

Top Five List for Parents of New Teenagers

Pastor Jesse's top five ways you can really show your teenager that you love them.

1. Say "I Love You" to them everyday.

OK. This may seem pretty obvious, but for some parents saying "I love you," is hard. We think our teenagers will not believe it or that they'll just think we are being corny. However, saying "I love you" is a powerful phrase to speak to your teenager, and even though they may not admit it, they definitely need to hear it from you.

2. Get to know their friends.

Take a genuine interest in your teenager's friends. Friends of your child may not have great parents of their own, but at least they could say, "I really love my friend's parents." Now, this does not mean that you spend every second that your teen spends with them...have good boundaries, while demonstrating that you care.

3. Have open communication with them.

For many parents, a typical conversation goes something like...

Parent: "Hi! How was school today?"

Teen: fine

Parent: Did you learn anything interesting?

Teen: no

Parent: What are you doing the rest of the night?

Teen: nothing

Sadly, this sounds quite familiar. But as parents and youth leaders, we cannot give up! We have to find ways to get our kids talking. Try to find what they are interested in. Ask good, open-ended questions. Try hard to talk about what THEY care about.

4. Set Good Boundaries for them.

What I mean by "good" boundaries will vary from home to home. There is a balance somewhere in the middle of being ultra-strict and too-loose with guidelines and rules. Make sure that boundaries are clear. If boundaries or rules are broken, be sure that consequences fit the offense, and be ready to explain the consequences.

5. Offer them lots of praise.

Teenagers need to hear that they matter, and unfortunately, they do not hear much in the way of affirmation even from their friends. There will be many times where you will need to correct your teenager and even implement consequences. That should never seem like the only words that your child hears from you as a parent. So, offer praise to them. Tell them you're proud to be their parent. Point out the things that they're good at and the ways that God has gifted them.