

# Family Matters: Surviving & Thriving at Home Series

## Honoring Our Parents

**Overview:** Explore the roles of parents and teenagers, helping your students consider how to live out God’s command to honor their parents by respecting them and offering forgiveness.

**Supplies:** You'll need Bibles, a way to show a YouTube video, 3x5 cards, pens, and a trash can.

### 1. Opening

Say: **We all know the stereotype—depending on the mood, teenagers are either embarrassed about their parents or outright disrespecting them. This is such a common expectation that some experts say it’s simply part of a teenager’s developmental stage in life. When it comes to parents, there’s plenty to complain about, right?**

Show a portion of the YouTube video “5 Things Teens Wish Their Parents Knew”

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP6z\\_hzVXTY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP6z_hzVXTY)) or a similarly-themed YouTube video. Preview the video ahead of time—in this suggested link, there is one brief use of a profanity.

Have students stand up and form pairs. Explain that you'll say a sentence-starter, and then they'll have one minute to talk with their partner about how they'd finish it, and why. After a minute, call “Switch” and have teenagers find new partners to talk through another sentence-starter. Continue with this pattern of one-minute discussions until students have discussed all five sentence-starters with different partners.

- One thing parents don't get about teenagers today is...
- I wish my parents understood that I...
- If I could ask my parents to change one thing, it would be...
- When I'm a parent, I will never...
- When I'm a parent, I will...

### 2. Bible Connection

Gather together and say: **Of course, the Bible teaches that children should honor their parents. But what does this mean for teenagers? You aren't little kids anymore, but you're also not yet adults. And honoring the most important people in your life seems like a priority, anyway. Honoring authority is a kingdom of God value—I mean that in the culture that God has created, even Jesus honors what his Father wants and who he is. Jesus is always and everywhere offering respect to his Father.**

Read aloud Exodus 20:12 and Leviticus 19:3, then ask the group:

- **What do you suppose *parents* think this command means?**

- **Now, what do you think this command means?**

Read aloud Ephesians 6:1-3 and Colossians 3:20; then ask: **Why do you think Paul reiterated these Old Testament ideas in his letters to the early church—why was it so important?**

Say: **Arguably, honoring parents is more complicated for teenagers than it is for little kids. You've probably each faced situations in which it's been hard to determine what it really means to honor your parents. We need guidance and wisdom from the Spirit of Jesus to help us live out what "honor" really means when it comes to our relationship with our parents.**

### **3. Digging Deeper**

Read aloud Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21. Explain that *exasperate* means to make angry or annoyed; *embitter* means to make resentful. Point out that Paul's teachings here show that it's a normal reality: Sometimes parents anger, annoy, or embitter their children.

Form trios, then have them read and discuss **Ephesians 6:1-8 and Colossians 3:20-25**. Although these Bible passages focus on a slave's responsibility to his master, they contain truths that can impact teenagers' relationship with their parents.

Ask trios to explore these questions:

- **What truths for first-century Christians in slavery could translate into times when it seems tough to honor your parents?**
- **Give some examples of situations between teenagers and parents that seem unfair. In those situations, what might honor and respect look like?**
- **What about when you feel as if parents don't "deserve" respect or honor? How can these Bible passages speak into those situations?**

Gather together as a large group and get feedback from small-group discussions. Then say: **You're no longer little children, but God still expects you to honor your parents. There's no cookie-cutter approach to this—what's most important is your heart attitude. If you will submit yourself to Jesus, always asking him for help in discerning when and how to express honor to your parents, he will help you find your way forward.**

### **4. Closing**

Pass out 3x5 cards and pens. Ask students to each think of and write down something about their parents that they need to forgive or let go of—something that exasperates or embitters them or that's a constant point of conflict.

Prompt kids to spend time asking for Jesus' strength to forgive and to honor their parents even when it's difficult. To represent the choice to "let go" (or to at least try to forgive), invite them to throw away their cards in a trash can as they leave.