**Impacting Teenagers**

**Women’s Ministries Seminar**

**INTRODUCTION**

Think back on your life as a teenager. For some that will be a few years, for others a few decades. However long it’s been, however different our circumstances have been, no matter what the variables were, today’s teens face similar challenges, but with an intensity that has never been felt before. Everything in their lives is public thanks to social media and cell phones. The world is smaller today with more opportunities—and challenges—than ever before.

🡺 ***With the help of your group, make a list of how the teen years have changed in the last decade or two. Then make a list of what teens face that haven’t changed—though some may be intensified today.***

1. **THE TEEN YEARS**
2. **Physically**

Many physical changes take place in a young teen’s body. Hormones, monthly—or sporadic—periods impact their daily lives. For some girls this may happen as young as nine or ten; others may be well into their teens. At whatever age this occurs, the rush of hormones, feelings, and emotions thrust them into new thoughts and feelings. Life is never the same. Emotional swings they don’t understand are taking place.

All these changes naturally make them curious about sex. Add this curiosity to the pressure from peers and the media to act, dress, and “be” sexy. As a result of this and other pressures, their appearance, clothes, and body become a huge focus in their lives—often the most important focus, at times, all consuming.

Eighty per cent of young women don’t like the way they look. They are dissatisfied with their body, and feel they are ugly. The National Statistics for Anorexia reports that 40-60% of girls in high school are on a diet. This dissatisfaction with their bodies begins early, with the same study reporting that 50% of girls between13 and 15 years old believe they are overweight.

1. **Personalities and Attitudes**

By their teen years, many young women have begun to choose the situations and experiences they enjoy—a good book in a quiet corner, the loud activity of a party, getting outdoors, athletic activity, etc. They are discovering who they are and looking for new experiences. They are more intentionally deciding what they like, don’t like, and who they want to be.

At the same time, they face the daily battle between feeling confident and feeling dumb and worthless. Studies have found that as girls go through puberty, their IQ scores drop, along with their math and science scores. Their self-esteem plummets. They are looking more to their peers than to their parents to determine their values, what to like, dislike, and participate in. This is a time when teens may act like they don’t like their parents or are unhappy with their family’s rules. They may feel like their parents “just don’t understand.”

1. **Socially**

Peer pressure doesn’t start in the teenage years, but it intensifies during the teen years—impacting every facet of a young woman’s life. Teens are extremely socially aware, often being insecure, with intermittent feelings of inferiority. Some feel it occasionally, some all the time.

A teen girl who has abuse (sexual, physical, or emotional) in her background will have feelings of shame, hopelessness, guilt, and agonizing feelings of inferiority. A young woman living in a home with physical abuse is less likely to invite people over—not wanting anyone to discover what happens in her home. Girls who have been sexually abused may withdraw socially and gain weight (to make themselves unattractive to men) or may become boy crazy, often sleeping with anyone who pays attention. An emotionally abused young woman may try to blend in and not be noticed in an effort to avoid any attention, fearing everyone will be critical or mean.

Young people long to belong, and if they don’t find that sense of belonging in a healthy relationship, then they may be willing to be part of any group that will accept them—regardless of consequences. A young woman seeking to fit in doesn’t want to be without friends, so she will do what it takes to fit into a group of young people—including behavior she knows is wrong or that parents or the church wouldn’t approve of.

Insecure teens (and they all are at times) are vulnerable to failure, to ridicule, to parental attitudes, or any rejection by the opposite sex. This is an age of emotional swings when they can be easily embarrassed, easily angered, or easily hurt, then the next day can easily lash out and hurt someone else. They have a deep feeling of needing to fit in; they fear rejection and the thought of not having friends.

In your groups, discuss ways young people attempt to fit in with their peers and how important it is at this age to belong.

Beauty, bodies, and boys become the main topics of a girl’s life, conversation, focus, and social life. Much of her world and resources are spent in making herself beautiful and especially, attractive to a guy. A large percentage of girls become sexually active in their teen years—and the statistics are the same for girls who attend church as for those who don’t.

Girls’ social lives are also deeply impacted by social media—Facebook, Twitter, etc. The Pew Research Center finds that 95% of teen girls are online, with almost 90% involved in social networks. Cell phones have become a teen staple. They hold in their hands a tool that allows them to text, instant message, check Facebook, “tweet”, take pictures and videos—and then instantly upload them to the internet or share them through texting. This creates new challenges for a growing young woman.

As a result, girls are feeling a need to constantly look their best because they never know when someone will take a picture or video and post it. The number of “friends” or “likes” they have on Facebook or “followers” they have on Twitter or on their blogs becomes important—creating a sense of value and importance.

Their social lives are no longer relegated to hanging out with friends or attending parties—it’s a 24/7 facet of their lives as they “socialize” through social media and texts.

1. **Spiritually**

If they have grown up in a spiritual home, one of the main decisions young people grapple with is their relationship with God and how important a place faith will have in their lives. This is a time of questioning everything, examining their parents’ beliefs, and deciding for themselves what will be important.

🡺 ***Review the chart in Handout #1, “Comparison of Childhood Faith and Mature Adult Faith.”***

Discuss in groups how churches are relating to teens and impacting their lives. Discuss what teens are looking for from church and how the church is responding.

Look at the handout contrasting a childhood faith and mature adult faith. Teenage years are the transition time from one to the other. During their teen years, young women are making decisions about their faith, how it will impact their lives, if it does impact their lives, and what parts of their parents’ faith they will retain and what they won’t keep.

Young people are looking for more than just an entertaining youth program. They want authenticity, community, and the opportunity to make a difference. They need to see how faith and life connect. They want a faith that’s relevant to their lives. They are tapped into today’s world issues like never before and need to know where the church stands on these issues. They want to hear more than the familiar Bible stories they have heard all their lives. They are seeking something real and life-changing, not a habit or way of life.

Studies find that 60-80% of young people leave the church (across all denominations) once they graduate high school. Barna research finds that most do not leave because they no longer believe, but because they either wander away, become involved in other things that are more important and engaging to them, or because they can’t find a place to belong and really make a difference. They want to do more than help take the offering. They are looking for ways to connect the church culture with the world they feel called to influence.

1. **NEEDS OF TEENAGE GIRLS**

🡺 ***As we transition from the typical thoughts/changes of teenagers to what they need, take a moment to make a list of needs you see so far. Use Handout #2, “What Are the Needs of Today’s Teens?” to list these needs individually, then list as a group.***

1. **Physical Needs**

**Because teens have no control over the physical changes taking place in their bodies, they do need education to understand what is happening.** It’s easier to show pictures and charts describing the physical changes than it is to show pictures and diagrams that accurately describe teenage emotions on paper! Young women need to understand that emotional swings are normal; for every high there is an equivalent low. In working with teens, adults need to remember that the physical and emotional ages may not be the same. Emotions are such an important changing part of the teen years, however, that education should take place so young women realize emotional variables are a normal part of God’s design; emotions that are out of control are not.

Since sexual things are of such interest to teens (both boys and girls), they need adult instruction in establishing healthy relationships so that their information is not received behind closed doors with other kids. They need to be told plainly about sexually transmitted diseases, their dangers, and how they can affect a lifetime. They should also be informed that sex is not “dirty” and that the God who made us sexual creatures has a wonderful plan for a healthy, happy sexual relationship in marriage. They need to know the emotional consequences on a young woman’s heart when she is involved in sex outside of marriage. This is a time when young women are looking for information on boys, dating, sex, relationships. Unfortunately, many parents aren’t talking and often the church isn’t talking either. Women’s Ministries has the opportunity to create ways to connect with young women on these topics. Resources are available for seminars and retreats. In addition, adult women who befriend and mentor young women have opportunities to begin conversations and impact girls.

Discuss in small groups the struggles with appearance you had as a teen.

**Young women often feel they don’t measure up physically because they compare themselves with the pictures they see on magazine covers, the internet, and women on TV and in the movies.** One attempt to do battle with feelings of inferiority is to help young women be as attractive as possible. Give them instruction in skin care and the tasteful use of makeup. Girls have fun doing facials and manicures together. Some girls seem naturally gifted with fixing cute hair styles. However, there are some basic guidelines for matching hair length and style with face shapes. Many girls will appreciate tips about hair care.

Because young folks have such a need to “belong,” this is the age when we see so many hair styles and dress fads that are similar. Even though they want their own identity (at least separate from their parents!) they don’t want to look different than their peers. However, they will still benefit from an understanding of skin tones and colors of clothes to make them look their very best.

At the same time, helping them to understand the lack of reality in the pictures they are seeing can also help. Online videos like “Evolution” by Dove shows how pictures of models and actresses are Photoshopped even after a team of makeup artists, hairstylists, and wardrobe professionals have done their work. The pictures they are seeing are not realistic. Helping them to understand this can provide a less distorted view of what real beauty is.

Another important aspect of appearance for girls to consider is what their appearance “says” to young men. Because girls don’t think the same way guys do, young women may think they’re dressing in a way that’s attractive and getting attention, not realizing the kind of attention they’re getting—or what message they are sending. They typically don’t understand what guys are thinking when they see a little cleavage or skin, while boys think girls know exactly what they’re doing.

Beauty and boys are two important topics for Women’s Ministries to discuss and educate young women on, giving them a biblical perspective without being harsh, critical, or “not understanding.”

**Encourage young women to think of themselves as being members of a royal family**. Stand tall and walk and act like the daughter of a King! They are, after all, daughters of the heavenly King! **“The King’s daughter is all glorious within” (Psalm 45:13, *KJV*).**

1. **Personality and Attitude NeedThe tendency to compare yourself with others is especially strong during teen years. That contributes to the feeling of inferiority with which teens often wrestle.** Remind them that no one can compare favorably in every area of their lives. There is always someone who is better, more attractive, more gifted, more talented—in at least one area! No one was created to be good at everything. Help them learn to respect themselves and others as being special in God’s sight. What they need to remember is that negative things they think about themselves are not usually true, and that others of their age have similar feelings. The adults in their lives need to keep them affirmed and reassured. Sometimes taking a personality assessment or something like “Strength Finders” helps a young woman learn about herself and understand herself better. It can help her learn who she is and enable her to feel good about herself.

🡺 ***Read aloud the beautiful verses from Psalm 139. Make a list of the truths it reveals about who each of us are.***

1. **Greater Responsibility in Church**

**Young people need to have encounters in which they feel comfortable and successful to build their self-confidence. Give them responsibilities they can do successfully.** Teens and parents will both learn that as they become more responsible they are trusted with more freedom. And that’s what teens really want. Give them real opportunities to serve in the church—opportunities to lead out and to participate in service projects. Get to know teens and discover what their gifts, talents, and interests are—then connect them with opportunities to serve. This has two benefits: 1) helping them develop their gifts; and 2) connecting them with the church.

Thank them for their help and affirm them for the positives you see. They aren’t looking for fake flattery, but a few authentic words of affirmation and encouragement, recognizing a gift or talent, will go a long way in building confidence in a young person.

1. **Career Choices**

**A major decision of the teen years is the choice of a career. In pondering this decision, they should consider their personality strengths, natural talents, abilities, and interests.**  Encourage them to realize that although this is an important decision, they don’t have to make the choice alone. They can take advantage of career counseling and testing to help point the direction. Show them how to use the Bible to help them in their choices—scriptures such as those in Psalm 37:3-8.

“Trust in the Lord and do good; …”

“Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

“Commit your way to the Lord; …”

“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him….”

Remind them of the importance of prayer in making big life decisions such as career, college major, and marriage. Show them how to connect the gifts and talents God has given them with a career.

🡺 ***Discuss Handout #3,* “Principles for Choosing a Profession.”**

1. **Social Needs**

**Teenagers need friendships that encourage, accept, support, and nurture. They need genuine friends with good values.** When they know other people like them, they will like themselves better, and that helps with the problem of feeling inferior. They need the fellowship of like-minded people and need to feel they are in a safe, warm environment of love and acceptance. This is one advantage young people may have who attend Christian schools where there are more choices of friends with similar standards and values. But more and more young people are not attending Christian schools. It is important to provide other opportunities to connect with Christian teens.

Because young people are afraid to be different and choose to conform to their peers as a group, they can be intimidating to adults. Their hair and their clothes may make it look like they’re wearing a placard which has a very important message.

It’s almost amusing to see how much they want to separate their identity from that of their parents and teachers, but it’s still important for them to belong to a group their own age. The gang culture starts during the teen years as young people search for a group to which to belong and for people with whom they can identify. So even though it is natural for a young person to establish personal identity and separate from adults in order to find out who they are by themselves, don’t use that as an excuse to abandon your adult responsibility for their nurture. This is a time when adults are needed more than ever. Getting to know their friends by name, praying for them, and connecting with them as often as possible, even when they intimidate you, is a positive.

1. **Church involvement**

**Every young person needs a feeling of acceptance, belonging, and validation.** This comes with opportunities for leadership and involvement. They need to have ownership. They need to feel needed and important. The church provides an ideal setting for this to take place. Every church should put its corporate arms around its young people, involve them, and train them for leadership. Imagine how that would strengthen the youth and strengthen the church!

1. **Building connections**

**The first step for involving and training young people is to connect with them.** Get to know them. Provide opportunities to socialize and work side-by-side with young people. Learn who they are and what they enjoy and are passionate about**.** Build on this knowledge.

It’s also important to connect with young people through social media—it’s where they “live.” Friend them on Facebook. This gives you the opportunity to have a regular glimpse into their lives—what they’re doing, who their friends are, what they’re saying. Don’t friend them to “spy” on them or use it as an opportunity to preach or be critical. Be “friends” as an opportunity to connect with them and learn more about who they are and what they’re looking for.

Teens rarely talk on the phone. They also rarely use email any longer—believing this is a tool for adults. They use texting and IM. Connect with them through these mediums. Let them know that you’re praying for them with a quick text.

1. **Loosen the reins**

**Conflict between parents and teens is caused by issues of control.** At birth, parents are in full control of the baby, but mom and dad need to remember that their goal is to gradually turn over the reins of control to the child herself. This will sometimes mean letting a young person make a decision and face the consequences of that decision without a parent’s help or rescue.

**Parents need wisdom to know which battles to fight and which not to fight.**

The teen needs to remember that as she manifests more self-control and responsibility, mom and dad are gradually able to relinquish that part of their God-given assignment. Teens must know the importance of making good choices and learn how to make good choices, learning how to use the Bible as their guide in decision-making.

Discuss in small groups some choices young people may make that bring consequences they would never choose if they had known ahead of time.

1. **Talking about sex**

**Because relationships with boys are such an important part of a young woman’s interest, they need adults who are willing to address those issues with them. Plain talk about sex and marriage calls for a maturity that comes beyond teen years.** Love as a feeling is a word that needs to be experienced, and lust or infatuation (although teens can easily get love and lust mixed up) needs to be explained as the strong feeling it is, but not the kind of feeling that builds a good foundation for marriage. Infatuation is self-centered. Genuine love desires what is best for the other person to be happy.

Help young women before they are dating think and plan for dating. Walk them through making a list of what they “must have” in a guy and what they “will not tolerate” in a man. Guide them with ideas to think about, things to consider. Help them to create a plan for dating—including how far they’re willing to go with a boy and who they will call when a date goes bad and they need to be “rescued.” These are also important topics to include moms in on and to help resource moms so that they can have these conversations or continue these conversations with their daughters.

Young people are always interested in hearing, talking, and thinking about sex. They need a mature Christian adult to help them understand the physical and emotional dangers in experiencing sex before marriage and to help them not only make a commitment to wait until marriage for sex, but helping them to see that they’re not alone in their commitment. They need Christian women who will be a “safe place” for them to talk to about boys, sex, and the pressures they feel.

🡺 ***Discuss Handout #4, “Differences Between Love and Sex in a Relationship.”***

Dr. James Dobson calls the ages between 16 and 26 the “critical decade.” These are years that transform a youth living at home into an adult earning her own living. Here are some decisions that are generally made during this time that have an effect on the rest of life:

* Occupation
* Marriage
* Establishment of values and principles by which life is governed
* Faith

These are all major decisions! What help and safeguards are there to assist with this important time of life?

🡺 ***Read Handout #5, “How to Know God’s Will.”***

1. **Spiritual Needs**

**Teenagers have the same spiritual needs adults have: to know God and be saved by grace. They may not admit it to their parents, but many of them crave an intimate relationship with God.** They want to understand Bible doctrines and feel like they can have their questions answered honestly. Many young people express a belief in God and a desire for a relationship with Him, but are no longer interested in church.

Young people are drawn to adults who are consistent, committed, and compassionate. They want to feel they have spiritual support and want to mature in a non-judgmental environment. They wilt under criticism, but will grow spiritually when they are mentored by a loving, mature Christian.

**Years ago Ellen White realized how much the church needs its youth and wrote:**

“The church is languishing for the help of young men [and women] who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God’s people and so increase the power of the church in the world” (Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People*, p. 25).

The tragedy is that young people want to be involved but are often entirely left out. Many would love to have leadership opportunities and feel they have ownership in church programs but they are not invited (or permitted) to participate. Women’s Ministries can help change that. We need to give them the opportunity to be involved, to develop their gifts and talents, and to become passionate about God.

Unfortunately, some young people have already made choices that have stained their lives, and need a real change of direction before they are willing to be participating members of a church program. If you find some who feel burdened with guilt, direct them to the sin-forgiving Savior with these beautiful verses:

“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord’s love is with those who fear him” (Psalm 103:8-14, 17, first part, *NIV*)*.*

1. **WHAT WOMEN’S MINISTRIES CAN DO**
2. **One-on-One Ministry**

Many adults feel intimidated or helpless when it comes to interacting with teens. They don’t know what to say or do or how to act. Getting to know teens one-on-one is a great way to ease into it. Remember:

* **Be a good listener**—really hear what they’re saying rather than looking for opportunities to “teach” or “preach.”
* **Be accepting**—don’t be judgmental of their feelings—they are their feelings regardless of what you think; let them express their doubts.
* **Be yourself** —don’t try to act like a teen or to be “cool.”
* **Be interested**—ask open-ended questions, learn what they’re interested in, and ask questions about those things, too.
* **Be genuine**—young people can spot someone who is fake a mile away and won’t respond or feel respected.
* **Be prayerful**—young people today need adults who care enough to take them to God with love.

Don’t be afraid to discuss anything they want to talk about, but help them look for God’s principles and not be sidetracked by today’s culture. Young people today desperately need and want to learn how to apply the Bible to their daily lives and choices.

Hold up the hands of parents. If you’ve ever mothered a teenager, you know some of the challenges. Pray with them and for them. Offer resources and opportunities for moms to learn and grow. Grandparents, too. They are often very involved in their grandchildren’s lives.

“To be effective, the youth worker must comprehend the cultural context of the young person. That requires exploring what life is like for young people (for example, reading their magazines, watching some of their favorite TV shows and movies, talking to them about their experiences and challenges).

It demands constant reinterpretation of events and experiences to perceive the meaning of life through the eyes of a teenager. To provide contextual wisdom and practical advice, a youth leader must retain a balance of biblical values and cultural sensitivity—with the dominant culture of concern being that of the young person, not the adult” (George Barna, *Real Teens*, p. 150).

**Families Vary**

**Today few young people live in a conservative, traditional family. Many teens may have a distinct feeling of being isolated for a number of reasons.**

* Dad and mom are gone a lot because of work.
* Parents are divorced.
* Fewer extended family members live nearby.

Young people from non-traditional families require more attention than kids from a two-parent home. Things we as caring adults should do for them:

* Visit them personally.

Ask the Lord to impress you with a young person you can involve in one of these ways.

* Talk to them at church.
* Invite them to church activities.
* Invite them to serve with you on a specific project.
* Invite a group of teens for lunch or a pizza evening at your house.
* Show an interest—learn their names and interests and talk to them.
* Connect with them through Facebook—don’t post a lot of things on their timeline, but do “like” their posts; you don’t want to come across as a stalker, just a friend who cares.
* Let them know you are praying for them. Ask them if there’s anything in particular you can pray about for them.

1. **Participation in the Church**

Ellen White writes:

**“In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, un-crippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men” (Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers,* p. 67).**

Young people have the energy to make a real contribution to the church program. Provide resources to meet their felt spiritual and social needs. Make sure they feel they are an important part and are not just tolerated. Let them help plan activities and projects for their teen group—if they help plan it and lead out, they are more likely to attend and invite their friends to attend. Religious programming that is relevant to their everyday life and interesting will help foster commitment. The church can intentionally encourage spiritual friendship groups of accountability and leadership.

Parents and teachers who provide a climate of warmth and acceptance at home and school, and caring adults in positions of religious training need to live out the gospel of grace and love in their interaction with the youth. When the teens see a consistent adult Christian pointing them to the cross, they are much more likely to accept salvation by faith and be committed to the church. Commitment is also associated with sermons that speak to their interests and congregations that are meeting their spiritual and social needs.

Engage them. Use visuals that get their attention like short video clips. (You can find all kinds of resources for churches online.) Get them involved by having them participate in a skit that goes with the sermon. Ask questions and let them text the answer or text questions while the sermon is happening—they already have a phone in their hand and are using it during worship, so learn how to get them to use it to engage with the worship service.

**Together, not separate**

**Be cautious about providing separate youth services that shut the kids away from adult influence.**

“Because teenagers are an integral part of the *body* of Christ, we need to understand this problem as a physician would. When an organ is removed from a living body, that organ dies, and sometimes the body dies along with it. The same principle is true in the body of Christ. Whatever new models for youth ministry we develop must take seriously the fact that teenagers grow toward mature Christian adulthood as they are connected to the total body of Christ, not isolated from it” (Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry,* p. 43).

**Provide intergenerational classes, prayer meetings, and Bible studies, inviting adults who truly are interested in and care about young people.**

1. **Ideas for Ministries that Impact Teens**

Pray that the Holy Spirit will impress you with some specific ideas for the young women whose lives you can influence.

**Now let’s give some thought to specific things Women’s Ministries can do for teenage young women. They’re a part of our responsibility—both for ministry and for fun.**

Here are some suggestions to get you started.

1. **Group activities**:

* Mom and daughter banquet
* Mom and daughter slumber party
* *Going-away-to-school* shower for young girl moving into a dorm for the first time
* Teen retreats (see AdventSource.org for resources)
* Father and daughter dinner—consider discussing dating and purity and offering an opportunity for a commitment

1. **Support groups for parents of teenagers:**

* Parenting teens and pre-teens
* Blended families
* Single moms
* *Prayer and Love Saves* by Dorothy Eaton Watts—a resource for parents to pray for their children

1. **Teen seminar topics:**

* How to get along with parents
* Living in a broken home
* Personal devotions
* How to study the Bible for yourself
* Prayer
* Differences between men and women
* Health tips
* Communication Skills
* Conflict resolution
* Boys, dating, love, sex
* Beauty—not just tips but also a look at the impact of the media/society
* Friendships
* Natural remedies for headaches, cramps, sore throat, etc.
* Bullying/Cyber-bullying
* Depression
* Social media safety
* Money management
* Personality profile
* Peer pressure
* Languages of love
* Healthy boundaries
* What to look for in a man
* Time management
* Staying physically fit
* Healthy eating
* Deciding your own values
* Making, keeping, and breaking friendships
* Career choices
* How to be a good marriage partner
* How to feel more confident?
* StrengthFinders

1. **Professional speakers for seminars for teens:**

* Substance abuse counselor to talk about drug and alcohol problems
* Police officer to talk about self-defense tips
* Crisis pregnancy worker to talk about abortion
* Medical person to talk about sexually transmitted diseases
* Social worker to talk about dating violence
* Counselor to talk about overcoming pain from childhood

1. **Seminar topics for parents:**

* Understanding Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, etc.
* Raising PG kids in an X-rated world
* Talking to your daughter about Boys, Beauty, and Boldness
* Guiding your daughter to look for Mr. Right
* Helping your daughter navigate dating
* Understanding teen depression
* Watching for bullying, and what to do whether your teen is a victim or a bully
* Helping your children connect with God

1. **Activities for teens to do:**

Choose one or two ideas that you could use with the young women in your area.

* Put on a banquet for parents or older church members.
* Adopt a grandparent.
* Plan a church service.
* Help plan Women’s Day of Prayer and Women’s Ministries Emphasis Days for your local church.
* Plan a Princess Tea for little girls and invite teens to help.
* Plan a mission trip—it doesn’t have to be to another country; it could be a trip to the local soup kitchen or any other community serving organization where young people can volunteer.
* Offer free childcare once a month so parents of small children can have a “date night”—people can bring their children to the church and teens can plan activities for the kids.
* Get teens involved in helping with Vacation Bible School.
* Organize a “Soup-er Bowl Party” with teens collecting cans of soup for the local food pantry.
* Connect young people with older people who need help learning their computers, social media, or any of the technology teens use on a daily basis.
* Create a blog for your youth group or young women and have the girls take turns posting—challenge them to use the blog for ministry by posting devotional-style posts that will help other young people connect with God and see how He can be a part of their daily lives.

1. **Communicating *Their* Way**

**Tap into their forms of communicating so that they “hear” you better.** Most of today’s young women don’t have an area of their life not connected to technology—mostly all through their phones. They can surf the internet, post on Facebook, record videos and upload them to YouTube, take pictures and upload them, write their blogs, message, text, find restaurants and shopping malls, download music and store it all on their phone, watch television, and find their way across town—all through their cell phone. Tap into this technology as another way of communicating with them.

**Conclusion**

**In planning activities for young people, it is our responsibility to know their main needs and then create programs that will meet those needs and help our young women grow toward mature Christian adulthood.**

**Use them. Mentor them. Provide for their needs. Help them discover and use their gifts, talents, and passions in ministry. But most importantly, help them discover how the Bible, God, and living a Christian life is relevant to their daily life and daily choices.**

**About the Authors**

**Roxy Hoehn** has taught teenagers, has mothered three teenagers, and loves teenage kids. She is the Women's Ministries director of the Kansas-Nebraska Conference, and in that capacity started retreat weekends for teenage girls which she has considered a highlight of the year since 1996.

**Tamyra Horst** is just a daughter-in-awe™ of an incredible Father who desires to "encourage, equip and challenge people to grow deeply and serve uniquely." An author and popular speaker, she serves as the Communication Director and Women’s Ministries Director for the Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. But what she loves most are her roles as wife, mom of two amazing young adult men, and friend to some pretty incredible women.