

What's Going on With Your 9th Grader?

The 9th grade year signals the beginning of the high school experience and the last stage of the adolescent journey. This is a look into the world of your 9th grader.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ There is a heightened sensitivity to appearance and its social value.
- ◆ Boys and girls have a propensity to diet.
- ◆ Upper body strength begins to develop in boys.
- ◆ Boys and girls level out in height.
- ◆ Girls have fully developed physically into their adult bodies.
- ◆ Boys have more of a growth spurt to continue.
- ◆ Sexual desire is awakened, and the temptation to be sexually active is common.
- ◆ They have a need to develop exercise routines and healthy habits.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The 9th grader may:

- ◆ Have a desire for more control over aspects of their life
- ◆ Have a more evident "adult" personality
- ◆ Have an idealistic viewpoint of the world at large
- ◆ Love to try new things in an effort to discover identity
- ◆ Obtain a strong sense of accomplishment from being involved in various activities
- ◆ Be easily "bored"
- ◆ Exhibit impulsive behavior with friends and peers

- ◆ Not respond to adult lectures, feeling they know better what is going on than the adult does
- ◆ Become better at setting and achieving goals

RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Less time may be spent with family, while more time may be spent with peers.
- ◆ Competition with outside groups is preferred over competition with friends.
- ◆ Relationships with parents become focused on a negotiation to get what they want.
- ◆ There is a strong desire for conformity with peers.
- ◆ Girls have a tendency to be interested in older boys.
- ◆ Popular peers, adults, and celebrities are strong influences.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Their capacity for self-discipline increases.
- ◆ Summer camps and mission experiences influence them spiritually because of the peer connections that those events create.
- ◆ They begin to imagine what life would be like as an adult away from their parents, and they begin deciding whether or not their faith will be a part of that.
- ◆ The ability to fully process abstract thoughts gives them the ability to engage God personally.
- ◆ Rather than being told what to believe, they need spiritual leaders to ask their opinions and let them develop their beliefs.
- ◆ Their interest and commitment to faith change rapidly back and forth, signaling an internal struggle on whether or not to accept it.