

NINTH GRADE

THE PHASE
WHEN →

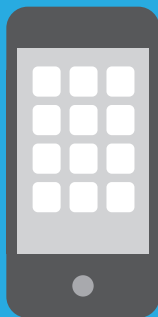
FRIENDSHIPS SHIFT,
GRADES COUNT,

YOUR TEENAGER

← AND INTERESTS CHANGE SO OFTEN

↓
HAS TO EXPLAIN

"THIS IS ME NOW."







YOU MAY NOTICE FORMER BEST FRIENDS FADING AND NEW FRIENDS APPEARING.

The average high school has 750 teenagers, 250 dating couples, and more than 50 options for extracurricular activities. With so many opportunities to connect, your high schooler may find their place in shop class or on the debate team, in drama club or on the baseball field, in Future Farmers of America or Beta Club. And it may change every few weeks.

THERE IS A NEW ACADEMIC REALITY.

Ninth grade means increased demands for personal responsibility. For some, this is when grades begin to count toward college admission. For everyone, grades count toward a high school diploma, and sometimes toward extra privileges at home.

THIS IS A YEAR OF IDENTIFYING TALENTS.

Freshmen gravitate to where they are most accepted. 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 that 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 know them and know where they are finding acceptance.

IT'S JUST A
PHASE

SO DON'T
MISS IT



YOUR ROLE IS TO **MOBILIZE** THEIR POTENTIAL

High school means higher stakes. Many freshmen get stuck or begin to feel hopeless if they don't find acceptance and experience some success this year. Some need help redefining who they thought they were or what they thought their future would be. Pay attention. Ask questions. This is a significant year.

**THINKS LIKE
A PHILOSOPHER**

You help them learn when you...
ASK QUESTIONS.

**WANTS TO KNOW,
"WHERE DO I
BELONG?"**

You capture their heart when you...
VALUE COMMUNITY.

**IS MOTIVATED
BY FREEDOM.**

You coach their moral abilities when you...
GIVE CHOICES.



YOU CAN HELP YOUR HIGH SCHOOLER...

LOVE
GOD.

LOVE
OTHERS.

LOVE
LIFE.

When you **MOBILIZE** your high schooler's potential,
you help them...

KEEP PURSUING AUTHENTIC FAITH. DISCOVER A PERSONAL MISSION.

Practically speaking, that means every week
you have an opportunity to...

**CONNECT THEM WITH A WEEKLY SMALL GROUP.
ENCOURAGE SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES.**

TALK ABOUT FAITH TOGETHER.

(But try not to have all the answers.)

PRAY FOR THEM.

You can do these things by taking advantage of the time you already
spend together.

MORNING TIME

Instill purpose by
starting the day with
encouraging words.

MEAL TIME

Schedule a consistent
time to eat and
talk together
(even once a week).

BED TIME

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



YOUR HIGH SCHOOLER IS CHANGING...

PHYSICALLY

- » Has difficulty falling asleep before 11pm (it's biological)
- » Needs nine hours of sleep and one hour of exercise per day
- » Girls still outpace guys in development
- » Guys are getting taller, smellier, hairier, and gaining muscle mass; may also experience an increase in acne, voice changes, and weird dreams
- » Girls' bodies take on adult physical appearance; after menstruation, increase in height will slow and then stop

MENTALLY

- » Increasingly able to focus, recall, and organize information
- » Overly self-aware; may think, "everybody's watching me"
- » Wired for risk-taking and sensational experiences
- » Resists potentially embarrassing situations
- » "I am bored" often means "I don't understand"

RELATIONALLY

- » Girls begin wearing make-up on a regular basis
- » Dating relationships tend to be short-lived
- » Increased interest in sexual expression (30% of ninth graders report being sexually active)
- » Say they want parents to listen more than advise

EMOTIONALLY

- » Feels empowered through choices rather than rules
- » May still feel insecure about changing body
- » Needs help navigating extreme emotions
- » May experience changes in motivation
- » Seeks experiences that create intense feelings and emotions
- » Increasingly vulnerable to addiction: self-harm, alcohol, pornography, etc.

PHASE:

A TIMEFRAME

IN A KID'S LIFE WHEN YOU CAN

LEVERAGE

DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE

THEIR FUTURE



YOU HAVE 208 WEEKS AND COUNTING...

IT'S JUST A
PHASE
SO DON'T MISS IT



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