

INWORD TRY THIS: Tools for Older/Younger



The idea of passing down our faith is written into the DNA of God's people. In the Old Testament the parent generation was given two key duties with regard to the younger generation. First, teach God's decrees to the children. They were to teach formally and intentionally but also teach through the fabric of life—when you come and go, when you eat, when you walk along. Secondly, the parent generation was to tell of God's ways and how he has worked in their lives.

The ideas below are tools you can use to foster a connection between your teens and the older generations around them. These tools give the older generation an opportunity to do what God asks of them: to tell the younger generation how God has worked in their lives. And they give your teens an opportunity to honor, and obey, the older generations around them.



Video Testimony

Give students one week to create a video interview with a member of the older generation—parent/grandparent age. Here are some suggested prompts:

1. *Tell me about a time when you were at the end of your rope and God's presence sustained you.*
2. *Tell me about something that happened that at the time was very bad, but God eventually used it for good.*
3. *Tell me what God has used in your life in His mission to conform you to the image of Jesus.*



Disobedience Fast

One of the great spiritual disciplines is fasting: the act of giving up a meal, or certain foods, as a discipline for prayer and personal sacrifice. Why not fast disobedience? Challenge your students to spend the next four weeks doing everything parents ask, and doing it enthusiastically: without push back, talk back, or the rolling of eyes.

1. Do your assigned house chores without being reminded.
2. Gladly do any extra house chore or task a parent asks you to do.
3. Hit every time mark set by parents: curfews, getting out the door, limits on a family computer, etc.

Invite students to keep a journal during these four weeks to record thoughts and impressions as well as observations on their relationships with their parents.



A Wise Panel

Recruit three to five folks from a cross section of older generations to serve as a panel for a youth gathering (your weekly youth meeting, Sunday school, a special event). You might consider a great-grandparent, a grandparent, a parent, and a twenty-something. Invite your panel to share with your students from their experiences of faith and life.

Starter questions to ask your panel:

1. What would you tell your 16-year old self?
2. How do you think living the Christian faith as a teen today is *different from* living the Christian faith in your teen generation?
3. How do you think living the Christian faith as a teen today is *similar to* living the Christian faith in your teen generation?