

Eighth Grade



The phase when it's cool to have choices,
it's not cool to answer questions, and one smart
kid will remind you, **"Yeah... I know."**

WELCOME

Give options whenever possible.

Remember when you had a two-year-old who wanted to “do it myself?” Your teenager’s resistance may not come in the form of a toddler tantrum, but the emotions may feel familiar. Whenever possible, give options so they have some freedom to choose.

Re-define the conversation.

You eighth grader may answer your questions with one word, an eye-roll, or an all-too-clear facial expression. But don’t mistranslate the cues. Eighth graders actually want to have adult conversations sometimes. Be available—even if it seems a little pointless.

Eighth graders are smart.

In fact, there may be no phase quite as smart as this one—just ask them. Being so much smarter than everyone else can really become a burden. Sometimes their patience just runs out, and they simply can’t explain it to you one more time. On some occasions, have fun going toe-to-toe with your eighth grader and challenge them back. Just remember, the important thing is how they personalize what they believe in this phase. So encourage their personal discoveries.

It’s just a phase,
so don’t miss it.



OVERVIEW

In the Eighth Grade phase, your role is to affirm their personal journey.

Your eighth grader is cool. No longer at the mercy of an uncontrollable emotional outburst, eighth graders are increasingly able to self-regulate their actions, emotions, and activities. But, this emerging sense of control creates a new kind of tensions for your teenager to resolve. When you consistently affirm their journey through this sometimes-turbulent season, you help them gain stability.



**Middle schoolers
think like an engineer.**

You help them learn
when you...
connect the dots.



**Middle schoolers
want to know, “Who
do I want to be?”**

You capture their heart
when you...
provide stability.



**Middle
schoolers are
motivated by.**

You coach them
when you...
affirm their value.

DISCOVER

Your eighth grader is changing.

Physically	Mentally	Socially	Emotionally
Needs 9-11 hours of sleep each night, may easily fatigue or develop headaches	Capable of self-evaluation and self-critique	Often interested in pop culture, slang, current events, or politics	Enjoys sarcasm and sophisticated jokes
Girls outpace guys in development	Able to see two sides of an argument	Wants to negotiate rules	Often interested in leadership roles and teaching younger children
Guys experience changes in height and body shape, and may develop body odor, body hair, and increased muscle mass	Enjoys forming and sharing their opinion	Displays an increasingly adult-like personality	May emphasize physical appearance and performance
Girls experience a significant growth spurt, development of body odor, body hair, and breasts, and menstruation is likely (10-16 years)	Sudden brain growth may lead to forgetfulness	Needs non-parental adult influences	Tends to overschedule their time
	Growing ability to organize	More concerned about personal appearance than personal environment (like the state of their locker or bedroom)	Often feels more comfortable in their own skin

RHYTHMS & RESPONSES

Authentic Faith

This year you will **provoke discovery** so your eighth grader will own their faith and value a faith community.

Your eighth grader wants to discover how faith applies to them, right now. Connect Biblical truth to their everyday world by purchasing a youth Bible, so they have access to articles and devotional copy that can inspire them. And, connect faith to everyday experiences through conversations at home.

Say things like...

Can we pray about this together?

God will never stop loving you.

What would be a fun way we could serve others together?

Consider serving at your church or local ministry that appeals to your eighth grader's interests.

Parent Cue Times



Morning Time

Instill purpose when you start the day with encouraging words.



Drive Time

Interpret life during informal conversation as you travel.



Meal Time

Establish values with intentional conversations while you eat together.



Bed Time

Listen to their heart by staying available—just in case.

*EVERY PHASE IS A
TIMEFRAME IN A
KID OR TEENAGER'S
LIFE WHEN YOU
CAN LEVERAGE
DISTINCTIVE
OPPORTUNITIES
TO INFLUENCE
THEIR FUTURE.*

*
You have
approximately
260 weeks
and counting...



PARENT CUE

IT'S JUST A
PHASE

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