

BACK TO SCHOOL

Make the **MOST** of right **NOW**

Start the conversation today.



At Axis, we believe in the power of everyday conversations with teens. Each conversation you have is part of a longer exchange that lasts a lifetime. This one ongoing conversation is key to shaping a lasting faith in Jesus.

GET STARTED:

5 Tips to Build Ongoing Communication

TIP 1

Create An Environment For Open Communication

The place matters. The vibe matters. A safe environment allows for the opportunity to talk about the things that matter most.

PRACTICAL STEPS:

- ✓ Find a place where you both can be free from distractions and interruptions.
- ✓ Use neutral, open-ended questions that encourage your teen to share more.
- ✓ **For example:** Tell me more about _____. What are you feeling in response to _____? What was it like for you when that happened?

AXIS RESOURCE:

One Conversation Model: The One Conversation Model is about using what your kid loves to keep the door open — and seizing moments to talk about deeper issues whenever they arise.

TIP 2

Stay Informed About Teen Culture

With all the cultural trends impacting your teenager's world, it isn't easy to stay informed. But we can be your research assistant. At Axis, we remind parents that your teen isn't crazy. After all, you were a teen once too.

PRACTICAL STEPS:

- ✓ Stay up to date on music, movies, TV shows, and social media trends — at least enough to ask curious questions.
- ✓ Discuss these trends with your teen to understand their preferences and perspectives.

AXIS RESOURCE:

The Culture Translator: Each week our team researches the latest music, movies, TV shows, and social media trends impacting your kid's world. Then, we translate it into a free email to equip you for conversations that build lifelong faith in Jesus.

TIP 3

Encourage Thoughtful Smartphone Use

Navigating technology isn't easy for any of us. Parents often ask if there's a perfect age to get a smartphone. The reality is, it varies. Once you take the plunge, be thoughtful about how you encourage and model thoughtful smartphone use.

PRACTICAL STEPS:

- ✓ Be intentional to discuss the responsibility of having a smartphone — and why you believe in your teen's readiness for it.
- ✓ Prepare your teen to be aware and come to you about safety concerns, anxiousness, or bullying.

AXIS RESOURCE:

The Everything Smartphone Toolkit

The decision to give your child a smartphone is one of the biggest decisions you will ever make, and one that will change both of your lives. This toolkit unpacks what's at stake in the smartphone conversation and highlights what parents can do to help their teens navigate smartphones from a Christian point of view.

TIP 4

Foster Warmth and Respect

Your presence can foster warmth and respect in big and small moments that are important to your teen. Your consistency and availability will speak volumes without a single word. Then, when you have a conversation, you can go deeper.

PRACTICAL STEPS:

- ✓ Listen actively when your teen shares their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Acknowledge their ups and downs, encouraging growth rather than perfection.
- ✓ Be careful not to jump in with advice or judgment. First, ask about their ideas to solve problems and make choices within healthy boundaries.

AXIS RESOURCE:

Parent Guides

prepare you to have confident conversations about big topics. These downloadable PDFs will answer your questions and equip you to dive deeper with your teenager.

TIP 5

Support Emotional and Mental Well-being

Feelings of anxiety, depression, and FOMO are becoming more prevalent in modern times and are affecting our teens in big ways. You can help create a foundation of healthy habits that will go a long way, even if you also draw on extra support for specific challenges.

PRACTICAL STEPS:

- ✓ Encourage and model good self-care, physical activity, healthy eating, and getting enough sleep.
- ✓ Be attentive to changes in behavior, mood, or academic performance. Signs of stress or anxiety may show up as withdrawal, irritability, or a shift outside of normal patterns.

AXIS RESOURCE:

An Introduction to Identity & Mental Health

Here is a resource page of written, video, and audio resources on topics ranging from teen FOMO, to navigating difficult emotions, to mental health issues, and how to talk about things like suicidal ideation.

START^{the} conversation TODAY



STAY CONNECTED:

10 Back to School Conversation Starters

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1

Setting Goals for the School Year

What are you most looking forward to this school year? What are some ways you want to grow?

2

Discussing New Challenges

What do you think will be the biggest challenge for you this year? What have you learned from past challenges that you can use going forward?

3

Exploring Friendships and Social Dynamics

Who are you excited to see again at school? Are there any new connections you hope will become friendships?

4

Navigating Technology and Social Media

How do you feel about your social media as school starts? What do you want to keep the same or do differently?

5

Balancing School and Activities

What activities or clubs are you thinking of joining this year? How do you plan to balance them with your schoolwork? What support do you need to make this work out?

6

Identifying Academic Support and Resources

Which subjects will require the most effort from you this year? How can we make sure you have the support you need?

7

Caring for Mental Health and Well-being

What's your overall feeling about going back to school? Are there any worries or stresses you want to talk about?

8

Cultivating Faith and Spiritual Growth

How do you see God's presence in your life as you start this new school year? What do you want for your spiritual life right now?

9

Building Healthy Habits

What are some healthy habits you want for yourself this school year? What will help you stay true to yourself in those habits?

10

Valuing Family Time and Priorities

How can we make sure we spend quality time together as a family during the school year? What would you like us to do?

