

# Parent/Teen Eye-Opener

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This activity helps young people see that the struggle they may be having with their parents isn't all their parents' fault. It can be a real eye-opener for the kids and a peacemaker in the midst of family strife.

Give a 3 x 5 card to each person in your group. Then have them draw a line down the middle of the card and write "Mom" above one column and "Dad" above the other. Tell the kids that they

will be asked ten questions, and they are to answer them separately for their mothers and fathers. They must grade their parents on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest or worst possible grade and 10 the highest or best. Here are the questions:

1. Do your parents show you affection?
2. Do your parents listen to you?
3. Do your parents talk with you about

school work? Your interests? Your boy/girlfriend?

4. Do your parents trust you?
5. Do your parents respect you?
6. Do your parents initiate leisure activities that involve you (shopping, camping, tennis, walks)?
7. Do your parents treat your friends the way you want them to be treated?
8. Do your parents always have a settled opinion about things? (a "1" indicates they do, a "10" means they don't)
9. Do your parents respect your privacy?
10. Do your parents treat you the way you want to be treated?

After both parents have been graded on these items, discuss the kids' answers on a few random questions.

What usually follows is a discussion of all the things parents do wrong. But the kicker in this exercise is the next step. After the discussion, have the kids turn their cards over and again make two columns with the headings "Mom" and "Dad." But this time they are to grade themselves, using the same questions turned around. (For example: Do you show your mom affection? Your dad?) In this way they can think about their relationship to both their mothers and fathers. The young people will likely see that, in many cases, their attitudes toward their parents are very similar to their parents' attitudes towards them. Close the discussion by having the kids think of ways they can improve the relationship with their parents.