

# Hot Topics

# LEADER GUIDE

## family relationships

**Note to Leaders:** *Talking about family relationships will always be a Hot Topic for teenagers. Before you start this discussion, it might help to be aware of your girls' family situations. It might even be helpful to have each girl share the names of their family members and state who they live with before you start the discussion. Be prepared for the girls to open up about difficult family relationships and ready to steer the conversation away from the tendency for girls to complain about their family members.*

*Any time you're in a relationship, it's inevitable that there will be conflict. Each person has a specific way of thinking, feeling, and handling stressful situations. Relating to family members is no different. When you live with people long enough there will eventually be conflict. Sometimes it seems like our family members know exactly what to say or do to hurt us. However, God designed families even before He designed the church. Consider these verses as you think about how God wants you to handle family relationships.*

### Read Psalm 68:5,6

Why do you think God designed for us to have families?  
Is it important to have a relationship with your family?  
What do you think God's original design was for the family?  
If a person doesn't have a family, how do you think God could provide a family?

### Read Ephesians 6:1-3 and Colossians 3:20

Why do you think it's so important to obey your parents?  
How does obeying your parents help you to learn to obey God?  
If your parents aren't Christians, should you obey them? Why or why not?  
What are some things you can do now to improve your relationship with your parents? What about your siblings? Other family members?

### Read Romans 12:17,18

What does it mean to live at peace with your family members?  
Is it OK to have conflict with your family members? Why or why not?  
What should you do if you have conflict with a family member?  
What are some healthy ways to resolve conflict?

### Guidelines for Resolving Conflict in a Healthy Way

- 1. You vs. I.** If you ever find yourself in a conflict with a family member, do your best to avoid using "you" statements. Starting statements with "I" or "me" can take some of the pressure off the other person. Instead of saying "You're always hogging the bathroom!" say "When you stay in the bathroom for an hour, it makes me feel rushed to get ready." When you focus on your feelings instead of what the other person is doing wrong, it can keep the other person from becoming automatically defensive as well as helping you express your frustration in a healthy way.
- 2. Pick your battles.** When you find yourself getting into a conflict with a family member, make sure the conflict is worth having. If it's something trivial that won't matter much in a month or even a couple hours, take a deep breath and concede to the other person. If you can't decide whether the conflict is worth having, ask yourself if it's something that will still bother you in five years. If the answer is no, it's probably not worth fighting about.
- 3. The art of compromise.** Part of living at peace with those around you has to do with learning to compromise. Do your best to meet your family members halfway. Be the first to sacrifice and they'll be more willing to meet in the middle.
- 4. Go the extra mile.** Instead of focusing on how you've been wronged or what you deserve, focus on your family members. Be aware of what they're going through and think of ways to be a blessing to them. Volunteer to help around the house or take on extra responsibilities. Help your siblings clean up after themselves. Taking the focus off of yourself will make you feel less like fighting. Plus, helping others will help end conflicts before they begin.

# family relationships ————— continued

For more information see:

*Stupid Parents: Why They Just Don't Understand and How You Can Help* by Hayley DiMarco, Baker, 2006.

*A Dad-Shaped Hole in My Heart* by H. Norman Wright, Bethany House, 2005.

*Not-So-Stupid Parents: Why Your Kids Think You're Weird and How to Prove Otherwise* by Hayley DiMarco, Baker, 2007.

*Five Conversations You Must Have With Your Daughter* by Vicki Courtney, B&H Publishing, 2008.



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