



## Parenting

### Getting Started

- *Larger LIFE Groups may consider splitting into same gender groups in order to facilitate more meaningful discussion.*
- *Groups will not have enough time to discuss every question. Leaders are encouraged to skip questions and make substitutions based on what's best for their group.*

### Warm Ups (15 Min)

- Everyone go around and share a “High” from the week and a “Low” from the week.
- What is something where you said, “When I’m a parent, I will never...”

### Community Note (1 Min)

- In the midst of a marriage series, some people might ask: “Why should singles care?”
  - a. Studies show that the vast majority of people eventually get married - and a series like this can help prepare people for a future relationship.
  - b. Our health as the body of Christ depends on all people pouring into one another - and leaning into a study on marriage will no doubt give you valuable insight that you can use to support the married couples around you.
  - c. This series contains great info that can be applied beyond the marriage relationship.
- For a great article on leaning into your singleness, visit <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/lead-out-of-your-singleness/>

### Scripture Study (30 Min)

- “For centuries Christian parents have taught that virtue counteracts vice and that learning how to make good decisions replaces our habit of making bad decisions. This tried-and-true approach to overcoming the allure of poor decision-making can still work today.”

- “After all, bad habits are easy. When relying solely on human nature, children will make selfish and short-sighted decisions. The habit of making good decisions, though, has to be deliberately built into our home life so our children have the tools they need to make wise decisions. Simply learning to share as a young child can begin a pattern of selflessness that can last years into adulthood.”

## **Focus on the Family: 7 Traits of Effective Parenting**

From <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/promos/seven-traits#225505>

- “Love
  - John the apostle tells us that we learn love by looking at the love God has shown us. God’s love came first and it is a truly sacrificial love. “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).
  - Do you know what you love? Look at the people, activities and things you’re attached to. Look at the sacrifices you make to see those people, do those activities or use those things. These are the areas of your life where you love. Children can see where your priorities are, where your love is directed.
  - God’s love helps parents counteract our natural selfishness. His love reveals itself in His commitment to us and His sacrifice for us, long after our emotions have faded away. Children learn God’s love through the sacrificial commitments we make to them and teach them to make.
- Respect
  - The apostle Paul writes that we should think like Christ and treat others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). Respect recognizes the best in people. It is more than acknowledging a child’s accomplishments. Children and teens are worthy of respect because God created them and loves them.
  - Respect teaches us not to treat others as unimportant. Nothing hurts a child more than being treated as if he is useless, and almost nothing encourages him more than being respected and valued.
  - One way to show respect to your family is to watch your language. Refuse to use cruel language — whether directed toward family members in your home or outsiders. Our language habits really do influence our ability to model respect to our children.
- Intentionality
  - Being intentional means talking about and living out our values and priorities before allowing other influences into our home. This trait nurtures a consistency in family life that reinforces the other traits. When parents are intentional, they grow in wisdom and are able to keep their focus on how they act as believing parents (Colossians 1:10).

- It is easy to be passive and let media and other influences set our family's priorities, but it's more effective to pay careful attention to how we live our lives. This is intentionality: making decisions as parents about how we will own the spiritual atmosphere in our homes.
- Boundaries and Limits
  - Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, authors of the "Boundaries" book series, write that the purpose of boundaries in parenting to "let good things in and keep bad things out." Hebrews 12:1 says that in order to run our race well, we need to shake off the things that keep us from reaching our goal. Ordering our home with healthy boundaries for kids and adults helps us do that.
  - Being deliberate about boundaries — for media, behavior, relationships, godly living and a vibrant faith — means we do not let culture determine what is healthy for our family. Proverbs tells us, "Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge" (14:7). If we don't set our own boundaries in our families, other influences — culture, extended family or trends — will set our children's moral boundaries, and we may become surprised and dismayed by what they have learned.
- Gratitude
  - As Paul begins his letter to the Philippians, he tells them how thankful he is every time he thinks of them (1:3-4). Gratitude is not just a polite reaction to something good. It is a cultivated habit and a vital part of healthy relationships.
  - When we practice gratitude in our families, it helps children and parents fight selfishness, which causes division among families and friends. When gratitude is expressed on a regular basis and in deliberate ways, it helps our children learn to see all the good God does in our lives. A natural outcome of this is that we learn to naturally praise Him, regardless of how we feel in the moment.
- Grace and Forgiveness
  - Grace and forgiveness shock us. God forgave us while we were still sinners. He shows grace to imperfect people and continues to involve them in His plan.
  - Parents need to be willing to model forgiveness and grace to their children, regardless of the personal cost. Human nature prevents us from easily giving grace and forgiveness, yet we learn from God's Word that we need to give both or we can't expect to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15).
- Adaptability
  - While he was in prison, Paul said something amazing: "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content" (Philippians 4:11). Paul learned to find peace in Christ, despite his situation. His personal happiness was not attached to his position, how well he was doing or what he was doing.

- Teaching adaptability helps our children find peace — a deep peace that is stronger than the stresses and trials of life. Peace counteracts the unproductive worry that causes us to lose our trust in God. This flexibility and resilience, grown in difficult circumstances, allows a family to face both hardships and joys together, as they grow deeper in their faith.”
- 8 Ways to Love Your Wayward Child
  - <https://www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/teens/8-ways-to-love-your-unrepentant-child.html>
    - Resist looking for a magic formula.
    - Pray, pray, pray.
    - Hold off on labels.
    - Point the way to Christ.
    - Avoid shaming them.
    - God saves, not us.
    - Show them love.
    - Make the way home easy.

## Group Prayer (15 Min)

## Trios (20 Min)

*Same gender groups of three. If numbers are uneven, go to groups of two.*

- **Spiritual Velocity:**
  - How did you see God at work in your life this week?
  - What has God been teaching you in His Word as you’ve encountered it in this week’s Life Journal readings, Sunday message, or LIFEGroup study?
  - What’s an area of your life in which you know you need to repent or grow? Is there an area of your life in which you’d like a friend to check in on you periodically?
- **Joining Jesus on His Mission:**
  - What kind of conversations are you having with non-Christians? How’s your 3-2-1 challenge going? Share about connections you’re building and spiritual conversations you’re having with non-believing neighbors and friends.
  - List the names of non-Christians in your life that you can pray for:
 

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  - What good can we do around here? (Missional party? Service project?)
  - How can we help each other, our neighbors, and our city in prayer?