

Encouraging Your Teen's Talents



"God has entrusted your teen with great talents, gifts, and abilities to reach every goal He has placed in front of them."

One of the greatest joys you can have as a parent is to see your teen master a task or excel in an activity. God has entrusted your teen with talents, gifts, and abilities to reach every goal He has placed in front of them. You now have the task of helping your teen find their gifts and talents, figure out their spiritual gifts and how to use them.

All parents have dreams and plans for their teen. Great frustration can arise when your plans don't match up with your teen's plans. A huge parenting mistake you can make is to push your dreams on your teen. Help your teen find their own passion by listening to their ideas and strategically placing them in areas that allow them to learn and grow.

Finding and defining your teen's spiritual gifts is vitally important. This is a difficult task because many adults don't know their own spiritual gifts. The Bible gives partial lists in several places throughout Scripture, including Romans 12:6-8, I Corinthians 12:6-10, and I Peter 4:11. Read these verses with your teen and send them on a fact-finding mission. Have them see if your church offers a spiritual gifts test. Have them talk to mature Christian mentors or leaders who know them best in order to get their opinion on the gifts they see displayed in their lives.

By helping your teen develop their spiritual gifts and teaching them how those gifts complement their God-given talents and abilities, you can be confident that your teen will live a life of greater purpose and fulfillment in their job, their family, or whatever God calls them to do.

Interested in helping your teen find their interests and passions? Here is an idea by Focus on the Family:

1. Ask your teen to make a list of all the things they have done in the past few years, including sports, social events, hobbies, etc. You should give your teen at least two weeks to compile this list.

2. Ask your teen to give each item on their list a "positive" or "negative" rating.

3. Ask your teen to focus on the "negative" responses and look for patterns. For example, if activities dealing with building things ended in disaster, then possibly, your teen will not be working with their hands.

4. Next focus on the positives by asking your teen the following questions:

- * How can I do more of these kinds of activities?
- * What kinds of qualities, talents, character traits, and skills do these activities require?
- * Do I have some of those qualities and traits?

(family.org)

Pulse

Here are some interesting findings:

Teen guys were asked, "What is your top life goal?"

- 40% - Become more spiritual
- 27% - Help people who need help
- 16% - Be a leader in your community
- 10% - Get rich
- 8% - Be famous

(breakawaymag.com)

Teen girls were asked, "Do you know what type of career or vocation you want to pursue?"

- 62% - Yes
- 38% - No

(briomag.com)

The Parent POV

(point of view)

Isn't it fun to think about your teen's talents and abilities? Here are some fun and thought provoking questions to help your teen figure out where their passions lie and what they like to do.

1. What can you do that most people can't?
2. What gifts or talents do you think God has given you? Why do you think that?
3. If you were to ask God to give you the ultimate dream job, what would it be? What steps are you taking right now to reach that dream job?
4. Are you happy with the gifts and talents God has given you? Why or why not?



Focus on Prayer

Pray that:

1. God will reveal to your teen his/her spiritual gifts and that they will practice using these God-given gifts to honor Him.
2. Your teen will be reminded every day that God is the Giver of "every good and perfect gift" as stated in James 1:17.
3. God will protect your teen from comparing their gifts and talents with other teens.
4. God will give you patience as your teen prayerfully considers God's vocational plan for their life. Pray that you will be supportive no matter their choice.

Verse of the month

"The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 'His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" Matthew 25:20-21 (NIV)

This is one amazing story! In God's infinite love and mercy, He entrusts to each of us talents and gifts to use for His glory and honor. This same love and mercy is also given to your teen. That is an exciting and humbling feeling all wrapped into one. God is looking for those who are faithful to the gifts and talents He has given out. Your job as parents is to help your teen use their talents, stay true to its requirements, and reflect Christ while using them. One way this can be done is through encouragement and living your faithfulness in front of your teen. The greatest accomplishment in any parent's life would be to ultimately hear our Master say about their teen, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"



Did you know...

- * Nearly 71% of teens believe the "American Dream" is still achievable while only 10% believe it is not achievable. (jobshadow.com)
- * Passion about an occupation is the greatest motivation for teens selecting a career (57%), followed by the opportunity to help people (21%), and money (12%). (ja.org)
- * Students were asked to select the single source they would access for information on career choices. Teacher/Counselor was selected by 31%, followed by "People in the Field" (24%), the Internet (19%), and a parent (13%). (ja.org)
- * By a ratio of nearly four-to-one, adults in this country say that American parents are placing too little (56%) rather than too much (15%) pressure on students, with the remaining quarter (24%) saying that parents are exerting the right amount of pressure. (pewresearch.org)

Music alternative

Flame (Marcus William-Gray) grew up in the inner city of St. Louis where he was influenced by hip-hop culture. He credits his grandmother for introducing him to Christianity, and at the age of 16 he gave his life to Christ. Cross Movement was Flame's first Christian rap CD to hear, and it changed his life. In 2000, Flame went to a Cross Movement concert and gave the group a demo CD. As a result, he was invited on the Platinum Souls tour. Shortly after, he signed with the Cross Movement Records label. With his debut album releasing in 2004, he gained a following in no time. He received a Dove Award nomination for Gospel Rap Song of the Year. (wikipedia.org)

trends

Here are the top searched designer jeans on AOL:

1. True Religion Jeans
2. Seven Jeans
3. Lucky Brand Jeans
4. Red Money Jeans
5. Evisu Jeans
6. Diesel Jeans
7. DNKY Jeans
8. Guess Jeans
9. Joe's Jeans
10. Rock and Republic Jeans

(aol.com)

musicspotlight



Albums:

- "Graduation" - 2007
- "Late Registration" - 2005
- "College Dropout" - 2004

Background: From 2001 to 2004, "Kanye West went from hip-hop beat maker to world wide hit maker" while doing production work for Jay-Z. Early in his career he focused on production work and writing Rap music. In 2001 he made his official performing debut contributing two songs to Jay-Z's "Blueprint." Due to a nearly fatal car accident, West's debut album, "The College Dropout," didn't release till 2004. Musically, West has only known success. He earned ten Grammy nominations in 2005 and won the award for Best Rap Album, Best Rap Song, and Best R&B Song. West's flamboyant personality also sets him apart. He has spoken out about homophobia in rap music and made anti-George Bush statements. Despite any controversy, he continues to produce hits and gain popularity. (sonicnet.com)

What Parents Should Know:

Kanye's most recent album, "Graduation," contains a parental advisory as it is filled with foul language, drug references, and derogatory lyrics about women. There are references about God that are irreverent and could be very confusing to a teen learning about God.

What Kanye Has To Say:

On his arrogant attitude, West said, "But let someone ask you about what you're doing, and if you turn around and say, 'It's great,' then people are like, 'What's wrong with you?' You want me to be great, but you don't ever want me to say I'm great." Q: Do you think being confident in a talent or ability is bragging? Why or why not? When does confidence step over the line into arrogance? (rollingstone.com)



filmwatch

Be aware and informed of these three movies that are being marketed to your teen this month...

TITLE	RATING	RED FLAGS	GENRE	STARRING
The Heartbreak Kid	R	For strong sexual content, crude humor, language, and a scene of drug use involving a minor	Comedy	Ben Stiller, Michelle Monaghan, Jerry Stiller
30 Days of Night	R	For strong horror violence, and language	Horror	Josh Hartnett, Melissa George, Danny Huston
Trick 'R Treat	R	For horror violence, some sexuality/nudity, and language	Horror	Anna Paquin, Brian Cox, Dylan Baker