



# Parent and Faith Companion Toolkit



Discovering what kids need to succeed

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## The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
<b>1. Express Care</b> Show me that I matter to you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be dependable.....</li> <li>Listen.....</li> <li>Believe in me.....</li> <li>Be warm.....</li> <li>Encourage.....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be someone I can trust.</li> <li>Really pay attention when we are together.</li> <li>Make me feel known and valued.</li> <li>Show me you enjoy being with me.</li> <li>Praise me for my efforts and achievements.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Challenge Growth</b> Push me to keep getting better.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expect my best.....</li> <li>Stretch.....</li> <li>Hold me accountable.....</li> <li>Reflect on failures.....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expect me to live up to my potential.</li> <li>Push me to go further.</li> <li>Insist I take responsibility for my actions.</li> <li>Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Provide Support</b> Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Navigate.....</li> <li>Empower.....</li> <li>Advocate.....</li> <li>Set boundaries.....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guide me through hard situations and systems.</li> <li>Build my confidence to take charge of my life.</li> <li>Stand up for me when I need it.</li> <li>Put in place limits that keep me on track.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Share Power</b> Treat me with respect and give me a say.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect me.....</li> <li>Include me.....</li> <li>Collaborate.....</li> <li>Let me lead.....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take me seriously and treat me fairly.</li> <li>Involve me in decisions that affect me.</li> <li>Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.</li> <li>Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Expand Possibilities</b> Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspire.....</li> <li>Broaden horizons.....</li> <li>Connect.....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.</li> <li>Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.</li> <li>Introduce me to people who can help me grow.</li> </ul>

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

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Resources for Mentors / Faith Companions:

<https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Getting-Relationships-Right.pdf>

[https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/0201/09/DevRel\\_Framework-1-Page-04-26-2017.pdf](https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/0201/09/DevRel_Framework-1-Page-04-26-2017.pdf)

# Talking with Youth about What's Important to Them!

## Some Open-Ended Conversation Starters

Adapted from "W.H.E.A.T.S." by Bob McCarty

<b>W</b>	<b>Where</b> are you from? <b>Who</b> is in your family? <b>Work:</b> Do you have a job? Are you looking for work? Where?
<b>H</b>	<b>Hobbies</b> or Interests: What do you like to do?
<b>E</b>	<b>Experiences</b> or <b>Events:</b> What have you done lately?
<b>A</b>	<b>Acquaintances</b> (friends): Who do you hang out with?
<b>T</b>	<b>Travel:</b> Have you gone anywhere special lately? Tell me about the best place you've visited. Where would you like to go?
<b>S</b>	<b>School:</b> What school do you go to? Best/Worst Teacher, Subject Extra-Curricular activities, Stresses

# 20 Questions for Getting to Know Your Teenager

Nicole Fabian-Weber, April 3, 2019, <https://www.care.com/c/stories/778/100-questions-to-get-to-know-your-teenager/>

## **Tip #1: Don't wait until it's too late**

Start open lines of communication early. If you wait until your child has entered full-on rebellion mode, it'll be much harder to get things under control.

## **Tip #2: Practice what you preach**

Modeling the behavior you hope to see in your child speaks louder than any lecture ever could.

## **Tip #3: Give your teen some control**

Want to connect with your teen? Switch roles.

## **Tip #4: Listen and be open**

Of course you have a lot to say, but listening to your child will yield much greater rewards than talking.

## **20 questions to ask your teen**

### **Ask them about their friends**

It goes without saying that you want to know who your child is hanging out with, but military-style interrogations are a guaranteed way to get your teen to shut down fast. Instead of coming from a place of suspicion, be genuinely curious about your teen's world and the people who inhabit it.

#### ***Some questions to ask:***

1. Why are you friends with so-and-so?
2. Do you feel good about your friendship with him or her?
3. What kind of things do you like to do together?

"These questions will help parents get a better understanding of whether or not their child's friendship is a positive or negative influence in their life," says Morrison. "If you determine that the friendship is more of a bad influence, you can then ask follow up questions."

#### ***Two follow-up questions Morrison suggests are:***

4. What will you do if this person makes you do something you don't want to do?
5. How do you think this person will impact your life?

### **Ask them about school**

Teenagers are spent when they come home from school, so expecting them to give you a dissertation on their day after a generic question is unrealistic. Instead, get specific.

"I've learned that I'm rarely going to get much of a response when I say to my daughter: 'How was school?'" says New York City mom Rebecca Owens.

#### ***So, instead, when speaking to her 16-year-old about her day and school in general, Owens asks more detailed questions, such as:***

6. Who is your favorite teacher this year?
7. Who is your least favorite teacher this year?

8. What's your all-time favorite class?
9. What's your least favorite class?
10. Did anything funny happen with [friend] at school today?
11. What's your favorite lunch to have at school?

"When all else fails, I always ask my daughter what she had for lunch, if she bought, or about her all-time favorite school lunches," says Owens. "It isn't super probing, and I get a small peek into her day."

### **Light-hearted questions**

A good chunk of many teens' lives revolve around pop culture and frivolity, so why not ask about that? Not only is your child more likely to talk if it's about something they're genuinely interested in (and don't feel put on the spot), you may just remember what it's like to be in their shoes.

"It's so important to keep a sense of humor when talking with your teen," says Grover. "Be playful and open, and your child will reward you with the same attitude. Getting information and providing strong leadership doesn't have to be done so through a dictatorship."

### ***Light-hearted questions to bring up:***

12. What's your favorite app?
13. What's your favorite filter on social media?
14. What's your favorite TV show?
15. Who's your celebrity crush and why?
16. What's your favorite band/singer?
17. What's your favorite song of all time?

### **Big questions**

Sometimes the time and place is ripe for getting your teen to really talk. The important thing is to be cognizant of these rare situations, and, still, to allow things to happen organically.

"I had the best talk with my son recently on a long car ride," says Keri Peterson, of Wheat Ridge, Colorado. "I was hoping we'd get to talk more than we normally do, but I didn't want to force anything. We covered so many big topics — marriage, death, family — and to be honest, I'm not even sure how it happened! My son was in the mood to talk, so I just sort of followed his lead."

### ***Big questions to consider:***

18. Do you want to get married one day?
19. What do you think happens when we die?
20. Do you think you have enough support at home? If not, how can we change that?

And if your child is the one-word type, don't worry; other forms of communication exist.

"If your teen doesn't like talking, think about other ways to communicate," says Golomb. "Some kids will 'talk' more through art or through writing journal messages to each other. The important thing is that you're listening in every way you can."

# Hey Young Church – We're Listening

(blog post from January 4, 2017 – [www.cmdnet.org](http://www.cmdnet.org))

In November, Papal Nuncio Christophe Pierre gave an address today at the USCCB that is a preview for the upcoming Synod on Youth and Vocation:

**We are called to listen.** "We have been describing young people and their relationship to the Church. If we are to help young people discern God's plan for their lives, we might ask: what are they looking for? They are looking to be heard. Earlier I mentioned the idea of accompaniment, which implies going to them and being with them. To this, we add listening to them. Listening is an important element of discernment. Pope Francis said:

'I think that in the pastoral ministry of the Church many beautiful things are being done, many beautiful things... But there is one thing that we must do more, even the priests, even the lay people, but above all the priests must do more: the apostolate of listening: to listen!' (Incontro del Santo Padre con i partecipanti a/ convegno per persone disabili, 11 giugno 2016)"

<http://www.usccb.org/.../usccb-general-assembly-november-2016...>



Listening is the starting point for all ministry. What does it mean to really listen to young people? We need to pause in our quest of sharing with them all the things that they need to know and take some time to really hear their story. Where do they see God? How do they experience our parish? What is their experience of youth ministry? As you discern and plan for your ministry time with youth in this new year. Take some time to listen. Let the conversation go where it will. Here are some questions that could prime the pump:

- Listen to their questions and acknowledge that we also have questions and doubts.
- Ask questions and encourage youth share about their experience of God.
  - *Where do you see God?*
  - *Are there places that you especially experience God's presence?*
  - *Who are the people whom you see as being filled with faith?*
  - *Are there activities in which you feel close to God?*
- Ask youth to share with you about their experience of their parish
  - *What is your experience of belonging to our parish?*
  - *What do you enjoy? What helps you connect with God? What do you experience as helpful in your life?*
  - *What is challenging for you? What is hard for you about belonging to our parish?*
- Ask youth to share with you about their experience of youth ministry
  - *What is your experience of youth ministry?*
  - *If you were going to tell a friend about youth ministry in our parish, how would you describe it?*
  - *What do you enjoy? What helps you connect with God? What do you experience as helpful in your life?*
  - *What is challenging for you? What is hard for you about participating in youth ministry?*

# Encouraging Youth to Participate in Mass

Many parents struggle to find effective ways of encouraging their teenage children to attend mass. Consider these ideas:

- + **Attend liturgy together as a family.** Parents, let your children know that this is what we do as a family. Attending mass on Sunday is part of who we are.
- + **Tell your children your feelings about liturgy** and the reasons why their participation is important to you. Take the time to talk about the importance of Eucharist in your life and the real presence of Christ that you receive through participation in liturgy. Share your values and why you believe participation in mass is central in your life.
- + **Make going to Mass an occasion**—go to breakfast afterwards or join in a special family activity.
- + **Let youth sit with their friends during mass if they want to.** Being part of a community means that there are people we look forward to being with. This is true for young people as well.
- + **Plan for time together as a family following liturgy.** This will give you an opportunity to continue the conversation about faith and life.
- + **Be careful about complaining** about the parish, your pastor, the homily, the music, or other aspects of the liturgy and parish community. It is normal to talk about things with each other as adults, but youth can misinterpret such concerns and critique as negativism and become discouraged about being part of the community.
- + **Make it personal** by asking the young person to go to Mass as a gift to you. Sometimes parents just cannot convince young people they should participate for their own good; however, a parent can let youth know what it means to them to be there together.

