

Life in the Middle Years

Summary Points - Visit 3 - Chapters 5 & 6

1. The middle-years is a phase of growth when children becomes increasingly sensitive to peer approval.
2. A pre-teen's perceived sense of standing within his or her peer group is often tied to the allegiance shown toward the group's expectations, interests and values.
3. Peer pressure on a child is not inherently bad or corrupting. It only has a negative influence when the peer-group's values stand in strong opposition to the values of the child's home life.
4. There are two groups that can have a profound impact on our children. The friends and families we hang around with, and the friends and families our children hang around with.
5. The greater the disparity between the values of your family and your family community (from which you and your child will both draw your peers), the greater will be the source of conflict within the home. The opposite of this is also true; shared values between community and home result in positive peer pressure on your child.
6. Building a healthy family identity is a type of preventative medicine for the family, because it helps promote and maintain healthy family relationships.
7. The middle years is the time when children are old enough to begin validating the activities of childhood they find comforting and carry those activities into adolescence as part of their own identity.
8. Building a healthy family identity requires:
 - a. Mom and Dad's physical presence.
 - b. Establishing and transmitting your family core values.
 - c. Allow your kids to plan a family night and vacations.
 - d. Establishing and carrying forward family traditions.
9. The three characteristics of healthy families:
 - a. They have a strong interdependent bond between family members, cemented together by a shared faith that generates common values.
 - b. Members of a healthy family enjoy each other—not just in the specific role of mom, dad and siblings, but as friends.
 - c. Healthy family relationships are cultivated, not inherited.
10. Hormonal changes start as early as age seven, when the gonado-trophin hormone levels begin to rise in both boys and girls. The results are more readily apparent in girls, since they tend to develop secondary sex characteristics as much as two years ahead of boys.
11. Proactive conversation is a specific strategy that has a purpose beyond ordinary everyday conversation. It is a type of conversation that is exploratory and affirming and one that indirectly teaches a life-principle, or reinforces one already taught.

12. Communication methods are tied to gender:
 - a. Preadolescent girls tend to feel more comfortable with direct conversation when receiving correction.
 - b. Preadolescent boys tend to feel less threatened and more comfortable with indirect conversation.
13. One influence on communication that is often over-looked is birth order. The firstborn child tends to interpret what Mom and Dad say literally, even when we, as parents clearly meant something figuratively.