

Ninth Grade



The phase when friendships shift, grades count, and interests change so often your teenager has to explain, **"This is me now."**

WELCOME

You may notice a few new friends.

High school feels like it has hundreds of teenagers, 250 dating couples, and more than 50 options for extracurricular activities (and all of that may be true). With so many opportunities to connect, your high schooler may find their place in engineering class or on the debate team, in drama club or on the basketball court, at the gym or Beta Club.

There is a new academic reality.

Ninth grade means increased demands for personal responsibility. For those headed to college, grades begin to count toward future admission. For everyone, grades count toward a high school diploma.

This is a year of identifying talents.

By the end of this year, your teenager will have a more stable sense of who they are. Frankly, they may be a little frustrated you haven't known who they were all along. (Why not? It's been so obvious.) Listen carefully. Pay attention. Stalk them openly. The greatest thing you can do in this phase is to continually rediscover who they are becoming and know where they are finding acceptance.

**It's just a phase,
so don't miss it.**



OVERVIEW

In the Ninth Grade phase, your role is to mobilize their potential.

High school means higher stakes. Many freshman spend this year redefining who they thought they were or what they thought their future would be. Pay attention. Ask questions. This is a significant year.



**High schoolers think
like a philosopher.**

You help them learn
when you...
ask questions.



**High schoolers want
to know, “Where do I
belong?”**

You capture their heart
when you...
value community.



**High schoolers
are motivated by
freedom.**

You coach them
when you...
give choices.

DISCOVER

Your ninth grader is changing.

Physically	Mentally	Socially	Emotionally
Has difficulty falling asleep before 11pm, but still needs 9 hours of sleep per day	Increasingly able to focus, recall, and organize information	Girls begin wearing make-up on a regular basis	Feels empowered through choices rather than rules
Guys are getting taller, smellier, hairier, and gaining muscle mass; may also experience voice changes, weird dreams, and increased acne	Overly self-aware; may think, "Everybody's watching me"	Increased interest in sexual expression, but dating tends to be short-lived	May still feel insecure about their changing body
Girls' bodies take on an adult physical appearance	Wired for risk-taking and sensational experiences	Say they want parents to listen more than advise	May experience changes in motivation
	Resists potentially embarrassing situations	May be tempted to change their appearance or behavior to gain acceptance	Seeks experiences that create intense feelings and emotions
			Increasingly vulnerable to addiction, such as self-harm, alcohol, and pornography

RHYTHMS & RESPONSES

Authentic Faith

This year you will **fuel passion** so they will keep pursuing authentic faith and discover a personal mission.

In this phase when your ninth grader is asking, “Where do I belong?” foster their connection to a positive faith community. Your ninth grader will need consistent peers and leaders who will strengthen their relationship with God.

So, look for ways to prioritize their church connection, and stay engaged in their faith journey by having conversations at home.

Say things like...

What’s something you feel like God is teaching you right now?

When do you feel closest to God?

When you told me about... it made me think of a verse in Proverbs.

Share Bible verses that relate to their present circumstances.

Parent Cue Times



Morning Time

Instill purpose by starting the day with encouraging words.



Meal Time

Connect regularly by scheduling time to eat together (even once a week).



Bed Time

Interpret life when they occasionally open up at the end of the day.



Their Time

Strengthen your relationship by adjusting your plans to show up when they need you.

*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
208 weeks
and counting...



PARENT CUE

IT'S JUST A
PHASE

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