

PARENT/STUDENT FRIENDSHIP GUIDE

7th Grade Conversation

OBJECTIVE

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

THE 411

By now our children are immersed in the junior high school culture and, of course, the drama. The pressure they face to be popular or fit in with the “cool” crowd is weighing on them every day. It’s important that we have conversations with them about the dangers of chasing popularity. Too often, students at this age feel pressured to do the things they wouldn’t decide on their own to do, just because it gets them one step closer to gaining popularity. We know as parents that popularity will fade, and at some point in our lives popularity doesn’t matter. Initiate a discussion about this or use the suggestions below to help your son or daughter see the truth about fading popularity.

SUGGESTION

Take a look back at your life when you were in junior high school.

What was important to you? What were your greatest fears? What were your biggest successes? Were you popular? Did you want to be popular? Why or why not? In what groups or activities did you try to find your identity? Where did you find your community?

By asking yourself these questions, you can easily relate to what your son or daughter is going through. The truth is, the same pressures you faced to fit in and be popular are the same pressures your son or daughter is facing. Pull out some old pictures — maybe some newspaper clippings about your basketball “career” or just a scrapbook your mom made for you and share it with your child. Be honest in sharing your fears, failures and social status. Then talk about how God cared for you during that time and discuss how the life you thought was so important has faded. Share how God had a much bigger plan for your life than just sitting at the “right” lunch table, and how your child will soon realize that the popularity they are chasing now is not as important as it may seem. Use the questions below to help guide your conversation.

DISCUSSION

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: When I was your age, I ...

Refer to the questions above; show some of your pictures and newspaper clippings to support your stories.

ASK: How important is popularity in your school?

Do you notice that some students are willing to do anything they need to do to be popular? If so, what are some examples?

Why do you think being popular is so important to some people?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: My view on popularity when I was in junior high school was ...



ASK: How important is it to you that you are popular?
Do you feel pressure to act a certain way to be popular?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: The popularity that we chase when we are in school really fades away, and the things that we thought were so important in junior high really don't matter when we get older. God promises us that He has a plan for us.

READ: **Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)**
"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and future."

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Sometimes it seems like being popular or just fitting in with friends is so important that we are willing to compromise our morals. When we compromise what we believe just to fit in, we are really telling God that we don't trust His plan for our life, so we are going to do it another way. I can tell you that I know from experience that God's way is always the best way.

ASK: Do you trust that God cares about you?
Do you believe He has a plan for you, even if at times your life gets really hard?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: I know middle school can be really tough — I experienced it just like you have. I know that at times it seems like you can't be yourself and fit in. I just wanted to take some time to talk and tell you that it's temporary. I also wanted to tell you all the things that make you so special.
Take some time and tell your son or daughter about some of his or her best qualities. What are specific things you love about your son or daughter?

PRAY

We must take time to pray for our sons and daughters. Pray that they will have the courage to stand up to the temptations they will face in junior high and high school and pray that they will have the courage to trust God and His plan for their lives.

