



3 Ways

to Prepare Your 8th
Grader for High School



You play a critical role in helping your 8th grader make the jump to high school.

It's at this point that big questions like "Who am I?" "What is true?" and "What is my purpose?" begin to surface. With the following three activities you can build a space for your 8th grader to have authentic conversations with you and trusted mentors.

**3 ways you can
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1. PLAN A RETREAT

Celebrate the end of middle school! It doesn't need to be extravagant—think about what your child likes to do or a place they love. You can fill a day or weekend with those things and places.

If your child loves to talk, it can simply be sitting across from each other in a coffee shop or on a park bench. If they're a little more hesitant to share their feelings, take away some of the pressure by **being active while you chat.**

While it's good to have a few insights prepared, don't feed your child answers, predict their responses, or steer the conversation in a certain direction. Let their responses be theirs!

If your child is more of an internal processor, ask them to write about these questions first. They might feel more comfortable getting their thoughts on paper before sharing.

Ideas!

- Play a board game
- Walk in the park
- Craft together
- Participate in a sport

Example Questions

Some starter questions:

- What went well?
- What did you not like?
- What did you feel like when...?

To dig deeper, ask follow-up questions:

- What do you want to do differently in high school?
- How do you think you've grown?

Now, start setting the vision for the next step:

- What are you excited about?
- What makes you nervous?
- What do you want to do?
- Who do you want to be in high school?



2. FIND THE FIVE

Cara Powell from Fuller Youth Institute offers this: “Despite the age segregation that exists in our churches and broader culture, each young person is greatly benefited when surrounded by a team of five adults. We call this the new 5:1 ratio.”

Check out *Sticky Faith* by Cara Powell

Who are your child’s 5?

If you can name them, awesome! Skip down to the next paragraph. If you can’t? That’s okay, too. If there’s someone who’s solid in their faith and sets an example of who you want your child to look up to, send that person a text or pull them aside and ask if they’d spend time with your child in a way that makes sense.

Don’t be afraid to ask!

The time spent together doesn’t need to look the same for everyone. Maybe it’s a college student inviting your child out for a movie or a youth group leader at church asking to grab coffee. Perhaps a grandparent (or adopted

grandparent!) needs help with a project at home. These are perfect opportunities to have your child spend time with a mentor figure.

If you’re able to do this before the “you and me retreat,” ask the mentors to write a letter to your child. It should encourage, name strengths, and gently challenge their next steps.

3. PROVIDE A PLACE SET APART

Encouraging your child to experience a new environment with new people before the jump into high school is key! At HoneyRock, we've learned that these elements make a powerful learning environment for eighth graders:

- **Authentic, Christ-Centered Community**

As cabins “do life together” with their cabin-mates and leaders, they’re experiencing powerful opportunities for meaningful conversations. This is what forges lasting relationships.

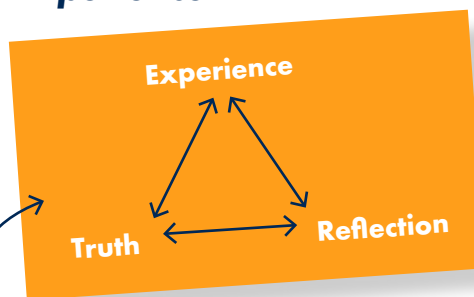
- **Compelling, Relevant Conversations Around Life’s Big Questions**

Cabin leaders lead activities, devotionals, and quiet time with God around stories and ideas that will help campers start to answer the questions, “Who am I? What is true? What’s my purpose?”

- **Gradual Responsibility is Given**

As your child begins to navigate high school, they’ll be spending more time away from you. Providing a new but safe space for them to start making their own decisions is a critical step to independence.

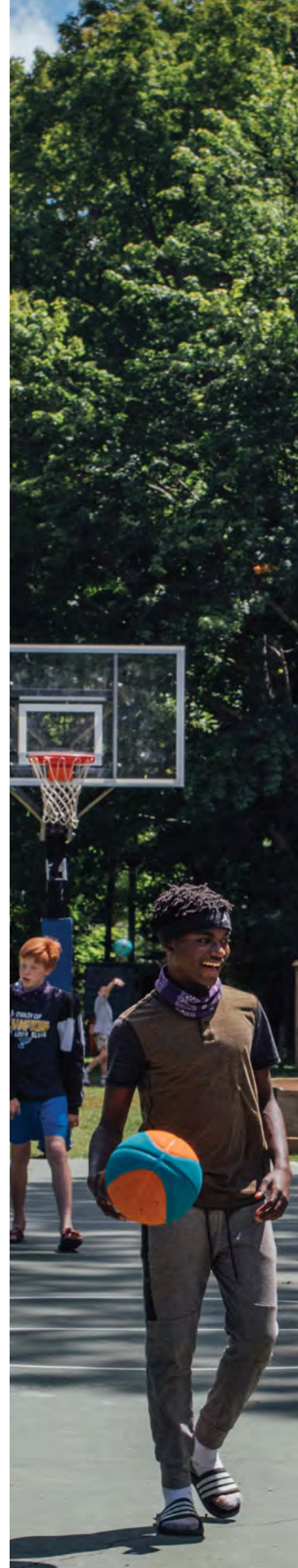
- **Hands-On Educational Experience**



We invite 8th graders into an experience—learning how to kayak, figuring out a puzzle, creating a ceramic mug—upon which we talk about and infuse with God’s Word. This allows for a focused reflection that increases understanding, clarifies values, and develops their capacities.

- **Outdoor Environment**

Getting outside provides a break from screens and Wi-Fi—a benefit for all of us! While your 8th grader might not be the typical “outdoorsy kid” getting them in a place apart from technology is more important now than ever.





Advance Camp

at HoneyRock

Advance Camp at HoneyRock is designed for 8th graders making the jump to high school. Help your soon-to-be 9th grader walk high school halls with confidence!

Through outdoor adventure, team-building activities, Bible studies, meals shared around the table, and all of the “in-between” moments, campers build authentic relationships. This Christ-centered community makes a safe space to wrestle with life’s big questions. Through their shared experience, campers grow in independence, grit, and confidence for their high school years.

Session 1: June 21 - July 9
3-Week Option | \$1,895

Session 2: July 12 - July 23
2-Week Option | \$1,225

Register Today!



We asked parents to share how they've seen their child grow during their child's experience at HoneyRock:

93%

grew in their ability to connect God's word with their lives

99%

grew in their engagement with daily activities and events

100%

grew in their personal character

96%

grew in their desire to serve others

100%

grew in their willingness and ability to face challenges

“HoneyRock has been a huge part of our lives. Our five kids have attended more than 37 camper sessions over the past 13 years. Added up, that's a significant investment. Yet the returns have been far greater. The challenges that HoneyRock has presented our kids and the resources—especially the people who have poured love into their lives—have cultivated their hearts and minds as confident believers who are able to lead with their faith and not follow questionable influences.”

Chip and Beth Edgar
HoneyRock Camper Parents

About HONEYROCK

Three Lakes, Wisconsin Location

FOUNDED
1951

Counseling Staff

Training Length
4 weeks*

Training Topics
youth development, leadership,
outdoor skills, youth ministry,
Christian education

Certifications:
American Red Cross First Aid
American Red Cross CPR
Basic Water Rescue
MinistrySafe

DISTINCTIVE PROGRAMMING

Each HoneyRock camper program blends these five themes:

- × Wilderness Trips
- × Instructional Activities
- × Service Opportunities
- × Spiritual Focus
- × Leadership

Activities Offered:
Rock climbing, canoeing, drama,
ceramics, arts & crafts, mountain
biking, riflery, archery, swimming,
horse-back riding, wilderness
skills, waterskiing, kayaking

TRANSPORTATION

Yes! Coach bus pickups include
Wheaton, IL; Schaumburg, IL; and
Madison, WI. Otherwise, parents can
drive their campers directly to camp.

CAMPER TO
COUNSELOR
RATIO

4:1

**900
acres**

FOCUS

**Spiritual
Formation**

**Character
Development**

**Leadership
Development**

* Most camps set aside 3-10 days for staff training. At HoneyRock, we take a full four weeks to train our counseling staff.

HONEYROCK LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRESSION

As the Outdoor Center for Leadership Development of Wheaton College, HoneyRock is focused on developing whole and effective leaders through transformational outdoor experiences.

Our camp programs follow a planned leadership progression, built on age-appropriate responsibility and challenge in five key components: wilderness trips, instructional activities, service opportunities, spiritual focus, and leadership.



WILDERNESS TRIPS



INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



SPIRITUAL FOCUS



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

	WILDERNESS TRIPS	INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES	SPIRITUAL FOCUS	LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
Intro-Res Camp Grades 3-6	Onsite	Sample All Activities	Cabin Oriented Service	Encounter God and Learn His Stories	Care for Yourself and Others
Residential Camp Grades 4-8	1-2 Day Trip	Choose Activities to Master	Cabin and Peer Oriented Service	Learn to See Yourself in God's Story	Build Self Awareness
Advance Camp Grade 9	4-5 Day Trip	Pursue Mastery of Activities	Activity Area and Camp Service	Explore Why You Believe What You Believe	Collaborate and Think Critically
2:22 Camp Grades 10-11	7-9 Day Trip	Complete Mastery of Activities	Community Service	Own Your Faith Through Communion with God	Assume Ownership and Responsibility
Voyageur Grades 10-12	8-16 Day Trip	Learn to use Outdoor Pursuits for Restoration	Sustained Service Within Your Community	See God Through His Creation and Among His People	Initiate Problem Solving
Catalyst Grades 11-12	Varies	Use Mastery of Activity to Instruct Others	Sustained Camp and Community Service	Discover and Practice Your God-Given Gifts	Initiate Problem Solving

To learn more and register, visit us at
wheaton.edu/HRadv



WHEATON
COLLEGE

For Christ & His Kingdom