



## Snapshots of Wonder

### KICK-START WITH ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PARENTS

- It's only too late to try to talk to your adolescent if you never actually do it. Don't be scared off if it's awkward at first. They may roll their eyes, but they'll secretly love that you tried to talk to them.
- Kids rarely complain that they don't want a relationship with their parents; they just wish they had a better one.
- For our kids, their perception is their reality. If we are dismissive about how they feel, it will be harder to show them a new perspective. Start by understanding how and why they feel the way they do, and they will eventually want to hear more of what you think.
- Take out some old 6th grade pictures of yourself and connect your heart to your own early adolescence before you start this Family Experience You might even bring it along for the first conversation, or better yet--bring a different and more embarrassing one for the start of each conversation. Nothing breaks the ice like letting our kids poke fun at us!

### FRAMING UP OUR PURPOSE

The first Family Experience is full of potential for creating lasting memories and healthy dialogue with your 6th grader. Because this is a season of so much change, it seems as if our kids can become unsure of themselves almost overnight. Sometimes we notice it when they just feel bad about everything. Sometimes they have a bad attitude. Sometimes they even make bad choices because of it.

The word we want you to keep in mind during this Family Experience is **wonder**. Wonder is when we experience something that is unexpected but amazing or that is so thrilling it takes our breath away. Wonder is the moment we remember that our life and purpose come from the beautiful imagination of God the Creator. We want our kids to look at how they are shaped and wired and experience a deep sense of wonder.

Here are a few biblical truths you can share or use as the backdrop of your conversations. Feel free to look up these verses in a translation that resonates with you.

***God's creation is so good because He is so great.***

*"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." --Psalm 139:13-16*



Your child was probably really good at wonder when they were young. Figuring out that  $4+4=8$  stunned them. Watching a huge, bright green grasshopper captivated them. Most likely, they thought every colored page they finished was a work of art and that every game of chase on the playground demonstrated their superhuman speed! Probably the most important truth you can imprint on your 6th grader's heart this year is that, just like all of God's creation, they are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

***When change happens, and life is hard, God is still there. And He is big enough to handle the tough stuff.***

*"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."--Isaiah 40:28-31*

As children get older, wonder begins to slip away a little, and they don't trust it as much. And when they trust it less, they don't see themselves the same way anymore. Suddenly, it's harder to believe that they can do anything. There are a lot more questions that they can't answer, and unkind voices tell them that they aren't very good at anything. That's your cue to tangibly remind them that God has not changed and to show them God's strength when they don't feel very strong.

**God wants to do amazing things in and through us.**

*But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day. And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.*  
--Luke 5:24-27

The people with Jesus that day had probably let go of wonder. They had probably lost hope that God could show up in such a remarkable way. But here is Jesus not only loving a paralyzed man but also healing the brokenness! The people were gripped with wonder.

The beginning of adolescence is the perfect time for you to help your child hold on tightly to wonder and expect to see amazing things as God shows up through all the changes and unexpected problems. Find ways to create space for your child to see the bigness and boldness of God's creation--everything from a gorgeous sunset on the beach, to towering mountain ranges, to her own reflection in the mirror. Do what you can to help them trust that there are no mistakes or mishaps in God's artistry--only masterpieces like Himself.



## IDEAS FOR KEEPING WONDER ALIVE TOGETHER

- Visit the Grand Canyon and walk out onto the glass skywalk bridge.
- On a clear night, go somewhere away from city lights and lay in the grass under the stars for an hour.
- Watch someone you love doing something they are really good at and think about how they are gifted in such a unique way.
- Stand in front of the mirror and pray that God would help you see all that He loves about you.
- Experience a sunrise or sunset on the beach.
- Climb a mountain. There are trails to the tops of mountains everywhere!
- Train to run farther than you thought you could--maybe try a 5K or a half-marathon. You'll amaze yourself. Better yet, do it together!
- Listen to the life story of someone from another country.
- Try something that has always scared you.