

Teen Topics – Understanding Your Parents (Part 4) Leader's Guide

Intro statement for leader: Our series up to this point has focused on responsibilities God has for teens in regard to the relationship they have with their parents and the potential struggles teens have with fulfilling those responsibilities. This lesson will switch gears and, instead of addressing concerns teens may have, it will offer a proactive approach teens need to take in order to establish a positive relationship with their parents. Specifically, this study focuses on the importance of students being an active part of their family and an involved participant who contributes to the life of their family. Dealing with frustrations can take the relationship of a teen and parent from bad to good, but being actively involved in the life of the home can take the relationship from being good to great. Pray that your students will be motivated to embrace an active role within their home through this study.

Lesson Objective: Students will explore how they can be an active part of their family, and discover ways their involvement in the home can bring them into a closer relationship with their parents.

Intro discussion question: Describe how you would feel if you went through the following experiences: (Point out the common theme of missing the excitement because of the person's lack of involvement.):

- Going to a big sports game but being denied entry because the tickets you were given were fake.
- Going to an amusement park but being told that all the roller coasters were shut down for the day.
- Going to enjoy a day at the beach but finding out it's closed because of a rip tide.

As we continue our study of understanding our parents, we'll look at an important reality that can do wonders to better the relationship you have with the caregivers God called to care for you. Let's begin.

Our previous lesson discussed how a correct perspective of our parents can help strengthen the relationship we have with them. Today, let's consider how being actively involved in our parents' lives will help strengthen the relationship as well. It is important to understand that our parents not only want us to be involved, but they need us to be involved!

Much of our study so far has looked at our reaction to our parents, and how to have a correct perspective on how we understand and relate to them. For this lesson, instead of considering how to be reactive, let's look at how we can be proactive and involved in our parents' lives.

Let's take a look at some key verses that share what being an active member of your family should look like:

Bible Verses on Showing Support

Consider the principles found in these verses that can apply to how we should be involved in the life of our parents:

- > ***Gal. 6:2 – Help carry their burdens/be supportive.***
- > ***Eph. 6:18 – Take time and pray for our parents.***
- > ***James 1:19 – Be quick to listen to our parents.***
- > ***I Cor. 13:11 – Show maturity/begin acting like an adult.***

We see several things we can learn from these verses:

1. God doesn't call us to simply minimize conflict within the home, He calls us to be actively doing what we can to make the relationship with our parents something great and special.
2. If you aren't contributing to making the environment as good as it can be, then you can only blame yourself if it isn't. Quit passing the blame to your parents and focus on what you can control—your own actions. Do your part, even if it shocks your parents. You may find it impacts the relationship in ways you never would have imagined.

Discussion Questions:

- Why would your parents desire you to be more involved at home?
- If you were more of a positive contributor to your family, what type of things would your parents see that they would appreciate?
- What possible benefits and advantages result from students showing maturity, taking an active role in the home, and contributing positively to their family?
- Would you say being involved at home is a sign of maturity? Explain why or why not.

How can you do this? Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Becoming a Part of Your Family

The relationship with our parents is often hindered because we aren't intentionally developing it. Consider these points:

> Realize your parents need you. They have a lot on their plates, but you can lift the burden. Is your attitude and level of cooperation making things easier or harder on them? Be supportive, and they will greatly appreciate it!

> Spend time with your parents. If life is too busy to spend time with your parents, adjust your schedule (Eph. 5:15-16)! Eating meals together, running errands, playing sports or games (etc.) are great ways to get closer to your parents.

> Be involved around the house. Vacuum, do laundry, put away dishes (etc.). Surprise your parents by doing a chore they hate. Your parents will appreciate your sense of responsibility, and may just offer you more freedom as a result.

Discussion Questions:

- What things fill your schedule that make it difficult to have time for your parents (e.g., social media, video games, friends)? Are any of these things worth hurting the relationship you have with your parents?
- What additional ways can you spend time with your parents? (Suggestions: Going out for ice cream/coffee, enjoying a movie night, teaming up to do a house project. Challenge your students to initiate these types of activities, if possible.)
- How can you be more involved around your house? What things can you do that you know would thrill your parents? (Examples: Doing yard work, helping with the dishes, cleaning the house, etc. Challenge them to do one of those things this week.)

A major key in any successful relationship is always being there for one another. Consider:

- Friendships – Knowing they are there for you when you are hurting, frustrated, sad or excited is something we cherish about our friends.

- In the parent/teen relationship, this is also special. Helping out around the house, being involved and supportive, and spending time together is very important.

It can be easy to be a member of the family but not contribute or be involved. Being present and making your presence known is crucial. You are your parents' kid, and they love you. Recognize they want you to be involved because every time you are involved in their lives it creates another opportunity for them to be involved in your life. Each of those moments are special to your parents.

In a typical day, how much time do you set aside for your parents? Do you need to put forth more effort to be involved?

Consider a typical day: how many minutes would you say are spent having quality time with your parents? Out of the 1,440 minutes in a day (10,080 minutes in a week), how many are spent for or with your parents? Discuss and analyze.

It is tempting to think the involvement of a parent/teen relationship is one way—Parents looking out for and centering their lives around their child. While this is true, the intentionality of every good relationship must flow both ways. Do you expect all the attention in your home, or are you willing to find ways to look out for and make your parents a priority? If you don't, the relationship will never grow. If you do, it will grow into something special. That is in your hands. What are you going to do about it?

Gospel: Romans 5:8 tells us that God demonstrated His love for us through the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. Through faith in Jesus we have salvation from our sin and a relationship with God. May we be eternally grateful for this act of love.

Summary: When we are involved and active members of our home, it demonstrates a maturity and sense of responsibility that can earn the admiration of our parents. We need to be pro-active members of our families.

Challenge: List 10 things you could do around your house that would absolutely shock your parents in a good way. Commit to doing one or two of these things this week and let your parents know you're doing it simply because you appreciate and love who your parents are.