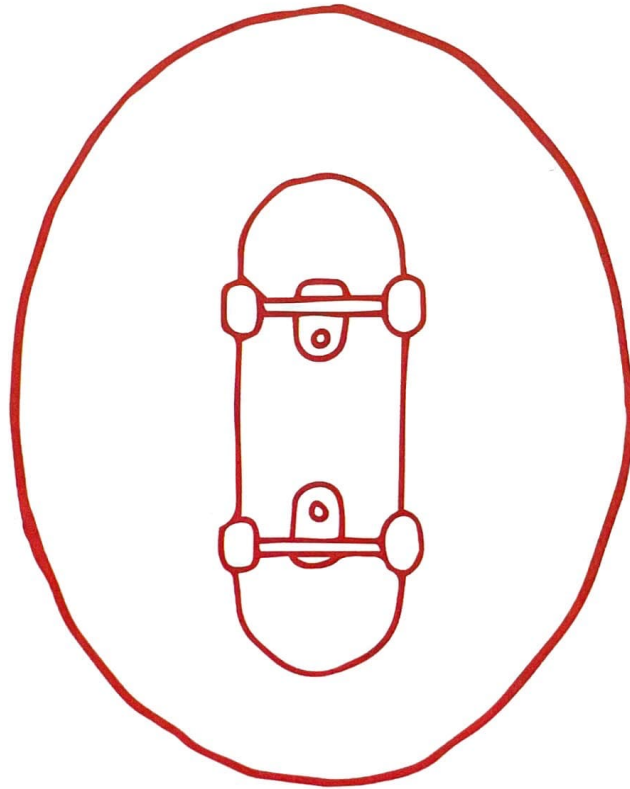


SEVENTH GRADE



**THE PHASE WHEN NOTHING YOU DO
IS COOL, WHAT THEY FEEL RIGHT NOW
MATTERS MOST, AND ONE SUDDENLY SOCIAL KID
WANTS TO KNOW, "WHO'S GOING?"**

Your seventh grader is changing...



PHYSICALLY

- 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; may develop body odor, body hair, and muscle mass
- Girls may develop body odor, body hair, and breasts; and menstruation is likely (10-16 years)

MENTALLY

- Able to see two sides of an argument
- Enjoys forming and sharing their opinion
- Solves multi-step, complex problems
- Has a hard time with organization and time management
- Sudden brain growth may lead to forgetfulness

SOCIALLY

- Often characterized as happy, silly, and loud
- Interested in pop culture and new slang
- Needs non-parental adult influences
- Places a significant emphasis on peer opinions
- Girls (in particular) frequently display excessive meanness, increased attention to self-image, and a lack of confidence

EMOTIONALLY

- Enjoys silly and sometimes crude humor
- Benefits from talking about what they are feeling and why
- May be restless and need physical activity
- Tends to overschedule their time

NOW—YOU'RE EMBARRASSING.

Figuring out the new rules for your social behavior can be intimidating. When is it acceptable to walk over and say hello? Why do all your comments elicit an eye roll? Don't be caught off guard—you're transitioning to parenting an adolescent. This may be an awkward phase for you.

NOW—EVERYTHING HAPPENS IN A CROWD.

It may be hard to recognize your seventh grader amid all the other seventh graders. They walk the hall in pairs. They go to the mall in a herd. They build unfathomably large social media platforms. In seventh grade, the best place to be is wherever "everyone" goes.

NOW—IS REALLY ALL THAT MATTERS.

It's not that what you said this morning doesn't matter, it's just that they don't remember it. And it's not that they don't care about their future, it's just that the present is so much closer. Most seventh graders are hyper-aware of their present reality. That means there isn't anything quite so motivating as—right now. Look for ways to use right now to your advantage, and appeal to their present circumstances.

IT'S JUST A PHASE



SO DON'T MISS IT.

YOUR ROLE IS TO
AFFIRM
THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEY

Your seventh grader is in a season of personal discovery. Not everyone makes the team. Interests and abilities change. Long-accepted values can come into question. On top of all that, this phase is a time of heightened self-awareness. When you consistently affirm their journey through this sometimes-turbulent season, you help them gain stability.

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 . . .

PROVIDE STABILITY.

**IS MOTIVATED BY
ACCEPTANCE**

You coach their moral abilities when you . . .

AFFIRM THEIR VALUE.

THIS YEAR YOU WILL **PROVOKE DISCOVERY** SO YOUR SEVENTH GRADER WILL OWN THEIR OWN FAITH AND VALUE A FAITH COMMUNITY.

In this phase, your seventh grader may be asking some hard questions. Don't be shocked (at least not visibly). Doubt isn't toxic to your middle schooler's faith; it's part of the process of personalizing what they believe. Make your home a safe place for them to ask questions, and show interest in what they are learning.

SAY THINGS LIKE . . .

"HOW CAN I PRAY FOR YOU TODAY / THIS WEEK?"

"GOD MADE YOU, HE KNOWS YOU, AND HE LOVES YOU."

"THE WAY YOU LIVE CAN SHOW OTHERS WHO JESUS IS."

WHEN DO YOU FEEL CLOSEST TO GOD?

"WHAT WOULD BE A FUN WAY WE COULD SERVE OTHERS TOGETHER?"

(Consider serving at your church or a local ministry that appeals to your seventh grader's interests.)

"I HAVE QUESTIONS TOO. WHAT OTHER THINGS DO YOU WONDER ABOUT?"



Instill purpose by starting the day with encouraging words.




Interpret life during informal conversation as you travel.



Establish values with intentional conversations while you eat together.



Listen to their heart by staying available—just in case.

The background of the entire page is filled with red, hand-drawn scribbles that resemble pencil or marker strokes. These scribbles are organized into several large, roughly circular or oval shapes, each filled with a different pattern of lines: some are vertical, some are horizontal, and some are diagonal. In the center of the page is a white rectangular box with a thick red border. Inside this box, the text is centered and reads: "EVERY PHASE IS A TIMEFRAME IN A KID'S LIFE WHEN YOU CAN LEVERAGE DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE THEIR future." The words "EVERY PHASE IS A", "TIMEFRAME", "IN A KID'S LIFE", "WHEN YOU CAN", "LEVERAGE", "DISTINCTIVE", "OPPORTUNITIES", and "TO INFLUENCE" are in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The word "THEIR" is also in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The word "future." is written in a black, cursive script font.

**EVERY PHASE IS A
TIMEFRAME
IN A KID'S LIFE
WHEN YOU CAN
LEVERAGE
DISTINCTIVE
OPPORTUNITIES
TO INFLUENCE
THEIR
future.**

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 312 WEEKS AND COUNTING . . .

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