

## // Parent Ministry

### *He's Almost a Teenager*

*Essential Conversations to Have Now*

Authors: Peter & Heather Larson, David & Claudia Arp

#### **REVIEW:**

Couples Peter and Heather Larson along with David Claudia Arp, the authors of *She's Almost a Teenager* have written an insightful companion book *He's Almost a Teenager*. Following the similar outline of topics and conversations, this time around they take parents through the tween transition of boyhood. Written from the heart of parents to other parents, this book is a meaningful book for parents with children of any age.

This valuable parenting resource is helpful for individual families or as a group discussion starter in a church setting. Each of the 8 chapters lead parents thorough the 8 foundational conversations that every parent should be having with their maturing son.

#### **SNAPSHOT**

##### ***Conversation 1: The Big Picture Talk***

The big picture talk is the first foundational conversation parents need to have with their son as he heads into the changes happening in the coming years. There are three types of parents that will approach the big picture talk: 1) The Smother, the parents that want to stay in control during the teen years. 2.) The Pusher, the parents that push their children into becoming an adult. 3.) The Releaser, the parents that give their son a period to slowly grow into adolescents. In the end, parents must keep the goal in mind, to raise a young boy that will become a Godly man.

##### ***Conversation 2: The Friends Talk***

The friends talk is taking a son from parent-based relationships to peer-based relationships. It is the conversation that will help a tween boy define what it means to be and have good friends. This talk will also be a time to process society's and the media's destructive definition of how to act and relate with others.

Some tips to having this conversation: 1.) Give unconditional love. 2.) Remember this phase is temporary. 3.) Concentrate on the relationship. 4.) Be brave enough to say "no", establishing limits. 5.) Give affirmation and positives. 6.) Have a sense of humor.

##### ***Conversation 3: The Body Talk***

Even before the first physical signs of puberty, the body talk begins the conversation about hormones and body changes. It is important for parents to understand the changes in their son's brain as well as to his body, known as "remodeling". The tween brain is going through active "pruning", letting go of millions of neurons, while at the same times strengthening other areas.

There are various changes that are happening mentally though changes in emotions, motivation, and evaluation. Parents must be attentive to the signs of negative attachment, risk, and self-image.

During this conversation, parents need to also talk about eating habits, clothing choices, and even modesty.



#### ***Conversation 4: The Technology Talk***

The technology talk is formed around teaching a young son to understand three main things: rights, responsibilities and privileges. A young boy, based on the world he lives in, often assumes a privilege is a right. Some key questions to answer as a family: 1.) What does responsible behavior look like? 2.) What are the consequences and rewards connected to the privilege of technology? 3.) When does your son get a smartphone? 4.) How will social media be used in the home?

In the end, parents need to have a talk about character and the choices their son will make when no one else is looking.

#### ***Conversation 5: The Faith Talk***

The faith talk is helping a son transition from borrowing their parent's faith to owning their own spiritual journey. A part of this conversation parents can have is exposing their son to their family's faith tradition, knowing that a son's faith informs his identity, values, and decisions.

During this stage of life is when a parent must go from directing to facilitating spiritual growth. It may be a scary moment of transition, but it is a time to move a pre-teen from living per parent's standards to living by their own personal convictions.

#### ***Conversation 6: The Academics Talk***

The academic talk is helping a son understand the goal of education. It is more than just learning or academic achievement. The goal of education also includes social and emotional development, citizenship, vocational preparation, and cognitive growth.

Parents must help their son understand the things that will get in the way of these additional goals by finding balance between these things and understanding achievement and intelligence.

#### ***Conversation 7: The Girls Talk***

The girls talk is a conversation about the purpose of dating and the things a son will hopefully learn though it: 1.) Being a good friend. 2.) Pursuing girls graciously 3.) Being respectful of girls and yourself. 4.) Being Honest.

The other part of this conversation is helping a son to decide when and who to date. This time is a time to provide a son with questions to decide if they are relationship ready and understand a parent's own experiences and expectations for dating.

The final part of this conversations is about staying pure through: 1.) Guarding your eyes. 2.) Guarding your heart. 3.) Respecting yourself and your future wife. 4.) Creating accountability.

#### ***Conversation 8: The Money Talk***

The "money talk" is having a conversation about the value of money and Godly stewardship. Parents need to talk to their son about budgets, expenses and the difference between a need and a want. During this conversation is a time to talk about future career or college planning.

Also in the is final talk is an opportunity to discover a son's natural tendency to be either a spender or saver.

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As always this "snapshot" is very quick overview of a long and in-depth book full of great parental advice and wisdom. It is provided to help you get a glimpse to see if this book would be a great fit for your family, ministry or church. We strongly encourage you to buy the full-length resource at your local bookstore or online. We hope you will.

