

Characteristics of a Pre-teen

Do you have a child between the ages of ten and twelve? We call this age span, the "tweenage" years. There are several characteristics which are common to this age group and often causes discomfort in the home.

Worry is probably the most consistent characteristic of this age group. Tweenagers (grade 4th - 7th grades) worry a lot. They worry about being fat, getting pimples,, freckles, not being accepted on an athletic team, or being publicly embarrassed. A tweenager's body is rapidly changing and they embarrass easily as they cope with the awkwardness and clumsiness that comes with it.

Tweens worry about school grades. They worry, worry, worry.

The greatest foundation a parent can lay is to present a calm, stable environment for their children. Don't express your worries and concerns to your tweenager. It just adds to their worries and confuses them more.

A parent needs to be home with their teens as much as possible. Be sensitive to his needs and pray over his worries with him.

Don't worry about all your tween is experiencing, but commit it to prayer. This too shall pass.

Helping Your Tweenager Overcome Struggles

A tweenager is going through rapid change in her life. One year to a tweenager is like eternity. They live for today!

When a tweenager has a problem she sometimes develops tunnel vision. For example: All the students in Mary's class were invited to the party . . . Except Mary.

All a tween can see is that they failed in being accepted and can't realize on their own that "life will go on".

A tweenager thinks, "I failed the exam. Mom and Dad will be mad. I will probably have to repeat a grade. There's no hope so I am going to give up."

The goal of a parent is to be sensitive to their child's needs. Share with your child that they are a beautiful creation of God and God loves them. Not for what they do but who they are . . . A Child of God.

How to Make a Tweenager Your Friend

Many parents feel that 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th graders are just foolish. Many tweens feel that adults just cannot understand them. Have we created a new generation gap?

Many parents love their children very much. They train them, discipline them, and pray for them, but they are not friends.

Many times we do not even really know our teens. Being a friend to your child takes a lot of work.

Parents often try to act, dress or even imitate tweenagers in order to become their friend. Our children don't want us to be like them. They are looking for someone to look up to as a role model.

You need to be involved in your child's life. Go to their games, recitals, plays and let them know you really care. They will tell you they don't want you around them, but knowing you are available and really care is so very important.

When was the last time you sat down with your tween or teen and really listened to what they had to say? Parents often have a lot to say, but rarely listen.

Parenting is involvement. Be available. Be a good listener. Develop qualities combined with prayer; then a wonderful friendship will blossom.

A TEEN QUEST POWER SHEET

A Tweenager ?

There is a group of people in our world today who are called tweenagers. They are really aren't teens yet, but are not little children.

They are giving up childhood toys for designer clothes and CDs. The tweenager is in tremendous transition . . . Puberty is taking place.

Here is what Angie Hunt has to say about tweenagers -

"Tara came to Sunday School with gold glitter in her hair. Vickie wore a slinky dress, obviously designed for an adult temptress. Pam came in with a black leather jacket over the modest dress her mother must have forced her to wear. Janie came in from sub-freezing weather in a lacy short sleeved dress without a coat. Why? A coat would have covered the dress she obviously wanted to show off."

Don't panic! Tweens are not going through a sudden change of insanity. They are simply going through a stage like temper tantrums and teething . . . It will pass.

My friend, this is a new generation which is facing problems and pressures like no other time in history. Spend time talking with a school teacher of 4th, 5th, or 6th graders. Go to a middle school and spend time with tweens.

Parents need to be sensitive to the needs of this transitional age.

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Preparing Your Teen for Adolescence

Changing from childhood to adulthood can be very difficult. Changing from childhood to being a teen can also be difficult.

As a parent, you have an important responsibility to prepare your child for those tween years. Those are the years sandwiched between childhood and teen years.

One of the biggest mistakes parents make with tweens is direct them into a negative mold. We tell them they are no good in sports, or too shy or ugly. Many times children will believe what they are told and follow in that path.

When I was in second grade, my teacher could see artistic ability in me. She encouraged me. She had me draw pictures on the wall and praised my work. A result of her praise and encouragement I pursued art as my major in college. Your tween is going through an identity crisis. She is caught in the middle of childhood and adulthood. Wouldn't you experience the same if your body was rapidly changing, your emotions are suddenly flip-flopping daily, and you generally feel out of control?

Parents need to build the self-esteem of their children. Teach your children to say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Pray with them and instruct them how to daily commune with God through prayer and Bible reading. This is an excellent time to instill those habits if they already are not doing it.

If you have a pre-teen or a teenager in your home, you must read the book, [Surviving the Tweenage Years](#) by Angie Hunt. It is an excellent resource.

Preparing for the Teen Years

What can you do to help your child prepare for the teen years? I have worked with teenagers since the early seventies and I am convinced preparation for the adolescent years is very important. Parents need to prepare their children for adulthood and the more immediate, adolescence.

How do we make the transition between childhood and the teenage years run smoothly?

1. Respect your child's privacy. I am amazed when parents tell me they snoop in the child's bedroom and tear up their posters and throw away offensive material. That is the wrong approach. We should not allow offensive material in our home, but we need to guide our child to remove the questionable item.
2. Show physical affection. Give your child a big hug at home and not in front of his peers.
3. Begin to allow your tween to make some decisions. Give her an allowance and allow her to choose her own clothes with guidance.
4. Keep your relationship with your spouse strong. This offers security to your tween.
5. Lead your children to Christ at an early age. Begin to help him develop spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Parents have a tremendous responsibility to teach their children under the leadership of God. This is why church attendance is so important. Your teenager not only needs biblical guidance on a regular basis but parents need that guidance also.

The Extremes of the Tweenage Years

Be prepared for anything during the tweenage years. The best way to describe a tween is extreme!

Should you let you son shave his head, let your daughter listen to rap music or let them get a tattoo? During the beginning teen years children want to express themselves in often bizarre and extreme ways. Some of these are hero worship, avoidance of their parents, crushes on an older person, and participation in extreme activities.

Our response to these should be one of sensitivity. As your daughter runs the other way because she doesn't want to be seen with you, don't become jealous of her friends because she would rather hang with them. A transition is taking place. She does love you.

Yes, your son is always moving in a fast-paced mode. He loves activity, the more the better. Why not host a party for him and his friends? Just make sure to have lots of pizza and a lot of activity.

Hero worship is another "biggie" during the tween years. And so often a tween does not choose a good role model. Encourage your son to pick Christian role models.

Tweenage girls often develop crushes on older men. This is very normal. Guide your daughter through this.

Why do tweens enjoy such extremes? Their bodies are changing rapidly. Their emotions are high. They are trying to find themselves.

Youth workers and parents can understand those extremes and be more sensitive while carefully guiding them towards those activities that will be an encouragement to them.