



## Session 3: Talking With My Teen

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Tools to help you better understand and communicate with your teen:

### Five Love Languages

1. **Words of Affirmation:** Your student is yearning for a “well done.”
2. **Gifts:** You may see your student spending money and not giving enough attention to a budget.
3. **Acts of Service:** Love through action.
4. **Quality Time:** Your student wants to do things together. (But they don’t want to watch TV; they prefer interactive activities.)
5. **Physical Touch:** Your student may have been a cuddler growing up and would like your hug or arm around their shoulder.

- Your love language (how you prefer to receive love) is likely the way you show love as well.
- Compare your love language with your student’s. This could explain how close your student is to you.

[Take the quiz\\* for FREE](#)

*\*Students take as seniors with Pastor Enter*

### StrengthsFinder\*

*\*Rebranded to CliftonStrengths*

The 34 strengths fall into 4 main categories:

1. **Executing:** Individuals who make things happen.
2. **Influencing:** Individuals who are natural leaders.
3. **Relationship Building:** Individuals who thrive on teams and with people.
4. **Strategic Thinking:** Individuals who can visualize what “could be.”

- Understanding your student’s strengths will tell you what they are “programmed” to do and what you can do to not squash them.
- You may, very literally, “not get them” because you have different strengths and are wired differently from them.

[Take the test for \\$20](#)

## Common Teen Topics & Themes:

### “The Big [College] Decision”

- When choosing a college major, you’re choosing a DIRECTION not a DESTINATION.
- It’s ok if your student is undecided on a college major. (70% of graduates have a job that’s not in their degree area.)

### Taking a Gap Year

- If your student is undecided on working or going to college:
  - Stay local, go to a community college, and *don’t* take a light load.
  - Take a sophomore class with no pre-requisite as an elective during freshman year. This may help them better understand a field they’re interested in and could help them get ahead in their schedule if they do go into that field.
- If your student will actually go and experience life: don’t just work, go become a “better you” through travel and activities.

### Going to Church

- Over 90% of teens, if they *don’t* go to church in the first 3 weeks of college, will *never go* all 4 years of college.
- Find a Campus Ministry program nearby and introduce your student to the pastor there face-to-face.
- *Good company interrupts* bad character. (Spin on [1 Corinthians 15:33](#))

### Overwhelmed / Overscheduled

- Have your student write down EVERYTHING they need to do that day - this will get it out of their heads and hopefully make it look more manageable.
- Have your student \*star\* any tasks they *don’t* want to do. They should do those FIRST.

### Looking Ahead

- You, as a parent, shouldn’t “be cool” right now.
- Ask your student if there is someone about 5-10 years older than them who they’d like to be when they grow up. Talk about why. (Career? Family? Faith? Community? Service?) Could that individual reach out to your student for a monthly, intentional conversation?

### Simple Things That Matter

- Get on their eye level when communicating
- Be willing to admit your failures/sin (it’s not a weakness to do this)
- Remove physical barriers when having a discussion (for instance, an island countertop, which nonverbally communicates that you do not want to be near them)
- Avoid absolutes (you “always” do this; we “never” see this; etc.)
- Forget their past actions and focus on the *present* failure. (An option for big failures: have your student pick their own punishment, while you maintain veto power. Your student will likely give themselves a larger punishment than necessary, but they will more concretely feel the consequences of their actions.)
- Gaming

- Set firm boundaries early on
- Realize it's social (they're communicating with others via headset, etc.)
- If necessary, treat it as a drug (it is addictive) and get them counseling
- Give them a nightly blessing (cross their forehead like at their baptism and say something like, "I love you, and Jesus loves you too.")
- When having family devotions, make sure they're practical and brief
- Have family dinner whenever possible

**What teens asked Pastor Enter to say:**

They want you to listen, not fix it.

**GREAT Resource:**

[Help Me I Have a Teenager!! by Annie Drake](#)

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**How can we better help you in talking with your teen?**

Email your thoughts to Anna Biedenbender (Domestic Admissions Counselor) at [ABiedenbender@StCroixLutheran.org](mailto:ABiedenbender@StCroixLutheran.org).