



What's Going on With Your 9th Grader?

The 9th grade year signals the beginning of the high school experience and the last stage of the adolescent journey. This is a look into the world of your 9th grader.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- There is a heightened sensitivity to appearance and its social value.
- Boys and girls have a propensity to diet.
- Upper body strength begins to develop in boys.
- Boys and girls level out in height.
- Girls have fully developed physically into their adult bodies.
- Boys have more of a growth spurt to continue.
- Sexual desire is awakened, and the temptation to be sexually active is common.
- They have a need to develop exercise routines and healthy habits.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The 9th grader may:

- Have a desire for more control over aspects of their life
- Have a more evident “adult” personality
- Have an idealistic viewpoint of the world at large
- Love to try new things in an effort to discover identity
- Obtain a strong sense of accomplishment from being involved in various activities
- Be easily “bored”
- Exhibit impulsive behavior with friends and peers
- Not respond to adult lectures, feeling they know better what is going on than the adult does
- Become better at setting and achieving goals



RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Less time may be spent with family, while more time may be spent with peers.
- Competition with outside groups is preferred over competition with friends.
- Relationships with parents become focused on a negotiation to get what they want.
- There is a strong desire for conformity with peers.
- Girls have a tendency to be interested in older boys.
- Popular peers, adults, and celebrities are strong influences.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Their capacity for self-discipline increases.
- Summer camps and mission experiences influence them spiritually because of the peer connections that those events create.
- They begin to imagine what life would be like as an adult away from their parents, and they begin deciding whether or not their faith will be a part of that.
- The ability to fully process abstract thoughts gives them the ability to engage God personally.
- Rather than being told what to believe, they need spiritual leaders to ask their opinions and let them develop their beliefs.
- Their interest and commitment to faith change rapidly back and forth, signaling an internal struggle on whether or not to accept it.