

THE PARENTING GAME

Give your teens an idea of what it's like to be a parent. Form families of three—one person plays the role of the father, one the mother, and one the child. The object is for each pair of parents to lead their blindfolded child home (a designated spot), directing the child by verbal guidance only.

But you tell the children and the parents two different things. Take the children to a separate room to blindfold them. Before they return to play the game, tell them that they must attempt to get home and that their parents will attempt to mislead them—even lie to them—about the directions to home.

Tell the parents, however, that this game is a race and that the first child to reach home wins for the team.

Now bring the two groups together to the starting place. After disorienting the blindfolded children by spinning them, say “Go!” Parents may then shout directions to their child. What happens next allows your group to experience some of the frustrations parents often feel.

What you'll see:

- Parents screaming for their child to listen to them.
- Children frustrated by their parents' pushiness to go fast and win.
- Some parents may simply stop giving guidance altogether.
- Perhaps one-half of a parental pair may get sufficiently frustrated with yelling directions that he or she gives up—leaving the other partner as a single parent.

Follow the game with a forum on parent-teenager relationships.