

PARENT/STUDENT IDENTITY GUIDE

11th Grade Conversation

OBJECTIVE

Affirm your teen for a week and let them know that they are loved by you and by God. This is a time to remind your teen that their identity is in Christ and He has a purpose and plan for each of us.

THE 411

Our teens go through major struggles of feeling worthless and discouraged. This is a time in life where they are figuring out who they are and why life matters. They are on a constant search to find acceptance and love. Most teens need constant reminders of why they are loved and why they matter. They won't tell you that, because they just can't seem to put it in words – especially to their parents – but it is true. They need affirmation and encouragement. We live in a performance society where worth is given and determined by what we can do and what we can achieve. This creates a lot of pressure and stress on us. Teens often wonder if they are loved by what they do or just by who they are. This is a great opportunity to take a week to affirm and love your teen through some creative avenues, but most importantly to let them know that they are loved unconditionally and that they are loved by the family of God. Let them know that God loves them and that their identity is not in what they can achieve or accomplish but that they are worthy by just being who they are. Their identity is in Christ.

SUGGESTION

Have a week of affirmation for your teen. This will be a week where you and your whole family can encourage and affirm them through creative ways. It is also a time to include their mentors and some of the body of Christ. This could be something that goes so well that you might need to implement it with your other kids so they don't feel left out. Here are some ideas on how to make this a great week of affirmation for your teen and how to make this happen.

First, pick out which week this will take place. Then contact all those people who are involved in your teen's life, such as mentors, grandparents and some close friends, to write notes of encouragement and affirmation. Make sure they give those notes back to you by a certain date and to not tell your teen about it. Before this week starts, prep your other kids and include them on writing encouraging notes. Here is an example of what a week of affirmation could look like:

MONDAY:

Notes from parents. In this note, affirm your teen and say that this week is a week of affirmation in their honor. Let them know that this will be a special week when they will also hear from others who care. Let them know that no matter what they do or don't do that you love them. Then let them know that no matter what, God loves them unconditionally and that their identity is not in what they look like or what they achieve, but that their identity is in Christ.

Also, as a family in the morning or in the evening while having dinner, declare this the week of affirmation for your teen, to make sure the whole family is on board and supporting them.

TUESDAY:

Notes from siblings and grandparents are given to the teen. These can be placed in different areas for them to discover, such as in his car, taped to their bathroom mirror or mailed to them.

Send a text message today affirming them.

WEDNESDAY:

Notes from mentors, small group leaders and those who have influence on your teen.

Write on their bathroom mirror this Scripture: 1 John 3:1 (NIV), "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are ..."

THURSDAY:

Notes from your teen's friends affirming them. Have their good friends collect all those notes and then give to them at school or after school.

As a family, get some sticky note pads and write on them what you love about your teen, encouraging comments, Scriptures and anything you can think of, and place hundreds of these sticky notes all over their room and bathroom.

FRIDAY:

Have your teen pick out a restaurant to go to as a family. At the restaurant, affirm them in front of your family and just say how proud you are of them.

SATURDAY:

If possible, line up some mentors or friends to come and take your teen out for breakfast where they can affirm them and let them know that they are loved.

If your teen has younger siblings, have them write with sidewalk chalk encouraging notes on your driveway.

SUNDAY:

Take time Sunday afternoon to take a drive or have a conversation. Let your teen know that this week you wanted them to know without a doubt that they are loved. Tell them they are loved not by what they do or achieve but because you just love them. Let them know that is how it is with God. We are loved not by our achievements or accomplishments but because of His great mercy and grace. Our identity is in Christ and not in our achievements. Tell them that when they feel discouraged and down to remember this week, and to know that they are loved.

