

HOW TO KEEP YOUR STUDENT ENGAGED WITH JESUS THIS SUMMER

The reality is, that for most of us, summertime means our regular rhythms and routines are thrown out the window. The same is especially true for our young people. With summer comes the desire to spend more time sleeping in, hanging out with friends, or staying up till the wee hours of the night playing the latest Fortnite season. And these things aren't inherently bad, but when these things replace God, they can become detrimental to their spiritual health. With this reality in mind, we want to give all our parents 5 small things that you can do to help your teen stay engaged with God this summer! Our prayer is that summer could be a time of rich spiritual growth, not spiritual regression.

1. Commit to personally spending time with God. Let's be honest, summer isn't just a hard time for teens in terms of spiritual disciplines! Summer messes up our rhythms too. Your teens are going to pay attention and become who you are, not what you say. Do your quiet time at the kitchen table, leave your Bible and journal out so that your teen can see your commitment to spending time with Jesus. If you want your teen to be attached to the True Vine, then you must abide with him too. (John 15:1-5)

2. Make Jesus a regular topic of discussion. The Bible tells us that the best thing we can do for our kids is talk about God no matter what we are doing. Whether you are driving in the car, cooking dinner, or on a family walk, Jesus should be the first name on our lips. Talking about Jesus and faith often makes the topic less taboo and helps our kids realize that he is Lord every day, not just on Sundays. (Deut. 6:4-9)

3. Don't fit Jesus into your schedule, build your schedule around Him. Somehow it can feel like the summertime is even busier than the school year. Vacation and sports tournaments often mean time away from church. Look for ways to redeem this time away with your family. If you're out of town on Sunday, try to find a local church that you can attend and ask your teens what they liked or didn't like about the service. You could even host your own mini church service and let your kids lead it! Communicate to your teen that following Jesus isn't restricted by location or season. (John 4:21-24)

4. Invite your teen to study the Bible with you. For some young people, they don't spend time reading their Bible because they haven't been taught how to read it. And when they do read it, they don't know what to look for. This is a great opportunity for you to show off your own knowledge while also meeting them where they are! The YouVersion Bible app has great plans that you can invite others to do with you. You can also see your partner's progress and even leave comments for them to see. It doesn't have to be complicated; it just has to be faithful! (Acts 8:29-31)

5. Be curious about your teen and their spiritual journey. Studies have shown that young people are more open than ever to discussing matters of faith and spirituality. The key is to remain curious to what your teen believes and values. And when they bring up a big question, don't just try to fix it right away. Rather, come beside them and find an answer together. They don't need a lecture; they need a mentor. The less you speak and the more you listen, the more impact you will have! (Mark 9:36-37)