



## FOR PARENTS AND GENERATION "Z" KIDS

"HOW ARE YOU?"  
"FINE."  
"HOW'S SCHOOL?"  
"FINE."  
"HOW ARE THINGS WITH YOUR FRIENDS?"  
"FINE."  
"I AM GOING TO RUN OVER YOUR IPAD WITH THE LAWMOWER TODAY."  
"FINE."  
SIGH.

If you are like most parents, you crave deep, meaningful connection with your kids. On the flip side, if your kids are like most Generation Z kids, they crave quick, no fuss, to-the-point questions and answers. So how can these two counterparts—Gen X parents and their Gen Z kids—communicate effectively?

One step is for us parents to understand how our Gen Z kids are wired. I explain Gen Z kids more in-depth in my eBook, *10 Ways to Help Generation Z Kids Connect With God*. In case you haven't read my eBook, here is a quick snapshot:

- They prefer texting to talking.
- Their number of virtual friends outweighs their number of real life friends.
- Social media is socializing.
- While we learned PowerPoint in college, they learn it in kindergarten, surpassing us in their tech-savvy skills every day.
- They are convinced they're going to be discovered on YouTube, just like Justin Bieber, whether for their singing talent, their CraZLoom bracelet instructional videos (because who doesn't need to know how to make a Minion keychain?), or their Truman Show-esque webcam recording their every move.

We compete with a fast-paced cyber-world for our kids' time, attention, affection, and purity. It's a battle for their hearts and souls and we will only win with consistent prayer, intentionality, and persistence.

Another way to communicate effectively with our Gen Z kids is to understand their internal clocks—the time of day when they are the most energized. Their internal clock determines when your child will be the most willing to and interested in having a conversation. And if you have more than one Gen Z kid, this can become really tricky.

So how do we figure out our child's internal clock? Here are a few questions you can ask yourself about your child:

1. *At what time of day does my child seem the most energized?*
  - a) *Morning*
  - b) *After school / dinner time*
  - c) *Night*
  
2. *At what time of day does my child seem the most lethargic?*
  - a) *Night*
  - b) *After school / dinner time*
  - c) *Morning*
  
3. *At what time of day does my child seem the most talkative?*
  - a) *Morning*
  - b) *After school / dinner time*
  - c) *Night*
  
4. *At what time of day does my child seem the crankiest?*
  - a) *Night*
  - b) *After school / dinner time*
  - c) *Morning*
  
5. *At what time of day does my child seem to have the best appetite?*
  - a) *Morning*
  - b) *After school / dinner time*
  - c) *Night*
  
6. *Does your child prefer to:*
  - a) *Wake up early*
  - b) *Take a nap*
  - c) *Stay up late*
  
7. *My child:*
  - a) *Never stalls at bedtime*
  - b) *Sometimes stalls at bedtime*
  - c) *Always stalls at bedtime*



If you circled:

- a) Mostly A's – Your child is a Morning person
- b) Mostly B's – Your child is an Afternoon / early evening person
- c) Mostly C's – Your child is a Night Owl

Now that you know your child's internal clock, you can engage in conversation tailored to their preferred time of day. Below are four lists of conversation starters for different times of the day:

1. **MORNING** – These are questions to ask your children before they go to school, whether you are sitting at the breakfast table, helping them brush their teeth, driving them to school, or standing at the bus stop. It doesn't matter how these questions come into the play, the point is that they provide ways to move beyond the mundane and into the unexpected.
2. **AFTER SCHOOL / EARLY EVENING** – These are questions to ask your child after school or in the early evening. You can engage your child while eating an after school snack, driving to soccer practice or dance class, doing homework, or at the dinner table.
3. **NIGHT** – You can ask your kids these questions before they go to bed. This is a great option if you have an older child and the younger siblings are already asleep. Engage in conversation while sitting on the couch, eating a nighttime snack, or tucking your child into bed.
4. **ANYTIME** – You can incorporate these questions into your daily life no matter your

## *Round the Clock* CONVERSATION STARTERS

### **MORNING**

If your child is eager to greet the day, then take a shot of espresso and start talking. This is your chance to connect with your child, to grab their attention, and hone in on what they are saying, feeling, or struggling with. Don't let the morning chaos steal a prime opportunity away from you. Seize the moment with these easy-to-implement questions.

- What are you most looking forward to about school today?
- What are going to do in computers/science/insert their favorite subject?
- What do you want to eat for dinner tonight?
- What do you want to eat for a snack after school?
- What do you want to do after school?
- Is there anything I can pray about specifically for you before you go to school?
- Are you nervous about anything today?

- What is one thing that makes you excited about today?
- If you could do one thing really great today, what would it be?
- If you could do one thing to make someone's day special today, what would you do?
- If you could go out of your way to be a friend to someone today, who would you be a friend to?
- Who did you sit with at lunch yesterday? Do you ever see anyone eating alone? If so, do you think you could invite them to sit with you today?
- Who did you hang out with on the playground yesterday? Do you ever see anyone playing alone? If so, do you think you could invite them to play with you today?
- What was the most challenging thing about practice/class last night?
- What was the most fun part about practice/class last night?
- How could you encourage one of your teachers today?
- Did you see God at work yesterday? Explain.



#### **AFTER SCHOOL**

Sometimes our kids need to relax with an afterschool snack before they are ready to unload the day's events. Other kids are quiet until the family sits down and observes an old-fashioned dinnertime. If this is your child, it might be advantageous to wait. Be patient. Don't press your child for information. Calmly wait until after football practice or dance class before asking the following questions:

- What was the best thing that happened at school today?
- What was the worst thing that happened at school today?
- If you could have changed one thing that happened today, what would you change?
- Did anyone go out of their way to be nice to you today?
- Did you go out of your way to be nice to anyone today?
- What was the most challenging thing you encountered today? How did you handle that challenge?
- Did you see God at work today? Explain.
- What was the most fun thing you did today?
- Was any class more difficult today than usual? If so, what can we do to help you prepare for tomorrow?
- Who did you hang out with on the playground? Do you ever see anyone playing alone? If so, do you think you could invite them to play with you tomorrow?

- Who did you sit with at lunch? Do you ever see anyone eating alone? If so, do you think you could invite them to sit with you tomorrow?
- Is there anything I can pray about specifically for you before you go to practice/rehearsal/outside to play?

## NIGHT

Most families have that one kid: the one who refuses to sleep. I know because I was that kid...and still am. I wake up early and go to bed late. I refuse to give in to sleep. Sleep is for wimps. At least that's what I tell my husband, until he finds me crashed on the couch at 9:00 p.m. with drool dribbling down my chin.

No matter how early some kids wake up or how late they go to bed, they still have enough energy to run an Ironman Triathlon. So, if you want to dive deep into conversation with your night owl, take a shot of caffeine and prepare to lose some zzzzz's, because the late hours are optimal talk time. Fortunately, you won't need any functioning brain cells because I've prepared the questions for you:

- Is there anything I can pray about specifically for you tonight?
- What was the most challenging thing you encountered today? How did you handle that challenge?
- If you could have a do-over for today, would you? How would you do things differently?
- What was the most fun thing you did today?
- Did you see God at work today?
- If you could do one really great thing tomorrow, what would it be?
- If you could make tomorrow better than today, what would you do to make it different?
- What was the best thing about school today?
- What was the worst thing that happened at school today?
- If you could have changed one thing that happened today, what would you change?
- Did anyone go out of their way to be nice to you today?
- Did you go out of your way to be nice to anyone today?
- Was any class more difficult today than usual? If so, what can we do to help you prepare for tomorrow?
- Who did you hang out with on the playground? Do you ever see anyone playing alone? If so, do you think you could invite them to play with you tomorrow?
- Who did you sit with at lunch? Do you ever see anyone eating alone? If so, do you think you could invite them to sit with you?

- What was the most challenging thing about practice/class tonight?
- What was the most fun part about practice/class tonight?
- How could you encourage one of your teachers tomorrow?

### **ANYTIME**

While there are questions that fit specific times of the day, there are also questions that work throughout the day or night. Below is a list of questions you can ask your child, no matter what time of the day it is.

- What is the most difficult thing about school?
- What is the best thing about school?
- Does school ever stress you out? If so, in what way?
- Is school challenging or easy? Explain.
- How can you be a witness for Jesus today at school?
- Who is your favorite teacher and why?
- Who is your least favorite teacher and why?
- If you could change one thing about school, what would it be and why?
- If you could be principal for a day, what would you do?
- Is there someone at school who needs to hear about Jesus? If so, are you comfortable talking to that person about Jesus? Why or why not?
- Does anything cause you stress?
- Do you have any friends we need to pray for?
- Do you have any teachers we need to pray for?
- Do you know someone who needs Jesus? A friend? A teacher? Your bus driver? Someone on your team or in your dance class? If so, tell me about it, then let's commit to pray for that person.
- How can you share your faith with someone who doesn't know Jesus?
- What is the most important quality in a friend? Which of your friends possesses that quality? Do you possess that quality?
- How would you describe your coach's/teacher's personality?
- How would you describe your personality?
- Do you think your personalities work well together? Why or why not?



- Do you think your team works well together? Why or why not?
- What is your team's greatest strength?
- What is your team's greatest weakness?
- Do you have a fear in this sport/activity? If so, what is it and what steps do you need to take to overcome it?
- If you could change one thing about your team/class, what would it be?
- Why do you think God put you on this team/class?
- How can you be a witness for Jesus on this team/class?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- What would you most like to improve this year?

If you found this helpful, check out my eBook, *10 Ways to Help Generation Z Kids Connect with God*.