

TEACHABLE moments

BUILDING BLOCKS *of*
CHRISTIAN PARENTING



Jonathan C.
ROBINSON, PH.D.

LEADER'S STUDY GUIDE

Teachable Moments: Building Blocks of Christian Parenting

Jonathan C. Robinson, Ph.D.

What Parents and Counselors Alike Have Had to Say About Teachable Moments: Building Blocks of Christian Parenting

Top Customer Reviews on AmazonBooks.com

[Not just for kids](#)

By [Amazon Customer](#) on August 19, 2016

Format: Paperback/Verified Purchase

I liked the book immediately. "The style and depth of communication tells you the level of emotional intensity and bonding being developed." I'd picked the book up, thinking it useful to a family I know (my own kids are all grown), but in the first chapter I realized the book would be useful for my own "not kids" friendships. The book didn't disappoint me.

[Solid psychologically and Biblically...outstanding parenting manual!](#)

By [Dr. Jared Pingleton](#) on December 9, 2016

Format: Kindle Edition

As a clinical psychologist myself, I have always told parents who come for help regarding their children that the major problem was that their son or daughter didn't come into the world with the instruction manual attached! Now we have a great one for those parents. The truth is, in parenting we do have opportunity to make an impact upon our children's hearts--if we seize and capitalize on those "teachable moments." Dr. Robinson has done an exemplary service to children everywhere in light of how this wonderful and innovative guidebook educates, equips and empowers parents to know how to effectively teach their children in those crucial moments. And as a minister also, I deeply admire and appreciate how Jon masterfully articulates how to integrate and synthesize Christian relationship principles into the everyday life of parenting. God has no grandchildren. The challenge for Christian parents is not only to know how to live our lives out in a Biblically healthy way in front of our kids, but to disciple our children in such an effective manner that they will themselves internalize and live out their own faith. The most important contribution of this excellent book is how to do just that. I highly recommend it both psychologically and theologically. You will want to buy extra copies for not only every parent you care about, but for your church groups as well.

[so I like to think I have high standards for books on ...](#)

By [Leigh Ellen Wattson](#) May 5, 2017

Format: Paperback

I'm a child and adolescent therapist as well as a parent, so I like to think I have high standards for books on parenting. I don't want to waste my clients' time with books that aren't realistic or helpful, so I only recommend the ones that I value personally and professionally. Dr. Robinson knocks it out of the park with Teachable Moments. He's included a great combination of personal vignettes, realistic approaches, and concrete tools to help assess how your family is doing currently. I'll be recommending this book for parents, and using the exercises as a resource with clients in session.

[A very timely book!](#)

By [Amazon Customer](#) on March 30, 2017

Format: Paperback

Every once in a while you come across a book that is a nothing short of a God-send. That's what happened with me when I received a copy of Teachable Moments. I came across it during a pivotal season of my life as a parent and I gleaned many practical insights and ideas to apply with my own children. Teachable Moments was a breath of fresh for me and I believe it will provide both hope and practical help to moms and dads everywhere! I highly recommend it and believe it is a necessary read for every parent, grandparent, or guardian trying to raise children in today's world! Mike Holt, Senior Pastor & Author, Nations Church-Athens, GA

[Christian Parenting Resource](#)

By [Amazon Customer](#) on May 11, 2017

Format: Paperback

I am a therapist who specializes in marriage and family. I also have 9 children. I believe that the Appendices in Teachable Moments will point your family in a healthy relational direction. Christianity is often criticized for its judgment of other adults and children without understanding and grace. I am a Christian and I do not believe that is the message of Christianity and Dr. Robinson does a great job of explaining strategies to improve parenting while preserving/creating positive relationships with your family members that is neither too permissive nor too authoritarian. I look forward to a Facilitators Guide, so that I can build a group parenting program around many of the concepts in Teachable Moments.

[Amazing! This is more than a book](#)

By [Heather Schulze](#) on November 2, 2016

[Format: Paperback](#)

Amazing! This is more than a book! This is an applicable guide to teaching your children (or students) about necessary life skills and managing relationships effectively. Dr. Robinson's thorough investigations, practices, and activities make communicating what is learned easy. He has an approachable way to addressing common issues in a fresh perspective! This book has become a household tool in raising our teenager. We are so thankful for Dr. Robinson! :)

[Robinson offers sound psychological advice along with valuable and powerful Biblical principles that will enable parents to have](#)

By [Angel D.](#) on December 9, 2016

[Format: Paperback](#)

Dr. Robinson offers sound psychological advice along with valuable and powerful Biblical principles that will enable parents to have great impact and effect on their children! Practical and 'doable' steps are given that any parent can follow no matter what life stage they are in. This book is a valuable resource not only for parents but also for therapists!

Overview

So, you've decided to teach a class or lead a study group, using *Teachable Moments: Building Blocks of Christian Parenting* as your resource book. Thank you.

For over 45 years, my passion has been to work with children, teens, and their families, helping them “raise their children in the ways of the Lord, so that, when they grow old, He will not depart from them.” Proverbs 22:6

You know, parenting is the toughest, lifelong job we have, for which most of us have no formal instruction. We typically wing it. How scary is that? Mostly, we model the parenting our parents gave us. Most of us try to parent just like mom and dad. Some of us, with unfortunate childhood circumstances, try to parent the opposite of mom and dad.

Now, you have a resource that combines sound, Biblical reference and solid cognitive-behavioral, psychological strategies for effective Christian parenting. Additionally, by creating a fictional family, with character development, back story, and dialogue, I gave you realistic examples of this parenting skill base in action.

Also, the nine appendices in the back of the book are protocols I developed and used in my clinic practice all those years. They have proven to be clear, exact, and engaging for each purpose, providing a means for developing coping skills.

Finally, the *Learn the Concept* sections, embedded in each chapter, provide immediate practice of and feedback on the parenting tool you just read about. In earlier drafts of the manuscript, I had written a separate workbook filled with these exercises and prompts. During the field testing of the material, I learned from my classes that often folks didn't get around to completing the workbook exercises. So, I embedded the exercises in the *Learn the Concept* sections for greater ease and access.

Why do you have this Leader's Guide? Most likely, you bought a copy of my book for yourself and decided you wanted to share it with others. You may have been unable to take one of my workshops or classes, but you saw the need for

such opportunity in your community. This Leader's Guide is intended to help you extend yourself in your community.

You might be a helping professional, physician, counselor, social worker, or other allied health professional and you see the value of extending the reach of your practice into your local community. You may want to add benefit to the counseling you do with your clients by starting a group for the parents of clients with child and adolescent issues. This Leader's Guide is for you

Also, you may have a leadership role in your local church. Are you a youth pastor, children's pastor, family pastor? Do you want to include this class in your church's Wednesday night activities, or have it be free-standing? This Leader's Guide is for you.

You may be a mom or dad who's active in your community association or your child's school PTA. You may want to offer this class in your neighborhood community center. You may just want to lead a small book study group of friends with kindred spirit. This Leader's Guide is for you as well.

You've already taken the journey that my book offers you, and you have a first-hand experience of learning the perspective and skill base of this journey. Now, you have the opportunity to enhance the journey others might take by taking them through the process with this Leader's Guide. My prayers go with you. Welcome!

Chapter 1

Communication Is Relationship!

Chapter Summary

It doesn't matter who is right or who is wrong. It doesn't matter if you have power and control over your child. Christ-filled parenting involves keeping the lines of communication open between you and your child at all times. Your communication with him defines the quality of relationship you will have with each other. As the parent, your communication with your child begins with listening, understanding your child's basic needs, and providing a meaningful context within which he can thrive in life. Active listening is the royal road to relationship.

Key Talking Points

1. There are 4 types of healthy communication when everything is going well with your child --- Directional, Instructional, Check-In, and Teachable Moments. **Ask for examples of each from your class.**
2. Both what you say (verbal) and how you say it (nonverbal) are equally important and telling for both you and your child.
3. Kids will tell you in words or actions when they are having a problem. Exploring their feelings, through active listening, is the key to helping them settle down. **Ask for examples of what children say or do that indicates things are just not right with them at the moment. Explain the metaphor of your child having an emotional fever.**
4. There are 4 ways to vary how you active listen---Passive Listening, Parroting, Paraphrasing, and Non-Committal Response. The more creative you are, the more engaging you will be to your child. **Provide a demonstration of active listening and the variations. Use the Bower family dialogue. Then break up into pairs to practice active listening.**
5. Cautions to consider. Feelings go beyond the core mad, glad, bad, and sad. **Direct your class to review Appendices 1, 2, & 3.**

6. There are 3 obstructions to helpful active listening --- don't problem solve, don't judge, criticize or rebuke, don't minimize your child's feelings.

Provide a role-play demonstration that highlights these obstructions.

Questions for Group Discussion

1. What are some of the best times you have had with your children? Were those times activity-based? Emotionally-based? Both? Examples.
2. You can see a broken arm, or find out if your sick child has a temperature. How do you find out when your child has an emotional fever? **Challenge the class to make as big a deal of an emotional fever as they do of a physical fever.**
3. When active listening, what do you notice that tells you the emotional fever is going down?
4. How boring would it be to your child if you only used "You feel..." in your efforts to active listen? **Challenge the class to use Appendices 1, 2, & 3 to expand their feeling repertoire, and PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.**
5. What do you notice from your child if you mistakenly fall into some of the obstructions to helpful active listening?

Notes

Chapter 2

Clearly Define Who's In Charge.

Chapter Summary

When the child is wreaking havoc in my office and the parents are making excuses, I know who's in charge. Parents are in charge when they convey authority, set firm boundaries, and work with their children on meeting their needs within those boundaries. When children are in charge in a family, their behavior demonstrates their fear and anxiety. Children do not have the mental and emotional maturity to be in charge. They will never tell you this, but they want YOU to be the boss.

Key Talking Points

1. There are 3 kinds of authority in the home --- Ascribed, Earned, and Benevolent Despot. **Ask for definitions and examples of each.**
2. While both ascribed and earned authorities are critical for healthy family functioning, all parties are more cooperative when earned authority takes precedence. **Ask, how does the benevolent despot embody the best of both ascribed and earned authority?**
3. Fear generates false respect, while relationship generates genuine respect.
4. Jesus taught us that servanthood is leadership in the home. **Dyads or small groups, review *Learn the Concept on Servanthood Parenting*, page 26.**
5. Joint leadership in parenting is ideal. Be aware of when you are on or off, and utilize the concept of "tag team parenting." **Dyads, talk about your usual parenting roles, when and how you fill in for each other as needed.**
6. There are 4 developmental stages of parenting --- Hands-On, Directed, Advice-Based, Consultative, which coincide with childhood developmental stages. **Small groups, complete *Learn the Concept, Exercise 7*, page 34-35.**
7. To keep things running smoothly, be consistent and timely, clearly define roles and expectations, and keep current by having scheduled family

meetings. **Homework, have a family meeting and write out each person's job description as a member of the family.**

8. For specific character development, utilize The Good Kid Chart. **Spend sizeable time detailing this behavior management strategy and why it works so well.**

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Most of us tend toward one kind of authority or another. Is your authority more ascribed or earned?
2. How do you earn authority in the family?
3. The words "benevolent" and "despot" don't seem to go together. What benefit do you see for your becoming a benevolent despot in your family?
4. Most of our parents, and some of us, came from a generation where children feared their parents. How did that work for you growing up? Share some of your growing up story with your spouse, in your group.
5. How do you suppose relationship would trump fear every time in raising your child?
6. How can you be a servant parent in your home without coming off as a doormat? What are the benefits/risks of servanthood parenting?
7. Review Ephesians, chapter 5. Is it God's will for the husband/father to always have the final say in decisions of the home?
8. How can you see "tag team parenting" enhancing your leadership style in your family?
9. Why do we need to change parenting gears, as our kids go through their developmental stages?
10. What constitutes a character issue? How is character development different from behavior modification? When your child needs time and structure to work on a character issue, how can you see The Good Kid Chart being helpful?

Notes

Chapter 3

Children Will Always Test The Limits!

Chapter Summary

Testing the limits is how children explore their environment. They test limits to be sure that they are there. Being in charge makes children anxious and afraid. They have neither the emotional nor intellectual maturity to handle being in charge. Children will act out continually until parents reassert their authority and set limits. Yet, children will never ask for limits nor beg you to be in charge. Yet, when you are in charge and you set limits, your children feel safe, secure, and confident that they can explore and grow.

Key Talking Points

1. Testing limits is natural for young people for 2 reasons --- Defining boundaries and expectations, assuring security and safety. **Small groups, what boundaries do you remember testing as a child?**
2. Testing limits is required for the maturation process. The goal is not freedom, but rather the security and certainty that limits are there.
3. Making good choices. Do good and good things happen. Do bad and bad things happen. **How does this play out in your home?**
4. Entitlement is the universal problem of our children's generation. **What is entitlement?** (I can do what I want, with no consequences.)
5. Family rules set the tone and provide a standard against which testing limits is measured. **Dyads --- Discuss 5 family rules that exist in your home. Homework --- Have a family meeting to agree on and write down family rules.**
6. Natural consequences vs punishment. **Give examples (p.63). Who benefits from punishment? From natural consequences?**

7. Abiding love is the standard. **Small groups --- some discuss Dobson's concept of "tough love." Some discuss the Biblical story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:5-8).**

Questions for Group Discussion

1. How have your kids tested the limits in your home TODAY?
2. Using Faye's categories of Drill Sergeant Parent, Helicopter Parent, and Love and Logic Parent, what's the impact of limit testing in these households?
3. How does using the concept of making choices affect your child's self-esteem?
4. Do you agree that a sense of entitlement is epidemic among your child's generation today? How does compassion and common good impact a child's sense of entitlement?
5. Do you lean more toward natural consequence or punishment with your kids? What's the impact of each?

Notes

Chapter 4

Children Never Mean What They Say!

Chapter Summary

For children, actions always speak louder than words. Unexpected lower grades in school frequently say, “I’m stressed, disorganized, overwhelmed.” Angry outbursts often say, “I’m afraid or depressed.” Extreme measures, like running away or cutting, often say, “Listen to me. I’m hurting.” Children’s words need to be decoded. Their behavior conveys what they mean much more than do their words. Parents will benefit from learning to speak their child’s nonverbal language.

Key Talking Points

1. Erikson’s psychosocial developmental stages are a baseline for timely Christian parenting. **Small groups, list behaviors you see in your children that fit their developmental stage.**
2. Gesell cyclical stages of children’s temperament help track moods and expectations. **Small groups, do your children fit the listed mood stages?**
3. Child/TeenSpeak is a critical language that parents need to learn. **Couples/Dyads, complete exercise 13, p.75-76. Hav you heard your children use any of these phrases? Add to the list from your own experience.**
4. Review Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2, and also Proverbs 12:18-20. Can these verses be the marching orders for you and your teen? **Couples, plan a time to sit down with your teen and talk about how these verses apply to you.**
5. Believe everything your children do and nothing they say. **Small Groups, how would your family interaction change if this was your guiding thought?**

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Where are you, and each member of your family, in the context of Erikson's psychosocial developmental life stages?
2. Are you or your children moody? Where do your children fit in Gesell's cyclical stages of childhood temperament?
3. How does current technology play into the prominence of KidSpeak?
4. In addition to the referenced Scriptures, where else do you go in the Bible for personal and parenting wisdom?
5. What is the importance of verbal/nonverbal interaction regarding how much you can believe what your children say?
6. How would active listening help you translate KidSpeak and help kids bring their verbals and nonverbals into line?

Notes

Chapter 5

A Family Is Not A Democracy!

Chapter Summary

While democracy may be the greatest gift to political structure, it does not bode well for families. Democratic families yield factions, lobbyists, “seed money,” and strategizing. Parents need to be benevolent despots. They share the power, confer with each other out of earshot of the children, and convey decisions with the support of one another. The children may have opinions, fight respectfully for causes, but never have a vote on matters that impact the entire family. Nevertheless, even capable benevolent despots are challenged occasionally.

Key Talking Points

1. The benevolent despot mixes the best of ascribed and earned authority, and is deeply rooted in love. **Look up Ephesians 3:15-17.**
2. The Plexiglas Pyramid is a visual reminder that each level of relationship gets its strength and security from the level above. **Tell a story about having a bad day and how that affected each level of the family pyramid.**
3. The one man-one vote core of democratic government does not apply to the Christian family. **Dyads/Couples, If you have more than two children, how would voting most likely go in your family? What forces would impact the voting?**
4. Family decisions are best made by gathering your children’s needs and feelings, expanding them, getting clarifying feedback, and implementing them slowly with time for feedback and reboot as circumstances change. **Homework, have a family meeting to structure and decide chores and household maintenance.**

5. Recharging your batteries daily has a spread of positive effect throughout the family. **Couples/Dyads, Make plans, time and space, for children's, couple, and family devotional time in your home.**
6. The power of God's Second Greatest Commandment. **Small groups, read Matthew 26: 36-40 and discuss.**
7. There are 3 kinds of selfs – selfish, self-interest, and self-caring. **Leader example, how do these 3 selfs differ? How do they play out?**
8. Balancing self-care with other-care generates the capacity for agape love. **Small groups, generate a list of 5 self-care activities you can complete each day.**

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Do you lean more toward authority, leniency, or benevolent despot in leading your family?
2. How does active listening with family members impact your decision-making process?
3. What are your plans for holding a family meeting to structure chores, curfews, and household maintenance this week?
4. How do you re-charge your batteries daily? What time do you give the Lord in that process?
5. How good are you at balancing self-care and other-care in your life decisions?

Notes

Chapter 6

Hormones Will Wreak Havoc!

Chapter Summary

While Lawrence Kohlberg hails adolescence as the age of developing a capacity for abstract reasoning, Erik Erikson sees the teen's challenge to form a personal identity. As adolescent hormones carom off all points inside the youth's body, the ricochets are dodged by all family members. Irritating habits of untidiness, extreme mood swings, saying no just because they can, and finding every last parent nerve to pluck are only a few of the outcomes of hormonal imbalance with which families must contend. As if this is not enough, its twin force, adolescent rebellion, is knocking at the door.

Key Talking Points

1. Three physical sources of emotional intensity – hormonal imbalance, the adrenal system, and neurotransmitter chemicals. **Leader, review these sources in detail.**
2. The body's immune system is adversely impacted by a person's stress levels. Higher stress makes one more vulnerable to medical illness and infection. **Couples/Dyads, list common stressors on your lives.**
3. With hormonal imbalance, emotional intensity ramps up. **Small gender groups, List what emotional things happen with changes in adolescent hormones.**
4. Three activities can help teens navigate the troubled waters of adolescence ---Diet & Activity Level, Confidante Relationships, Journaling. **Leader, review appendices 6 & 7, pages 177-189.**
5. Healthy lifestyle and meaningful friendships ease teen moodiness and hormone imbalance. **Couple/Dyad, share who you told your secrets to growing up.**
6. The six-week rule – the difference between mood and symptom.

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Women, how does your monthly period impact you and your relationships emotionally?
2. Are you at your ideal weight? Could the Weight Management Program help you get there? What has worked, not worked in the past?
3. What physical activity do you do to stay healthy?
4. What would be a picture of your best, most stress-free, day ever?
5. What helps you calm down when you are moody or stressed?
6. Who do you go to for advice? Share your secrets with? Is it mutual?
7. How is a therapeutic journal different from a typical adolescent journal?
8. How important is a good night's sleep to your mood level and stress management?

Notes

Chapter 7

Teenagers Will Rebel!

Chapter Summary

In childhood, kids want to be just like their mom or dad. In adolescence, they want to be exactly opposite of mom and dad. Ironically, this is a good thing, for it is out of this exploration that youth begin to form their personal identity. I heard once that 80% of teens rebel, to the exasperation of their parents. And yet, 80% of the rebels return to the values, conditions and lifestyles of their parents by age 25 or when their first-born child turns 2 years old, whichever comes first. I believe that even the 20% that do not rebel in adolescence do rebel. They just have a delayed reaction developmentally. Their rebellion comes about later in the form of extramarital affairs, failed marriages, job hopping, drug and alcohol addictions, or other limit-testing adult behavior. Adolescents will rebel, sooner or later.

Key Talking Points

1. Teenage rebellion is a developmental imperative on the path to individual identity. **Small gender groups, what form did your adolescent rebellion take?**
2. Personal identity is formed with 3 influences --- 80% from parents before age 5, 15% from peers during ages 6-13, 5% from self during teen years. **Couples/Dyads, how are you like and not like each of your parents?**
3. There are 3 parenting goals for your teens --- acknowledge their growth through rebellion, minimize adverse impact of their rebellion, and shepherd them through to adulthood.
4. The value of natural consequences over punishment in parenting teens – helps them learn responsibility, awards good choices, holds them accountable for their actions. **Small groups, what punishments have you used with your teens in the past? How well did they work?**

5. A new model of restriction --- using judgment, compassion, mercy to help your teen learn and improve from their errors. **Leader, explain the difference between the correctional and relational model of restriction. Review appendix 8, p. 189.**
6. The value of catching your kids being good. Use the “sandwich effect” to help your kids improve their behavior – Praise/Critique/Praise. **Couples/Dyads, review exercise 23, p.124-125. How can you apply this in your family?**

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Remember when you were a teen. How did your folks handle your rebellion? Was that helpful or not?
2. Aside from your folks, for good or bad, who among your family, peers, and friends influenced you the most? How?
3. What was the first, really big decision that you made completely on your own?
4. How good were your folks, in your teen years, at giving you advice and wise counsel, but without being demanding or intrusive? Examples?
5. How would you handle really big mistakes by your teen, e.g., getting arrested, having sex, cheating on tests, school truancy?
6. Why is it important to actually use the words judgment, compassion, mercy when adopting the relational model of correction?
7. How have you caught your child being good today?

Notes

Chapter 8

Problems Can Be Solved!

Chapter Summary

Every child, teen, and even adult, has “stuff.” The question is, what to do with the stuff. As a rule, if problematic behavior lasts longer than 6 to 8 weeks, it might be a symptom. If it lasts less than 6 to 8 weeks, it’s probably a mood. The predominant “stuff” we all deal with is worry, sadness, and compulsive behavior. Learning calming techniques and turning “what if” thoughts into “I wonder” thoughts will help ease worry. Using the “as if” principle, staying active, and planning ahead will ease sadness. Acknowledging your lack of control over “have to” behavior, identifying, confronting, and owning it will keep you from being compulsive.

Key Talking Points

1. Two keys to not letting problems get started – active listening affirms worth, responsibility, and accountability, personal, couple, and family devotional time energizes healthy family interaction. **Couples, go to page 89, commit, on paper and to each other, daily time to re-energize.**
2. Children are the emotional barometer of their parents’ feelings and moods. **Small gender group, list things you do that help with your feelings and mood.**
3. Balancing play with work with school with devotion helps your children become well-rounded and Godly. **Couples/Dyads, what proportions do these factors fill out daily in your family?**
4. Everybody has times of sadness. Three factors combat sadness – use of a therapeutic journal, getting active, using the “as if” principle. **Leader, have the class turn to page 184 and review the protocol for the therapeutic journal.**
5. Worry is the great inhibitor. Two kinds of worry – constructive worry and destructive worry. **Small gender groups, give examples of each.**

6. A calming technique addresses immediate worry. **Leader, have class turn to page 195 and review thoroughly the components of “chillin’ out.”**
7. The “Plus One” strategy helps kids take steps toward reaching their goal with less worry. **Leader, review Wolpe’s concept of successive approximation.**
8. When the “have to’s” have a hold on you, there are three steps toward getting back in control – identify, confront, and own the behavior. **Leader, ask for a list of common behaviors that can get out of control for our kids.**
9. Tracking behavior works. Behavior theory – what you monitor moves in the way you want it to. **Couples homework, keep track of one behavior you would like your child to change for one week and see what happens.**
10. Stopping cold turkey is a measure of the intensity of the “have to.”

Questions for Group Discussion

1. How do you affirm worth, accountability, and responsibility in your family?
2. How much of your “stuff” do you see in your kids?
3. Are you able to have one, undistracted meal together as a family each day? How is that, or how difficult would that be to make that time together?
4. What things make you sad? How do you handle that sadness?
5. What do you worry about? How would the 20/80 rule impact your worry?
6. Talk about a common worry. What are the “what ifs” and “I wonders” you could attach to that worry?
7. How does focusing on something you want to change help the change process?
8. Have you ever succeeded in stopping something cold turkey?

Notes

Chapter 9

The Principle of Responsible Freedom

Chapter Summary

Young adults launch when they demonstrate responsible freedom. All children explore as they grow. Our brains crave stimulation and experience. Parents need to nurture this process of exploration, but within healthy limits. Thus, parents give children and youth as much freedom as they demonstrate responsibility for. Parents define for the child what is responsible at any age. Parents set the limits and boundaries for the child's exploration and freedom. When a child exhibits irresponsibility, parents pull back on the freedom. When the lesson is learned and trust restored, parents can again allow the child freedom to further explore and experience.

Key Talking Points

1. The goal of Christian parenting for our teens is responsible freedom. **Leader, review Luke 16:1-13 with participants and discuss how this passage reflects the concept of responsible freedom.**
2. Teen freedom is graduated by their response and includes two parental factors – supervision and accountability. **Leader, discuss with participants how this is practice for the real world for your teen.**
3. There are two must-have conversations with your teen – The Talk, The Rules. **Couples/Dyads, tell each other why you believe these conversations are vital for your teen.**
4. The Talk gives your teen opportunity to explore sexual behavior and personal morals and values with you, and gather information from you from your perspective. **Couples/Dyads, are you proactive or reactive in your approach to The Talk?**
5. The Rules give parents the opportunity to be clear with their expectations and to list pre-determined reward and consequence related to following the rules. **Couples/Dyads, go to page 147-148 and complete Exercise 26.**

6. Accountability and oversight build trust and integrity between you and your teen, using 3 actions – setting limits, modeling appropriate behavior, and teaching cause and effect. **Couples/Dyads, list 5 examples of how you would require accountability and 5 examples of how you would provide oversight.**
7. The space launch analogy provides an example of the specific interaction between parent and teen, as the teen moves from adolescence to odyssey. **Leader, review the space launch analogy in detail.**
8. As parents move from advice to consultation, be aware of the 4 steps in effective consultation – be asked, gather data/expertise, present, and leave. **Couples/Dyads, review exercise 7, pp 34-35 again and pull out all the advice-based examples and all the consultative examples.**

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Why is letting go of our teens so hard?
2. Have you had The Talk with your child yet? How did that go?
3. Why is writing The Rules down and posting them so critical to compliance?
4. Remember when you taught your child to ride a bike? How is that analogous to preparing him for adulthood?
5. How can you require accountability and oversight without hovering?
6. How does moving from advice to consultation reflect your mutual respect for each other?

Notes

