

St. Ignatius Health Ministry - Back To School Month

It is proven that diligent parenting, open communication, and school connectedness improves the overall well being of Adolescents and Teens. With the hectic schedules the school year brings, it is important to work in family time and conversation. Below are some tips from Focus on the Family.com to help open keep the lines of communication with your family:

1. **Talk about a "neutral" issue.** Not every conversation has to be about feelings and relationships. Read a book and discuss the choices the characters made. Watch a movie and talk about it. Take an article from a teen magazine and discuss it. Share thoughts about the last homily the two of you heard.

2. **Use time at the table.** Family dinners encourage conversations, but let everybody share the load. Think of a few questions for people to answer, and avoid judging the replies. Some possible topics: quizzes at school, favorite films, reports due, assemblies attended, geography trivia, headline news.

3. **Refine your questions.** Learn to ask gentle questions that require more than a yes-or-no answer. Let's say you and your teen are at a restaurant. You might start the conversation by asking:

"How is life going for you?"

"What level of your video game are you at now? What's the most challenging thing about it?"

"How do you think basketball is going? Where do you want to improve? What's Coach Welch say about the team's prospects?"

If your teen still doesn't want to talk about herself, get her talking about her friends.
"What do you like best about Sara?"

4. **Make the most of drive time.** Tired of being your teen's chauffeur? Unless talking in the car disturbs your concentration as a driver, discuss topics that come up naturally. That might include the weather, where your teen would like to go if he could go anywhere, the rudeness of a driver who cuts you off or the kinds of cars your teen likes.

5. Use the cover of darkness. (My personal favorite) Some kids find it easier to talk at night, especially in the dark. If you go into your teen's room at bedtime to pray, ask for a prayer request; it might lead to his/her opening up and sharing concerns.

Another nighttime opportunity: Greeting your teen after a date, offering a snack and making yourself available for a chat. One parent told us, "We found that if we waited up for them after a date or a night out with friends, they seemed to let down their guard and share more. Some of our best talks happened late at night. And we would have missed them if we'd just hollered out a 'Did you lock the door?' from our bedroom."

Other after-date conversation starters might include, "You looked so great tonight when you went out. Did you feel that way, too?" "I had fun meeting your date. What was he like?" "What was the best part about tonight?"

6. Try commercial conversations. Watch a favorite TV show together and talk during the commercials. View a football game and talk during the halftime show. Watch the news and discuss the stories during the breaks. These short bursts of communication, conducted without having to sit face-to-face, may be just the thing for the really reluctant talker.

Find more, including tools for dealing with conflict at:

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/teens/tips-for-parenting-teens/how-to-talk-to-a-reluctant-teen>

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Health Ministry Happenings - Up and Coming:

- **Quarterly Blood Drive – Sign Ups Starting after all Masses next week**
- **Stay Tuned for Health Ministry information located in a dedicated area on the parish website. This area will include all published flyers plus additional health related information and local resources!**