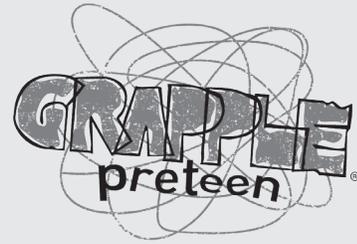


Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

Why Do I Have to Go?



Kids Learn:

Encountering God in Community

Dig Into the Bible:

Luke 4:14-16; Colossians 1:18-20; Hebrews 10:23-25

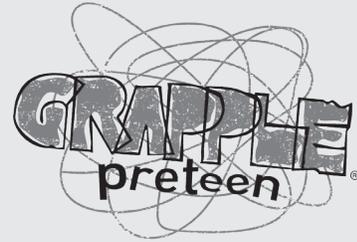
Have you ever had this happen to you on a Sunday morning? As you're struggling to get the kids up and out of the house, your preteen asks the inevitable question: "Why do we even have to go to church?" And you respond with your most respectful and understanding tone of voice, "*Because I said so!*"

Think about why it's important to you that your kids go to church. Is it because you want them to hang out with their friends, so your neighbors will see you going to church as a family, or because you hope your kids will listen to their Sunday school teachers even if they won't listen to you? Or is it because you realize that some of the most powerful life-changing moments happen in the midst of other Christians, while listening to a friend share about a tough situation, for example, or worshipping in a large group? Find a quiet time (*not* on your way out the door to church!) to talk to your preteen about the importance of experiencing God in community. It's all about growing in relationship with God and others.

Grapple Parent page

Grapple Question:

Why Are There So Many Churches?



Kids Learn:

The Church Is the Body of Christ

Dig Into the Bible:

John 17:20-23; Romans 16:16-17; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 12:12-31

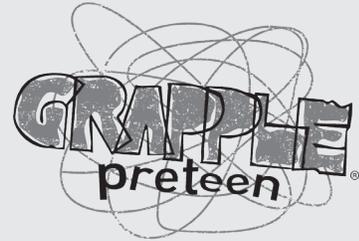
Many people focus on the differences between churches. But the real message Jesus gave us is that we are all *one* church. First Corinthians 1:10 says, "Live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose."

Talk to your family about ways to work together with people from other churches. Maybe you will think of a few families in your neighborhood who go to different churches and invite them to your home for dinner. Remember that as Christians we need to work together as the body of Christ.

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

What Am I Supposed to Do at Church?



Kids Learn:

The Purpose of Church

Dig Into the Bible:

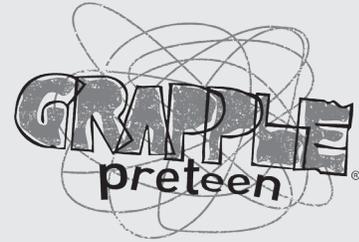
Matthew 22:37-40; 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:6-12; Ephesians 3:8-12; 4:11-13

Being part of a church community serves a lot of different purposes. We develop a sense of belonging, learn about Jesus together, and have an opportunity to learn about the gifts God has given each of us.

Romans 12 explains that everyone has different spiritual gifts—gifts of encouragement, teaching, giving, showing kindness, and so on. As a parent, you probably already see some unique qualities emerging in your preteen. Send your child an email or text message today to point out a character trait that makes your child unique and special. If your child doesn't have an email account or cellphone, write a card or simply tell your child about the unique and special character trait you see. Encourage your son or daughter to use that gift to tell others about Jesus.

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:
Why Is Church So Long?



Kids Learn:

Church Practices

Dig Into the Bible:

Psalm 100:1-3; Luke 22:19-20; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 2:8, 4:13

Do your kids complain about how much time you spend at church each week? Do this object lesson as a family to remind everyone of the importance of spending time with God each week.

Measure and cut a rope or string to make it 168 inches long (that's how many hours are in a week). Then attach a 1-inch piece of masking tape to the string (one hour is the average length of a church service). Stretch the string out so your family can see it. Then read Psalm 150 as a family. Spending time at church is just one small opportunity to worship God. Talk about how you could spend the other 167 hours a week praising him!

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

What's Satan Trying to Do?

Kids Learn:

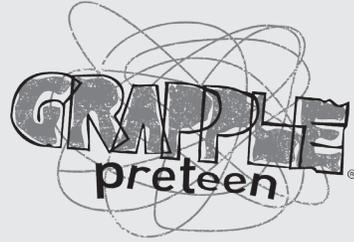
Satan Has a Plan

Dig Into the Bible:

Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9

Don't you get frustrated when you're driving somewhere, only to run into a detour along the way? You have an idea of where you want to go, but you're sent in a different direction. Satan has a plan to detour us away from the path we're on. When he sees that we're going Jesus' way and following God's directions, Satan devises strategies to get us off course.

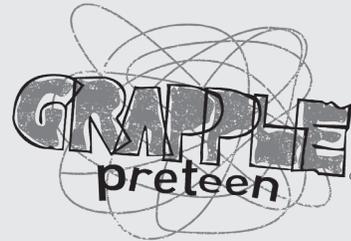
As you and your preteen are driving around town this week, watch for detour signs. No construction in your area right now? Surprise your preteen and create your own detour by taking a different route to a familiar place. Talk about Satan's plans to divert our lives, and how to keep on track when that happens.



Grapple Parent page

Grapple Question:

Why Aren't Other Religions Okay?



Kids Learn:

Jesus Is the Only Way

Dig Into the Bible:

Matthew 7:13-23; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 John 5:1-12

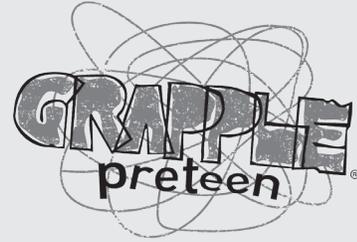
With hundreds of different religions in the world (not to mention all the different denominations and beliefs there are even among Christians!), sometimes we forget the main foundation of our faith: Having a relationship with Jesus is the only way to salvation.

It's important to know about other religions so we can discuss our beliefs intelligently. With your preteen, write down five questions you have about other religions. Then together type "compare religions" into an Internet search engine, and find a site that answers some of the questions you have.

Grapple Parent page

Grapple Question:

How Can So Many People Ignore God?



Kids Learn:

Pride Makes Us Ignore God

Dig Into the Bible:

1 Samuel 3:1-11; 2 Chronicles 33:10-13; Job 33:14-18; 2 Corinthians 5:21-6:2; James 4:4-10

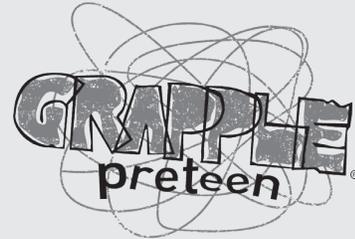
People ignore God for so many reasons—they don't believe in God, they don't know how to listen for God to speak, or they're so used to God taking care of them that they take God for granted.

Is there an area in your life where you're ignoring God? Take a minute to pray and ask God to reveal himself to you. Then talk to your son or daughter about the lessons God is teaching you, and listen to what your preteen is learning, too!

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

Why Don't All People Want God?



Kids Learn:

Rebellion Leads Us Away From God

Dig Into the Bible:

Numbers 16:1-11, 23-35; Joshua 24:14-18; Isaiah 53:1-8

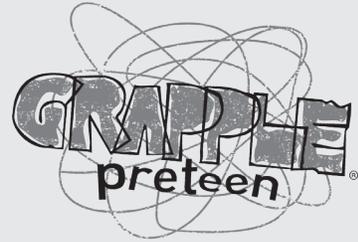
When it comes down to it, life is really all about choices, isn't it? You've been giving your preteen the opportunity to make choices since you let your daughter pick her own outfit at age two, or since you gave your son cereal options for breakfast when he was a toddler. Teaching your preteen to make wise decisions isn't just to prepare him or her for adulthood. It's also in preparation for eternity. Because God gives us the freedom to choose to follow him, in the end your son or daughter will have the responsibility of making that choice for himself or herself.

Spend a few moments praying for your preteen. Ask God to help your preteen make wise decisions and to give you the strength to be a good example as a parent.

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

What if I Don't Like It?



Kids Learn:

God Is Good

Dig Into the Bible:

Exodus 16:1-15; Deuteronomy 1:26-46; Psalm 116:1-8; Romans 8:28

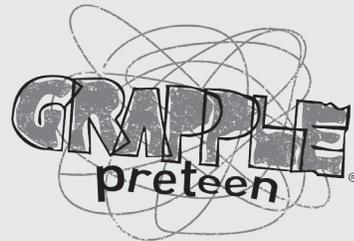
Do you have picky eaters in your family? This week, serve a few different foods that no one in your family has ever tried before (exotic fruits are a good place to start). Encourage everyone to take one bite to see if they like it.

Wouldn't it be nice if the hardest thing God asked us to do was to eat unusual foods? God has lots of ideas in mind for us, including many that seem risky or strange. Read Romans 8:28 as a family: "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Talk with your preteen about something you did in the past that you didn't want to do, and share how God used that situation for good.

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

What if I Fail?



Kids Learn:

God Is Full of Grace

Dig Into the Bible:

1 Kings 8:44-51; Matthew 17:14-20; 26:31-35, 69-75; John 21:15-19; Philippians 3:12-14

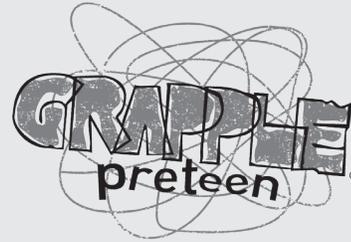
Explore this question with your preteen: What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Try out for the Olympics? Sing a solo in your school play? Climb Mount Everest?

Fear of failure holds us back from trying a lot of things. But God is full of grace! Even when we mess up, he loves us. Read Philippians 3:12-14 with your preteen. Then encourage your preteen to make a commitment to try one risky thing this week (invite a friend to church, post Bible verses on his or her desk or locker, and so on). Check in with your preteen at the end of the week to see how it went!

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

What if I Give Up?



Kids Learn:

God Doesn't Give Up on Us

Dig Into the Bible:

1 Kings 19:1-13; Psalm 42; 2 Timothy 2:3-13

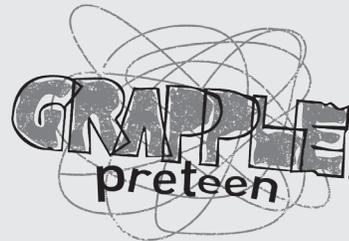
How does your preteen react when you catch him or her lying, cheating, or in other sins? Aloof? Remorseful? Afraid of disappointing you?

Even when we mess up, God doesn't give up on us. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is." Practice that kind of unconditional love for your preteen this week by forgiving your son or daughter for a time they've messed up recently. Remind your preteen that forgiveness ultimately comes from God, so encourage your preteen to ask God to wipe the slate clean, too.

Grapple Parent Page

Grapple Question:

What if I Get Hurt?



Kids Learn:

God Is a Refuge

Dig Into the Bible:

Job 1:12-22; Psalms 23:1-4; 31:14-22; Jeremiah 29:11

School shootings. Car accidents. Terrorist attacks. When we experience danger, pain, or fear, it's often difficult to understand how God can allow that situation to happen. Trusting God in those times can be a real test of our faith. We want to put our whole life, and the lives of our kids, in God's hands, but what if we (or they) get hurt?

We may never fully know why God allows bad things to happen. But we can trust that he is with us during tragedy. Talk with your preteen about different situations where people have been hurt. Then together, ask God to help you trust him to be a refuge and to keep you safe when things around you are a mess.