

Restorative Parenting

Communicate & connect as a family

It can be easy, as parents, to feel like we are in the dark about what is going on in the life of our child (especially as they develop more of a social life outside the family unit).

However, instead of berating them and getting nothing (or very little) out of them, consider making a fun activity of it with discussion prompts. These can be done as part of a family ritual or on the fly on the rare instance that your teenage son or daughter emerges from their bedroom.

Discussion prompts can range from superficial to deeply introspective. Be sure to gauge your child's willingness to go deep before selecting a question. If opening up has been a barrier, consider starting with lighter prompts that are less intimidating. Once your child has displayed willingness to engage, try a deeper question. Some additional ways to spure participation in this activity are:

1. Engage your child(ren) in selecting the discussion prompts or topics.
2. Make it a fun game by choosing a theme for the night
3. Take turns as a family on who gets to decide or keep a list to choose from

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Developing discussion prompts

Once you have selected the topic or them have each person write down a question they would like others to answer but also be willing to answer themselves and put it in a hat (if this is the first time doing this activity, you may have to model an example).

One by one take turns selecting a question. The person who selects the question should answer first and pass to the next person.

Sample discussion prompts (light & fun)

If you need help coming up with ideas, consider the following examples:

1. Making a change

* Potential question: If there were one thing you could change about your room, what would it be & why?

2. Something new

* Potential question: Share one thing you have never done that you've always wanted to try.

3. Things that interest us

* Potential question: What is something you enjoy doing that you never thought you would?

4. Places and spaces

* Potential question: If you had all the money in the world describe your perfect vacation. Where would you go, what would it look like & what would you do?

Discussion prompts for challenging conversations

Question prompts can also be used to help with difficult discussions about things going on in the family or the world.

For example, if there has been conflict between siblings, a discussion prompt may be, *"when people in this family are not getting along, how do you feel?"*

Or in response to a current world event you might ask, *"When you heard about _____, what did you first think and what do you think about it now?"*



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For more information on restorative practices, visit:

<https://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/system-of-supports/Pages/Restorative-Practices.aspx>