



ARTICLE / MAKING DISCIPLES (/BLOG/MAKING-DISCIPLS)

# 5 Ways to Disciple Your Quaranteenager

*Leading our teenagers to Jesus amid this temporary reality*

Syler Thomas (/blog/authors/syler-thomas), Justin Wevers (/blog/authors/justin-wevers) | March 23, 2020



<https://twitter.com/efca>

I (Syler) have two teenagers. When they got word their schools were all going online in light of COVID-19 and they'd be spending more time at home, with their parents, they high-fived each other. Then gave my wife and me big hugs. And exclaimed: "More time with our parents? Our prayers have been answered!"

Ok, that's not even close to true.

For many of you, social distancing actually means a newfound social proximity to teenagers. That is a really great thing (and possibly a little frightening). We want to offer a little encouragement to you in this unique season. Here are five practical ways you can intentionally use this time for your teenager's discipleship.

## 1. Let them catch you trusting in God in the midst of your fear

*Make sure you're communicating your own awareness of God's provision and protection by your words and even your body language.*

🐦 TWEET ([HTTP://WWW.TWITTER.COM/INTENT/TWEET?URL=HTTPS://WWW.EFCA.ORG/BLOG/MAKING-DISCIPLES/5-WAYS-DISCIPLE-YOUR-QUARANTEENAGER&TEXT=%20MAKE+SURE+YOU%E2%80%99RE+COMMUNICATING+YOUR+OWN+AWARENESS+OF+GOD%E2%80%99S+PROVISION+](http://www.twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=https://www.efca.org/blog/making-disciples/5-ways-disciple-your-quaranteneer&text=%20make%20sure%20you%20re%20communicating%20your%20own%20awareness%20of%20god%20s%20provision%20and%20protection%20by%20your%20words%20and%20even%20your%20body%20language)

Parents are human too. We show fear. We doubt. We express sadness about the next thing that will get canceled/postponed. A normal amount of that in front of your kids shows them that you're real. But too much of it could rub off on them.

It will be tempting to watch the news all day and shake your head at each new disappointing development. You don't need to ignore it, but make sure you're communicating your own awareness of God's provision and protection by your words and even your body language. When you find yourself feeling panicky, it's probably time to turn off the TV.

Let them see you pray. When you're overwhelmed, you don't have to hide it from them. But you do have to show them where to turn. We model all kinds of things for our kids as they grow. We show them how to hold a pencil. When they grow up, we show them how to drive a car. Let's show them where to turn when they're afraid. Let's tell them what to believe even in the midst of having to remind ourselves that same truth. Preach the gospel to your own heart, right in front of them.

## 2. Bring back a short devotional time

For years, my family (Syler speaking) used to have a nightly “devotional” where we would read a Bible story, sing a Bible song and pray. Once my kids became teenagers, this became impractical for us because everyone’s schedules are so crazy.

The good news is that you have everyone back again. A captive audience! The simplest way to do this is to pick a book of the Bible, read a chapter and discuss it. You could also find a short sermon online and listen to it together. Take advantage of your increased facetime with your teenagers by taking an increased deep dive into Scripture.

Final tip on this front: if your teenagers are nostalgic at all (like mine), bring out the cherished Bible stories from when they were younger and the favorite vintage Bible songs too. They’ll love it!

### 3. Tell them why they don’t need to be afraid

*Show your quaranteenager that their mom and dad have built their lives on a Rock, and not on the sand of an ever-changing world.*

🐦 TWEET ([HTTP://WWW.TWITTER.COM/INTENT/TWEET?URL=HTTPS://WWW.EFCA.ORG/BLOG/MAKING-DISCIPLES/5-WAYS-DISCIPLE-YOUR-QUARANTEENAGER&TEXT=%20SHOW+YOUR+QUARANTEENAGER+THAT+THEIR+MOM+AND+DAD+HAVE+BUILT+THEIR+LIVES+ON+A+ROCK%2C+AND+CHANGING+WORLD.+%40THEEFCA](http://www.twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=https://www.efca.org/blog/making-disciples/5-ways-disciple-your-quaranteenager&text=%20show%20your%20quaranteenager%20that%20their%20mom%20and%20dad%20have%20built%20their%20lives%20on%20a%20rock%20and%20not%20on%20the%20sand%20of%20an%20ever-changing%20world.%40theefca))

“Do not fear” is the most common command in all of Scripture. It applies to life at school and life in a quarantine equally, because God’s goodness and His control don’t fluctuate. Your teenager needs to hear this truth. It won’t take you long when you study (or live with!) Gen Z—those born 1997-2012ish—to realize this is a group of people that often struggles with more fear, less optimism about the future and increased anxiety than previous generations. This was true before the pandemic.

But here’s what you might want to avoid. Don’t tell them it’ll be ok because the disease is more dangerous for *other people*. Don’t tell them it’ll be ok because the economy will recover. Don’t tell them everything will work out fine because they still have the internet to do online school and see friends.

Tell them they don't have to fear because God doesn't change. He's always good (even now). He's always in control (even now). And His goodness and power are not subject to the circumstances of our world. In fact, it's the opposite. The circumstances of our world are most definitely subject to His goodness and power. That's the kind of game-changing hope in which they can truly find rest.

So do some show and tell. Show your quaranteenager that their mom and dad have built their lives on a Rock, and not on the sand of an ever-changing world. And tell them why.

#### **4. Practice social media distancing together**

As your teenager has more free time to scroll and their feeds become inundated with a frightening waterfall of news relating to the virus, the economy and the cancellations, help them turn the volume down on these voices. Invite them to exchange a little Facetime with their friends for a little face-to-face time with you.

Now, I'm not encouraging you to place quarantine on social media. It's fun for them to connect with their friends (and their youth groups!) through these mediums. I'm also not encouraging you to limit their access while spending most of *\*your own time\** on Facebook or watching the news.

A fire burns best when there's room between the logs. Give them room. Put your phones down together. Pick up a new hobby or dive into an old one, together. Let your fingertips and brains rest. For many of them (and many of us, if we're honest), social media distancing is an act of faith. It admits that we don't need to know everything, because we are children of a God who does.

#### **5. Enjoy a good gift together.**

Your teenager has lost something. It might not seem as big as the economic downturn or health crisis. But they've still lost something. It might be graduation, or prom, or the last few months with their fellow seniors. They might've lost their tennis season

or their spring musical. They might not understand why they aren't supposed to go to the mall for a little while. And with these losses comes real grief and frustration.

Grieve with them (Rom 12:15).

*In all these things rely on the Spirit to transform you and your quaranteenagers to be more like Jesus, together.*

🐦 TWEET ([HTTP://WWW.TWITTER.COM/INTENT/TWEET?URL=HTTPS://WWW.EFCA.ORG/BLOG/MAKING-DISCIPLES/5-WAYS-DISCIPLE-YOUR-QUARANTEENAGER&TEXT=%3D%3Ein%3Dall%3Dthese%3Dthings%3Drely%3Don%3Dthe%3Dspirit%3Dto%3Dtransform%3Dyou%3Dand%3Dyour%3Dquaranteenagers%3Dto%3Dbe%3Dmo](http://www.twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=https://www.efca.org/blog/making-disciples/5-ways-disciple-your-quaranteenager&text=%3D%3Ein%3Dall%3Dthese%3Dthings%3Drely%3Don%3Dthe%3Dspirit%3Dto%3Dtransform%3Dyou%3Dand%3Dyour%3Dquaranteenagers%3Dto%3Dbe%3Dmo))

Then help them see that, in the midst of these losses, they have incredible joy available to them. They have joy in the good gifts that are still available to them: a hike with the family, greasy cheeseburgers, laughter at toilet paper memes, technology that lets them connect with their friends, books that are better than smartphones. They can and should enjoy those gifts (responsibly, of course). But deeper joy awaits because they also have a heavenly Father who gives them good gifts. So they can enjoy the sweetness of a honey almond milk latte (I think that's a thing teenagers drink) and *at the very same time* remember that God's word is even sweeter than honey.

Show them how to extract double joy—the joy of the earthly gift and the joy of the heavenly Father who provides it. And then show them a deeper, untouchable joy. The joy that comes from knowing their Savior. He is always with them, even when their friends are not.

And in all these things rely on the Spirit to transform you and your quaranteenagers to be more like Jesus, together.

*Stay tuned for Justin and Syler's new youth ministry podcast "You Can't Handle the Youth!" which will debut later this spring.*

---

**Syler Thomas (/blog/authors/syler-thomas)**

Syler Thomas is a native Texan who has been the pastor of student ministries at **Christ Church Lake Forest** (<https://christchurchil.org/>) in Illinois since 1998, when he graduated from **Trinity Evangelical Divinity School** (<https://divinity.tiu.edu/>). He has written extensively for various outlets

EMAIL UPDATES

---

Subscribe to receive EFCA blog updates.

Email Address \*

**Subscribe**

RELATED POSTS

---

[How Transformational Churches Impact Individuals \(/blog/making-disciples/how-transformational-churches-impact-individuals\)](/blog/making-disciples/how-transformational-churches-impact-individuals)

---

[Taking the Pulse of Student Ministry \(/blog/making-disciples/taking-pulse-student-ministry\)](/blog/making-disciples/taking-pulse-student-ministry)

---

[Discovering Your Divine Design \(/blog/making-disciples/discovering-your-divine-design\)](/blog/making-disciples/discovering-your-divine-design)

---

[Repenting From My Idol of Missions \(/blog/making-disciples/repenting-my-idol-missions\)](/blog/making-disciples/repenting-my-idol-missions)

---

[Why Small-Place Ministry Still Matters \(/blog/making-disciples/why-small-place-ministry-still-matters\)](/blog/making-disciples/why-small-place-ministry-still-matters)

**[Blog](/blog)**

**(/blog)**

**[Resources](/resources)**

**(/resources)**

**[Contact \(/contact\)](/contact)**

ABOUT

[Our identity \(/about/who-we-are\)](/about/who-we-are)

MINISTRIES

[Global mission \(/ministries/reachglobal\)](/ministries/reachglobal)

[Our faith \(/about/what-we-believe\)](#)

[National mission \(/ministries/reachnational\)](#)

[Our mission \(/about/why-it-matters\)](#)

[Crisis response \(/ministries/reachglobal/crisis-response\)](#)

## OPPORTUNITIES

## TRAINING & EVENTS

[Ways to serve \(/opportunities/serve\)](#)

[Conferences \(/resources/conferences\)](#)

[Internships \(/opportunities/internships\)](#)

[Employment \(/opportunities/employment\)](#)

[Courses \(/resources/library?rtype%5B%5D=24&orderby=date&searchterm=#results\)](#)

[Credentialing \(/resources/credentialing\)](#)

---

[Statement of Faith \(/resources/document/efca-statement-faith\)](#)

[Theological positions \(/resources/document/theological-definitions-positions\)](#)

[National office \(/ministries/office-president\)](#)

[Church districts \(/districts\)](#)

[Ministry contacts \(/ministry-contacts\)](#)

[Preferred providers & partners \(/resources/preferred-providers-and-partnerships\)](#)

[🐦 \(https://twitter.com/TheEFCA\)](https://twitter.com/TheEFCA) [f \(https://www.facebook.com/my.efca\)](https://www.facebook.com/my.efca) [v \(https://vimeo.com/efca\)](https://vimeo.com/efca)



© 2002–2020 Evangelical Free Church of America

All rights reserved. Read our [privacy policy \(https://www.efca.org/privacy-policy\)](https://www.efca.org/privacy-policy), and [copyright policy \(https://www.efca.org/copyright-policy\)](https://www.efca.org/copyright-policy).

<http://www.efca.org/MemberProfile.aspx?ID=9012>

including [Rooted](https://www.rootedministry.com/author/syler-thomas/) (<https://www.rootedministry.com/author/syler-thomas/>), [The Gospel Coalition](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/profile/syler-thomas/) (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/profile/syler-thomas/>), and the [Chicago Tribune](#). He and his wife Heidi have four kids.

---

## Justin Wevers (/blog/authors/justin-wevers)

Justin Wevers serves as the national director for [EFCA ReachStudents](https://www.efca.org/ministries/reachnational/reachstudents) ([/www.efca.org/ministries/reachnational/reachstudents](https://www.efca.org/ministries/reachnational/reachstudents)). Previously, Justin was a student ministries pastor in Minneapolis, Minnesota, after graduating from [Trinity Evangelical Divinity School](https://divinity.tiu.edu/) (<https://divinity.tiu.edu/>) in Deerfield, Illinois. He and his wife, Amanda, live in the Twin Cities with their three daughters. They joyfully are part of the community of [Gospel Life Church](https://www.gospellifemn.org/) (<https://www.gospellifemn.org/>), an EFCA church plant that aims to reach skeptics with the gospel.

---

6 | [ReachStudents](/blog/tags/reachstudents) (</blog/tags/reachstudents>), [COVID-19](/blog/tags/covid-19) (</blog/tags/covid-19>), [social media](/blog/tags/social-media) (</blog/tags/social-media>), [youth](/blog/tags/youth) (</blog/tags/youth>), [family](/blog/tags/family) (</blog/tags/family>), [disciplemaking](/blog/tags/disciplemaking) (</blog/tags/disciplemaking>)

### EFCA Blog Comment Policy

We welcome all relevant, thought-provoking comments and questions. Off-topic comments may not be published.



Please read our [Comment Policy](#) before commenting.

0 Comments [EFCA Blog](#) [Disqus' Privacy Policy](#)

1 Login ▾

[Recommend](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#)

Sort by Best ▾



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS [?](#)

Name

Be the first to comment.

---