

## ***What's Going on With My 7<sup>th</sup> Grader?***

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade year is the "Wonder Year," where your brand new teenager begins to try on identities and discover who they are going to be. This guide will give you a map into the body, mind, and soul of your 7<sup>th</sup> grader.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ There may be comparisons with other students, who are developing faster or slower than they are.
- ◆ Stress begins to develop from relational struggles and from an increase in school work.
- ◆ There may be a high energy level, but it is balanced by a high need for rest.
- ◆ Skin problems and acne can become issues.
- ◆ Menstruating has begun for most girls.
- ◆ Girls typically experience growth spurts before boys (about one year ahead).
- ◆ Bones and muscles are not growing at the same rate, which may lead to feelings of awkwardness and clumsiness.
- ◆ There is an increased need to pay attention to personal hygiene.

### **EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*The 7<sup>th</sup> grader may:*

- ◆ Desire and need more privacy (with boundaries)
- ◆ Become moody and easily frustrated
- ◆ Begin to experience "bullying issues"
- ◆ Show more concern for body image
- ◆ Start to be mean, due to being driven by fear

- ◆ Experience emotions in extremes
- ◆ Be characterized by curiosity
- ◆ Become more socially expansive and aware
- ◆ Express less affection for parents
- ◆ Encounter periods of sadness, depression, and desperation, which can lead to poor coping habits

## **RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ Adults who tease them do more damage than they might realize.
- ◆ There is a strong desire to be accepted by peers.
- ◆ Girls have a tendency to be interested in older boys.
- ◆ There is a desire to have and "overuse" a cell phone.
- ◆ Friendships change due to new schools, boyfriends/girlfriends, and change of affinity groups.
- ◆ Girls tend to build friendships in groups of 2-3.
- ◆ Boys tend to build friendships in "packs" of 8-10, based on affinity.
- ◆ Boys struggle with being "loners" if they do not find a pack of friends.
- ◆ A strong interest in sports is typical for both genders but is not exclusive.

## **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ They have a great propensity to memorize Scripture, but they still struggle to fully understand it.
- ◆ They thrive in a small group of peers led by a trusted adult, who serves as a spiritual guide.

- ◆ Concrete thinking begins to give way to abstract thinking, which creates a new world of questions about faith and spiritual things.
- ◆ The desire to question and disagree with their parents' beliefs arises, but it is tamed by fear to express those doubts.
- ◆ Learning how parents interact with God through prayer and Bible study is greatly beneficial.
- ◆ While timid about taking on difficult intellectual tasks like studying the Bible, they are ready to begin the practice of daily Bible study (with lots of encouragement).