

St. Joe's Counselor's Corner-January 2016

--Jennifer Moyer-Taylor

****HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JANUARY****

K-2nd –Empathy, Friendship, Teasing Strategies **3rd**-Bullying/Upstander
4th-Girls Groups **5th**-Friendship/Conflict Resolution **6th**-Conflict Resolution
“Snack and Chat” for 1st -4th **7th/8th**-Peer Mediation Program

IT'S ELEMENTARY (K-4)–Beyond “How was your day?”

It's tiring to hear the same answer (“Fine” “Good”) after you ask “How was your day at school?” Try mixing it up by asking these questions instead: “What was the best part of your day? What was the worst part of your day? (highs and lows/roses and thorns)”, “Tell me something that made you laugh today.”, “How did you help someone today?”, “Tell me one thing you learned today.”, “Who in your class do you think you could be nicer to?”, and “If you got to be the teacher tomorrow, what would you do?” These questions will most likely elicit more than just the “Fine” or “Good” tired responses. Here's to livelier dinner conversations!

IN THE MIDDLE (5-8)–Got Grit?

Grit is a non-cognitive skill that researchers now realize is as important as academic skills. The good news is that grit can be taught. Here are some tips: 1) Praise the effort, not the grade, 2) Let kids struggle, 3) Create and talk about your own goals, 4) Keep and model an open (growth) mindset, and 5) Find ways to challenge your teen. Finally, practice the **Power Of Yet!** I have emphasized this message before but I think it is worth repeating. “You don't understand this concept...yet.” “You are not able to do an overhand serve...yet.”

My middle schooler only has one friend and I worry that he is lonely.

ASK THE COUNSELOR...

Q- My middle school son seems to only have one friend and I worry that he does not feel like he has a group to belong to. He says the group of boys he used to hang out with are now in the “popular” group.

A-Friendships are an important aspect in a boy's life. They may be less likely to talk about this aspect but boys need friendships. One of the things to keep in mind is not to confuse popularity with friendships. Having one or two close friendships is enough for many kids and they may not be labeled as “popular”. In fact, research suggests that just having one friend who he can trust and confide in, is enough. There will be periods of time when kids feel like they don't have a friend. There will be turnovers in friendships from time to time (especially in middle school). This is a good time to take stock and discuss the important aspects of relationships and what he is looking for in a friend. During the down times, encourage him to explore outside activities and interests. This way he can connect with boys who share the same interests and passions. A great book for parents of boys is *Masterminds and Wingmen* by Rosalind Wiseman.

Thank you!

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