

ELEMENTARY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

BIG TRANSITIONS



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR SGLs

... for intentional conversations with kids

You're the leader of a group of sixth graders. Not just one, but multiple sixth graders, all sitting together smelling like Axe Body Spray and staring at you. This year is one of the biggest transitions they'll face, and you get to be there to encourage and affirm them through this season. They might be nervous or seemingly confident, serious or over-the-top silly. They've still got stuffed animals in their room, but they're so over cartoon movies. At times, it might be hard to know when to pump them up and when to just listen. It might be difficult to know which words they need to hear, and what they really don't need right now. We've written a few words to say and a few not to say to help you help them through the transition to middle school. But remember to make this your goal with everything you communicate:

AFFIRM THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEY.

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WHAT TO SAY:

- "I know it might feel like everyone is staring at you at school, but the reality is, everyone is really just worried about themselves."
- "Getting involved in other activities at school is a great way to make new friends who enjoy the same things you do. What are some things you might be interested in?"
- "I know trying out for the team is scary, and I know you don't want to fail. But whether or not you make it, you're showing courage."
- "If you notice someone sitting alone at lunch, why don't you go talk to them? They probably need a friend just like you do."
- "Middle school is a chance for you to start figuring out who you are and what you like. You might feel awkward at times, but that's a normal part of growing up. Everyone has gone through middle school, and we all felt awkward at times—including me."
- "You might think you have to join the football team/cheerleading team in order to be popular or cool, but that's really not true. Focus on the things that you really like doing and you'll find a whole bunch of friends who have similar interests as you."
- "A lot of your friends might act differently toward you. Give them some grace. They're trying to figure out their place, too."
- "You aren't a nerd if you make good grades. And if you need to study hard to make good grades, it doesn't mean you're dumb. You're smarter for knowing what it will take to succeed."
- "You'll probably have lots of questions this year. I always want to answer them and talk to you about the things you're dealing with."
- "Text me, when you're allowed, if you need some encouragement during the day."

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY:

- "You think this is hard, just wait until you get into high school."
- "This is your last chance to get it right."
- "I've already gone through all of this and here's what I did . . ."
- "You're being silly, don't worry about it."
- "If you don't do well in middle school, you'll never get a good job."
- "Everyone hates middle school. Middle school is just the worst time in your life."

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