



Charting a course for your teen driver

"It is never too early to start preparing your teen for the inevitable task of learning to drive."

One of the greatest milestones in a teen's life is the day they start driving a car. Whether your teen is thirteen or sixteen, he/she thinks about driving. It is a dream for your teen, but it can become a nightmare for a parent. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15 to 20 year olds, accounting for forty percent of all teen deaths. While this age group makes up only 10% of the U. S. population, they account for 14% of all crash fatalities (teendriving.com). It is never too early to start preparing your teen for the inevitable task of learning to drive. Parents must be proactive in coaching and encouraging their teen's ability to drive. Your first step in being proactive is setting the example when you drive. Don't expect your teen to drive the speed limit or slow down at yellow lights if you don't do this. They WILL follow your example. Parents must also set clear guidelines when driving. Don't allow your teen to talk on the phone while driving and definitely limit the number of passengers in the car. Teendriving.com has a helpful link to help parents and teens draw up a driving contract to write down in stone the guidelines you expect when your teen is driving. (<http://www.teendriving.com/drivingcontract2.htm>) Another thing parents can do is go to their state's Department of Motor Vehicle's website or to this website: <http://www.drivers.com/article/639/>. Most states have a new driver's handbook that lets you know of new rules and safety tips for the road. It is tough for any parent to watch their teen drive out of the driveway for the first time. But, the more you prepare your teen for the responsibility, the more comfortable all of you will be. It's a skill that takes time, knowledge, and patience.

Ladies Home Journal (lhj.com) has put together a great tip sheet for parents to help their teens become better drivers:

- 1. Be a good role model.** Always wear your seatbelt, never use your cell phone while driving, and don't be an aggressive driver.
- 2. Insist your teen wear a seatbelt.** Statistics show that 50 percent of all teens who died in car crashes last year were not wearing a seatbelt./
- 3. Remind your teen that a car can be a weapon and driving is a privilege, not a right.** If it's not being used responsibly, it should be taken away.
- 4. Restrict night and weekend driving.** It is estimated that teens have more accidents after 11 p.m. on weekdays and after midnight on weekends.
- 5. Drive with your teen occasionally.** You'll get a firsthand view of his/her weaknesses behind the wheel.
- 6. Restrict the number of passengers in your teen's car.** Remember that the more friends your teen is carrying, the greater the risk of an accident.



What are your opinions on these questions?

At what age do you think people should be permitted to drive a car?

Younger than 16 - 4%
16 - 46%
17 - 8%
18 - 30%
19-20 - 2%
21 or older - 9%

Here are percentages of teens who reported seeing these things at least sometimes among teens while driving:

Teen driver on a cell phone - 89%
Teen driver upset on the cell phone - 71%
Teen driver using handheld device - 53%

The Parent POV

(point of view)

One important factor to keeping your teens safe while either preparing to become a driver or already being one, is open communication. Try asking some of these questions to get the discussion going:

1. If we could afford to buy you any car you wanted, what type of car would you pick and why?
2. What are you most looking forward to about driving?
3. How can you start getting prepared to become a driver yourself?
4. What are some things that you can do to minimize distractions when you are in the car with another teen driver or when you are driving yourself?
5. What are some things you have seen in other teen drivers that scare you or that you know are not smart driving habits?



Focus on Prayer

PRAY THAT:

1. God will give you discernment regarding how you get your teen ready to become a driver.
2. God will give you an abundance of patience while teaching your teen to drive and while they develop into safe and independent drivers.
3. God will protect your student as he/she drives or rides with other young drivers and that he/she will make smart choices while driving.
4. God would show you ways to teach your teen each time you are together without being nagging.

Verse of the month

"Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD." Proverbs 16:20 (NIV)

Most people want to succeed at a task. In order for success to happen, a person must have proper instruction. As your teen embarks on new activities and stages in life, like driving a car, they are looking to you for right and helpful instruction. The flip side of this proverb is that your teen must heed your instruction. It is easy for you to ask for it, even demand their obedience when you are around. But what happens when you are not around? Isn't it great to know that communication, persistence, and patience will pay off in the end? You can have all the information in the world to help your teen, but it doesn't help the fact that there is an element of trusting the Lord in every situation and decision that surrounds your family's life. Questions of doubt and fear will creep into your mind when you think about your child's safety and their ability to think in critical situations. Remember that fear is from the enemy, and trust is from the Lord. Know the difference between fear and discernment and be blessed to "trust in the Lord."



The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm conducted an extensive survey and research regarding teen drivers.

Here are some of their interesting findings:

- * Nearly all (93%) of teens report seeing other teens in the car of a young driver at least sometimes, while the same proportion (94%) report seeing these passengers distracting the driver in some way. Distractions included cell phone use, loud music, and heightened emotions.
- * Although only half of teens report seeing drunk driving by teen drivers at least sometimes, three-fourths of respondents report seeing fatigued driving by teens.
- * 39% of teen drivers said they were not responsible for any car related expenses including gas, insurance, maintenance, repairs, or tickets. More than half, however, said they were responsible for paying at least some fuel costs.

Music alternative

Sarah Kelly is a Grammy-nominated artist whose sophomore release, "Where the Past Meets Today", deals with pushing through life's hardest battles. Kelly knows about battles as she has gone public with her history of abuse. "Her words emit deep courage...words that will call the bruised and broken back to health in relationship with their creator." She says, "I lived in a place of quiet fear for so many years, keeping silent about the cycle of abusive relationships in my life. Once I started being honest with myself, healing and peace followed. This album contains "earthy vocals with classic rock moments and is raw, gritty, determined, and powerful." In February 2007, she released an acoustic EP named "Sarah Kelly". sarahkelly.com

trends

Here are the top 5 fashion trends for late spring/early summer of 2007:

1. Shift Dress
2. Peep-Toe Shoes
3. Convertible Handbag
4. Kimono Sleeves
5. Babydoll Dress

(about.com)

musicspotlight



Albums:

"Introducing Joss Stone" - 3/2007

"Mind, Body, and Soul" - 1/2005

"The Soul Sessions" - 9/2003

Background:

In 2003, English singer, Joss Stone, emerged on the pop/rock scene to take on the pop domination of Britney and Christina. Though born in England, she grew up listening to American soul and R&B such as Aretha Franklin. In 2002, Stone left her home town of Devon, England to take a risk and audition for a record company in New York City. S-Curve CEO heard her, fell in love with her voice and style, and signed her to the company immediately. Her first album, "The Soul Sessions", sold over two million copies.

What parents should know:

Joss Stone's newest album, "Introducing Joss Stone", primarily deals with relationships between a guy and girl. In some of the songs, she is fixated on one guy and is consumed with being with him. Songs such as "Headturner", "Put Your Hands on Me", and "Tell Me 'bout It" contain several sexual references and innuendos.

Parent/Teen Q&A:

Joss on adversity: "Nothing scares me anymore. Why? Why waste your time being scared? Something scares you, do it, just to find out. Then you can grow and move on in life. It's a much more fun way to live." (allhiphop.com) Q: Do you like taking positive risks, why or why not? What holds you back from taking positive risks?



filmwatch

Know what these movies contain before your teens ask to see them!

TITLE	RATING	RED FLAGS	GENRE	STARRING
Spider-Man 3	PG-13	For sequences of intense action violence	Action/Adventure, Superhero	Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst, Thomas Haden Church, Topher Grace, James Franco
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	PG-13	For intense sequences of action/adventure, violence, and some frightening images	Action/Adventure, Comedy	Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley, Geoffrey Rush, Bill Nighy
Georgia Rule	R	For sexual content and some language	Drama	Lindsay Lohan, Felicity Huffman, Jane Fonda, Dermot Mulroney, Cary Elwes