

PARENT/STUDENT FRIENDSHIP GUIDE

5th Grade Conversation

OBJECTIVE

Have a meaningful conversation with your son or daughter about the importance of choosing friends wisely.

THE 411

The adolescent time of our children's lives can be summed up in one word: CHANGE. They are entering, or have already entered, one of the most transforming periods of life. They are, or soon will be, experiencing body changes, school changes, and changes in the way they process the world. They will begin to ask questions about their beliefs, and they will start to change their friendships. They will be changing their friendships soon, if they haven't already, and will base those friendships on affinity, whereas before, their friendships were based mainly on proximity. For example, you may notice they no longer want to hang out with "Becky" even though they have been friends since they were four and she lives down the street, because they just don't have enough in common. But now we see that our children want to hang out with people we have never met, because they enjoy them and share similar passions.

Although our children are quickly facing a lot of changes in their lives, one thing that hasn't changed is that we parents are their most important influencers. A 2006 study done by the Boys and Girls Club of America showed that 45 percent of teenagers say the most influential people in their lives are their parents. So, the good news is we may be the most influential persons but following closely behind are their friends. Now is a great time to talk to them about the friends they have chosen to surround themselves with and help them look for qualities that they should want in a friend.

SUGGESTION

Take your son or daughter out on a "date." Maybe it's to get ice cream, to play mini-golf, or just play basketball down at the park, but get away from the house to indicate that you want to intentionally spend time together. As you are out on the date, use the discussion questions below to help your kids process what they believe are important characteristics in a good friend. After your children have identified the characteristics of a good friend, have them identify which current friends meet those criteria and ask your them to invite those friends to your house for a sleepover that weekend. You'll provide the evening snacks and breakfast the following morning, and your child will provide the fun. The goal of this exercise is to help your child recognize how to look for quality friends, not just a large quantity of friends.

DISCUSSION

ASK: On a scale from 1 to 10, how important are your friends in helping you make decisions?
Are there questions you wouldn't feel comfortable asking me because I am your parent, but you would go to your friends to seek advice?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: I know your friends are important and will become even more important to you during the next few years in your life, so I want to help you think about whom you choose to make your friends. Here are three verses from the Bible that tell us the importance of choosing our friends wisely:



READ: Proverbs 13:20 (NIV)

“Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”

Proverbs 17:17 (NIV)

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.”

Proverbs 18:24 (NIV)

“One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

Proverbs 22: 24-25 (NIV)

“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.”

ASK: According to these verses, what are some qualities you know you don't want in a friend?

What are some qualities you need in a friend?

What are some ways your friends can be a bad influence on you?

What are some things you like about your current friends? Are there any things you don't like?

What are some ways you can be a good influence on your friends?

Describe for me the qualities you look for in a best friend. Which of your friends would you say fit that description of qualities?

Do you have friends that don't fit that description? Why would you choose to hang out with them?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Your friends are very important, and I want you to have some great friends you can rely on.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV) says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

These verses tell us how important your friends are, and I want to help you make good decisions about the friends you choose because they are so important to you. I'd like you to invite those people you would consider to be “good” friends over for a sleepover this weekend. Make sure you take a serious look at the friends you have and determine which of your friends have the qualities you are looking for in a friend.

PRAY

Spend some time praying that God would give your children the wisdom, strength and courage to stand up to the temptations that they will be facing. Pray for their future spouse and pray that God would also help them remain faithful in their effort to remain pure.

