search Institute Research: Building Strong Families

## WHAT MAKES PARENTING HARDER?



Search Institute Research: Building Strong Families

## WHAT WOULD REALLY HELP?



Search Institute Research: Building Strong Families

## SEVEN STAGES OF PARENTS OF FAITH

- Stage 1—Wondering and imagining (pre-birth)
- Stage 2—Caring and nurturing (birth to 2 years)
- Stage 3—Testing and treasuring (2 to 5 years)
- Stage 4—Supporting and strengthening (6 to 10 years)
- Stage 5—Experimenting and encouraging (11 to 14 years)
- Stage 6—Guiding and questioning (15 to 18 years)
- Stage 7—Launching and fostering (19 to 29 years)

## THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF PARENTS

	Undeveloped Faith	Lopsided Faith	Integrated Faith
<b>20-29 years</b>	48%	35%	16%
<b>30-39 years</b>	45%	34%	21%
<b>40-49 years</b>	39%	31%	30%
<b>50-59 years</b>	37%	33%	30%

Which adults have the highest percentage of integrated faith? People 70 years and older (57% have an integrated faith).

Search Institute Research: Effective Christian Education

## **THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF TEENS AT HOME—TALKING ABOUT FAITH**

Percentage of 13- to 15-year-olds who talked never or rarely to their dads about faith or God 56%

Percentage of 13- to 15-year-olds who talked never or rarely to their moms about faith or God 35%

Percentage of 13- to 15-year-olds who talked never or rarely to their other relatives about faith or God 63%

Search Institute Research: Effective Christian Education

## **THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF TEENS AT HOME—ACTING ON FAITH**

Percentage of 13- to 15-year-olds who never or rarely had family devotions 64%

Percentage of 13- to 15-year-olds who never or rarely did family projects to help others 63%

Search Institute Research: Effective Christian Education

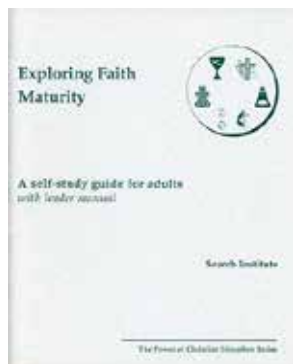


## EXPLORE FAITH ISSUES WITH PARENTS AND TEENAGERS

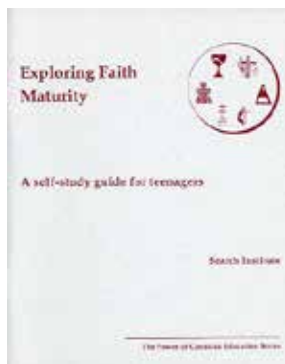
Eight marks of mature faith:

1. Trusting and believing
2. Seeking spiritual growth
3. Integrating faith and life
4. Holding life-affirming values
5. Experiencing the fruits of faith
6. Nurturing faith in community
7. Advocating for social change
8. Acting and serving

## ENCOURAGE BOTH ADULTS—AND TEENAGERS—TO GO DEEPER IN FAITH



Study guides you can do with parents (and other adults) and also with teenagers. Free downloads on the website.



## **THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF PEOPLE IMPACTED BY YOUR MINISTRY**

- ◆ The teenagers in your congregation
- ◆ The parents of the teenagers in your congregation
- ◆ Your volunteers
- ◆ Your church leadership

Be intentional about nurturing the spiritual journey of all the people affected by your ministry.

## **DISCUSS: IN YOUR SMALL GROUP**

1. Repeat your name.
2. How could your congregation nurture the faith of parents with teenagers?

## FAITH FORMATION AT HOME HAPPENS IN FOUR SETTINGS

1. Home: What are families doing to grow in faith and discipleship in each of the faith-forming processes?
2. Intergenerational: How are families connected to other generations in your congregation?
3. Congregational life: How is your congregation empowering, resourcing, and supporting families to grow as disciples and practice their faith?
4. Parents: How is your congregation empowering, resourcing, and supporting parents as faith formers?

See Chapter 6, Strategy 2, Pages 166-169

## #1: THE SETTING OF HOME



How families adopt faith practices at home really matter.

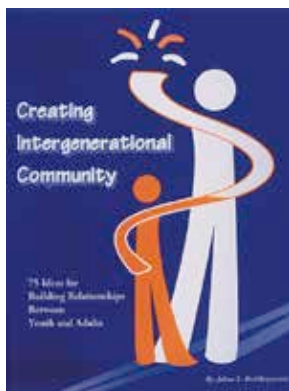
1. Praying
2. Doing rituals
3. Reading the Bible
4. Eating together
5. Having family conversations

## #2: INTERGENERATIONAL



1. Design intergenerational, one-time activities
2. Have teens form relationships with adults
3. Have teens develop relationships with children
4. Create faith partners

## FREE DOWNLOAD ON THE WEBSITE



Creating Intergenerational Community: 75 Ideas for Building Relationships Between Youth and Adults

### **#3: CONGREGATIONAL LIFE**

- ◆ Examine youth ministry and youth group programs.
- ◆ Integrate teenagers into worship in meaningful ways.
- ◆ Invite teenagers to serve on committees in meaningful roles and give their valuable input.
- ◆ Create ways to make teenagers more visible in your congregation.
- ◆ Develop meaningful service projects (short, easy ones) for teenagers to become involved in.

### **#4: PARENTS**

- ◆ Get to know parents.
- ◆ Help parents connect with other parents.
- ◆ Nurture the spirituality of parents.
- ◆ Create ways to teach parents how to nurture their teenager's faith journey.
- ◆ Develop meaningful service projects (short, easy ones) for parents to become involved in with their teenagers.

## **DISCUSS: IN YOUR SMALL GROUP**

1. Repeat your name.
2. Examine the handout: 4 Settings for Faith Formation at Home
3. Talk about what intrigues you for your ministry
4. Share ideas with each other

## **LIVING IN A CULTURE OF SUFFERING**

“Global communication means that more and more of us are alert to the suffering of humanity. No generation before ours has been exposed to such a massive amount of trauma.”

*The Revolutionary Trauma Release Process*

David Bercefi, Ph.D.

## RECENT TRAUMAS IN THE NEWS

- ◆ School shootings
- ◆ Police officers shooting civilians
- ◆ Civilians shooting police officers
- ◆ Local traumas
  - ◆ A high school classmate and his father disappeared in the Colorado mountains during spring break.
  - ◆ A classmate died of the flu.
  - ◆ A classmate's brother drowned in the middle-school pool during physical education.
  - ◆ A classmate was killed by a drunk driver while walking home.
- ◆ Natural disasters
- ◆ Accidents

## AFTER A TRAUMA OR MALTREATMENT

- ◆ Most people don't talk about it until five years later.
- ◆ Most people talk about it with a friend or family member—not a professional.
- ◆ The way people listen to someone who has experienced a trauma or difficulty matters for the healing process.

Joan Cook  
Yale University

## ADDRESSING TRAUMA AND LOSS

1. Help teenagers feel safe.
2. Help teenagers feel calm.
3. Help teenagers feel connected.

*Oxford Handbook of Traumatic Stress Disorders*

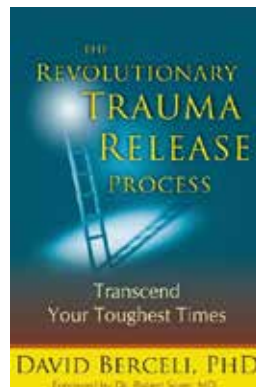
Edited by J. Gayle Beck and Denise M. Sloan

## RETHINKING TRAUMA—FROM A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

“When trauma comes into our life, it can put us in touch with the deep dimensions of reality....It stops us from skating along on the surface of everyday events, inviting us to go deeper into our life.”

*The Revolutionary Trauma Release Process*

David Berceli, Ph.D.





## **OUR CALLING: CREATING CRUCIBLES OF CARE**

- ◆ For families (within their families)
- ◆ For families (to connect with other families)
- ◆ For teenagers
- ◆ For teenagers to connect with other teenagers

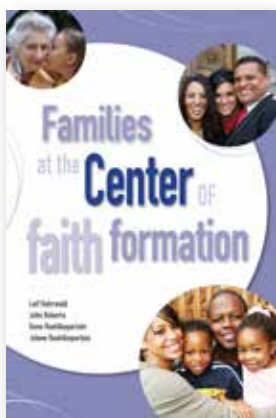
## **TEACHING TEENAGERS THE SKILLS TO LISTEN WELL TO A FRIEND'S DIFFICULTY**

- ◆ Use attentive body language (facial expression, posture, eye contact)
- ◆ Validate emotions in a positive tone
- ◆ Allow for silence
- ◆ Ask open-ended questions
- ◆ Strive to be nonjudgmental
- ◆ Don't offer unsolicited advice
- ◆ Point out the person's strengths

Melissa Ming Foynes and Jennifer J. Freyd  
University of Oregon

## **DISCUSS: IN YOUR SMALL GROUP**

1. Repeat your name.
2. Talk about how we can create safe, spiritual places for families.



## **KEY QUESTION**

How can this book—and what you're learning today—impact your ministry with families?

This is the key question to contemplate during this symposium—and when you return home.

## TRANSFORMING WORK WITH TEENAGERS

### From an emphasis on . . .

1. Programs
2. Parenting as a strategy
3. Pathologizing and/or idealizing families
4. "Passing on" the faith
5. Serving families
6. Congregation-centered ministries

### Toward an emphasis on . . .

1. Relationships
2. Parenting as a relationship
3. Tapping the strengths and resilience of families
4. "Living into" the faith
5. Empowering families
6. Community-centered ministries

## ADDRESS THE RESISTANCE OF PARENTS

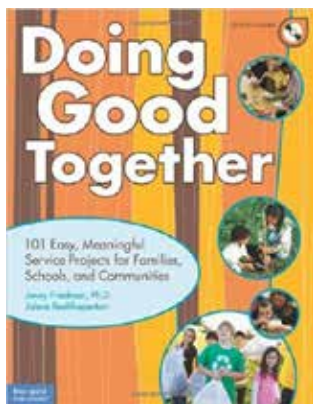
- ◆ Parents often feel uncomfortable talking about their faith.
- ◆ Parents may be baffled about how to talk to their teenager as their teenager matures and separates from them.
- ◆ Some parents are having faith doubts and don't want to add to the religious skepticism of teenagers.
- ◆ Some parents are facing major stressors, and they don't know how to talk about them (and sometimes don't know how to deal with them).
- ◆ Parents are seeing their teenagers change, and they often don't know how to react well.

## HELP PARENTS WITH THEIR PARENTING



Create one-time, easy-to-do, thought-provoking activities to help parents become more intentional about their parenting.

## CREATE WAYS FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENAGERS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Do short-term, easy family volunteer activities.

Visit [www.DoingGoodTogether.org](http://www.DoingGoodTogether.org).

## DOWNLOAD FREE FAITH ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENAGERS



Visit Vibrant Faith at Home  
[vibrantfaithathome.org](http://vibrantfaithathome.org)

## SMALL STEPS; BIG CHANGE

1. Choose one small step to take and try it.
2. If it works, build on that small step.
3. If it doesn't work, try a different small step.
4. Continue this process every step of the way.



**FORMING FAITH AT HOME  
WITH TEENAGERS**

Empowering families to live into the faith together

