

Life and Faith After High School

Preparing teens for life after high school and (more importantly) *faith* after high school, is one of the most important things to He's Alive Students. Why? Because approximately **40 to 50 percent of youth group seniors significantly struggle with their faith** and with finding a church after graduation. And only about **16 percent of college freshmen felt well prepared by their youth ministries for what they encountered after graduation.**

We believe that maintaining a vital connection to the gospel and faith in Jesus is vital to living an eternal life of purpose. This pertains not just to a teen's life under their parents' roof, but to college, career, and adult life as well. Here are the top resources we provide to help teens prepare for college and life after graduation.

1. Sticky Faith Class.

Every few years, we provide a 10-week class to prepare our students for life after high school both practically and spiritually. When you see registration open up *Sticky Faith Class*, get your 10th – 12th grader involved. It is one of the most important things we do.

During class, we answer such important questions such as: What's the real gospel? How do I see myself after graduation? How can I have genuine conversations with people of other faiths? How can my faith shape my life and career? How can my struggles and friend help my faith stick? How will I respond to the party scene in college? How can I find a new church? How can I manage my life after high school? And How can I experience God on a regular basis?

2. Recommended reading and links

Book: [Preparing Your Teens for College: Faith, Friends, Finances, and Much More](#) by Alex Chediak

Book: [Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids](#) by Kara Powell and Chap Clark

Website: [The College Transition Initiative](#)

Article: [Finishing Strong: Advice for Parents of High School Seniors](#) by Derek Melleby

Article: [Conversations for The College Bound: 10 Talks to Have Before Arriving on Campus](#) by Derek Melleby

Article: [Finding Community in College: 5 Ways to Help Students Connect](#) by Derek Melleby

Get Your Teen Ready for College

(by Donna Green, from LifeWay.com)

Graduation - a word that sends spirits soaring to the greatest heights while at the same time causing streams, if not rivers, of tears. Smiles, hugs, shouts of joy and excitement mark an ending as well as a beginning. Dreams, anticipations, and hopes sail as high as the graduation caps. The day has arrived. Diplomas in hand. Graduation is over. Now what?!

High school is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Why is it our human nature often misses the moment at hand because we're looking toward the future or reliving the past? This scenario is extremely common among high school seniors and even juniors. There is so much pressure in our society to excel - to get ahead - to be at the top. Horizons and challenges of the future are constantly bombarding the minds and captivating the hearts of high school students, causing them to miss out on those priceless high school days which, once gone, can never be retrieved.

Balance is key. Yes, it is important to plan ahead, to study hard, and to visit different universities and colleges; but the most important thing to remember is that no one is guaranteed tomorrow. For that reason we must *carpe diem*, which is Latin for "seize the day." Life is not a dress rehearsal. We're each given only one opportunity to invest our lives for all eternity or to waste the precious time entrusted to us.

How can we as parents, teachers, mentors, and youth leaders encourage those young adults as they prepare to make the transition from high school to college? I stress the word encourage as the student must decide to make these investments of their own accord.

Prepare heart and mind

There is so much preparation given to finding the right college, finding the right roommate, and deciding how to decorate the dorm room. Just how much time is spent in preparation of heart and mind? College is a constant flurry of activity. It's important for a student to develop a disciplined devotional life before arriving on the college campus. Habits are made by consistently doing a thing over and over for at least 30 days. Quiet times, prayer, praise, and Bible reading will not easily be meshed into campus life unless a pattern has been set during high school.

Anchor life in God

This relationship with God will be the anchor, the constant, in an ever changing college environment. It will provide encouragement, admonishment, instruction, correction, and stability.

Loneliness is a given in the college experience, especially in the freshman year. But a student who has brought Christ as a "third" unseen roommate, experiences the confidence and contentment that comes from being with Him - from the realization that they are, indeed, never alone. Although by themselves physically at times, a Christ-filled student need not be lonely.

Set High standards and goals

It is imperative for high school students to set standards and goals before putting one foot on a college campus. Many reputations are ruined in the very first weeks of a college student's freshman year. Everything looks like so much fun. There is no supervision. "Everyone" is doing it. And there is that deep desire to fit in - to be a part of the crowd.

Set goals and set standards high. Write them out. Sign them. Laminate them. Keep them visible. Refer to them often. Don't settle for mediocrity. Make a difference. Have an accountability partner. This may be a parent or mentor; but most often it is peer pressure.

Choose friends wisely

Friends, roommates, and peers have an incredible influence over students—high school and college as well. High school affords a training ground for parents to supervise and encourage students in their choice of friends. It is important for them to learn to be a good judge of character, loyalty, dependability, and morality. College presents a sea of diversity, and wisdom is needed as choices are made concerning new friendships. In most cases, a student will look for the same type of friends that they have become comfortable with. Friendships are special on any level, but developing good friendship patterns is so important for a college experience which is positive.

Take ownership of faith and beliefs

A stark realization for many college students is the reality that not everyone believes as he does. What do I believe? Why do I believe it? Is there something better? These are questions which very often plague the freshman mind. Many students may come to college as Christians but are unable to defend their faith. Different religions or even various denominations can be confusing and disturbing. This is a time when many students begin to take "ownership" of their faith. What has become a part of who they are since childhood becomes their own. Others, however, may do a lot of "testing" which can lead to life-altering consequences.

High school is a time to prepare students - to help them know not only what they believe but why. No matter the preparation, there will always be curve balls in the college arena. By taking a stand, a weak or weary student will become more steady and stronger while standing on the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As college students stand, they will become the peer pressure rather than living in a peer pressure box themselves. College is the perfect place to share one's faith. People are searching and don't even know for what. A life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit will win the right to be heard.

Much of life is caught, not taught. Parents, mentors, and other adults can play an incredibly valuable role in the lives of high school students as they transition to college. Ultimately, they must face the college world alone, but encourage them to take their best friend - Jesus Christ.