

An Overnight Event

Based on

**STUPID
Parents**

Why They Just Don't Understand
and How You Can Help

By Hayley DiMarco

Overview

5 Introduction

9 Friday Night

Dinner 1 hour

Large Group Session One: The Perfect Parents (pp. 11–23) 1–1.5 hours

Individual Reflection Time 15–30 minutes

Free Time 30 minutes +

13 Saturday Morning

Breakfast 1 hour

Reading/Review Time 30 minutes

Large Group Session Two: The Art of the Deal (pp. 25–66) 1–1.5 hours

Small Group Session 30 minutes

17 Saturday Afternoon

Lunch 1 hour

Large Group Session Three: The Big Talk (pp. 67–96) 1–1.5 hours

Free Time/Pack Up 30 minutes

Closing Large Group Session 30–45 minutes

23 Handouts

29 Author Bio

Introduction

How many of your students have ever complained about their parents? Have you ever heard one of them exclaim, “My parents are so stupid”? Sure you have. We all have. And here’s why: today’s teens face a lot of issues that are embarrassing or difficult to talk about—especially with their parents. As a result, they stay quiet, ignore their parents’ advice, or argue and yell. But it doesn’t have to be this way.

I wrote *Stupid Parents* to show teens how they can change things at home by improving their relationship with their parents. Teens will find out how to stop parental nagging, deal with over-protective parents, rebuild trust after they’ve screwed up, and much more. It can be done—but it may not be easy. And that’s where you come in.

This *Stupid Parents* event guide has been designed as an overnight event and is loaded with questions and activities that coordinate with specific sections of my book. Together, we’ll take a look at why parents act the way they do and how teens can get their parents to finally understand. The event begins in the early evening and ends the following afternoon. The Friday evening session will introduce the topic, while still leaving plenty of time for games, movies, or any other fun activities you might want to do together. Keep in mind that Saturday’s schedule is more intense; you’ll want to encourage your students to get some sleep the night before. I’ve offered a suggested timetable in the Overview, but feel free to adapt this schedule as needed. Be flexible and remember that the goal is to have meaningful discussion—not to simply “get through” the schedule. Since the timetable doesn’t allow for a great deal of reading time, I suggest that you hand out copies of the book to your students at least two weeks before the event. Encourage them to read the entire book ahead of time so you can focus your time on discussion at the event. And when it comes to discussion, please feel free to use these activities and questions to sculpt your own group time. You may find that students come with enough questions to fuel an hour’s worth of conversation. Or you may need to rely on the questions provided here to keep the discussion rolling. How you want to use these questions is up to you. Just remember: the goal is to generate a healthy discussion.

It’s almost time to get started. But first, here are some helpful hints about using this guide in a group setting.

Before You Start

Before hosting a *Stupid Parents* event, you'll want to do the following:

- » **Prepare Yourself:** Make sure you've read through *Stupid Parents* and this entire event guide before your students arrive. As you read, jot down ideas that will help you make the activities and questions applicable to your group. You may also want to think of some personal stories you can share. Also, set aside a special prayer time to ask for God's blessing on this event. Pray for the students who will be coming. And ask God to give you wisdom and grace as you encourage the students to improve their relationships at home.
- » **Prepare the Students:** Hand out copies of the book at least two weeks before your event and encourage students to read it beforehand. If they feel overwhelmed at the thought of getting through the whole book in that amount of time, hand out copies of the Twelve-Day Reading Schedule included in the handouts section of this event guide. You may also offer students a copy of the event schedule a few days ahead of time so they can prepare for the pace of the event.
- » **Talk to Parents:** Some of your students' parents may raise eyebrows at the sight of a *Stupid Parents* book. So before you host this event, explain the book's title and subject matter to parents. Host a meeting or send out a letter informing them of the book's contents and offering to answer any questions they may have. Offer them a copy of the Table of Contents and share your vision for helping students build better relationships at home.



Handout

Take-Away

Help your students remember this event by offering them a take-away item they can bring home with them. In the Closing Session of this event guide, you'll find a simple suggestion for using car air fresheners as this take-away, but you can easily substitute another item if you'd prefer.

Group Rules

Remind your students that this study group is a place where people are to be valued and respected. We suggest that you share these simple group rules with everyone before you begin.

- » **Practice confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
- » **Respect other people's views,** even when they are different than your own.
- » **Listen. Listen. Listen.** Don't be the one who does all the talking. Let others have a chance to share their views as well.
- » **Don't interrupt.** Wait your turn to talk.

TIPS for Leading a Discussion

Here are a few ideas to help you keep your discussions rolling in a meaningful way:

- » **Prepare.** Make sure you've read through the book chapters for each session. As you prepare for the sessions, consider one or two personal anecdotes you may be able to share during the group's discussion.
- » **Be yourself.** Thank students for sharing their thoughts and opinions, but don't feel that you need to agree with every one. Be honest with your students about the lessons you've learned in your own experiences—even if they may not be what your students want to hear!
- » **Encourage students to go deeper.** When someone gives a simple response, ask them follow-up questions such as "Why do you feel that way?" "What do you mean by that?" "Tell us more."
- » **Allow for silence.** Remember your students haven't read the questions ahead of time and they may need some time to process a response. Allow for about seven to ten seconds of silence before saying anything further, even when it makes you feel uncomfortable. If necessary, you can reword the question or move on to another topic.
- » **Include everyone in the discussion.** If it seems like the same two or three students are responding to all of your questions, look for ways to bring others into the conversation. Some students may need a little encouragement to share their thoughts and opinions. Invite them to talk by saying something like "Ben, I'm curious what you think about this too," or "Sara, I'd love to hear what you have to say about that." Be sensitive to their feelings, though. If the student has nothing to say or looks extremely uncomfortable, give them an out by moving on to someone else.
- » **Be a good listener.** The goal is to have a true discussion, not just a "talk" by the group leader. Avoid putting words in the students' mouths or overreacting to comments that you may not agree with. Try asking "mirror" questions that challenge students to clarify or affirm what you've heard. For example, say "What I hear you saying is this. Is that what you mean?" or "So what you seem to be saying is this. Would you agree?"
- » **Bring God into it.** Pray for the students before and after each session. Ask God to direct your discussion and be open to the Spirit's leading. It may be that he takes you in an unexpected direction, so don't get too hung up on "the plan." If students are genuinely interested and engaged in a healthy side topic, let the conversation go, saying a silent prayer for God to be working on their hearts as you go.

Friday Night

Dinner

I suggest that you start your event with a meal. Whether you order pizza, hit the drive-through, or brave the kitchen together, dinner is a great time for your students to get to know each other. The more comfortable they are around each other, the easier it will be for them to share their honest feelings later on. But be careful not to dull the mood. Keep the time light and fun so everyone has the energy and focus they need to dig into the really meaty issues ahead.

Large Group Session One: The Perfect Parents

Opening Activity: Parenting 101

Supplies needed: blank paper (about 4 sheets per group) and pens/markers

For this activity, divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group several sheets of blank paper and some colored pens or markers.

Tell the groups to create an instruction manual for parents from a teen's perspective. Encourage them to imagine what the perfect parents would be like. How would they act? What kind of rules would they make for their teens? How would they treat their kids? They should describe the perfect parents in their parenting manual and include a set of guidelines that the perfect parents would follow.

Give your students about ten minutes to create their parenting manuals. Then take a few minutes to have the groups share highlights from their manuals with each other.

Follow-up Questions

- » What were some of the common traits you used to describe the perfect parents? Were there any areas where you disagreed on what the perfect parent would be like?
- » What were the underlying goals you had in mind as you created guidelines for perfect parents? What *should* be a parent's goal?

- » Now try to imagine that you are a parent. How would you describe the perfect kid? Do you think most teens would live up to your description of the “perfect teen”?

Student Feedback

Before moving into further discussion, ask students to share any questions or comments they had as they read pages 11–23.

Discussion Questions for Session One

1. Do you think any teen has perfect parents? Why or why not?
 - » Why do so many teens feel like everyone else’s parents are better than theirs?
 - » Do you think teens hold other parents to a different set of standards than they do their own parents?
2. Can you think of an example of a “stupid parent” incident in your life? Was there ever a time when your parents just didn’t get you?
 - » How did your parents act in this situation?
 - » How did you act in this situation?
3. What kinds of situations or issues tend to cause tension between parents and teens?
 - » Why do you think these issues cause such problems in the average parent-child relationship?
 - » What do parents do that makes these problems worse?
 - » What do teens do that makes these problems worse?
4. How do you think your parents feel about growing older? How do you think they feel about the fact that *you* are getting older?
5. Why do you think some parents are so afraid to let their teens have some independence?
 - » Should parents *always* let teens make their own choices? Why or why not?
6. What responsibilities and pressures do your parents deal with that you don’t have to worry about yet?
 - » What does your parents’ average day look like?
 - » What do you think your parents worry about?
 - » When you look at life from your parents’ perspective, does it help you understand them any better?
7. What issues do *you* face that your parents just don’t seem to understand?
8. Do you think most teens treat their parents the way they themselves would like to be treated? Why or why not?

9. What's the difference between a normal "less-than-perfect" parent and a crazy parent who isn't safe?
- » What kinds of behaviors are unacceptable and require outside intervention?
 - » What should a kid do if they find themselves in a dangerous parent-child relationship?

Individual Time

After your Friday evening session, encourage students to find some quiet space for a short time of personal reflection. For this individual time, give the students a copy of the handout "Home Inspection."

An orange octagonal icon with the word "Handout" written in white text inside.

Free Time

By now your students have discussed and thought a lot about their relationships with their parents. To reward them for all of their hard work today, you might want to plan a special event. Watch a movie together, hold a board game tournament, or just hang out. Don't forget to have fun! Keep in mind, though, that day two's schedule is more intense, so you will want to encourage your students to get some sleep tonight.

Saturday Morning

Breakfast

After a full night's sleep, your students will be ready to dig into more *Stupid Parents* topics. While you munch on some cinnamon rolls and orange juice, get the kids talking. If you had free time last night, ask them what they did. If you watched a movie together, ask them how they liked it and what their favorite part was. Keep it fun and entertaining!

Reading Time

Before you begin the next group session, ask your students if they need or want more time to review the next section of the book. If they have not been able to read through the entire book before the event, you may want to start a little earlier this morning and work in some reading time before you continue with the schedule.

Large Group Session Two: The Art of the Deal

Opening Activity: Yelling Match

Supplies needed: poster board or whiteboard, markers

For this activity, you will need to divide your students into four or five groups. One of these groups will serve as judges, and the rest of the groups will be acting troupes. Each troupe will act out a disagreement that might occur between parents and teenagers. The troupes will each have two minutes to act out their argument, and they will be competing to see who can make their argument the worst.

Give each troupe one of the scenarios listed below, and offer them a minute or two to plan out their act.

- » **Scenario #1:** A teen comes home 20 minutes past curfew. The teen thinks his/her curfew is too early, but the parents think their curfew is fair.
- » **Scenario #2:** It's Saturday afternoon and a parent has just asked their teen—for the third time—to wash the family van.
- » **Scenario #3:** A teen wants to go to a concert with some friends. The concert is in a city three hours away and the parents don't think it's a good idea for a bunch of teens to go that far alone.
- » **Scenario #4:** It's Friday night and a teen is about to go out with some of their new friends. The parents forbid them from going, however, because they don't trust this new group of friends.

Encourage the actors to have fun with this activity, exaggerating their characters to create a big argument. After each group has performed their skit, let the judges give their scores on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the worst fight ever). If you want, you may hand out a small prize to the winners before moving on to the follow-up questions below.

Follow-up Questions

- » What kinds of things did your parents and teens do or say that made the arguments escalate? How did their actions create a negative cycle?
- » How common are these behaviors in real-life arguments between parents and teens?
- » Did the negative actions/words end up bringing the parents and kids closer to their goals or farther away? Why?
- » How could the parents or teens have handled the situations differently to produce a better outcome?

Student Feedback

Before moving into further discussion, ask students to share any questions or comments they had as they read pages 25–66.

Discussion Questions for Session Two

1. Is it easy or difficult for teens to accept that their parents have authority over them? Why?
 - » How will learning to deal with your parents' authority prepare you for other situations later in life?
 - » Does accepting your parents' authority mean that you are helpless or powerless in the relationship? Why or why not?
2. In what ways do teens sometimes try to take control from their parents?
3. Consider this quote from p. 30: "Understanding what you have or can offer another person is called leverage, and you can use it with your parents just like in a business deal."
 - » What do you think of this suggestion that you can have some power in your relationship with your parents?
 - » What do you have to offer your parents as "leverage"?
4. How do you usually feel after an argument with your parents?
 - » How do you think your parents feel after an argument?
 - » Who usually gets their way in the end? Do they feel good about it?
5. Why do you think parents nag?
 - » Why do teens tend to have negative reactions to their parents' requests and rules?
 - » Discuss this quote from p. 36: "See, their nagging isn't all about bossing you around. It's one part needing your help to get things done and one part wanting to teach you some skills. . ." Have you ever seen nagging from this perspective?
6. Why do teens get embarrassed by their parents?
 - » How can teens deal with these embarrassing feelings in a way that doesn't damage their relationship with their parents?
7. How would your relationship with your parents change if you focused more on their feelings instead of your own?
 - » How would you act to show them that you care?
 - » How do you think they would respond?
8. Why do you think parents tend to be overprotective of their kids?
 - » In what ways do teens contribute to this problem?
 - » What are some ways you could show your parents that you are responsible and trustworthy?
9. Is apologizing a sign of weakness or strength? Why?
 - » When should a teen apologize to their parent?
 - » Why are apologies so hard? Should they be?

10. What are your needs and desires in the parent-child relationship? What are your parents' needs and desires?
- » Should kids have to fulfill their parents' needs? Why or why not?
 - » How might fulfilling some of your parents' desires help you gain some of your own desires?

Small Group Session



Handout

Divide your students into at least three small groups for this session and designate an adult leader (or a mature student leader) for each group. Explain to the groups that they will be given a handout with further instructions.

Give the leaders enough copies of the "Mess-Ups" handout for each person in their group and give them a designated area where their small group can meet. You will also need to give each group leader an assignment number (one through three) so they will know which assignment to complete on the handout.

Saturday Afternoon

Lunch

How's the weather outside? If it's nice, why not have a picnic? Recruit your students to help make sandwiches, pack juice boxes, or wrap brownies. They can split up the responsibilities or work on them together. Teamwork is great! When you're ready, ask each student to help carry some of the food to a nice picnic area outside. If the sun is out, take advantage of the weather and go for a walk with each other, play Frisbee, or challenge your students to a game of basketball. A little adventure can be fun!

Large Group Session Three: The Big Talk

Opening Activity: Yea or Nay

Supplies needed: construction paper, string or yarn, index cards, pens

Before this session, use some construction paper to make signs for each of the characters listed below. Write out the character descriptions on the sign and punch holes in the top corners. Thread a piece of string or yarn through the holes and tie it off in a large loop so the sign can be hung around someone's neck.

Characters:

Mr. Responsible

- » I always keep my promises and never break curfew.
- » I tell my parents where I'm going and who I'm hanging out with.
- » I respect my parents' opinions and listen to what they have to say.

Miss Attitude

- » If my parents say no to a request, I do what I want anyway.
- » I roll my eyes a lot when my parents are talking to me.

Mr. Sneaky

- » I always make curfew—but then I sneak out again later.
- » I listen to my parents' decisions, but I always find a loophole that lets me get what I want.
- » I tell my parents my plans, but I'm usually lying about them.

Miss Trying-to-Get-Along

- » I disagree with my parents at times, but I do obey their final decisions.
- » When my parents ask me to do something, I usually get it done eventually.
- » If they ask where I'm going, I'll tell my parents about my plans.

Mr. Irresponsible

- » I don't follow through when I say I'll do something.
- » My parents often end up bailing me out of bad situations.

As the students arrive, hand each of them an index card and a pen. Ask the students to think of a request that a teen would need their parents' permission for (going to a sleep over, extended curfew, etc.). Encourage them to be creative and have them write their request on the index card. After they are finished, collect all these "request" cards.

Now select five students to wear the character signs you created before the session. (For a small group, you may only want to use two or three of the characters). Give each character two of the "request" cards and tell them to think about how their character would try to get parental permission for their requests.

The rest of your students will form a "parents' panel." Each character will get a turn to make their requests to this panel. Encourage your parents' panel to think like typical parents and ask questions or raise concerns as the characters present their requests. After the characters have finished making their case, have the parents' panel discuss and vote on whether they should give a "yea" or "nay" response to the request.

When all the characters have taken a turn, use the following questions to have a brief discussion about this activity.

Follow-up Questions

- » What factors made the parents more likely to grant a request? What factors made them unlikely to grant a request?
- » Which of these characters would you trust? Why?
- » Which character best describes the average teenager?

- » What could the characters have done to get a more positive response to their requests?

Student Feedback

Before moving into further discussion, ask students to share any questions or comments they had as they read pages 67–96.

Discussion Questions for Session Three

1. Why is trust such an important issue in the parent-child relationship?
 - » What are some things teens do that could destroy trust with their parents?
 - » How do you treat someone you don't trust? Why?
2. Discuss this quote from p. 70: "If you can't be honest with yourself about yourself, then you can't be honest with anyone."
 - » How does having a realistic picture of yourself help you deal with other people?
 - » How does having an unrealistic picture of yourself mess up your view of life?
 - » Is it easy or difficult to be honest with yourself? Why?
3. Discuss this quote from p. 75: "Don't use honesty as an excuse to hurt someone."
 - » How might a teen use honesty to hurt someone? To hurt a parent?
 - » When is it better to keep the truth to yourself instead of telling it to someone?
 - » Is it ever ok to speak the truth if it's going to hurt someone's feelings? If so, when?
4. How big of an impact does your attitude make on your daily life?
 - » What has a bigger long-term effect: what happens to you, or the way you react to what happens to you?
 - » Describe a teen with a bad attitude. How would that attitude impact their relationship with their parents?
 - » What are some positive steps you could take to develop a better attitude about your life and your parents?
5. Why is it important to spend time with your parents?
 - » What's more important: a teen's relationship with their parents or their friends? Who should they spend more time with? Why?
 - » How would your relationship with your parents change if you were willing to spend more time and effort on them?
6. What are some ways to build trust with your parents through everyday actions?
 - » How does building everyday trust improve your chances of gaining approval for special requests?

7. What are some advantages to preparing in advance for a big talk with your parents?
 - » What can you do before your talk to help increase your chances of getting what you want?
8. How does thinking through your plan's strengths and weaknesses prepare you to make a better argument?
 - » How should you handle your parents' objections as you discuss your idea?
 - » Does it weaken your argument to acknowledge your parents' concerns?
9. What should you do if your parents still say "no" to your request, even when you've acted responsibly and made a good argument?
 - » What happens if a teen refuses to accept their parents' last word? How does that affect the trust in the parent-child relationship?
 - » Do you think the way you handle your parents' decision on one request has an impact on their response to your next request?

Free Time

Need a break? Give your students—and yourself—thirty minutes to regroup. You've all been sitting for a while, so encourage everyone to get up and move. If this event was held away from home, take a few minutes to clean up and pack your things. And before you start the wrap-up, take a minute to say a prayer. Thank God for everything that happened during this event. If you have time, say a quick prayer for each of your students so that they may take what they've learned this weekend back to their regular routines.

Large Group Closing Session

Supplies needed: paper, pens, envelopes, permanent markers, car air fresheners (1 per student)

Special Note

Before this session, meet with your adult sponsors and assign each of them a few students to pray for during the Letter Writing time. (See details below). Make sure that every student will have at least one leader assigned to them.

Rather than starting this session with an activity, you'll begin with some follow-up discussion about the students' small group time earlier in the day. Have each group take turns sharing their answers to the questions from their handouts. Wrap up this sharing time with a brief discussion of these questions:

- » In your small groups, you did a lot of talking about stupid mistakes—made by both teens and their parents. How can we turn past mistakes into a positive way of moving forward?

- » How do you know when you're dwelling too much on someone's mistakes—whether they are yours or your parents'?
- » What are some concrete steps you could take to avoid making mistakes with your parents in the first place?
- » What's the best way to handle your parents' mistakes? How do you think God would like us to handle them?

Letter Writing

After your time of conversation, hand out writing supplies to each student. Tell them to spend the next few minutes writing a letter to their parents—talking about what they learned at this event and how they would like to see their relationship improve. Ask the students to think about some specific steps they can take to build a stronger relationship with their parents and then encourage them to share their goals with their parents in the letter. Give students about ten minutes to write their letters and place them in an envelope.

Give students a couple of minutes to start their letters. Then, as they continue to write, have your adult sponsors kneel by each of their assigned students and offer to pray for them. The sponsors should ask if the students have any specific requests about dealing with their parents and then say a brief prayer for them. It's important to keep these conversations and prayers quiet so the other students will not listen in or be distracted as they write.

After the adult sponsors have completed their prayers, ask students to finish their letters. When they're done, encourage them to bring the letters home to reread them or hand them to their parents. Or you can ask the students to address the envelopes and then collect them so you can mail them out. This option may be helpful to students who would otherwise chicken out and fail to actually give their letter to their parents.

Before sending the students home, ask these final questions:

- » What is the most important step you need to take to improve your relationship with your parents?
- » What do you need to do to have a "fresh" attitude toward them?

Ask students to think of at least one specific "action step" they want to take when they return home. As they are thinking, pass out an air freshener to each student as a take-away item to help them remember this event. Explain that the air fresheners are meant to be a reminder that they need to work at "freshening up" their relationships at home. Have them write their action step on the air freshener with a permanent marker and encourage them to put it in a place where they'll see it often—in their car or bedroom, for example—and remember their commitment.

Handouts

A Twelve-Day Reading Guide For

Stupid Parents

Why They Just Don't Understand
and How You Can Help

- » Day One: Contents and Introduction—pp. 7–14
- » Day Two: The Perfect Parents—pp. 15–23
- » Day Three: The Art of the Deal—pp. 25–43
- » Day Four: The Art of the Deal (continued)—pp. 44–56
- » Day Five: Take a Break!
- » Day Six: The Art of the Deal (continued)—pp. 57–65
- » Day Seven: The Big Talk—pp. 67–82
- » Day Eight: The Big Talk (continued)—pp. 83–94
- » Day Nine: Take Another Break.
- » Day Ten: Rebuilding Broken Trust—pp. 98–103
- » Day Eleven: Really Stupid Parents—pp. 106–117
- » Day Twelve: Really Stupid Parents (continued)
and The End—pp. 126–127

Home Inspection

Ever heard of a home inspection? It's a helpful process people go through before buying a house: An experienced inspector looks over the property and gives a report on what's in good shape and what parts may need repair. Of course, roof shingles and pipes aren't the only things that can fall apart in a home; sometimes our relationships also get broken. And it's helpful to make an inspection of those relationships so you can fix things before they completely crumble. So take the next few minutes to evaluate your own home—and what you'd like to see it become.

1. What are some of the good things about your parents? What are some good memories you have at home with them?
2. What are some areas where your relationship with your parents is broken? What issues cause friction between you and them?
3. What was the topic of your last argument with your parents? How do you feel about the way you acted? How about the way they acted?
4. What would be your ideal home situation? What would you like your relationship with your parents to look like?
5. Check out this passage from Ephesians 6:1-4: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise— 'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.' Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."
 - » How does your relationship to your parents compare to this passage?
 - » What do you think it means to honor your parents?
 - » What changes do you think God would like to see in you and your parents?
6. If you could make one "repair" to your relationship with your parents, what would you want to fix the most?

Spend the rest of your quiet time in prayer. Ask God to help you see how you can make the repair you just wrote about. If you want, use the back of this paper to write a letter to God about your relationships at home.

MESS-UPS

“How could you?” “I don’t think I’ll ever trust you again!” “I can’t believe you did this!” Ever heard those words coming out of your parents’ mouths? Ever felt like saying them back? We’ve all had our share of mess-ups at home. And it seems like no matter how hard we work to improve relationships with parents, someone ends up making a mistake and we have to start all over. So how do you deal when you’ve screwed up? And what do you do when your parents are the mess-ups?

Talk through the following questions with your group and be prepared to share your answers when you get back to the big group.

Your Mess-Ups

1. In *Stupid Parents*, the author suggests that you have a “Trust Bank Account” with your parents. (Check out page 77 if you need a little help remembering what that was all about.) What would be some examples of deposits and withdrawals to your trust account?
2. Can you share an example of a time when you messed up and lost your parents’ trust? What did it take to earn their trust back?
3. What are some typical consequences when a teenager breaks their parents’ trust? How can they show maturity in their response to these consequences?
4. How does fessing up to your mistakes help rebuild broken trust? How can you show your parents that you’re really sorry for what you did?
5. What would be your #1 piece of advice for how a teen should handle their mistakes with parents?

Their Mess-Ups

If you haven't been told already, ask your leader which of the following assignments your group should complete.

Assignment #1: Reread or skim through the material about dealing with divorce on pages 107–117. As a group, imagine that you are all dealing with this situation at home. Use the questions at the bottom of this sheet to develop some insights that you can share with the large group on how to handle divorce

Assignment #2: Reread or skim through the material about dealing with a parent's alcohol or drug abuse on pages 118–120. As a group, imagine that you are all dealing with this situation at home. Use the questions at the bottom of this sheet to develop some insights that you can share with the large group on how to handle drug or alcohol abuse by parents.

Assignment #3: Reread or skim through the material about dealing with materialistic parents on pages 121–122. As a group, imagine that you are all dealing with this situation at home. Use the questions at the bottom of this sheet to develop some insights that you can share with the large group on how to handle materialistic parents.

1. Describe what kind of feelings you would have about your parents.
2. What would be some unhealthy ways of dealing with all these feelings?
3. What would be some positive steps you could take to help you cope with your parents?
4. Who could you turn to for help? Would you feel strange about asking for help? Why or why not?
5. What could another teenager—a friend or acquaintance—do to help you deal with the tough situation you have with your parents?

About Hayley



Hayley DiMarco writes cutting-edge and bestselling books for teens including *Mean Girls*, *Mean Girls Gone*, *Sexy Girls*, *Technical Virgin*, *Dateable*, *The Dateable Rules*, *The Dirt on Dating*, *The Dirt on Breaking Up*, and *Stupid Parents*. Hayley also writes books for former teens including *Marriable* and *Mean Girls All Grown Up*. Her goal is to give practical answers for life's problems and encourage readers to form stronger spiritual lives. Hayley is Chief Creative Officer and founder of Hungry Planet, an independent publishing imprint and communications company that feeds the world's appetite for truth. Hungry Planet helps organizations understand and reach the multi-tasking mindset, while Hungry Planet books tackle life's everyday issues with a distinctly modern spiritual voice. For more information on Hungry Planet including leader resources and online communities that revolve around the books, visit www.hungryplanet.net.