HERITAGE | MILESTONES

Early Adolescence
Frequently Asked Parenting Questions

Q: How early should I talk to my child about relationships, purity, and dating?
A: Every child is different, but you know it is time to discuss purity if any of the following is true... Your adolescent child shows interest in having a girl/boy friend You notice texts, emails, Facebook posts, etc. from the opposite sex Your child has any sort of online access including a home computer, mobile phone, iPod Touch, iPad, and other electronic devices. Also, keep in mind their social groups. If they are in public school and even private school, they are much more likely to be exposed to inappropriate material and/or relationships.

Q: How can I talk to my daughter about modesty in a fun way?
A: Go on a shopping trip together and discuss fashion and basic guidelines to tell if something is modest or not. Let them go through the list and tell you what they feel comfortable with. Suggested guidelines: Fingertip length on shorts/skirts. Practice sitting (watch the back of bottoms). Swimsuit (jump up and down and make sure everything stays in). Tops must fully cover breast/cleavage even when bending forward.

Q: How do I help my child set good boundaries for internet/online social media?
A: Set a time to discuss the following questions with him/her: What is a healthy/appropriate amount of time per day to spend online? What guidelines will keep our identity and personal information private? What kinds of pictures are/aren't appropriate to post? (i.e. no swimsuit or pajama pictures or pictures with too much skin showing) Emphasize the importance of never responding to someone online we don't know in person.

Q: How do I protect and help my child in the temptations they face with technology and media?

A: Even if you believe your child is not yet tempted, take the following proactive steps...

- Do not allow your child to have a computer or television in his/her room.
- If your child has a mobile device or phone, have them turn it off and plug it in the kitchen a certain time each night.
- Limit and monitor all text messages.
- Put parenting controls on your television.
- Be careful of the shows/television that you watch in the company of your child to avoid sending mixed messages.
- Check services such as **pluggedinonline.com** for content details on any movies, music and television shows they want to watch.
- Set controls/accountability on all computers, phones and other electronic devices in your home using services such as the following... covenanteyes.com, xxxchurch.com, bsecure.com, clearplay.com, and TVguardian.com

Q: How can I expose my child to the influence of other godly adults to reinforce what we are teaching at home?

A: When a child enters the adolescent years it becomes important to help him or her glean from the example and influence of other Godly adults, some of whom may become important voices into your child's life when he/she reaches the Rite of Passage step of the Heritage Milestones. A few suggestions...

- Start with extended family including grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. Invite godly relatives to take an interest in your child's activities by attending his/her concerts, games, award assemblies, etc. Ask them to invite your child to breakfast or ice cream once in a while to connect and speak into his/her life.
- When you eat meals with Christian friends invite your adolescent son/daughter to sit at the adult table rather than with the kids. Simply including him/her in these conversations can help establish a bond with other Godly adults.
- Introduce yourself to the student pastor and/or a small group leader and ask who he/she considers to be godly leaders and volunteers in the student ministry program. You might consider offering to volunteer in the student ministry in order to get to know other adult leaders who might be willing to take a special interest in your child.
- For more ideas on inviting the influence of other adults into your child's life read Parenting Beyond Your Capacity by Reggie Joiner and Carey Nieuwhof.