



Guardrails: Parent Cue

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT:

Here is an overview of what we're talking about. Listed below the summary is a parent cue to help you dialog with your child about the session. The question is intended not just to be asked by you, but to be responded to by **BOTH** of you. Use this opportunity to find out what God is teaching your child, and allow your child to see what God is teaching you as well.

Guardrails:

Series Overview

Guardrails are “a system designed to keep something from straying into dangerous or off-limit areas.” Just like the guardrails we see on the roads we drive everyday, the guardrails we place in our lives are designed with a simple purpose; to create a small accident to protect us from a larger one. We don't often spend a lot of time thinking about or paying attention to them, but when we need them, we are very glad that guardrails are there. In the same way that guardrails protect us on the road, when we establish them in our lives, they can help to both protect us and direct us. Most likely our biggest mistakes in life could have been avoided if we had guardrails steering us in the right direction. The goal should never be to see how close we can get to a guardrail without crashing but rather to keep us from ever going “too far,” in the wrong direction.

Session 1: Shift (AUG. 14)

Guardrails are part of our every day experience. Whether we are walking, biking or driving there are guardrails all around us to protect us from those off-limit areas—areas where we could drop off the edge or crash into something. But where are the guardrails in our actual, everyday lives? We have to establish those personal guardrails ourselves so that we can back up and stay on the safe side of a potentially dangerous situation.

Has there ever been a time when you wish you had some guardrails in place—something that would have protected you from a certain situation? Can you share a time that you did have some boundaries and were protected from something because of them?

Session 2: Swerve (AUG. 21)

We may be able to recognize the need for guardrails in some relationships and habits, but what about relationships with our friends? It seems a bit odd to think we may need to set up boundaries with our friends. But our friends have the power to influence our decisions, our actions and even the quality of our lives. With that much potential to determine the direction of our lives, putting up a few guardrails when it comes to our friendships may be one of the wisest things we can do.

How important to you are the friendships you have right now? Do you feel like the friends you have really make a difference in your life? Do you believe that your choices about your friends really matter?

XP3 Students: Guardrails Parent Cue

Session 3: Brake (Aug. 28)

Everywhere we go we see images, hear songs, read advertisements and receive the message that sex is great. And it's true. Sex is great! But what makes sex great is that it is a gift from God, given with a purpose. It was created for intimacy with one person and when we establish guardrails early, we set ourselves up for the greatest potential to experience this intimacy in marriage. Without guardrails we set ourselves up to experience some deep pain, both physically and emotionally. But establishing guardrails is a crucial way for us to have the healthiest relationships we possibly can.

Are sexual guardrails important for both young people and adults? What are some difficulties you may come across when you draw sexual boundaries that culture or your friends may not feel the same conviction about? How can you keep those guardrails firm, even if you are the only one you know who has them? Talk about some sexual guardrails you either have already established or that you are going to establish.

Session 4: Steer (SEPT. 11)

Sometimes it can feel like rules and regulations are only there to block us and interrupt our lives. Why would we want to set up rules that keep us from doing what we want? But, the truth is, if we aren't diligent about creating and keeping guardrails, we set ourselves up for way more pain than any amount of fun is worth. And, establishing guardrails is something we have to make a decision to do. No one else can do it for us.

If someone else tells you what guardrails to have, do you think you will stick to them? Why is it important for you to make a decision to establish guardrails? What do you think is at stake if you don't set up some guardrails in your life?

Imagining the End

Focus your energy and effort on the issues that will make a lasting impact.

During the course of this series we are going to spend some time talking to your teenagers about guardrails. As parents, we understand the importance of setting things in place that help protect us from making potentially dangerous decisions—when it comes to our personal lives, and the lives of our children. And while we all want our kids to make wise choices and be intentional with the things they put in place to keep them from being at risk, we don't ever want them to believe that the choices they make or don't make determine our love and care for them. Which is why, for this series we want to encourage you, as parents, to encourage your child by telling them about the good you already see in them. The idea is not to just point out the good things they have *done*, but the good that exists in them simply because God made them.

Here you are going to have the opportunity to write your child a letter to encourage them as they walk through their tumultuous teen years. Think of the things you have seen in your child since they were just little toddlers running around the house. Think of the times they have really impressed you or caught you off guard, demonstrating something uniquely special. Use those memories to draft a letter letting them know that you love them; express to them all the great things that you see and hope for them. Remember, this is not a time to put extra pressure on your child to succeed but instead to encourage them in the specific gifts, characteristics and talents you have seen blossom throughout their lives. It is also a time to encourage them in their walk with the Lord and remind them that He has a specific purpose for their life.

Below you will find an opening and a closing line to your letter. But be sure to write this in your own hand—writing and make it personal. Think of this as a love letter to your child as you commit to helping them become all God has made them to be.

Opening: God has given you as a gift to our family and in you I see ...

Closing: Whatever the situation and wherever you find yourself in life, I'm here to help you get to where you want to be.

Get connected to a wider community of parents at www.orangeparents.org.