

SEVENTH — & — EIGHTH

THE PHASE
WHEN



AND ONE
SMART KID



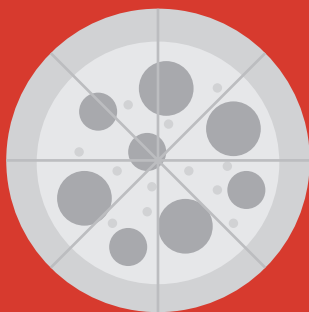
WILL KEEP REMINDING YOU,

NOTHING YOU DO
IS COOL,



EVERYTHING IS FUN IN A CROWD,

"YEAH...I KNOW."







THIS PHASE WELCOMES A CROWD.

They walk the hall in pairs. They go to the mall in a herd. They build unfathomably large social media platforms. For most kids in this phase, the name of the game is to never be caught alone.

NOW YOU REALIZE JUST HOW EMBARRASSING YOU ARE.

Figuring out the new rules for your social behavior can be intimidating. When is it acceptable to “like” their Instagram post, and when are you allowed to openly comment? When do you dress sharp, and when are you supposed to just be casual? Don’t be caught off guard-this may be an awkward phase for you.

YOU MAY BE SURPRISED AT HOW SMART KIDS IN THIS PHASE REALLY ARE.

In fact, there may be no phase quite as smart as this one-just ask them. Being so much smarter than everyone else can really become a burden. Sometimes their patience just runs out, and they simply can’t explain it to you one more time. The important thing will be what they know and how they begin to personalize it in this phase. So look for ways to encourage their process (just remember that it’s their process and they know it).

IT’S JUST A
PHASE

**SO DON’T
MISS IT**



YOUR ROLE IS TO
AFFIRM
THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEY

Your seventh or eighth grader is in a season of personal discovery. Not everyone makes the team. Interests and abilities change. Long accepted values can come into question. But when you affirm their journey, you guide them to value their uniqueness, authenticate their beliefs, and discover greater potential.

**THINKS LIKE
AN ENGINEER**

You help them learn when you...
CONNECT THE DOTS.

**WANTS TO KNOW,
“WHO AM I?”**

You capture their heart when you...
**HELP THEM DISCOVER
THEIR UNIQUENESS.**

**IS MOTIVATED
BY ACCEPTANCE**

You coach their moral abilities when you...
AFFIRM THEIR VALUE.



YOU CAN HELP YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER...

LOVE
GOD.

LOVE
OTHERS.

LOVE
LIFE.

When you **AFFIRM** your middle schooler's personal journey,
you help them...

**OWN THEIR OWN FAITH.
VALUE A FAITH COMMUNITY.**

Practically speaking, that means every week
you have an opportunity to...

- PRIORITIZE A WEEKLY SMALL GROUP.**
- SHARE STORIES ABOUT YOUR FAITH.**
- PRAY FOR THEM.**
- CHOOSE NOT TO BE SHOCKED BY HARD QUESTIONS.**

You can do these things by taking advantage
of the time you already spend together.

**MORNING
TIME**

BE A COACH.

You instill purpose
when you start
the day with
encouraging words.

**DRIVE
TIME**

BE A FRIEND.

You interpret life
during informal
conversation as
you travel.

**MEAL
TIME**

BE A TEACHER.

You establish values
with intentional
conversation while
you eat together.

**BED
TIME**

BE AVAILABLE.

You strengthen
your relationship by
showing up when
they need you.



YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER IS CHANGING...

PHYSICALLY

- » Still needs 9-11 hours of sleep each night and may easily fatigue or develop headaches
- » Girls outpace guys in development
- » Guys experience changes in height and body shape and may develop body odor, body hair, and increase muscle mass
- » Girls experience significant growth spurt, development of body odor, body hair, and breasts, and menstruation is likely (10 -16 years)

MENTALLY

- » Capable of self-evaluation and self-critique
- » Able to see two sides of an argument
- » Connects information to form an opinion
- » Solves multi-step, complex problems
- » Growing ability to organize

RELATIONALLY

- » Often interested in pop culture, slang, current events, politics, or a global cause
- » Wants to negotiate rules and test boundaries
- » Displays an increasingly adult-like personality
- » Needs non-parental adult influences
- » Benefits from having a same-gender best friend

EMOTIONALLY

- » Enjoys sarcasm and sophisticated jokes
- » Often interested in leadership roles and teaching younger children
- » May emphasize physical appearance and performance
- » Tends to over-schedule their time
- » Benefits from talking about feelings

PHASE:

A TIMEFRAME

IN A KID'S LIFE WHEN YOU CAN

LEVERAGE

DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE

THEIR FUTURE



YOU HAVE 312 WEEKS AND COUNTING...

IT'S JUST A
PHASE

SO DON'T MISS IT



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