

D3-2: Intergenerational Session with Parents and Teens

Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith



Intergenerational Dialogue **Creating Strong Parent-Teen Connections**

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 Minutes)

- Open the session by sharing a brief (humorous is good!) story that illustrates the “generation gap” when you were a teen.
- Make a connection with how faith/church played an important bridge for family connections at that time and express the goals of this session as follows:
 - In the words of the Prayer of St. Francis, to be able to “seek first to be understood so as to understand.”
 - To facilitate a deeper appreciation for, and knowledge of, the hopes, fears, dreams, and aspirations that the other generation holds.
 - To grow closer to one another as a family of faith.
- Ask all to bow their heads as you offer the following family blessing prayer to begin the session :

Lord of Life,

bles and sustain these families.

Hold them close, keep them connected, and protect them from all evil.

Gift them with love and patience for one another.

*Help them to reconcile that which divides them
and celebrate all that unites them as one family,*

where you live and reign now and forever.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

B. Opening Activity: Back to Back Game Show (20 minutes)

1. Have one parent and one teen sit back to back in chairs.
Note: If there is an “extra” parent, he/she can play along by doing their own set of answers and comparing, but only add up the score for one parent and one teen.
2. Give each a sheet of paper and pencil and ask them to number it down the left side one through ten.
3. Ask one question (in bold) at a time and give them a few seconds to write down a response. Ask all ten questions at once without allowing them to speak to one another.
4. When the ten questions are completed, invite them to face one another, but not to share answers yet.
5. Read one question at a time and then invite them to share their responses and score it appropriately. Once done, ask the *italicized question* to encourage further sharing on the topic.
6. Repeat this process for each question. Then determine the top three scores and declare the winner (and award prizes if appropriate, such as bag of candy that they can share with others around them).

Five Point Questions

1. **What is the teen's favorite room in the house?** (*What's most cherished item in that room?*)
2. **What is the teen's favorite meal that he/she cooks her/himself?** (*Who taught them to prepare that?*)
3. **What is the parent's favorite restaurant?** (*Why is this the favorite and share a favorite memory from eating there.*)
4. **Who is the teen's best friend?** (*What will that person likely be doing after high school and how will it change your relationship?*)

Ten Point Questions

5. **Who is the parent's best friend?** (*How did they meet and an early memory from the relationship.*)
6. **What is the best part about being in high school?** (*What was it for the parent?*)
7. **What's the *first thing* the teen will do after graduating from high school?** (*What did parent do after graduation?*)
8. **What personal trait has the teen picked up from the parent?** (*One thing the parent has learned from the teen?*)
9. **In the next year, what will likely be the most challenging event for your family?** (*What are you doing now to get ready for it?*)

Thirty Point Question

10. **What is your favorite memory of a family time together?** (*What made it so? What symbol is associated with it?*)

C. Who is That Other Generation? (20 Minutes)

1. Divide parents and teens into two sides of the room. If it is a large group, place them into small groups of six to eight.
2. Instruct each group that they are to respond to the following questions as they think the OPPOSITE GENERATION would (i.e., parents respond as teens and teens respond as parents).
3. Read one question at a time and give each small group about two or three minutes to answer it within their group and then have a spokesperson call out the answer to the large group when they are invited.
4. Let all groups representing one generation answer first and then ask the opposite generation if their responses seemed accurate and if not, what clarification (additions, changes) they would add and why.

Questions:

- What is the main reason your age group wants money?
 - What kind of music does your age group like?
 - Why does your age group think school/education is important?
 - Name one of the most popular TV shows for your age group.
 - Which technology is your age group's favorite? Why?
 - Why does your age group go to church?
 - What is often misunderstood about your age group by the opposite generation?
 - What is one of the most important values for your age group?
 - What worries your age group the most?
 - What is your age group's biggest hope/dream/goal for the opposite generation?
5. Ask each group what they have learned from the other during this activity? What message(s) would you like the other generation to hold onto about their generation?

Ten Minute Break

Invite each person to anonymously complete a **Generation Profile**. Be sure the teen profiles are copied in a different color than the parents so they can be easily distinguished

D. What the Other Half is Thinking (15 minutes)

1. Keep teens in one group and parents in another group.
2. Randomly distribute the Generation Profile surveys to the opposite generation (teens randomly get parent surveys/parents randomly get teen surveys) so that each person has or shares at least one. Give them a couple of minutes to read over them and review what the other generation is saying.
3. Invite them to turn to the person next to them and share for two minutes each what struck them the most about what the other generation is experiencing today.
4. Lead a large group discussion by survey category using the following questions. Be sure to have a recorder jot down the main points on newsprint as they are shared:
 - a) *What changes is this group going through right now?*
 - b) *What do they need from the other generation?*
 - c) *What do you need from them?*
 - d) *What do you want to tell the other generation about what you've just learned about them?*

E. Up Against the Wall Activity (30 Minutes)

1. Pair up teens at various spaces around the room (preferably a male and female).
2. Assign parents in the same pairs/triads as teens are in and invite them to stand across from their teen forming an inner circle. Then tell parents to rotate one pair to the right, so they are not standing in front of their own teen.
3. Using the Generational Surveys, read a teen question that parents are asked to answer, and when done, read a parent question that teens are to answer.
4. Once each has responded, ask the parent group to rotate once to the right so they are standing across from a different teen and repeat the process. Continue for about 30 minutes or until questions have been exhausted.

F. Closing Comments and Prayer (15 Minutes)

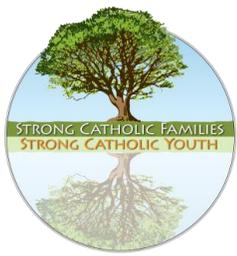
- Ask parents what struck them about tonight's gathering. Ask teens what they learned about parents. Draw some conclusions about the importance of actively listening to the other generation and how this becomes the cornerstone for family growth and the development of deeper understanding between generations.
- Talk about prayer as being one of the deepest and most profound forms of communication that a family has available to them. Share a story that illustrates the power of prayer in the life of families.
- Invite the generations to close the session by inviting each generation to pray together the blessing prayers for the "other" generation:

Invite the parents to touch the shoulder or heads of their teens as together they pray:

***God of Youth,
your hope and promise abound in and through the young church.
Bless and hold our children close.
Give them eyes that see your presence each day,
ears that hear your words of everlasting life,
lips that speak your truth,
and hands that reach out to all in need.
May each step they take lead them closer to knowing you more deeply.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.***

Invite the teens to touch the shoulder or heads of their parents as together they pray:

***God of All Creation,
your breath gave life to all humanity.
Breathe into these parents your love and guidance,
so that they may parent with wisdom and compassion.
Gift them with your strength and courage
so they may proclaim your presence through their words and actions.
Enlighten them with words of truth and comfort as they are needed and
bring them patience and humility as they lead our family along this journey.
Help them pass onto their children a faith that matters,
with you as the center and foundation for our family.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.***



Youth Survey: THIS IS ANONYMOUS!

Please complete it neatly and seriously (as someone else will actually be reading it). When all the surveys are done, we will shuffle them up so that each parent gets an anonymous youth survey and each youth gets an anonymous parent survey.

I. Changes

Both parents and teenagers are going through lots of changes in their lives. Some might be physical changes while others may have to do with a change in career, friendships, school, or family makeup. Below, **write down two changes your age group is going through right now.**

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

II. Issues

All young people have certain issues, problems, or conflicts that they want their parents to know about them or to keep in mind when they are trying to talk to them. **Below list three things that you would like parents to know about teenager's lives:**

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

III. Expectations

We all place expectations on our parents and ourselves as to what we or they SHOULD be like. Think about what you expect from each of the people listed below and fill in the blank.

- Parents should..._____
- Teenagers should..._____
- Families should..._____

IV. The Last Word

Often there are so many things we want to tell our parents—things we want them to **know about us** or to **not do** or to **start doing**. Think about these things and write whatever you would like to say to parents in this space:

A Question for the Other Generation: Write down one question you would like the parents to answer to teens (this will get asked out loud so be serious!)



Parent Survey: THIS IS ANONYMOUS!

Please complete it neatly and seriously (as someone else will actually be reading it).
When all the surveys are done, we will shuffle them up so that each parent gets an anonymous youth survey and each youth gets an anonymous parent survey.

I. Changes

Both parents and teenagers are going through lots of changes in their lives. Some might be physical while others may have to do with a change in career, friendships, school, or family makeup. **Write down two changes your age group is going through.**

1. _____

2. _____

II. Issues

All parents have certain issues, problems, or conflicts that worry them about their teenager's life or lifestyle. Below **list three things that you would like teens to know about life/lifestyles both now and in the future:**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

III. Expectations

We all place expectations on our parents and ourselves as to what we or they SHOULD be like. Think about what you expect from each of the people listed below and fill in the blank.

Parents should... _____

Teenagers should... _____

Families should... _____

IV. The Last Word

Often there are so many things we want to tell our children—things we want them to **know about us** or to **not do** or to **start doing**. Think about these things and write whatever you would like to say to young people in this space:

A Question for the Other Generation: Write down one question you would like the teens to answer to parents (this will get asked out loud so be serious!)