

MOMS & POPS STUFF

Volume 7, Issue 8

May 2009

TAXI DRIVE TIME

These are ideas for you to use during that drive time between school, practices and meetings. Take advantage of that "trapped" time to pass on your faith.

The Summer of Goodbyes

For graduating seniors, a lot of emotion and energy is focused on saying goodbyes--particularly to friends. You can help with this "goodbyeing" by giving up some of your errand running to let your graduated student get that goodbye time with a sibling or relative. Your child will have no problem making the time to say goodbye to his/her friends but they may overlook properly doing this with family members. Ask your grad to pick up his/her younger sibling instead of you. Even give him/her a few bucks for an ice cream to share together. Or if you have grandparents or aunts and uncles who live close, ask them to drive your grad once for that same sort of goodbye time. Whatever is arranged, be sure your grad knows to take opportunity to properly say goodbye before he/she is off to his/her post-high school life.

Friendship Connection

Take the purposed time on a drive to explain to your child why you have the friends you have. Explain what do you like about your friends? What would you like to change about the relationship you have with your friends? Tell the story about a close friendship in your life that has ended and why. You already know that friends and which friends are important to your child. Your honest insight will help them grow and/or change in these friendships.

Question Box

Put together a box or tin or whatever that has slips of paper with questions inside. During one ride, pull out one question which **both** of you will answer. Limit this to one question per ride and possibly one question per week or less. This will keep the value of the question box.

Some questions to add to your box:

- C What is Satan? Is he or a she a living being or a symbol of evil?

- C What is there about you that you think no one can understand?
- C Would you accept twenty years of extraordinary happiness and fulfillment if it meant you would die at the end of that twenty years?

Proverb Probe

Give your child a 3x5 card with a Proverb written on it in your handwriting. Using your handwriting is important as it is something very personal about you which they can cherish forever. Ask your child the following questions about the Proverb.

Proverb 15:14 - "Anyone with good sense is eager to learn more, but fools are hungry for foolishness." - What does hungry for foolishness mean? Why are fools hungry for foolishness? Do you have friends who seem to have no desire to learn anything? What value is their in learning? Not only your education but in learning from other people? What is one of the greatest life lessons you have learned so far?

EDUC8N

This is an idea to help you encourage your child with their academic achievement since that is an important issue for both of you.

Ways to Help Your Teen Tone Down Test Stress

1. "Be positive about your teen's abilities. Your teen may experience some self-doubt or worry that the test may be 'too hard'. Sympathize with your teen but remain confident that he/she is capable of handling the test.
2. "Provide a quiet place with all that your teen needs to study. I can't stress enough how important it is for a study place to be 'study ready' for your teen. All the right tools at home will help your teen succeed at school with very little stress as it will give him/her a can-do attitude.
3. "Provide nutritional food that your teen likes for breakfast and for dinner and snack the night before. These meals will set up how well your teen's brain works on test day. A hungry teen, or one that was hyped up on junk food the night before, will be tired and lethargic. This can cause undo stress that may have your teen missing answers he/she does know.

4. "Have your teen get some rest and stick to your normal routine. Don't stay up late to go over the information one more time. Routine and habits will help your teen keep his/her stress under control.
5. "Be sure your teen knows how to take a test. Follow these quick rules:
 - Read and follow all of the directions.
 - Read each question through before answering.
 - If you don't know the answer right away, move on to the next question and come back to it.
 - If there is time, check your answers.
6. "Prevent test stress long before the testing starts. Require that your teen keeps up with his/her class work and homework. Learning takes place over time. If your teen's history teacher wants the students to read the chapters for homework, it needs to be done as much something that is turned in for a grade. When your teen keeps up with his/her reading and note-taking, then studying for a test becomes reviewing, instead of cramming. It's an excellent habit to teach your teen. Check your teen's notes, ask about what is being learned in class and what your teen needs to do for homework. Make asking your habit when you hear, 'I don't have homework tonight.'" (Denise Witmer, <http://parentingteens.about.com>)



The Summer of Goodbyes

Senior year in high school is a long series of farewells, most of them highly emotional because those treasured friends who shared their lives and knew them best may disappear from their lives permanently. Although they swear to each other that they will stay in touch, the possibility that this is a final farewell is almost too much to bear for the graduating teen.

There are also the goodbyes needed to be said between you as parents and to other family members. Yet because of this focus on friends, family may be forgotten.

Instead of feeling neglected or rejected, help your grad with these summer of goodbyes by planning goodbye parties for him/her. Plan one for the friends with the goal in mind to say proper goodbyes and appreciate these final memories. And plan one for family with the same goal.

One idea for the friend goodbye party are to have a "favorite movie festival" of your child's all-time favorite movies.

Encourage them to watch the sunrise together and share their hearts at that time.

One idea for the family goodbye party are to prepare all of your child's favorite foods--appetizers to desserts.

Help us set a Guinness World Record and Purge the Old Denim Out of Your Family's Closet

National Geographic is trying to set a Guinness World Record but more importantly, they created this project to recycle old jeans into UltraTouch™ Natural Cotton Fiber Insulation, which is used to help build houses in places that have been damaged by hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters. It takes about 500 pairs of jeans to recycle enough denim to insulate one average-size U.S. house.

Here's the details of what you can do as a family:

1. Purge your closet of all old denim. The denim can be any brand. The denim can be any color or size but must have been worn by a human (no doll clothes!).
2. Also involve your neighbors, church family, school group, etc. to purge their closets. Creatively make this a huge community project. Maybe even bring out a local newspaper to get a story.
3. After collection, print the form found at <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/> to include with each package.
4. Ship everything to: NG Kids/Set a Guinness World Record - P.O. Box 98001 - Washington, D.C. 20090-8001
5. Jeans must be received by June 30, 2009.



The following are website recommendations. These are chosen based on their value as determined by our staff. These are not paid endorsements nor can we vouch for the ethics of their entire website.

Real World Parents (<http://www.realworldparents.com/>) - A Christian resource site for parents of teens. There is also a seminar of the same name.

Changing the Present (<http://changingthepresent.org/>) - The idea of this site is that instead of giving a regular gift, give a gift in honor of the gift-receiver that can change someone else's life. The site contains a search engine of 1,500 meaningful charitable gifts. You can browse by cause or nonprofit to find the perfect gift for friends or for your own charitable giving.

Just Think Twice
(<http://justthinktwice.com/>) - A drug prevention site from the DEA with loads of practical information. Check this out together when you have that parent-teen drug talk. You will both learn something.

Do the Right Thing
(<http://dotherightthing.com/>) - A website that tracks the right things corporations do. For socially conscious people, you will appreciate knowing these stories so you can support corporations who care.

Weird & Different Recipes
(<http://www.bertc.com/recipes.htm>) - For the family that likes to cook together, you can now make Kitty Litter Cake and Boogers on a Stick and many, many more. Bring one of these dishes to the next church potluck!

CULTURE (NO) SHOCK

This is a small glimpse into the youth culture to help you parents have some insight as to what is going on.

Trend Alert: The Obama Marriage

My hunch is that millennials are going gaga over Barack and Michelle because they want to be Barack and Michelle. It's not that other generations can't admire the Obamas' bond; their marriage—a union of self-sufficient equals—embodies the post-'60s ideal. But unlike their elders, most millennials have yet to experience marriage firsthand, and what they've experienced by proxy hasn't been particularly encouraging: a 50 percent divorce rate, a steep rise in single parenthood, a culture captivated by cheap celebrity hookups. Even America's most visible household hasn't offered much hope, veering from '50s-era subservience (the Reagans) to boomer dysfunction (the Clintons). But now the Obamas—two independent individuals who also appear to be (surprise!) in love—have filled the void. For young people who have rejected the tired 'wife in the kitchen' template but resolved not to follow their parents to divorce court, it's a relief to see that the sort of marriage they hope to have—equal and devoted—can actually exist." --Andrew Romano, *Newsweek*, February 23, 2009

Trend Alert: Modesty

"Led by tweensetter franchises such as *High School Musical*, *iCarly* and tween queen *Hannah Montana*, girls are finally backing away from the the belly-shirts and short-shorts of years past.

"Why are tweens no longer aspiring to dress like Britney? One reason is that in

response to criticism from concerned parents, many tween entertainment properties are now featuring more innocent (and wacky) looks. As such, tweens are seeing their role models wearing cardigans instead of tube tops and they want to do the same. Additionally, tweens these days are much closer to their parents and are hyper-conscious of anything that could upset them. As the generation gap closes, tweens are truly looking to their parents for second opinions and are seeking parental approval in their clothing choices. Because of this, tween girls are increasingly taking fashion cues from their mothers who are themselves following Karl Lagerfeld's "new modesty" trend. Also driven by the recession, women and girls of all ages are looking to spend money on conservative pieces that work for any occasion instead of flashier pieces that might not be in style next season.

"...And while looking to tweensetter franchises is never a bad bet, it's wise to remember that there is a new set of tweens in charge: Malia and Sasha Obama are sure to be tweensetters as the world watches their girly White House antics, and many young girls continue to associate the Obamas with exactly the kind of positivity and values they are trying to exude." --Trendcentral, April 13, 2009

Trend Alert: Games Mixed with Current Events

The gaming division of Nickelodeon have begun a shift from games as a product that gets built, shipped and sold to a media that's consumed, similar to television with an interactive twist. This includes specifically news and culture becoming integrated in game play.

Many of Nickelodeon's news-related games have become huge viral hits. For example, the group created "Hero on the Hudson" in less than 72 hours, from conception to launch. It has raked in about 4.0 million game plays since launching January 21. Other viral hits are "Trillion Dollar Bailout" with 1.7 million plays since February 19 and "Escape the Oval Office" at 1.8 million plays since January 16. --Mediapost.com, March 27, 2009

Vegetarianism--The New Eating Disorder?

A new study has found that the common teen fad of vegetarianism is one way for teens to hide an eating disorder since it's a socially acceptable way to avoid eating many foods and one that parents tend not to oppose. Most teens in the study claimed to be a vegetarian because they wanted to be healthier or to save the environment and the world's animals. However the research found that they are more interested in

losing weight than protecting cattle or swine.

From interviews with 2,516 young Minnesotans, ages 15 to 23:

C 4.3% say they were currently vegetarian.

C 10.8% say they were former vegetarians.

C The researchers found that the vegetarians were healthier: they tended to consume less than 30% of their calories as fat, while non-vegetarians got more than 30% of their calories from fat.

C But 20% of the vegetarians turned out to be binge eaters, compared with only 5% of those who had always eaten meat.

--*Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, Time.com, April 7, 2009

The Pink Light Solution

In a neighborhood in Nottinghamshire, England, pink fluorescent lights have been installed in locations where teens congregate and cause trouble. Not only do the pink lights calm teens, they expose acne-problems. Seriously. And the lights are working.

--BBCNews, March 25, 2009

Teen Unemployment Rate

The teen unemployment rate for February 2009 was 21.6 percent.

--U.S. Labor Department, March 7, 2009

Talk To Your Teens About the Economy

Seventy percent of teens say they have discussed the state of the economy with their parents. But 47 percent said that they would like to talk to their parents more about the issue. Eighty-one percent say they want to know more about the causes of the current problems

Teens are also talking about the economy with teachers at school, 64% say they are. --Center for Media Research, March 2, 2009

Family Vacations Go On

From a survey of 425 moms of kids ages 6 to 14:

C 50% say they will still be taking their family vacation this year. 25% say they won't be taking a family vacation this year.

C 50% say they will be taking two or three family vacations this year. 29% say they will be taking fewer vacations this year.

C 40% say they will be taking a local vacation.

C 31% say they will be going on a shorter vacation.

C 26% say they will be staying with family or friends.

C 84% say the number one reason for a family vacation is time together.

"Connection may be the best replacement for consumerism as families look to cut costs without sacrificing happiness."

C 67% say that family vacations are needed for relaxing and reducing stress.

--Just Kid Inc. survey, March 19, 2009

Teen Birth Rate Rises

According to the figures for 2006, the latest year for which data are available, birth rates for teens aged 15-19 rose by 3.5 percent. This increase marks the largest growth in teen birth rates since 1989-1990. The birth rate increased again for 2007 with another 1.7 percent increase. Does 2 years in a row make a trend to worry about? Experts have yet to say so.

Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas had the highest teen birth rate per 1,000 teens. New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts had the lowest birth rates. The only states with declines in teen birth rates were North Dakota, Rhode Island and New York.

--Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, January 7, 2009, *Washington Post*, March 19, 2009

The Growing Acceptable Behavior of Violence

From a poll of 750 teens, ages 12 to 17:

C 27% say they think behaving violently is sometimes, often or always acceptable.

C 19% say they think violence is more acceptable than cheating (19%), plagiarizing (10%) or stealing (3%).

C 20% say they had personally behaved violently towards another person in the past year. 41% say a friend had done so.

C When the teens who agreed that violence was acceptable were asked more specifically about rationale for such behavior:

self-defense 87%

to help a friend 73%

to settle an argument 35%

for revenge 34%

dislike of the person who is the target of the violence 22%

to gain respect 21%

peer pressure 14%

simply for "the thrill" of it 10%

C 77% of those who think violence is acceptable also consider themselves ethically prepared to enter the workforce.

--Opinion Research survey, Junior Achievement press release, December 15, 2008

Please feel free to submit ideas which you have done with your family. It is always good to provide a resource that is known to work and we do not claim to know it all. You will be credited for your submission and thanked profusely from us. Please submit your ideas at momspops@wildfrontier.org.