



The Conversation Stage

The **Conversation Stage** of the Rooted Families journey begins at puberty and continues through early high school—a season marked by rapid physical, emotional, and spiritual change. During this time, one of the most meaningful ways you can support your child is by engaging in regular, intentional conversations. These moments of connection help them process who they are becoming and develop confidence through self-expression.

While communication with teens can be unpredictable, your steady presence offers security and trust. Like Jesus with His disciples, your role isn't to have perfect conversations, but to simply be present—listening, encouraging, and creating an environment where your child feels safe to share what's on his/her heart.

“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

John 15:15

Tips for Caregivers

- Ask open-ended questions to spark deeper dialogue.
- Be consistent, even when your child seems distant.
- Celebrate small moments of vulnerability.
- Listen without immediately offering advice.
- Make space for unplanned conversations, even during busy moments.

Growth Model



Plant

Your adolescent may struggle to express his/her thoughts and emotions.



Root

Your adolescent may start choosing to engage in conversation.



Growth

Your adolescent may start handling conflict and discussing deeper issues.



Fruit

Your adolescent will initiate meaningful conversations on his/her own.

Activity: Defining Conversations

STEP 1 (The Why)

Conversations are essential to healthy growth and Christian formation. However, adolescents often don't know what kind of conversation is needed in different moments of their lives. Defining categories of types of conversations they may encounter helps with communicating clearly, clarifying expectations, reducing pressure, and promoting relational connections.

STEP 2 (Activity Directions)

This activity invites you and your teen to create four types of conversation cards. These cards will serve as tools to guide your communication, helping clarify expectations and making space for meaningful dialogue. Creating the cards is just the beginning of building healthy, ongoing conversations with your child.

- 1 Choose Your Materials** — Select four different colors of index cards or cardstock. Each color will represent a different type of conversation.
- 2 Set a Time to Meet** — Find a time when both you and your teen(s) are free from distractions. Use this time to talk about: 1) The purpose of each type of conversation, 2) When and how these conversations should happen.
- 3 Name the Categories** — Be flexible and open as your teen identifies the kinds of conversations they want to include. This helps them feel ownership and agency. Encourage them to come up with names for each conversation type and examples of what each type might look like.
- 4 Celebrate the Conversation** — Once you've named and discussed the cards, decide together how to end each conversation with a small celebration. This could be a high-five, a shared snack, a walk, or anything that positively reinforces active communication.

Note: The titles below are examples. It's important that your teen helps you decide what each type of conversation should be called and what it includes.

Information-Gathering

— A light, casual conversation for sharing daily experiences. Best for mealtimes or relaxed moments, with equal participation from everyone.

Schedule-Planning

— A focused, collaborative talk to align plans—whether for a week, weekend, or season. Think of it as a “family meeting” to coordinate expectations.

Treasure-Seeking

— A special, intentional conversation to deepen connection and celebrate someone. Ideal for one-on-one time, like a date or meaningful event.

Heart-Tending

— A healing conversation to nurture relationships. Used for resolving conflict, offering apologies, or seeking clarity with honesty and care.

Encouragement

Remember that we all continue to grow in our ability to communicate well. Healthy and faithful communication is a lifelong journey and the only way our adolescents can get better is by practicing, making mistakes, and learning from those mistakes. Starting the practice is often the hardest part.