

# MOMS & POPS STUFF

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## TAXI DRIVE TIME

These are ideas for you to use during that drive time between school, practices and meetings. Take advantage of that "trapped" time to pass on your faith.

### Christmas Traditions

Maybe you have already incorporated a family tradition from your childhood into your family. If you haven't, now is the time. On one of your drive times, talk about how this tradition started and why, childhood memories you have from this tradition and why you brought that tradition into your own family. If you have already done this, it doesn't hurt to do it again, especially while you are driving and noticing all the Christmas decorations.

### Salvation Army Bell Ringers

How many Salvation Army bell ringers are between your home and your regular taxi destination? Find out by stopping at each one you find on the way home and dropping some money into their cans. But don't just let it be your money. Make a memory of this by both of you cleaning out your purse, backpack, whatever of loose change and end of the day cash and give it all away. Be sure to inform your child that the Salvation Army is more than a thrift store and why they do this fundraiser every Christmas.

### Question Box

Put together a box or tin or whatever that has slips of paper with questions inside. During one ride, pull out one question which **both** of you will answer. Limit this to one question per ride and possibly one question per week or less. This will keep the value of the question box.

Some questions to add to your box:

- C In what ways do you think you are different from me?
- C What was the most valuable (personally or financially) thing you ever lost? Did you get it back? Do you want it back now?
- C Why do people put a plastic Jesus on their dashboards?

### Proverb Probe

Give your child a 3x5 card with a Proverb written on it in your handwriting. Using your handwriting is important as it is something very personal about you which they can cherish forever. Ask your child the following questions about the Proverb.

Proverb 17:3 - "Silver and gold are tested by flames of fire; our thoughts are tested by the Lord." How are silver and gold tested by fire? What is the process? How are our thoughts tested by the Lord? Why does the Lord need to test our thoughts? What do our thoughts lead to?

## EDUC8N

This is an idea to help you encourage your child with their academic achievement since that is an important issue for both of you.

### Diagram the Lunchroom

There is a famous scene from the movie "Mean Girls" where the new girl is told the layout of the school lunchroom. Have your child diagram the school lunchroom for you.

Give him/her a sheet of white paper. Have him/her draw with rectangles the way the school lunchroom tables are laid out. Then have him/her write in which school cliques sit where. When he/she is finished, ask the following questions:

- C Where does (the child your child was friends with in elementary school) sit? Think of as many of those former friends your child had.
- C Who are the leaders of each group from the diagram?
- C What makes those leaders?
- C How does one move from one group to the next? Is that even possible?
- C Is there a "uniform" to a part of one group?
- C What are the groups known for?
- C Do the groups also have "dedicated" locations in other parts of the school?
- C (If there is a caste system) how do the groups rank?
- C Where do you fit in?

You will learn a lot about your child's school life through this little project. And your child may appreciate the chance to "gossip" about life at school and impress you with his/her knowledge of what is truly going on.



### End-of-the-Year Film Festival

Rent your family's favorite movies from the past year and watch in one setting. Be sure each family member has a choice. Also prepare lots of fun family food. Enjoy the time together.

### 12 Days of Christmas Project

Decide as a family to adopt a family, widow, or single parent from either your neighborhood or church.

At a designated time each day starting with the 12<sup>th</sup> day before Christmas, drop off surprises and poems. In your first poem, explain that you're a secret Christmas friend bearing gifts, and encourage your adopted family not to peek to discover your identity. Ring the bell, and then run.

Day Two's surprise could be a gift with two parts. On Day Three give your family a three-in-one storybook or some other triple-themed gift. As a family shop creatively to match all 12 days to the Christmas carol.

On Day 12 ring the bell and stay so your friends can meet you.



The following are website recommendations. These are chosen based on their value as determined by our staff. These are not paid endorsements nor can we vouch for the ethics of their entire website.

**Gospelr** (<http://gospelr.com/public>) - A Christian Twitter alternative.

**Campaign for Real Beauty** (<http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/home.asp>) - Dove's website for their campaign to help women deal with true beauty issues.

**My First Paycheck** (<http://www.myfirstpaycheck.com/>) - A job search board for teens.

**Geography Map Game** ([http://www.rethinkingschools.org/just\\_fun/games/mapgame.html](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/just_fun/games/mapgame.html)) - A click-and-drag game to name some really tough countries which are actually in the news quite a bit. Do this together with your teen and see who can do better.

**Yearbook Yourself** (<http://yearbookyourself.com/>) - A fun website where you can take a school picture

and make it look like a yearbook photo from the 1950s or the 1980s or any other crazy hair date.



This is a small glimpse into the youth culture to help you parents have some insight as to what is going on.

### A Better World

Eighty-five percent of youth today think it's important to make the world a better place.

--The Cassandra Report, May 2008

### Grounded from Youth Group

From an informal internet survey of parents, "Should parents prohibit their kids from participating in church and youth group activities as a method of discipline?"

Yes 26%

No 74%

A few of the selected comments from the survey:

C "Sometimes it is necessary. Social youth group activities are fun and no different than saying you cannot do things with other friends. If they have not done homework or other things expected of them then they do not get to do fun things. I would still allow them to attend church and Sunday School with the family. Youth group activities are a privilege."

C "No! Absolutely not! There are many other types of discipline (restriction from cell phones, computer time, iPods, etc). Church activities/small groups are our teens' lifelines. With Jesus as the center, teen fellowship offers safe and healthy outlets, and opportunities to pray together with like-minded comrades. Never deprive teens from time to grow closer to Christ!"

C "Even though this is a tough one to answer or do, I feel that since our H.S. boys are so involved in church activities and that IS their social life, we have no other choice. Nothing else seems to hit home more than taking away social activities even though they may be 'good' ones."

--Good Advice Parent Newsletter, Homeward.com, October 2008

### The Social Life with a Cell Phone

From a survey of 2,089 teens, ages 13 to 19, who have cell phones:

C 80% say they have a cell phone.

C 47% say their social life would end or

be worsened without their cell phone.

- C 57% say their cell phone has improved their life.
  - C 57% say their cell phone is key to their social life.
  - C 52% say that the cell phone has become a new form of entertainment.
  - C 80% say their cell phone provides a sense of security.
  - C Teens say they spend nearly the same amount of time texting as they do talking on their cell phones.
  - C 42% say they can text blindfolded.
- "Teenagers: A Generation Unplugged," Harris Interactive survey, September 23, 2008

### **Brand Obsession**

Designer labels make up about 15.3 percent of 13- 17-year-olds' purchases. In 2003, it was 9.6 percent.

From 2007 to 2008, girls spent 11 percent more on luxury items, even though their overall spending on clothes, shoes and accessories fell 3 percent.

Retail analysts believe brand obsession may be the reason mid-range retailers such as Gap Inc. and Limited Brands Inc. are struggling. They say teenagers are purchasing items with recognizable brands and saving money with basics at lower priced stores such as Target.

--NPD Group study, *The Republican*, September 9, 2008

### **Teen Vogue Living**

The amount of merchandise featured in the editorial content of the September 2007 issue of *Teen Vogue* amounted to a total of \$74,458.

--Jezebel.com, September 2008

### **Teens and Electronics**

The average teen expects to spend around \$312 on consumer electronic devices in the next six months. One quarter of teens expect to purchase a new cell phone within the next six months, making it teens' most popular consumer electronic product.

--CEA study, Marketwatch.com, November 13, 2008

### **Teen Discretionary Money Down**

From a survey of 7,000 teens, ages 15 to 18, annual discretionary spending by teenagers, whose money comes from allowance, gifts and part-time jobs, has dropped 27 percent to \$2,600, from its spring 2006 peak of \$3,560.

--Piper Jaffray survey, *New York Times*, October 10, 2008

### **Parents Aren't Told of Cyber-Bullying**

From a survey 1,454 teens, ages 12 to 17:

- C 41% say they are bullied online between one and three times a years; 13% say between 4 and 6 times; and 19% say more than 7 times.
- C 10% say they have reported the problem to a parent or someone in authority.
- C 50% of the teens who were cyber-bullied said they just "need to learn to deal with it."
- C Nearly one-third of the teens who were cyber-bullied said they worried parents might restrict internet access.
- C While most cyber-bullying is done anonymously, 75% of the teens who were cyber-bullied said they were pretty sure they knew who was doing the cyber-bullying to them.

--UCLA study, *Journal of School Health*, September 2008, *New York Times*, October 10, 2008

### **Ford for the Helicopter Parent**

Ford has created a new technology called MyKey that will be standard on the 2010 Focus Coupe and quickly spread to the rest of Ford's lineup. MyKey's technology is: allows parents to limit a vehicle's top speed to 80 mph and/or the stereo's volume up to 44% of its max as well as set a sustaining chime if the seatbelts aren't being used.

--AutoBlog.com, October 6, 2008

### **Who's Doing the Homework?**

From a survey of 778 parents, 47 percent of fathers and 39 percent of mothers admit to doing part of their child's homework.

--Parents Omnibus survey, *USA Today*, October 28, 2008

### **Saving Endangered Animals**

From a survey of 600 kids, ages 8 to 14:

- C 80% say they want to get involved in protecting endangered species and help create safe places for them to live.

--ECO Kids study, Mediapost.com, November 18, 2008.



**Please** feel free to submit ideas which you have done with your family. It is always good to provide a resource that is known to work and we do not claim to know it all. You will be credited for your submission and thanked profusely from us. Please submit your ideas at [momspops@wildfrontier.org](mailto:momspops@wildfrontier.org).