

DEAR MOM, AND DAD,

Parenting Tips from Teens



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Seminaries and Institutes

Over the past 20 years as a seminary teacher, I've asked hundreds of my students, "What advice would you give your parents on parenting?" Their responses fascinated and inspired me—so much so that I started asking their parents the same question, only in reverse: "What advice would you give your teenaged children?"

The most frequent responses over the years are listed on the following pages.

For suggestions on how to use these lists with your teens, see the "What Now?" activity on page 39.





Communication and Building Trust

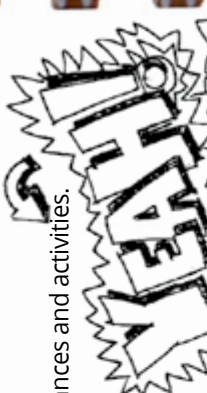
- 1 Trust us. If we lose your trust, make us earn it back.
- 2 Don't always say, "Because I said so." Explain your decisions to us if you can.
- 3 Don't yell at us or overreact. And don't let us yell at you.
- 4 Be willing to negotiate with us sometimes.
- 5 If we admit our mess-ups to you first, don't be mad at us.
- 6 Recognize our desires to change.
- 7 Admit when you're wrong.
- 8 Talk with us and listen sincerely to our ideas.
- 9 Be sure your expectations for us are clear. Sometimes we mess up because we genuinely don't understand what you want from us.
- 10 Instead of grounding us all the time, let us suffer more natural consequences.
- 11 Give us second chances.
- 12 More praise, less criticism.
- 13 Be our friends sometimes and just listen to us.
- 14 Really try to understand our side of the story before you judge us or punish us.
- 15 Apologize when you mess up.
- 16 Have high standards and expectations, but don't force us to become something you want us to be.

Learning and Living the Gospel!

- 17 Practice what you preach, or we'll be less likely to follow you.
- 18 Go to the temple more—it puts you in a better mood.
- 19 Teach us the gospel; then let us make our own choices.
- 20 Have family prayer and scripture study.
- 21 Take us to church with you (but if we don't want to go, find out why).
- 22 Talk to us about morality and intimacy—more than once. If you don't, we'll get answers elsewhere.
- 23 Have faith in us. ~~★~~

Family Unity

- 23 Treat all the children in the family fairly. If you treat one child differently from another, be certain we understand why.
- 24 Be happy.
- 25 Support our ball games and performances and activities.
- 26 Limit our screen time.
- 27 Don't embarrass us around friends.
- 28 Respect our privacy.
- 29 Have family meals together.
- 30 Don't try to be cool. Just be yourself. That's what we need and who we love.
- 31 Have fun family nights and family activities. Play with us.
- 32 Tell us goofy stories about your life so we know you were a kid once.

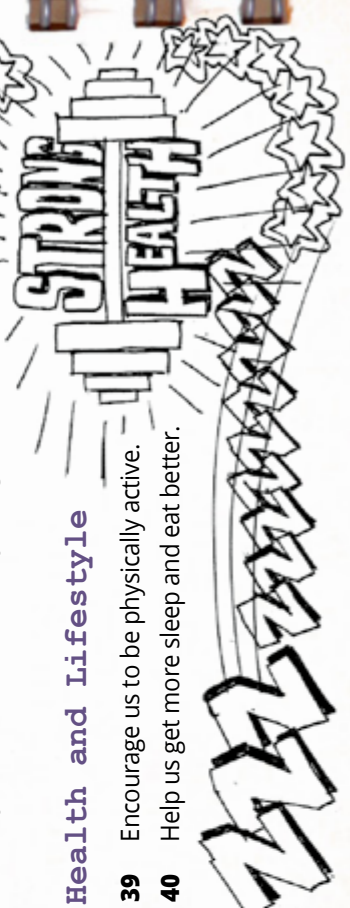


Life Skills, School, and Work

- 33 Don't work too much. ~~★~~
- 34 Teach us how to work (but don't overdo it).
- 35 Teach us life skills like doing our own laundry and cooking dinner. Teach us to serve.
- 36 Help us with homework and encourage good grades (but don't overdo it).
- 37 Teach us to be self-reliant and how to manage money.
- 38 Pay us sometimes for babysitting or extra chores.

Health and Lifestyle

- 39 Encourage us to be physically active.
- 40 Help us get more sleep and eat better.



Dear Kids,



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Tips for Teens from Parents

For parenting tips from
teens, see previous pages.

Communication and Building Trust

- 1 Be trustworthy and we will trust you.
- 2 Believe us. Your well-being is of utmost importance to us.
- 3 Be patient with us. Parents are people too, and we make lots of mistakes.

Learning and Living the Gospel

- 18 Get to know Heavenly Father through prayer and scripture study every day. He's the real parent. He knows you even better than we do, and He won't let you down.
- 19 Believe that with the Lord's help you can do hard things.
- 20 Meditate and listen to good music.
- 21 The more you serve, the happier you are.
- 22 Sit by people who are lonely and be friendly, and you will always have friends.
- 23 Go to the temple with your friends and siblings. Go with us too.
- 24 Don't care about what people in the world think about you; only care about what the Lord thinks of you.
- 25 You're going to make lots of mistakes, but remember that Christ paid the price for you, so you're going to make it if you turn to Him.

Family Unity

- 26 Laugh at yourself sometimes. We all do stupid stuff.
- 27 Go on lots of dates with lots of different people, but don't let yourself get hooked on one person. Teen romance complicates and confuses everything.
- 28 Treat your siblings like friends, even if you think they don't always deserve it.
- 29 Enjoy your friends but make time for family.
- 30 Don't compare our family with your friends' families. We do things differently and try our best. If you have ideas for how our family can improve, share them.

- 4 Remember that although being a teenager can be stressful, you won't be one forever.
- 5 Talk to us about your life. We really do care about what's going on.
- 6 Sometimes the kindest thing we can tell you is no.
- 7 Being an adult really is a lot harder than you think.
- 8 Tell us "Thank you" and "I love you." We need your approval just as you need ours.
- 9 Please hug us and let us hug you.
- 10 We ask you to put away your phone because we like you and want to interact with you. Learn to unplug and be present.
- 11 Own up to your mistakes; it shows maturity. Don't blame others.
- 12 Swearing shows weakness, not strength.
- 13 When we call for you, please say, "I'm coming," and then actually come. Don't make us call multiple times.
- 14 Tell us when you mess up before we have to "catch" you. We won't feel as much need to punish you if we know you're trying to make things right.
- 15 Choose friends who help you want to be a better person. Let us get to know them.
- 16 Check in with us. Let us know where you are and who you are with. Then we'll trust you more.
- 17 Try asking us questions instead of the internet once in a while. We know and love you better than Google does.

Life Skills, School, and Work

- 31 Learn to work really hard, and then take time to relax now and then.
- 32 Dream big. God gave you great talents, so have great expectations of yourself. Write down your goals; then get to work!
- 33 Do your chores without being asked. We'll see that you're responsible and give you more privileges. And we won't have to nag you!
- 34 Phones and other devices are a privilege, not a right.
- 35 Clean up after yourself. You're almost an adult, and it's time to take responsibility for yourself.
- 36 Remember that the internet is forever.
- 37 Do your best in school. Bad grades don't bother us so much if we know you are really trying.
- 38 Don't text and drive—or let us do it either!

Health and Lifestyle

- 39 What you eat and how physically active you are now will affect your health for the rest of your life.
- 40 Get the right amount of sleep every night. Sleeping for 15 hours on the weekend is as bad as 5 hours on a weeknight.

WHAT NOW?

As an activity, parents might consider sitting down with their children and reviewing these lists, taking time to lovingly discuss those suggestions that need the most attention. Afterwards, parents and children could come up with their own lists of tips for strengthening relationships and building a Christ-centered home.