



## HELP KIDS HANDLE EMOTIONS

The teen years are filled with emotional highs and lows. Some kids become overwhelmed by intense feelings; others are reluctant to show these feelings, keeping them bottled up instead. But a happy façade stifles meaningful conversations and doesn't match up with the real-world struggles of teenagers.

Kids need to know that although pain is a real part of life, God, their family, and their Christian friends will walk with them no matter what they're going through. Use these tips to help your teenagers confront strong feelings:

- Create an environment that's healthy and safe for young people to be honest about what they're feeling. Provide perspective that kids aren't alone and that God is a safe place of refuge (Psalm 18:2).
- Give kids permission to feel their emotions. Assure them it isn't wrong to feel a particular way—and that trying to avoid painful emotions is often harder than just working through them.
- Remind teenagers that Jesus cares about all our emotions. Absolutely nothing is too small or too big to bring to him. We can surrender everything to him because he cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).
- When your teenagers are "stuck," seek help. In the Bible, God helps individuals through other people. Ask your doctor, youth minister, or school counselor for names of professionals who can help.

## THE VIEW

- Five times as many high school and college students are dealing with anxiety and other mental-health issues as young people who were studied during the Great Depression.

—Associated Press

- In a five-year survey of almost 1,000 teenagers, 34% said the mental-health issues that concern them most are depression and loneliness.
- Experts say factors such as insufficient sleep and sexual activity seem to put teenagers at risk for emotional instability.

## TIPS >>>

**In *Jesus-Centered Youth Ministry (Group)*, Rick Lawrence explores ways to "dive into the deep end" of life with teenagers:**

- **Weep with kids during their crises.** Our sincere tears communicate passionate presence, which says, "I see that treasure you have there; I appreciate and respect it for what it is."
- **Keep asking the next question until you get a real answer.** Think of yourself as a detective trying to unravel a mystery—and do so with gentle determination and respect.
- **Be determined to witness to the glory of God.** Because God is writing every teenager's story, we unlock his glory when we

unlock a teenager's story. The glory of God is the release into freedom of his beloved children.

- **Risk what is scary to you by passionately pursuing your teenager.** Wounded kids are looking for persistent, focused attention that proves we care.
- **Don't be afraid of strong emotions, even when they're directed at you.** When Lazarus died, Mary didn't hold back her anger at Jesus. But he saw past the outburst to her hurting heart and reassured her that life was on the way.
- **Partner with God to bring life where there is death.** Grieve together as people of hope, providing presence and companionship for teenagers.

## PONDER THIS

- What are some healthy and unhealthy ways you deal with your own emotions?
- What types of feelings do you avoid or discredit? How can you embrace and honor these feelings?
- How can you give your kids permission to feel their emotions—even difficult ones?





# Flex Emotional Muscles

Expert Insights for Parents of Teenagers

By Steve Merritt

I once ignored an engine light in my quirky diesel station wagon. As a result, I soon was left with a few bucks from a scrap metal yard.

Emotions are like dashboard lights. They're trying to tell us to stop immediately and figure out what's going on. But we often ignore our emotions. For guys, especially, it can be hard to even know which emotions are being triggered (except anger or hunger).

Without use, certain muscles can atrophy and all but disappear. The same is true of emotional muscles. Without use, they become blunt or end up looking like something else entirely. Sadness may emerge

as anger or slowly drop us into the canyon of depression. Grief is complicated when guilt or shame is added to sadness.

Physical, intellectual, and relational changes usher teenagers into a three-ring circus of emotions. Helping them learn how to use their emotional muscles means exploring feelings from many angles. Our engagement with them should reveal, through a wide spectrum of emotional colors, that people in the Bible were humans who experienced many familiar feelings.

Kids need to know they aren't alone in what they're experiencing

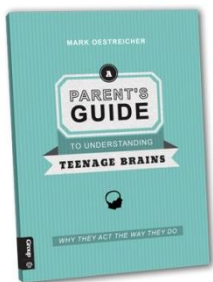
or feeling. They need to see that life is complicated yet rich, that emotions are full of ambivalence, and that we often feel competing, complex things.

Putting words to what kids are feeling and helping them develop an emotional vocabulary are important tasks. Share how you feel during life's ups and downs, and live out what it means to interact with a God who understands—and isn't afraid of—our emotions.

The red light on the dashboard of life will flash. Teaching kids to pay attention is crucial to both their emotional health and their spiritual well-being.

—Counselor Steve Merritt, writing in *Group* magazine

## RESOURCE



In the brand-new resource *A Parent's Guide to Understanding Teenage Brains*, veteran youth worker Mark Oestreicher offers practical insights about brain development—and how it affects young people's actions and emotions.

## BIBLE FOCUS

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul. ... The Lord has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge.

Psalm 94:19, 22 (NIV)

# MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

## MAINSTREAM MUSIC



### SHINEDOWN

**Background:** This alt-metal band formed in Florida in 2001. Their debut album was certified platinum and spawned a hit with the remake of Lynyrd Skynyrd’s “Simple Man.” Many of Shinedown’s songs have been used by the WWE and on other sports broadcasts. Lyrically, the band deals with depression, angst, abandonment, and loss—which many teenagers identify with. The band doesn’t seem to have answers to these problems but merely voices them.

**Albums:** *Amaryllis* (2012), *The Sound of Madness* (2008), *Leave a Whisper* (2003)

**What Shinedown Says:** When asked about the band’s goals, bassist Eric Bass says, “We want to reach as many people as we can through our music. We want to help people, and at the same time enjoy ourselves. I personally want to entertain people and maybe just for a night they can forget about everything else in their lives and have a great time.”

**Explore:** Shinedown’s entire catalog is available on Spotify.

## CHRISTIAN MUSIC



### FLYLEAF

**Background:** This hard-rock, melodic-metal band formed in Texas in 2000. Led by Lacey Sturm, whose powerful vocals kept pace with the band’s loud chops, they’ve achieved large crossover success. Flyleaf often sings about love and death but also addresses their faith. The band recently announced an amiable split with Sturm, who’s been replaced by Kristen May of the band Vedera.

**Albums:** *New Horizons* (2012), *Remember to Live* (2010), *Memento Mori* (2009)

**What Flyleaf Says:** Sturm writes, “Pursue your highest calling with reckless abandon... understanding that sometimes the fullness of life comes in doing things that are only understood by you, God, and the special people God has put in your life that truly love you for you... not for what you do but for who you are.”

**Explore:** Flyleaf’s entire catalog is available on Spotify.

## MOVIES

**Movie:** *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*

**Genre:** Adventure, Fantasy

**Rating:** PG-13 (for fantasy violence)

**Synopsis:** This is the first of three(!) films based on J.R.R. Tolkien’s beloved book. Dwarves recruit a bewildered hobbit to go on an amazing adventure and help them take back their gold from a dragon.

**Our Take:** Director Peter Jackson is back for these prequels to *The Lord of the Rings*. This should be a great movie to see with your teenagers.

**Movie:** *Jack Reacher*

**Genre:** Thriller

**Rating:** PG-13 (for violence, language, and some drug material)

**Synopsis:** Tom Cruise stars as an ex-military investigator who’s called in to help when a man is wrongly accused of murder.

**Our Take:** This should be standard thriller fare—think the “Bourne” movies. Surprisingly few movies are coming out over the holidays, so teenagers looking for something to do during break might even go see a Tom Cruise movie.

For more media discussions and ideas, go to [www.MinistryandMedia.com](http://www.MinistryandMedia.com)


## VIDEO GAMES



**Playstation All-Stars Battle Royale**—This epic fighting game stars 20 of the system’s most beloved characters, including Sackboy from *Little Big Planet*, Ratchet & Clank, Kratos from the “God of War” series, and PaRappa the Rapper. Despite the dark, twisted, and violent games some of these characters come from, this should be a teen-friendly title. (Rated T; PS3)

**Far Cry 3**—The third game in this series is an open-world, first-person shooter. Players are stranded on a set of remote islands and must try desperately to escape from crazy inhabitants. There’s lots of killing, violence, and mental instability, so please don’t let your teenagers play this one. (Rated M; Xbox 360, PS3, PC)

# DECEMBER 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
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<p><b>PARENT NOTES:</b> Have you been to the youth group website? Sign up for Parent text message alerts online at <a href="http://m.pulseyouthgroup.org">m.pulseyouthgroup.org</a>. Download the FREE eBook "Parenting-The-Internet-Generation" while you're there also. View thousands of pictures of all of our adventures online as well. Get online Sundays &amp; Wednesdays to enjoy our always hilarious video announcements. We love parents because you have always been the biggest influence in your children's lives &amp; we want to help you in any way we can.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>– Your Youth &amp; Family Ministry Team</i></p>						<p><b>Acquire The Fire</b></p>
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Church 2013 Budget Vote 6pm			<p>PULSE</p> <p>Pastor Tony B-day</p> <p>Victor B-day</p>			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			<p>PULSE</p>			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<p>Christmas Celebration Concert</p>			<p>PULSE</p> <p>Shaye B-day</p>			
23 / 30	24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29
	<p>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</p>	<p>Christmas Day</p>	<p>No PULSE</p>			
	<p>New Year's Eve Party</p>			<p>Logan B-day</p>		

**January 2013:**

1.18-1.21: High School Winter Camp:

**February 2013:**

2.1-2.3: Middle School Winter Camp:

[www.pulseyouthgroup.org](http://www.pulseyouthgroup.org)