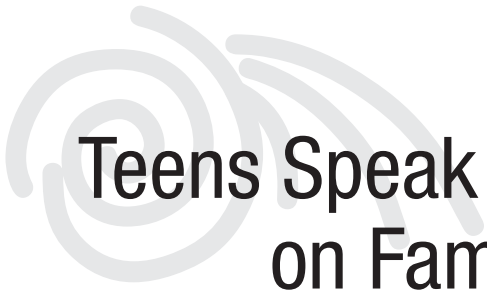


saint mary's press

Teens Speak on Family Matters

truth • tension • trials • triumphs

Edited by Laurie Delgatto



Teens Speak on Family Matters



Teens Speak on Family Matters

Truth, Tension, Trials, and Triumphs

Edited by Laurie Delgatto



saint mary's press

The publishing team included Laurie Delgatto, development editor; Jayne Zellers, editorial intern; Lorraine Kilmartin, reviewer; Mary Koehler, permissions editor; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the prepublication and production services departments of Saint Mary's Press.

Copyright © 2006 by Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1320, www.smp.org. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

3442

ISBN 978-0-88489-875-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Teens speak on family matters : truth, tension, trials, and triumphs / edited by Laurie Delgatto.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-88489-875-7 (pbk.)

1. Catholic teenagers—Religious life.
2. Catholic teenagers—Family relationships.
3. Family—Religious aspects—Catholic Church.

I. Delgatto, Laurie.

BX2355.T44 2006

248.8'3—dc22

2006009615

Dedication

For Brooke, Alyssa, and Erin. And for
Brigette, the heart of their family.

Acknowledgments

With a book like this one, we are limited to a certain number of pages. All the writings we received are worthy of publication because they speak of the wisdom that young people have to offer one another and the world at large. We express gratitude to all the young people who took the time to write and share their thoughts.

So many youth ministers, religious educators, teachers, and parents continually support our efforts to make the voices of young people heard and known through books such as this one. We extend our deepest thanks to those who encouraged so many young people to put their words into writing and then sent them on to us.

And finally, I wish to thank Mary Koehler and Jayne Zellers for their assistance with this project.

—Laurie Delgatto

Foreword

There are many “hot button” words in our culture today and among them, I believe, is the word *family*. For some, the word brings fond experiences, memories, and feelings of joy-filled grace. For others, the mere mention of the word *family* brings pain, sorrow, bitterness, and deep-seated, everlasting scars.

These days family-life experts share their research, wisdom, and expertise—and for many, their latest book as well—on television, radio, Internet sites, and in our newspapers. They also are guest speakers at our churches and schools. So one might ask, Of what value is reading another book on family life?

Sometimes I think we all just need some honest, frank, and spiritual inspiration that can come from sources that vary greatly from our research-and-statistic-loving society. Sometimes I believe people of all ages and generations have a deep desire for someone to just give it to them straight, to share messages in ways that teach, inspire, challenge, and truly affect mind, soul, and body.

This book definitely gives us straight talk from young people in the form of thought-filled, honest, and insightful stories, poems, and reflections. God’s grace pours through each story and poem. There is nothing like sharing “truth” about family life.

May your reading of the truths of the varied families mentioned in this book cause you to ponder, reflect, and come to peace with your own family. May God’s healing grace transcend the pages of this book and leap into your soul, transforming you with increased courage as you continue to build your own family life—today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

May the Lord bless all those who have shared their time and talents in writing this book, and for all those at Saint Mary’s Press who had the insight to undertake such a vital piece of literature for all generations to read and take into their hearts.

—Doug Brummel

Introduction

Teens care deeply about family. This observation shouldn't surprise us. After all, what is more central, more important, and at times more painful than our family experiences? Who hasn't felt the sting of a parent's anger, the exhilaration of a fun adventure with a sibling, or the pain of losing a grandparent? Teens feel deeply, passionately, and honestly about all these relationships, often speaking in a louder voice and with more candor than do most adults.

Written by high-school-age teens, *Teens Speak on Family Matters: Truth, Tension, Trials, and Triumphs* offers a glimpse into the emotional peaks and valleys of teenagers' relationships with their families. Teens write with honesty, insight, and creativity as they share their firsthand realities of life within a family. The joys, challenges, highlights, and sorrows of family life as seen through the eyes of teen writers are included in this diverse collection of writings.

Each entry is as unique as the writer, and yet all these writings share a common thread: family matters!

All of us know that at times, family life can feel like a ride on a roller coaster, which climbs up and up and up the track and then plummets suddenly to the bottom. Difficult experiences such as divorce or a death in the family can make us feel as though we just left our stomach at the top of the roller coaster and our mind got lost somewhere around that last sudden and unexpected turn. Family life also has moments of sheer pleasure and exhilaration, such as celebrations and holidays, and we want to partake in those again and again. In equal measure are those moments when our families carry on at a slow and steady pace, moments when we can take a deep breath and know that "all is well," despite the highs and the lows.

The writings in this collection appear in random order to remind the reader that family life is filled with many twists and turns, tensions, trials, and triumphs.

The reflections you find in the remaining pages hold great truth. Savor the honesty, the poignancy, and the depth with which they are being shared.

Whether you laugh, cry, smile, or sigh as you read these pages, you are sure to appreciate the essential and timeless truth that family does, in fact, matter!

—Laurie Delgatto, Editor



All About Family

In Young People's Words



Family consisting of friends
Family consisting of relatives
Filled sometimes with love
Filled sometimes with hate
The giving of care, the giving of compassion
Made up of mind, made up of body
Made up of blood, made up of spirit
Being born into one, being married into one
Being joined with one
Of getting together
Of special occasions
Of Christmas, of Thanksgiving, of Easter
Of weddings, of birthdays, of funerals
Fighting with each other
Only to be reconciled
Relaxing with each other
Of sitting, standing, talking
Activities with one another
Of playing, camping, cooking
Days filled with anxiety
Of trouble, of problems
Days filled with excitement
Of expectations, of changes
Sometimes being happy
Joy, love, laughter, smiles
Sometimes being sad
Woe, hate, tears, frowns
Of giving up selflessly—one's time, money, life
Of taking back selfishly—one's time, money, life
Of living as a family
Every day of your life

—Kimberly Adkins



Many people have different definitions of families. Family is a wonderful thing that you will always have. Family is composed of parents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents, cousins, and friends. These are people you look up to for guidance. They are always there when you need someone to talk to—whether it is about serious stuff or just random funny stuff. Many holidays you spend with them. These will be great memories that you will have about your family. During these holidays, you will share many interesting conversations with them. These are long-lasting friendships you will gain. You will have your family around, and they are just like your friends and will always be there. You can share your deep, dark secrets with them, and they won't repeat them. They are definitely people you can trust with anything.

—Brittany Radden