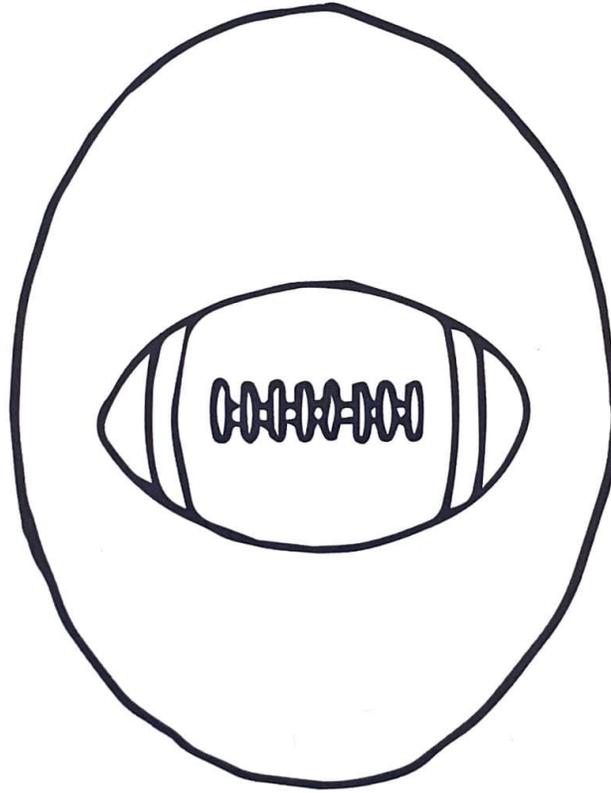


NINTH GRADE



**THE PHASE WHEN FRIENDSHIPS SHIFT,
GRADES COUNT, AND INTERESTS CHANGE
SO OFTEN YOUR TEENAGER HAS TO EXPLAIN,
“THIS IS ME NOW.”**

Your ninth grader is changing...



PHYSICALLY

- Has difficulty falling asleep before 11pm, but still needs 9 hours of sleep per day
- Guys are getting taller, smellier, hairier, and gaining muscle mass; may also experience voice changes, weird dreams, and increased acne
- Girls' bodies take on an adult physical appearance; after menstruation, increase in height will slow, then stop

MENTALLY

- Increasingly able to focus, recall, and organize information
- Overly self-aware; may think "Everybody's watching me"
- Wired for risk-taking and sensational experiences
- Resists embarrassing situations
- "I'm bored" often means, "I don't understand"

SOCIALLY

- Girls begin wearing make-up on a regular basis
- Increased interest in sexual expression, but dating tends to be short-lived
- Say they want parents to listen more than advise
- May be tempted to change their appearance or behavior to gain acceptance

EMOTIONALLY

- Feels empowered through choices rather than rules
- May still feel insecure about their changing body
- May experience changes in motivation
- Seeks experiences that create intense feelings and emotions
- More vulnerable to addiction, such as self-harm, alcohol, and pornography

YOU MAY NOTICE A FEW NEW FRIENDS.

The average high school has 750 teenagers, 250 dating couples, and more than 50 options for extracurricular activities. With so many opportunities to connect, your high schooler may find their place in engineering class or on the debate team, in drama club or on the basketball court, in YMCA or Beta Club.

THERE IS A NEW ACADEMIC REALITY.

Ninth grade means increased demands for personal responsibility. For those headed to college, grades begin to count toward future admission. For everyone, grades count toward a high school diploma.

THIS IS A YEAR OF IDENTIFYING TALENTS.

By the end of this year, your teenager will have a more stable sense of who they are. Frankly, they may be a little frustrated you haven't known who they were all along. (Why not? It's been so obvious.) Listen carefully. Pay attention. Stalk them openly. The greatest thing you can do in this phase is to continually rediscover who they are becoming and know where they are finding acceptance.

IT'S JUST A PHASE



SO DON'T MISS IT.

YOUR ROLE IS TO
MOBILIZE
THEIR POTENTIAL

High school means higher stakes. Many freshmen spend this year redefining who they thought they were or what they thought their future would be. Pay attention. Ask questions. This is a significant year.

THINKS LIKE A PHILOSOPHER

You help them learn when you . . .
ASK QUESTIONS.

WANTS TO KNOW,
“WHERE DO I BELONG?”

You capture their heart when you . . .
VALUE COMMUNITY.

IS MOTIVATED BY FREEDOM

You coach their moral abilities when you . . .
GIVE CHOICES.

THIS YEAR YOU WILL FUEL PASSION SO THEY WILL KEEP PURSUING AUTHENTIC FAITH AND DISCOVER A PERSONAL MISSION.

In this phase when your ninth grader is asking, "Where do I belong?" foster their connection to a positive faith community. Your ninth grader will need consistent peers and leaders who will strengthen their relationship with God. So, look for ways to prioritize their church connection, and stay engaged in their faith journey by having conversations at home.

SAY THINGS LIKE . . .

"HOW CAN I PRAY FOR YOU TODAY?"

"WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU FEEL LIKE GOD IS TEACHING YOU RIGHT NOW?"

"LATELY, I'M FINDING I CONNECT BEST WITH GOD WHEN I'M . . ."

WHEN DO YOU FEEL CLOSEST TO GOD?

I DON'T KNOW.

"THERE'S NOTHING YOU WILL EVER DO THAT COULD MAKE GOD STOP LOVING YOU."

"WHEN YOU TOLD ME ABOUT . . . IT MADE ME THINK OF A VERSE IN PROVERBS."

(Share Bible verses that relate to their present circumstances.)



Instill purpose by starting the day with encouraging words.



Connect regularly by scheduling time to eat together (even once a week).



Interpret life when they occasionally open up at the end of the day. (Stay consistently available —just in case.)



Strengthen your relationship by adjusting your plans to show up when they need you.

**EVERY PHASE IS A
TIMEFRAME
IN A KID'S LIFE
WHEN YOU CAN
LEVERAGE
DISTINCTIVE
OPPORTUNITIES
TO INFLUENCE
THEIR
*future.***

YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 208 WEEKS AND COUNTING . . .

FOR MORE RESOURCES VISIT PARENTCUE.ORG OR DOWNLOAD THE PARENT CUE APP.

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