

# Dos and Parenting

*There's no easy way to guide kids into adulthood, but here are some simple guidelines:*

- **When your teen confesses his sins or temptations, don't act shocked.** Remember: You did some pretty stupid things when you were younger. Tell your son or daughter about the mistakes you made. Be vulnerable and admit your own failures.
- **Don't compare your teens to their friends.** Your kids don't want to feel as if you are evaluating them based on their behavior or accomplishments. Love and accept them unconditionally. Offer loads of encouragement rather than constantly criticizing them.
- **Don't compare them to their siblings.** Your kids need to know that you love them for who they are as individuals. Make each of your children feel special.
- **Continually remind them of their significance to you and to God.** This can be done with a kind word in the morning or a quick devotional thought over dinner. Find natural opportunities to share.
- **Help them discover their callings in life.** When you detect that your teen-agers are drawn to a certain sport, talent or academic interest, encourage them to pursue it—and do what you can to fuel their development.
- **Listen to your language.** Do you use phrases that are condemning or judgmental, like "How could you do that?" "What is your problem?" or "Can't you do anything right?" Stop the negativity.
- **Be affectionate.** Hug and kiss your kids. And remember: Fathers need to be affectionate with their sons as well as with their daughters.
- **Give them the opportunity to make mistakes.** A bird never learns to fly without a few falls out of the nest. Trust God with your teens and let them fail when it is necessary. Don't equate mistakes with sin.
- **Pray for them fervently.** Go into your children's rooms while they are asleep and lay hands on them when you pray. Keep a prayer journal and record ways you see God working in your children. □

