

## Club 56 (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students) Celebration Dinner

*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12*

Adolescence is a time of dramatic changes. Children in this stage begin to navigate the unknown as they face changes socially, emotionally, and physically within the process of searching for their own identity. At Third, we provide Club 56, for our fifth and sixth grade students, where we are intentional about nurturing our children in this transitional stage by offering a time to gather for fun, fellowship, and diving into the Word. The church seeks to come alongside parents as we equip our children with the knowledge of how to grow through all of the dramatic changes in a peaceful, godly way. May they keep their focus on God as they continue to develop their identity in Him.

Third kicks off this Club 56 experience for our students and their parents with a celebration dinner. At this dinner we share how we seek to offer a safe environment where these children can foster and enrich their relationship with God, their family, their peers and the culture. Plans for Sunday mornings, Wednesday nights, the annual retreat, and fellowship activities for the year are discussed at this dinner. It is important for children of this age to establish and nurture friendships with other like-minded young people. Our hope is that they would influence each other for Christ and make Christ-centered decisions.

How can parents serve as loving support for their children during this transitional stage?

Demonstrate unconditional love for who they are, rather than what they do.

Serve as a confidant and friend, while most importantly remaining their parent.

Listen more than lecture; rather than dictate conclusions or discount “silly” ideas, use questions and thoughtful responses to coach your child’s thinking as you help him or her learn to think and speak clearly as they find a solution.

Spiritual maturity is often born out of struggle. If your child begins to wrestle with the faith, consider this a potential step forward on the road to spiritual growth. It is important to encourage thought-provoking questions and honest discussions about values, morals, and faith. It is through this process of exploration and discovery that our children begin to shift from adopting their family’s worldview to owning their faith and therefore entering into adulthood with a deeper, more secure and authentic foundation of faith.

Carve out quality time to spend together. Consider having a weekend away with your emerging teenager to discuss topics such as purity and integrity.

Be willing to be vulnerable; share areas where God has worked or is working in your own life. Our children need to know that we have problems too as they develop a realistic picture of adult life. Sharing our troubles gives us an opportunity to model with our teens how to rely on God and His strength.

Remember the awesome power of encouragement. Our children need to have encouraging words replay in their minds as they face the difficult challenges of life.

Pray for your teen; tell your child you are praying for specific issues and together you will witness how God cares for them and answers prayers on their behalf.

*Standing on the brink between childhood and adulthood, this young person needs Your help, Jesus. We ask that You supply everything needed: a clear thinking mind, calm emotions, a strong, growing body, and constant encouragement from loving parents who choose to keep their eyes focused on You for guidance.*

*Revised 3.16.16*