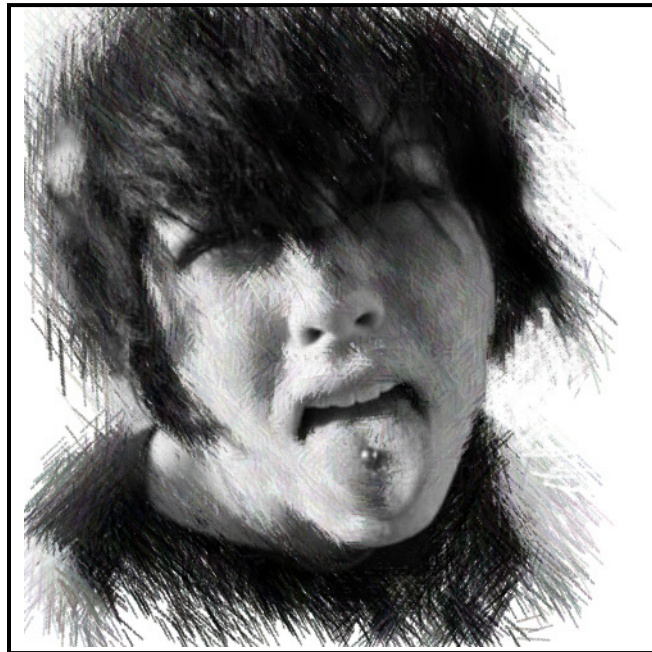


10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Teenager



GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Israel Galindo

10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Teenager: Study Guide
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Introduction

This group study guide is designed to be used with the book *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Israel Galindo and Don Reagan (available through Educational Consultants, www.galindoconsultants.com). For the most part this study assumes that the groups will be mostly self-directed with a minimum of guidance from the class facilitator. You can format the study in any way that suits your group. Use the group discussion questions depending on the location (a Sunday morning class, a weekday evening class, a retreat, a weekly study course, a one-day extended workshop experience) and on the schedule you have chosen.

Here are some suggestions for an effective group learning experience:

- Provide books for all participants. The ability to discuss the issues will be enhanced to the extent that participants read the book chapters ahead of time. The chapters are short, so most people will be able to read one chapter a week if you want to use a weekly meeting format.
- The class or group leader should act as facilitator, allowing the group process to carry the learning. Group members will learn through conversation, through sharing of their experience, struggling with answers to questions, and by being a resource to one another. Monitor the groups to help them in case they get stuck, have a question, or need a resource. Strive to start and end your sessions on time.
- You do not have to use all of the sessions in this study guide, or cover all of the chapters in the book. Choose the issues that are of most concern to the parents in your group—you can combine two sessions if it suits your format and schedule. Be sure to check the Appendices in the book for additional material.
- If you have a large class, form discussion groups of no less than 4 persons, but no more than 8 persons. The ideal group size for discussion is 4 or 5 individuals.
- Allow sufficient time for group discussion (at *least* 45 minutes for a group of 5 to 8 persons) and additional for the learning activities if you choose to use them. For optimum learning, build in at least 15 minutes of “debriefing” time at the end of each session.
- The “Going Deeper” section can help translate the learning and insights acquired in the small groups into application in the home. Encourage the use of this dynamic. Encourage parents to report back when they have used this feature.
- At the beginning of your study, review the “How To Be A Good Group Member” guidelines and encourage your class members to commit to them so as to provide a good learning experience for all.

How To Be A Good Group Member

Good group learning experiences do not happen naturally, they are a result of intentional and responsible behaviors by group members. For an optimal learning experience, practice these good learner behaviors:

- Participate and share—others need to learn from you
- Determine to be honest and transparent with your group
- Take time to think
- Listen to one another
- Give reasons for your answers
- Stay on task or on the topic under discussion
- Negotiate the level of confidentiality you are comfortable with
- Ask thought-provoking questions
- Allow yourself to be challenged—you'll learn more
- Ask for others' opinions
- Ask yourself, "How does this apply to me?"
- Ask yourself, "What am I learning?"



Session 1

Parent your teenager as if he or she is a child



Directions:

Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Israel Galindo and Don Reagan in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- A parent’s job is over by the time a child is seven years old.
- Coaching and challenging are the most effective postures for parenting teens.

Discussion Questions:

1. The great educator, St. Ignatius of Loyola said, “Give me a child until he is seven years old, and I will give you the man.” Take turns in your group and, (1) interpret what you think that statement means and implies, and (2) state whether you agree with it or not, and why.
2. The authors state that the job of “parenting” is over by the time a child is seven years old. For the sake of argument, let’s assume that that statement is true. Therefore, in what ways might you have to change the way you’ve been trying to “parent” your teenager?
3. Share with your group specific ways you have had to adjust your parenting style or your parenting behavior with your teenager from the time they were small children to the present.

Learning Activity:

Distribute paper and pencil, or provide a flip chart or butcher paper and markers. Draw a line down the middle of the paper to make two columns. Label one column “Coaching” and the other “Challenging”. With your group brainstorm and create a list under each respective column of specific areas you think teenagers need “coaching”, and specific areas in which teenagers need to

be “challenged.” Next, determine, by ranking, which of those items in the list are the most critical for parents to do because ONLY parents can address in the lives of their teenagers.

Going Deeper:

Think about yourself in your family of origin at the time you were around 10 years of age. Can you remember if your relationship with your parents changed around that time? If so, in what ways? What do you remember about your perceptions about yourself and about your relationship with your parents?

Now recall yourself as a teenager in your family of origin. Did your parents still “parent” you during that time of your life? How did you feel? How effective do you think your parent’s “parenting style” was in helping you navigate your adolescence?

Session 2

Parent your teenager as if he or she is an adult.



Directions:

Read Chapter 2 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Galindo and Reagan in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Treating your teenager like an adult will confuse your teenager by removing too quickly the boundaries he or she needs to learn about the world
- Your teenager is on his or her way to becoming an adult—but is not there yet
- Teenagers think and ‘feel’ differently.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you remember when you first realized that you were “grown up”? Share a story of that moment. Where were you when you had that insight? Was there an incident that caused you to “grow up” and become an adult? Do you think you “grew up” too fast? Not fast enough?
2. Do you think teenagers “grow up” too fast today? Give examples of where and how you see that to be true? If you don’t think that that is true, explain why.
3. Share from your experience the way(s) you perceive that teenagers don’t “think like adults.” Describe a conversation or an incident with your teenager where this became evident.

Learning Activity:

Divide the class into two groups, **Group A** and **Group B**. Provide a flip chart, poster board, or a large piece of paper and markers for each group. Reproduce and distribute the handouts on the

following pages and have the groups record their responses on the flip chart. Debrief by having each group report their responses. Share the implications for parenting teenagers from the insights they gain from this exercise.

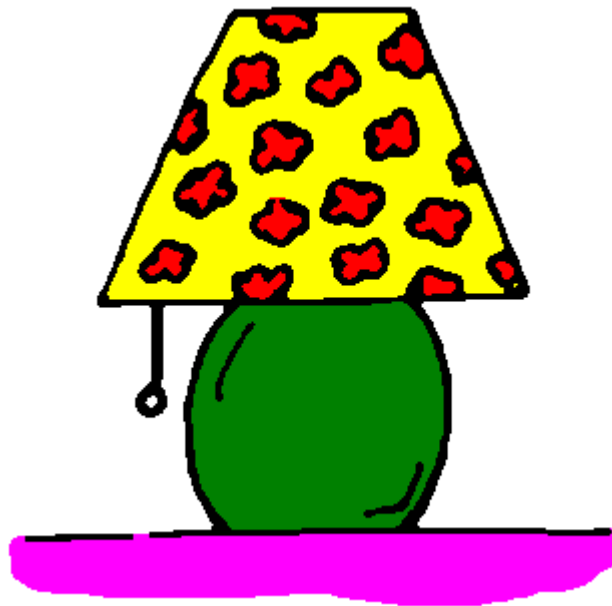
Going Deeper:

Sit down with your teenagers and share with them, in detail, how you were as a teenager. Describe the friends you had, the feelings you experienced, and describe the way you dressed and looked. Share your recollection about your religious or spiritual beliefs at the time. When you are done, invite your teenager to ask you any question about you as a teenager—and answer honestly.

Session 2
Learning Activity for Group A

DIRECTIONS: With your group members, rapidly brainstorm and list the responses to this exercise. Answer the following question:

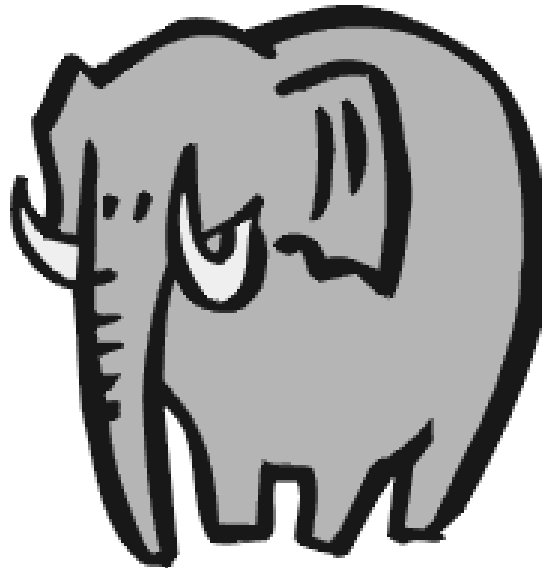
How is a teenager at home like a lamp?



Session 2
Learning Activity for Group B

DIRECTIONS: With your group members, rapidly brainstorm and list the responses to this exercise. Answer the following question:

How is a teenager at home like an elephant?



Session 3

Be Inflexible With Rules.



Directions:

Read Chapter 3 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Galindo and Reagan in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Teenagers need new and different rules than when they were children
- Increase your teenager’s freedom, when it is earned, but with increased responsibility
- Setting limits and boundaries remains an important part of the parent-teen relationship.

Discussion Questions:

1. What “rules” did you have in your family of origin when you were a child? Which rules did you have to abide by when you were a teenager? As you look back, did any of the rules not make sense?
2. Are there rules in place in your relationship with your children and teenagers that you borrowed from your own family of origin? Which are they? Why are these rules important to you? Finally, do these rules “work” for your family?
3. Share issues and occasions where you have had conflict with your teenager regarding rules. What was the rule, what was the occasion, and how were you able to resolve the crisis, if at all?

Learning Activity:

Read Appendix B, “Discipline Guidelines for Teenagers” on page 75 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*. Ask class members to form pairs. In pairs, choose one of these “guidelines” and (1) share about how consistently you practice it in your relationship with your teenager, (2) Give an example of how the guideline looks like (or does not look like) in your home, and (3) Write two or three derivative “rules” based on the guideline that you would like to implement in your home.

Going Deeper:

Review the “rules” that you have in your home regarding your teenager and his or her activities, relationships, responsibilities, and expectations (including unspoken rules and rules based on assumptions). Consider which may be outdated and need revision. Talk with your teenager about new “rules” that you can negotiate to help make expectations clearer and life together smoother.

Session 4

Expect Your Teenager To Be Perfect in Everything



Directions:

Read Chapter 4 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Galindo and Reagan in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Communicating expectations of ‘perfection’ on the part of your teenager results in an unfair amount of stress and anxiety
- “Job 1” for your teenager is the development of a strong sense of his or her identity
- Make sure your teenager does not see only your “good side” (a “perfect” pseudo-self that you’ve cultivated).

Discussion Questions:

1. Share with your group your thoughts about why you think parents get so anxious and “bent out of shape” about their teenager’s behaviors?
2. Time to be honest: what behaviors or habits of your teenager(s) drive you crazy?
3. Time for a deeper theological discussion: Consider, and articulate, as a group, how expectations on the part of parents for their teenagers to be ‘perfect’ is a lack of practicing Christian grace, and/or, a lack of faith.

Learning Activity:

If you have a large class, form smaller groups of 4 or 5. It’s often helpful to create different small groups than those in the discussion circles. Distribute paper and pencil, or provide a flip chart or butcher paper and markers. Write the word “EXPECTATIONS” at the top of the sheet of paper. Have the groups identify and list expectations that parents often have of their teenagers. Once you have a good list, have the group decide on which are “appropriate” and which are “not

necessarily appropriate.” Put a plus sign on the appropriate ones, a negative sign on the ones that are inappropriate, and a question mark on those the group is not sure about.

Going Deeper:

Share with your teenager a story of a time in which you “failed” at something. Share what you learned about yourself, about how you dealt with that failure, and the lesson(s) you learned through the experience. Share how that experience changed your perspectives or resulted in a new resolve on your part.

Session 5

Take Responsibility for Your Teenager's Behavior



Directions:

Read Chapter 5 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Galindo and Reagan in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Rescuing your teenager will prevent your teenager from being able to learn personal responsibility and will result in a state of perpetual anxiety for yourself.
- Avoid rescuing your teenager from the consequences of his or her own actions—whether they result from mistakes or from acts of willful intent.

Discussion Questions:

1. Share an experience when, as a teenager, you had to face up to the consequences for your behavior—either because of a mistake, an accident, a time you acted out, or were just being foolish. How did your parents behave and function? What did you learn?
2. Have you ever “rescued” your teenager from the appropriate consequences of his or her actions? Share that story? How do you feel about it? What was your motivation for doing so?
3. Do you think there are circumstances in which “rescuing” your teenager from the consequences of his or her actions is appropriate? Give your rationale for why you believe so. Identify the consequences you are willing to live with as a result of your action in that scenario.

Learning Activity:

Distribute the worksheet for this session, titled “The Speech”. Challenge your participants to write, and then share with the larger group, “The Speech” they will give to their teenager as a

way to help the teenager understand where the parent stands on the issue of personal responsibility and rescuing.

Going Deeper:

Read Appendix A, the second Q&A on p. 65. Share “The Speech” with your teenager.

Session 5 Worksheet

“The Speech”

DIRECTIONS: Write out, or outline, a two to three minute “speech” that you will give your teenager that spells out your position and beliefs on personal responsibility and on your choices about “rescuing” your teenager.

Session 6

Work Hard At Making Your Teenager Your Friend



Directions:

Read Chapter 6 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Israel Galindo and Don Reagan in preparation for this session. You can read and discuss Chapter 9 in conjunction with this session's focus.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay "on task" and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Trying to make your teenager your friend will result in a loss of your effectiveness in being of any help to your teenager.
- Your teenager needs a parent, he's got plenty of friends
- Focus on your function as a coaching and challenging parent and on your relationship with your spouse.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you agree with the authors that it is important to stay clear about one's relationship with one's teenager regarding being a parent and not a "friend"? Why or why not?
2. When do you think it is appropriate, if ever, to become a friend to your offspring?
3. The authors make a connection between maintaining appropriate boundary relationships with one's teenager, and working on one's relationship with one's spouse. In your own words, interpret and explain why that is important.

Learning Activity:

Distribute paper and pencil, or provide a flip chart or butcher paper and markers. Starting on page 35 in *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, the authors identify seven guidelines and principles (they appear in italic throughout the chapter) related to discipline and teenagers. With your group members, develop additional guidelines and principles for discipline based on

your own experience with your teenagers. Share why you think these are important to observe and in what ways they are helpful in maintaining a right relationship between teenager and parent.

Going Deeper:

Think about your teenager's current life and the areas that are significant to him or her now: school, friends, hobbies, sports, church, relationships, home life, job, hopes and dreams, etc. (1) Identify those issues and areas in which your teenager needs you to coach him or her. (2) Identify those issues or areas in your teenager's life in which you need to provide challenge. Assess how intentionally and how well you have been in providing coaching and challenge in those areas.

Determine how you will go about being intentional about engaging in a coaching and challenging relationship with your teenager in those critical areas of his or her life. Be specific about what you are going to do and when you are going to do them.

Session 7

Make Your Teenager the Primary Focus in Your Home



Directions:

Read Chapter 8 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Galindo and Reagan in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Focusing on your teenager will maintain a perpetual triangle that will inhibit the development of healthier family relationships.
- The primary focus in the home needs to be on the adult marital relationship.
- Focusing on making your marriage a more mature, healthy adult relationship will best serve your family, yourself, and your teenager.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think we live in a society that is focused on the “youth culture”? What evidence do you see of that being true, or not?
2. In what areas, or at what times, does your family situation shift so that your teenager becomes the focus in the family? Share how you see the dynamics of that happen.
3. When the focus of a family is on the teenager, are there other important areas that are being neglected? Speculate and identify what those areas might be.

Learning Activity:

Distribute paper and pencils to participants (or provide flipcharts or butcher paper and markers). Form groups of three for this exercise. Spouses are to be in separate groups for this activity. Have each participant take turns diagramming the relationship “triangles” they are in focused on

the teenager(s) in the home. A triangle can be three persons, or, two persons and an issue. Use the following questions to help identify the dynamics at play:

- How and when does this triangle get formed?
- Who is on the “outside” of the triangle?
- Which side of the triangle is most conflicted or anxious?
- Who is taking responsibility for the relationship between two others?
- Describe the “functioning” of the persons in this triangle?
- Are there interlocking triangles connected with this one?
- Can you discern similar triangles from your own family of origin?
- Can you identify ways you can avoid getting in this triangle?
- Can you identify ways of staying in this triangle, but functioning better?

Going Deeper:

If you and your spouse participate in the triangles learning activity, compare your insights about the relationship triangles in the family. Do you both see them the same way? Work at arriving at a consensus opinion as to the triangles in the family relationships and how they are formed. Talk about how you can function better in handling the triangles that form in your family related to your teenager.

Session 8

Take Responsibility for Your Teenager's Spirituality And Faith



Directions:

Read Chapter 10 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*, by Galindo and Reagan in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- When parents take responsibility for their teenager's spirituality and faith, they in effect usurp God's relationship with their teenager and inhibit the teenager's ability to develop his or her own faith.
- There is a difference between taking appropriate parental responsibility for *nurturing* faith, and taking responsibility for that faith—the beliefs, spirituality, and relationships—of our teenager
- Allow your teenager the freedom to develop his or her own faith, and take more responsibility for your own faith maturity.
- Trust that God already has a relationship with your teenager—let them work out their own relationship.

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe your teenager's spiritual life and faith as you see evidence of its effect on his or her life and in the life of your family.
2. Share what anxieties or concerns you have about your child's faith. Can you identify which of those you can take responsibility for?
3. Share honestly about your personal spirituality and faith when you were a teenager. Was your family religious? Were you a believer? Did you have a religious experience? Where your friends Christian? How did your church help you in your spiritual life, if at all.

Learning Activity:

Invite persons in your church who work with youth to participate in this session; the pastor, the youth minister, the youth Sunday School teachers, and/or other program leaders who work with the teenagers of the parents in the group. First, ask them to come prepared to share some brief comments on “What You Need To Know About Your Child’s Faith” (this should not be a theoretical or “academic” presentation—they should share about the *real* situation of the *actual* youth in the church—points of celebration, of challenge, and of concern.). Second, conduct an interview to facilitate a time of honest questions and answers, and dialogue, between the parents of teenagers and the youth ministers and workers. Prepare a list of questions to start the interview and dialogue. You should encourage the youth ministers and workers to read Chapter 10 in *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Teenager*.

Going Deeper:

Set aside some time during the week and share your faith with your teenager. Be honest and humble—you are not trying to impress your teenager about how “spiritual” you are—you are merely sharing your faith about God and about your beliefs—including things you are not certain about, areas of challenge and doubts, areas of your life you are wanting to grow in. You can share also, about those things of which you are certain and confident in your faith. Tell the story of your religious experiences, a conversion experience, a time of doubt, a “religious experience,” a time you felt “called” to respond to God through action or vocation or in obedience. Allow your teenager to ask questions, and strive to answer them honestly.

Second, share your hope for your teenager in terms of his or her own relationship with God. Remember, this is your “hope,” for them, not an expectation.

Finally, give your teenager your blessing.

OTHER BOOKS BY *Israel Galindo*

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The Craft of Christian Teaching.

This essential book on Christian teaching focuses on ways to becoming a VERY good teacher. (Judson Press)

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