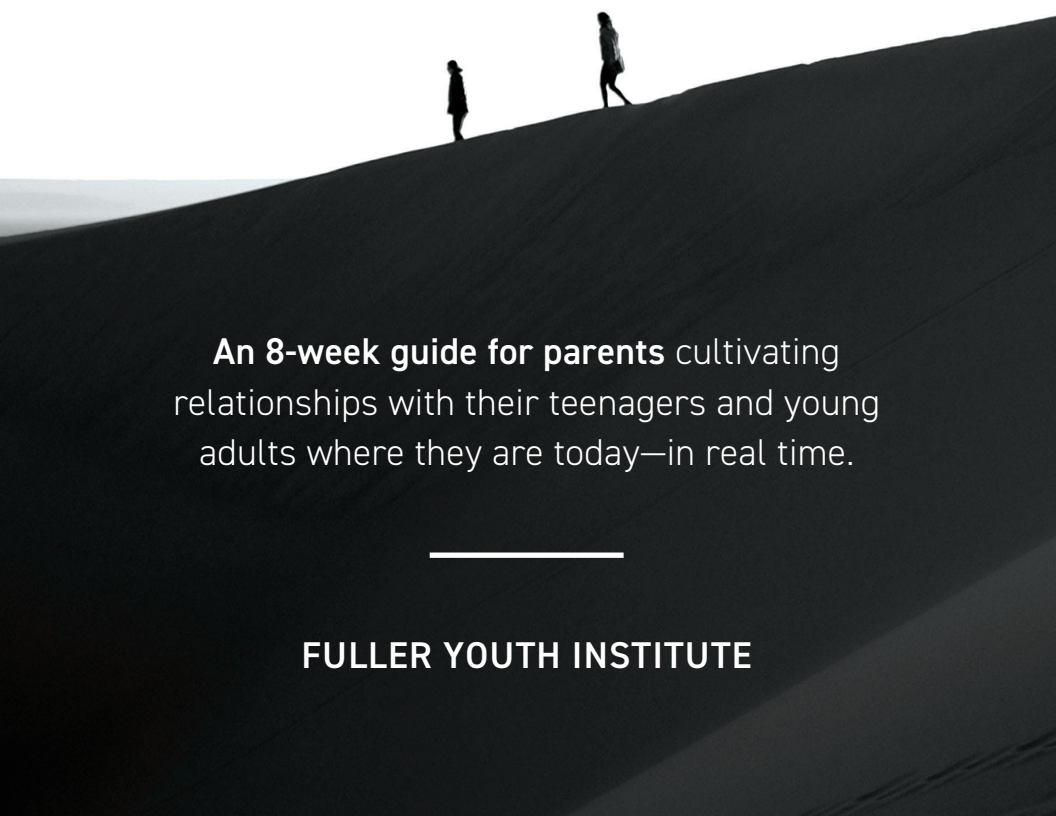


GROWING WITH

SMALL GROUP BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

A black and white photograph showing the silhouettes of two people walking along the crest of a large sand dune. The dune slopes upwards from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is a bright, clear sky.

An 8-week guide for parents cultivating relationships with their teenagers and young adults where they are today—in real time.

FULLER YOUTH INSTITUTE

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***Growing With* Small Group Book Discussion Guide**

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GROWING WITH

**SMALL GROUP
BOOK DISCUSSION
GUIDE**

An 8-week guide for parents cultivating relationships with their teenagers and young adults where they are today—in real time.

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SESSION 1.

GROWING UP TODAY

How Our Kids' Paths Are Different from Ours

WORK AHEAD OF TIME

- Get a copy of *Growing With: Every Parent's Guide to Helping Teenagers and Young Adults Thrive in Their Faith, Family, and Future*.
- Read Part 1: "Growing With Parenting" and Chapter 1: "Growing Up Today: How Our Kids' Paths Are Different from Ours" (pages 17-47).
- Pray that God will speak to you in new ways as you take this courageous next step. Ask God to transform both you and your kid as you walk faithfully on this small group journey.
- Consider the following reflection questions, which can be found at the end of chapter 1 (p. 47). You may wish to journal your answers in preparation for your small group discussion.

GROWING WITH GROUP TIP:

Each week you'll find space to journal thoughts and responses to the "questions for reflection" found at the end of each chapter in your copy of *Growing With*. Although you won't be answering these questions during the small group meeting, taking time to reflect and jot down some thoughts on your own can help you have a more meaningful group discussion later.

If you are a parent of a teenager, how does your child's experience confirm that 14 is the new 24? What in your child's life counters this saying?

If you are a parent of a twentysomething, how does your child's life confirm that 28 is the new 18? How, if at all, is your child perhaps also embracing the myth that 30 is the new 20?

Which of the three Growing With dynamic verbs—withing, faithing, and adulting—is easiest for you to embrace?

Which of the three Growing With verbs is toughest for you and your child to embody? What makes it difficult for you?

What do you hope happens in your family as a result of reading this book? How about in your own attitudes or behaviors?

GATHERING ACTIVITY

(20 minutes)

Preserve some time at the beginning of the first meeting to ensure everyone knows one another. If not, share introductions:

- Tell the group a little about yourself.
- What age(s) is/are your kid(s)?
- What are you most looking forward to on this small group journey?

Parenting is tough for all of us at times. In order to nurture a supportive environment, discuss how your group can become a safe space so that each member may feel comfortable to share:

- Struggles and disappointments in your parenting, or with your kids.
- Values your kid holds which you may not agree with.
- Values another parent or kid holds which you may not agree with.
- Risks or influences your kid is facing which concern you.

As a group, you may want to agree on answers to these questions:

- When is it okay (or not okay) to share another group member's news or prayer request outside these meetings?
- How should members respond when one group member disagrees with another on a particular value or parenting style?
- When is it okay (or not okay) to offer advice?
- How will we agree to hold to our end time for each session, and what will we do if there are unresolved questions or conversations?

GROWING WITH GROUP TIP:

Take the time to establish these boundaries together, write them down, and commit to sticking with them throughout the next eight weeks. Agreeing on these things now will create a space where you'll feel more comfortable sharing your worries and frustrations as parents—and celebrating your wins too.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(35 minutes)

Now turn to the conversation about Growing With. You may want to discuss all of the questions below or, if you run short on time, choose which questions to tackle together.

What are some of the humorous or commonly heard misconceptions about “Millennials” or “Gen Z” you’ve heard?

What concerns you most about the research finding that “teenagers today in the US are facing life choices that many of us didn’t experience until our midtwenties” (p. 28)? Where have you seen this trend exemplified in your kid’s life?

Reflect for a moment on the difference between your teenage experience and your kid's: In what ways have you had to reframe your thinking and adapt your parenting or stepparenting given the new world your teenager or young adult is encountering?

This chapter introduces three “new” verbs for parenting: *withing*, *faithing*, and *adulging*. Which concept most excites or challenges you, and why?

We define Growing With parenting as “a mutual journey of intentional growth for both ourselves and our children that trusts God to transform us all” (p. 23). What words stand out to you in this definition? What hope does this definition give you? What are some of the challenges you anticipate as you grow on this journey?

WORK FOR NEXT TIME

- Read Chapter 2: “Pursuing the Growing With Posture: Parenting in Real Time” (pages 48-72).
- Think about the parenting struggles or fears another group member shared during your time together. Commit to praying for that parent. Consider one way you might reach out to offer fellowship and support to that person in the coming weeks.

This week I'm going to pray for...

About...

GROWING WITH GROUP TIP:

At each meeting you'll be presented with an action step to try during the week. Pause momentarily so each group member can note their commitments for the week ahead. When we write things down, there's a better chance we'll do them.

CLOSING PRAYER

(5 minutes)

Take some time as a group to reflect and pray silently over the hopes and challenges shared during your discussion time. To close, ask one member to pray the following words aloud (found on p. 18 of your *Growing With* book):

Jesus, our kids are growing up and we are growing older.

These truths weigh heavily on us, some days more than others.

*There are moments when it feels like we're growing together
and other times when we fear we're growing apart.*

*By your grace, please grant us faith to trust you with our kids
as well as courage to grow with them through our parenting.*

*Spark in us a more expansive vision for this journey—
a vision not only about who they might become,
but also about who we might become.*

Amen.

BUY THE SMALL GROUP GUIDE