



PARENT CONNECTIONS

for families of Preteens

PARENT POINTERS

Every human being longs to be listened to. Listening is perhaps the greatest gift one human can give to another. Are you giving your preteen the gift of your ears? It seems in our world that many are willing to talk, but few listen.

TODAY YOUR PRETEEN LEARNED

YOU'VE GOT GIFTS Is There a Better Gift?

Today's lesson was based on 1 Corinthians 12. Preteens learned that all spiritual gifts are no more or less important than any other gift. In order for the Body of Believers to function as God intended, we must all seek out our gifts and use them in the church.

Every person in the church needs the other people in the church. This becomes very apparent in times of crisis or need. We really do need each other.



Together with your preteen, find someone in the church who has a spiritual gift. Talk with your preteen about the ways to use that gift. Speak together to the person with this gift asking the person to share his or her testimony.

It does require energy to listen. Listening does not mean merely being in the same room with your preteen while they talk in your direction. Listening means eye contact. Constant eye contact can be a bit unnerving if you are not used to it. Be prepared to be uncomfortable. It is, however, very rewarding. Eye contact says with intensity, "You are the most important person in my world right now."

Listening calls for physical closeness. Listening doesn't work well from across a yard or even across a room. If you are both sitting, make sure that your body is facing your preteen.

Touching is also important as you listen to your preteen. Preteens differ greatly in how much touch they are comfortable with at this stage in their lives. If your preteen protests or pulls back because of any amount of touching, don't push that on him or her. Be assured they are not rejecting you or your ears; they just don't want to be touched.

If someone's ever really listened to you, you know from that experience of being fully heard how vital it is that you give your full attention to listening to your preteen.

—by Katherine Hendrixson

Focused attention is giving a child our full, undivided attention in such a way that he feels without doubt that he is completely loved. That he is valuable enough in his own right to warrant parents' undistracted watchfulness, appreciation and uncompromising regards. . . . Focused attention makes a child feel he is the most important person in the world in his parents' eyes.

—H. Norman Wright
(*The Family That Listens* [Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1978], 74.)



You can read aloud anywhere—the park, the car, or the living room. But your "read aloud" time will be that much more special if the atmosphere is fun. Whether it's candles and beanbags in a cozy corner or warm cookies and milk as you begin, make your reading time something that your family or preteen looks forward to with excitement.

The Silver Chair by C. S. Lewis is humorous and suspenseful. Eustace, Jill, and what

Lewis calls a Marsh-wiggle are sent to rescue a prince. They are an unlikely trio for such a dangerous task. Ask your family/preteen why Aslan chose such weak characters to do this. They don't even get along all the time. Think together about how God chooses the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chooses us and gives us the strength to do as He asks.