

Building Bridges with Young People

Julie E Lowe





“Have we talked with our children this week about
the delights of living more
than the disciplines of living? Have we inspired and
guided them more
Than we have corrected them?”

– V. Gilbert Beers

Why Do We Struggle with This?

- Pace of Life
- Cultural Priorities
- Feeling Inadequate
- We value compliance, over dialog (or relationship)
- We look for quick fixes rather than long-term bridge building



We serve the
wrong agenda

Peer Influence vs. Adult Influence

Peer Influence

- Lacks life experience
- Limited in resources and help
- Lacks insight & wisdom
- Assumes autonomy & maturity
- Sees adults as inadequate or insignificant
- Is often self-serving
- “My Truth”

Parental/ Adult Influence

- Looks out for the child
- Assumes greater life experience and wisdom
- Usually does not have anything to gain/ not self-serving
- Understands we all need help
- Values building relat.
- Points to the Lord for the source of truth

Negative Peer Influence

- A false sense of maturity/ confidence (arrogance) in their self-knowledge
- An inability to occupy themselves or be alone
- Tolerance for bad behavior and inappropriate peer demands
- Intolerance of wisdom- Mocking what is good/ wholesome
- Turning a blind eye to immoral/ risky behavior
- Disparaging authority and adult values
- A lack of humility and teachability
- Limited relationships with encouraging adults
- Idolizing/ imitating peers
- Proneness to alienation and isolation

Adult Influence

- It builds respect and cooperation.
- It creates an atmosphere of deference and admiration.
- It provides security and connection with children.
- It encourages a child's healthy dependence on parents for spiritual and emotional nurture.
- It models a reliance on wise counsel, especially from the Lord.
- It models a proper respect for leadership and governance.

Rules Without **Relationship** =

Rebellion

"Trust, and not submission, defines obedience."

A Gathering of Days, Joan W. Blos, 1979

Fostering Conversation



“The skill is to listen,
the gift is to hear.”

Building Bridges

- Nothing can substitute a genuine care and concern
- Pursue your kids
- When a child says “I don’t know”
- Forced Family Fun Day
- Look for opportunities to talk and ask questions
- Be willing to bring up the hard topics before they do – demonstrate you are not inadequate or indifferent
- Be willing to come back to hard conversations
- Affirm your love for them.

Incarnational Relationship: It's Never too Late

“Developing Christian Standards is like building a fire in the rain. It requires willful determination, against all odds, to do what seems impossible. It calls for expertise – know-how which understands the stubborn nature of the child and the nature of a hostile world.

It demands a stubborn perseverance to keep fanning the flickering flame, to keep protecting the hot coals.”

Howard G. Hendricks

Human Love vs. God's Love

Love is limited
Love is flawed
Is not always accessible
Prone to disappoint

Love is limitless
Perfect Love
Always available
Incapable of
disappointing

There are places inside a child's head & heart that we can not go – places only God can reach.

Human Comfort vs. God's Comfort

Comfort is limited
Comfort is flawed
Is not always accessible
Prone to disappoint

Comfort is limitless
Perfect Comfort
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There are places inside a child's head & heart that we can not go – places only God can reach.

Incarnational Relationship



2 Corinthians 1:3-5

"Comforting others with the
Comfort we've been given..."

God's Love & Comfort

"Greater is He that is within you, than he that is in the world..."

"What others meant for evil, God meant for Good."

"Do Not Fear, I am with you."

"Have Courage; Don't be afraid"

"You are not alone."

God offers Himself

His presence is the Answer

“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or the other of these destinations.”



The Weight of Glory
by C.S. Lewis

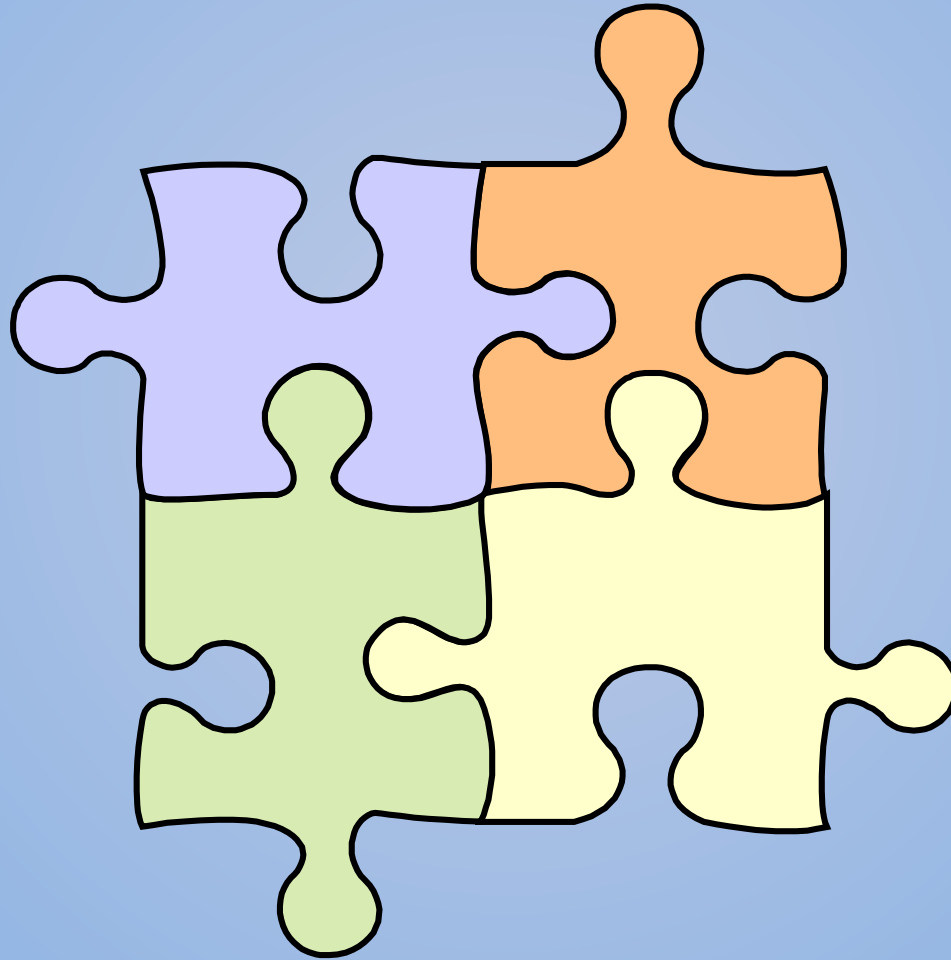
Commit to Understanding the Teen



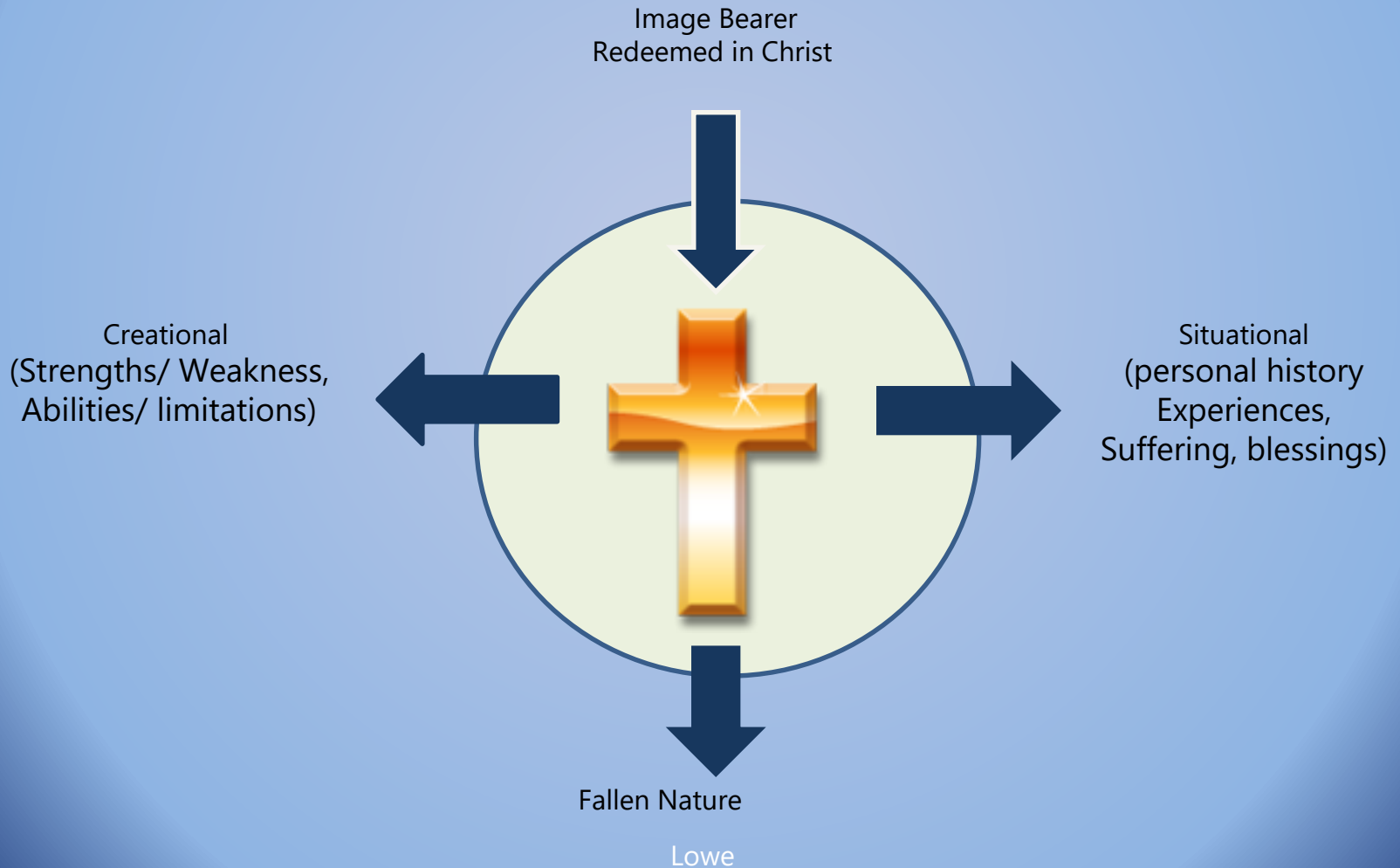
“The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but man of understanding draws them out.”

Proverbs 20:5

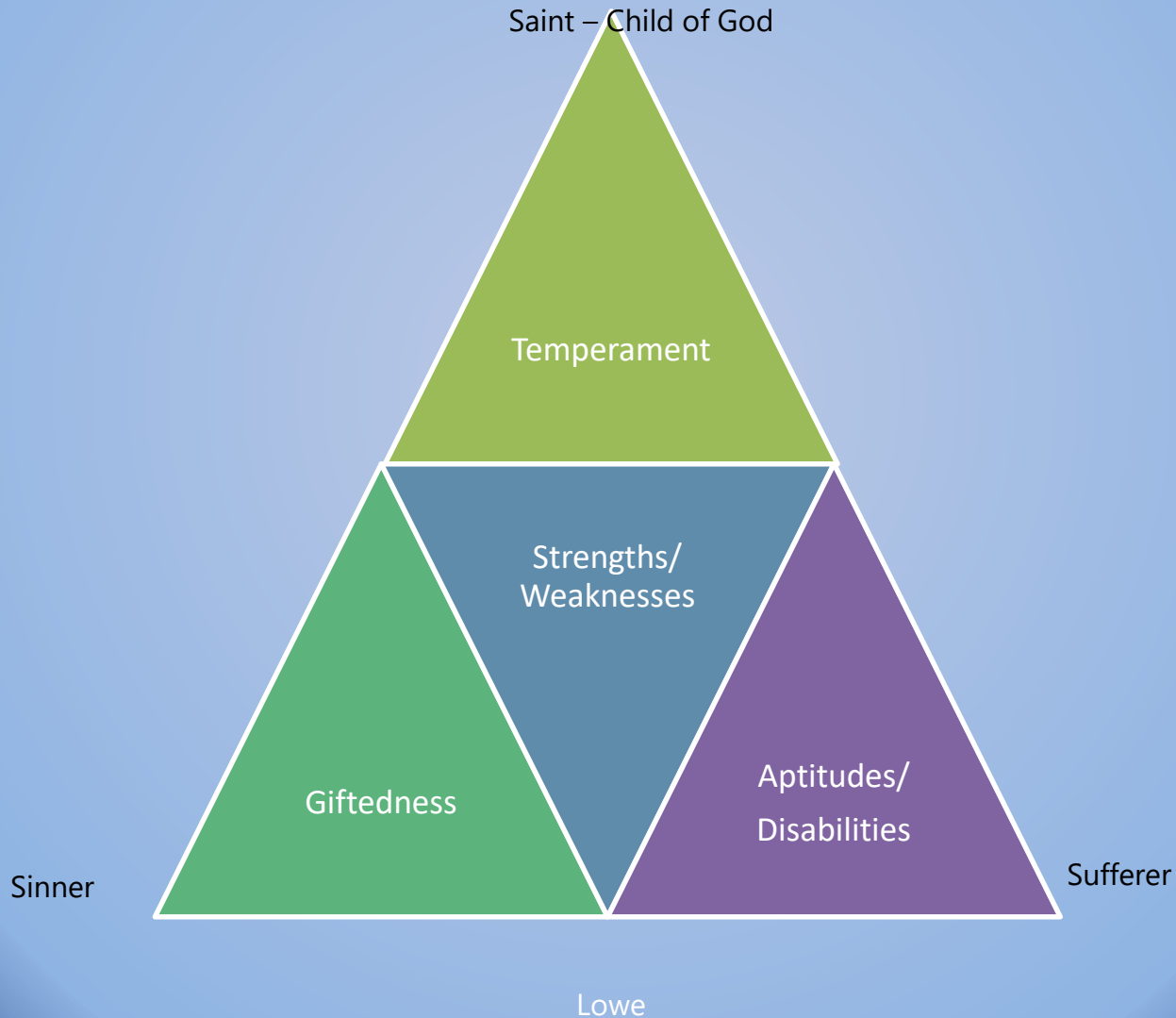
Your Child As A Puzzle



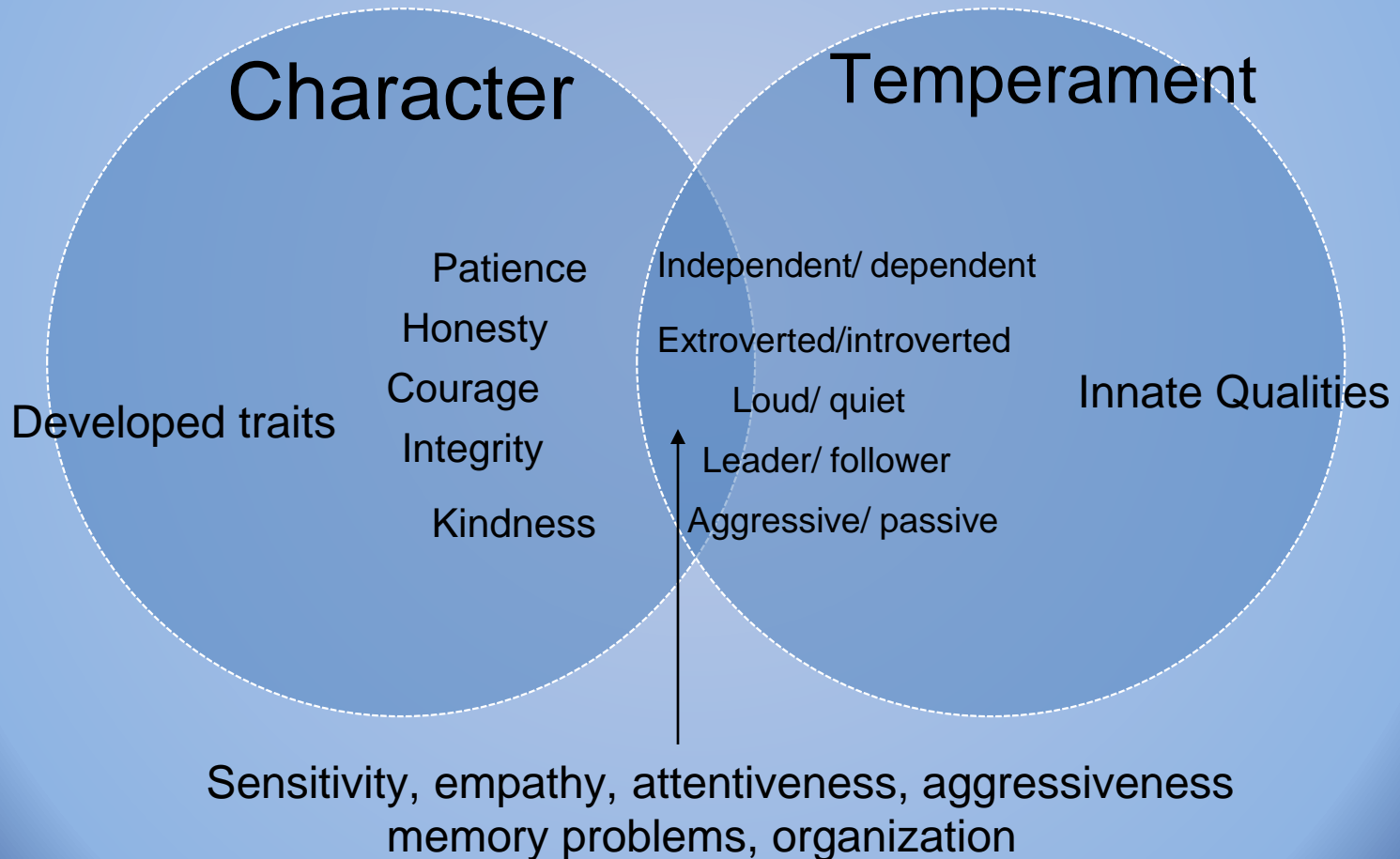
The Individual



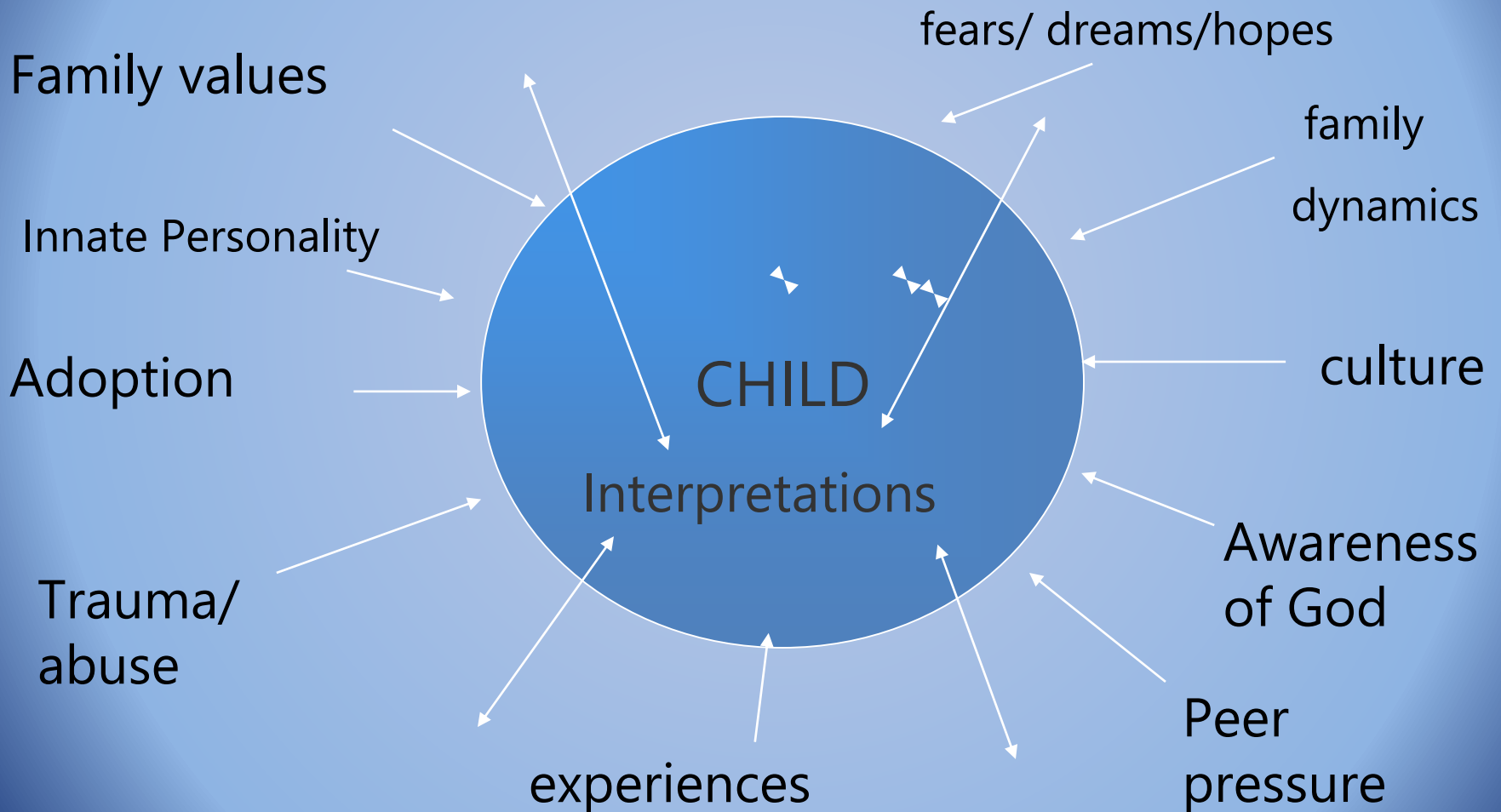
Seeing Children as Multi-faceted



Knowing Children



IDENTITY



Therefore, others must
tell me what to do

So I am fearful all the
time

I push people
away before
they hurt me

I am helpless

I act out my
anger & bully
others

The world is not
safe
I have to protect myself

I am not loved I am bad

I trust no one

God won't help
me

I am being
punished
I wasn't given a choice

I have to earn love

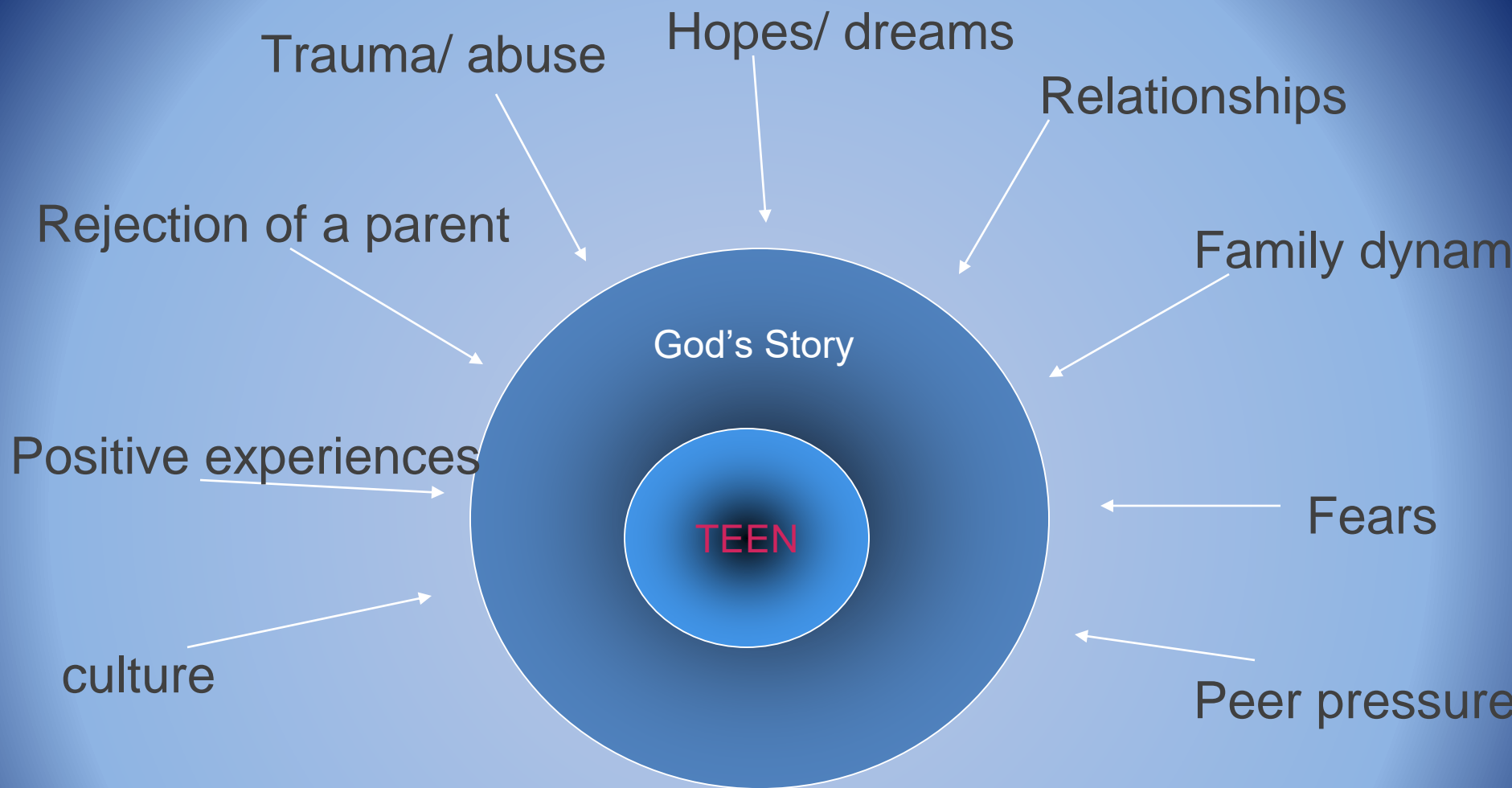
It's not okay to be different

I must be
perfect

God doesn't
care

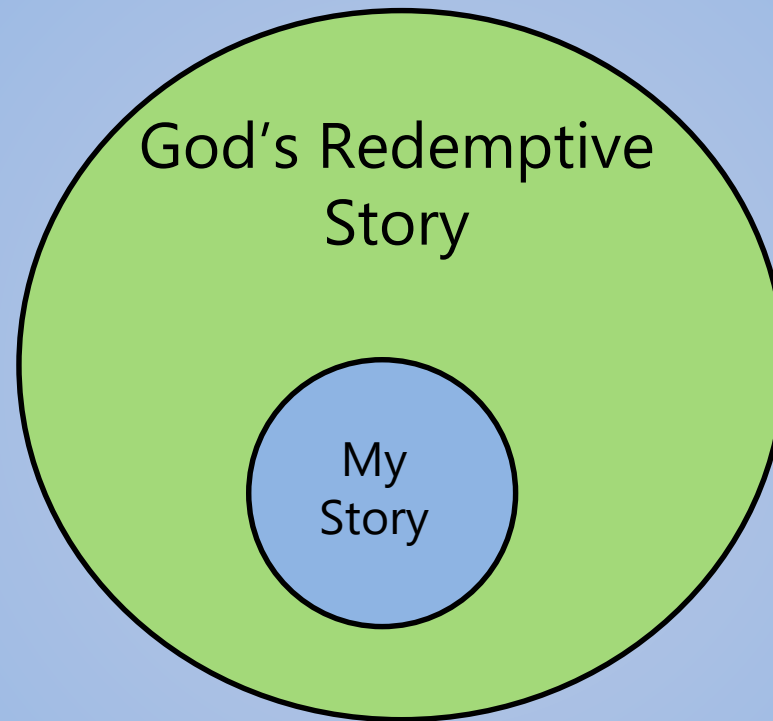
I hide from people
or lie to be
accepted





When teens learn to find identity in Christ, it does not negate the struggle of their experiences, but it creates a grid through which children can make sense of life – not only make sense, but accurately make sense out of life.

The Power of a Story



When we find our stories embedded in the midst of God's Story, our lives - our stories become so much richer, purposeful, and hopeful. We naturally begin to bear image to Him and it will manifest itself in every area of life.

Be Proactive, Not Reactive



It is far better to proactively shape a teen's understanding of a subject, than to debunk an inaccurate view.

Fostering Conversation



“The skill is to listen, the gift is to hear.”

A Mindset: Social Media

- Talk to their kids in an effort to prevent an issue
- help kids be responsible digital citizens, and
- Inform their kids about appropriate and responsible use of digital tools and technologies
- Communicate a preventative mindset

“Public and Permanent” by Richard Guerry

“In many a Christian home a child is told what he may and may not do – but is not trained to understand why. That method quite frankly, is lethal...

Deep within, he lacks the rationale,
the conviction necessary to stand
alone against a powerful world system.”

– *C. R. Swindoll*

“Our responsibility as parents is to develop in our children a hunger, taste, or desire for spiritual things.

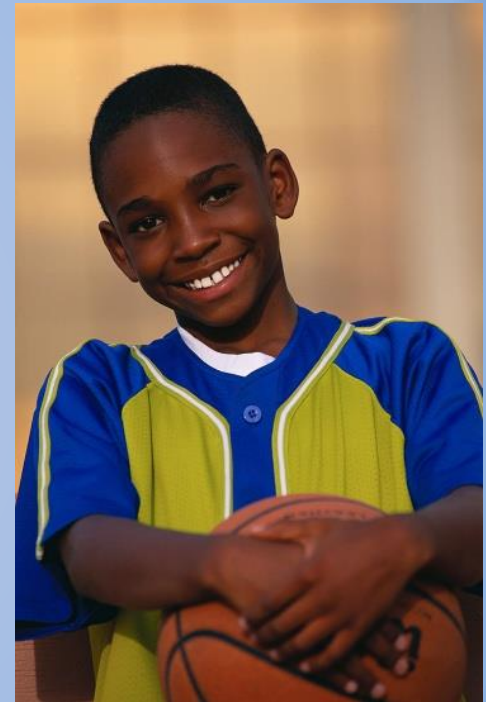
This is not the picture of ‘you do as I say,’ but a process of cultivating the personal urge to love God and follow Him.”

- *David Jeremiah*

“We are told the average child asks 500,000 questions by the age of fifteen. That’s half a million opportunities to teach.

Many of these are “why” and “how” questions which take us right to the feet of God.”

– *John M. Drescher*



“And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates...”

Deuteronomy 6:6 – 9 (and following verses)

Practical Ideas for Building Bridges

- Be Proactive, Not Reactive
- “Talk OFten, Talk Freely, Talk Soon”
- Foster godly Disagreement
(Agree/ Disagree exercise)
- Dinner/ Mealtime
- Enter their world
- Be open to correction
- Genuine care is Priceless

