

*“The ultimate point of parenting (and teaching), is not to have children like us all of the time, but to have them be like us when they are raising their own children.” Robert Evans*

## **TEXTING GOD**

### **Understanding the Spirituality of Today’s Youth**

Religious faith and spiritual practice are not simply matters of individual experience and institutional involvements. They are also embedded in and sometimes draw much of their life from personal relationships in families, with friends, at school, and with other adults.

*A major task for adolescents is to find, among the available alternatives, a way of life that they can make their own. The search for such a way is made partly through experimentation. And the test by which adolescents finally make enduring choices is whether or not more (or more) of the patterns helps them make sense of themselves in the world. Of course, enduring choices often are not made during adolescence but only later. Craig Dykstra*

<b>Aspects of Identity</b>	<b>Areas of Ability</b>
A Sense of Safety and Structure	Physical Health
High Self-Worth and Self Esteem	Mental Health
Feeling of Mastery and Future	Intellectual Health
Belonging and Membership	Employability
Perception of Responsibility and Autonomy	Civic and Social Involvement
A Sense of Self-Awareness and Spirituality	

#### **Adolescents and Identity Changes**

*Pastoral Counseling with Adolescents and Young Adults, Charles M. Shelton*

1. Growing time perspective
2. Finding time for solitude
3. Inner complexity
4. Growing boundaries
5. Development of healthy relationships
6. Growing self-acceptance
7. Knowledge of roles
8. Develop a philosophy of life
9. Competency functioning
10. Appropriate display of emotions

#### **Influence is about . . .**

*Good Influence, Dan Heishman*

- Separateness as well as togetherness
- Presence
- Sitting with a problem and not solving it
- The inner voice

## Effective adolescent faith formation . . .

1. Involves two movements in the development of religious commitment in youth:
  - a. Socialization
  - b. Religious experience
2. Offers teens a sense of belonging that ties them into the fellowship of the church, a sense of the comprehensive meaning of the whole of life that is based in religious truth, and opportunities to develop various competencies that assist them as they cross the threshold into adult roles and institutions
3. Nurtures the spiritual life of teenagers and the adults who minister with them through spiritual disciplines and contemplative practices
  - a. Sabbath
  - b. Prayer
  - c. Covenant Community
  - d. Accompaniment
  - e. Discernment
  - f. Hospitality
  - g. Authentic Action
4. Equips and engages young people to participate in the life, ministries, and practices of the congregation; and to assume leadership in congregational and youth activities
5. Nurtures the faith of parents and the whole family, and equips, resources, and supports parents in sharing faith with teens.
6. Utilizes a variety of program models to develop the faith maturity of young people
  - a. Retreats
  - b. Service
  - c. Milestones and Life Transitions
  - d. Weekly youth meetings
  - e. Small faith communities or cell groups
  - f. Monthly youth gathering
  - g. Short-term learning opportunities on a topic (4-6 weeks; one-day)
  - h. Intergenerational faith formation
  - i. Independent learning
7. Respects the way teenagers learn today by offering learning activities that are experiential, image-rich, multi-sensory, interactive, engaging, and varied in learning style
  - a. Begins with real-life issues and connects faith to life
  - b. Is facilitated by open-minded, authentic, and faith-filled adults
  - c. Includes community building
  - d. Includes peer sharing, peer witness, and youth leadership
  - e. Teaches about religious identity
  - f. Is experiential, active and innovative
  - g. Doesn't feel like school – doesn't involve long lectures or too much focus on textbooks

## What Every Adolescent Needs from a Parent (and Teacher)

*10 Best Gifts for Your Teen, Patt & Steve Saso*

Respect  
Room  
Receptivity  
Revelation of Self  
Responsibility  
Resolve  
Recognition  
Reconciliation  
Release  
Role-modeling

## Five Family Assets that Promote Faith Maturity in Young People

*Exemplary Youth Ministry Study*

1. Strong parental faith
2. Family faith practices
3. Family harmony
4. Congregations equip parents
5. Congregations foster parent-youth relationships

### Characteristics of Younger Youth (Middle School)

- Like to have fun
- Seek identity
- Like making choices
- Need to be heard
- Seek approval
- Want to be valued and significant
- More interested in who's there than what is taught
- Growing and changing
- Looking for a faith of their own

### Characteristics of Older Youth (High School)

- Like to have fun
- Have skills, talents, and energy
- Are people in transition
- Self-reliant and accountable
- Like making choices
- Need to be heard
- Want to be valued and significant
- Looking for a faith of their own

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### Websites:

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- National Study of Youth and Religion [www.youthandreligion.org](http://www.youthandreligion.org)
- The Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood & Adolescence <http://spiritualdevelopmentcenter.org>
- The Search Institute [www.search-institute.org/congregations](http://www.search-institute.org/congregations)
- My Faith, My Life [www.myfaithmylife.org/](http://www.myfaithmylife.org/)
- Practicing Our Faith [www.practicingourfaith.org/](http://www.practicingourfaith.org/)
- Exemplary Youth Project [www.exemplarym.com](http://www.exemplarym.com)
- Center for Ministry Development [www.cmdnet.org](http://www.cmdnet.org)
- Fuller Youth Institute [www.fulleryouthinstitute.org](http://www.fulleryouthinstitute.org)

### Apps / Websites for Youth:

- <https://D365.org>
- <https://pray-as-you-go.org/home/>
- <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org>
- <https://www.missionstclare.com/english/>
- <https://www.ceaselessprayer.com>
- <http://commonprayer.net>