

PARENTING MATTERS: FRIENDSHIP

— 9TH & 10TH GRADE —

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Familiar faces that start to stick around. The start of high school often brings a reshuffling of friendships, but by the end of freshman year, your child will likely have a pretty solid group. Their groups are still greatly defined by their interests, but students are now more capable of creating friendships without a ton in common. These friends will be a part of your student's journey for the next few years, so invest in getting to know them.



YOU PARENT THEM WELL WHEN YOU...

KNOW:

The beginning of freshman year usually brings a reshuffling of friendships as your student settles into their new normal. By the end of sophomore year, most of the friendships they have made are here to stay. Your student is beginning to better understand themselves and the way that they relate to their world. This understanding is what starts to build more lasting friendships. Know that when you use your relational influence to lead their friendships in these early high school years, they stand a higher likelihood of establishing solid, healthy friendships now and throughout their lives.

EXPECT:

The emotional ups and downs will start to stabilize. While the pressure your student is under is still huge, they are now responding more out of logic and stress than out of hormones. Friendships are also starting to cross gender boundaries more and more. There is less of a difference in how they communicate and build friendships, so you may start to see more opposite gender friendships being built. Expect to start seeing the same faces more consistently as these friendships are built more strongly.

PREPARE:

This is your chance to influence who your student befriends. The more you can lead them in these early high school years, the better off you will all be. Because they are still dependent on you for rides and for permission, you have a little power that you can choose to use wisely. Invest in getting to know their friends and have open and honest conversations about who you disapprove of and why. Allow this to be a conversation, but know when to put your foot down if a friendship is particularly toxic or unhealthy. Prepare to use your leadership and influence wisely in order to set your student up for success.

TALK:

Have open and honest discussions about why good friends are important. Ask a lot of questions, give them space to answer, and listen actively. Your student is thinking philosophically, so give them a chance to reflect on how things impact them, and how they can impact others. If they have friends you don't approve of, give them a chance to present their case and have an open conversation about both of your viewpoints. Talk consistently about how good friends can help them make wise choices and be a better person and bad friends can negatively impact who they are and how they behave.

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

Invest in their Friendships

Don't be afraid to stick your nose in their business. Talk to their friends, ask about their friends, get a feel for who they are spending time with. Be intentional in helping them foster positive relationships and help steer them away from negative ones. Use the influence you have through time, freedom, and rides, to help them make wise friendship choices.

Ask Internally Focused Questions

Host the discussion and let them talk as much as possible. Start with questions like:

- How are your friends helping you grow as an individual?
Grow in your faith?
- How are you sharing your faith with your friends?
- How can your friendships impact who you are as a person?
- Why do you think healthy and positive friendships are important?
- What impact can negative friendships have on you?

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Your child's friend groups are starting to solidify and friendships are starting to grow. Pray for your child to embody these qualities as outlined by Colossians to be people of love, compassion, and forgiveness like Christ modeled for us. Ask God for your child to have wisdom in developing relationships with their friends and be peacemakers in their groups.

RESOURCES...

> Web

How to Deal with Toxic Friendships – Search [Telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk): *Mean Girls*

Male Friendships in Late Adolescents – Search [NewYorker.com](https://www.nytimes.com): *Secrets of Boys*



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