

HIGH SCHOOL TO WHAT'S NEXT

# BIG TRANSITIONS



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR SGLs

... for intentional conversations with students

You know the phrase “fake it ‘til you make it?” This might be the motto of the post-high school season for a student. As a small group leader, you might think your job is done! You’ve gotten them past the tumultuous last years of traditional schooling, and now you’re ready to relax and finally remove yourself from the constant barrage of group texts. But pause for just a second before you hit that button! This might be the transition when your students need you most. This is a whole new world they’re entering—one that may or may not include graduating high school, going to college, or going straight into a full-time job. This is your chance to help a student not feel abandoned by the church. They might not be at your same church—or even in your same state—but you’re in a unique place to help a student transition to what’s next at a pivotal point in their lives. We want to help you by giving you some words to say, and some words not to say. Remember, your goal during this phase is to:

**MOBILIZE THEIR POTENTIAL.**

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## WHAT TO SAY:

- “All new beginnings can be scary. It’s okay to feel overwhelmed at this new stage. I felt the same way when I was your age.”
- “Take advantage of the social opportunities college has to offer. Try a bunch of stuff out until you find your niche. There will be a trial and error period.”
- “It’s okay if your experience isn’t as perfect as you expect it to be right away. Fitting into a new world takes some time.”
- “You don’t have to figure out your whole life right now.”
- “High school isn’t the end. It’s the end of a season, but not the end of the world. I can’t wait to hear about your new experiences in this new season!”
- “Work at finding a balance. Take classes seriously, but have a social life too.”
- “You’ll probably feel overwhelmed and homesick at some point. That’s normal, and it won’t last forever!”

### Consider this:

- Help them connect to a local church. They might have moved or they may just be looking to try a new ministry in the area. That’s okay—it’s great even! Our job is to keep students connected to the Church, not one specific church. Take it upon yourself to look up a few churches in the area they’ll be around, and let them know about them! Take it a step further and attend a service or group with them, if you can.
- Call them. Or text them. Regularly. Don’t be a helicopter, but be connected. Let them know you aren’t dropping off their planet just because you don’t see them every week anymore. It’s important for them to know they still have access to you and can talk with you through this time.

## WHAT **NOT** TO SAY:

- “I don’t know what I’m going to do without you!”
- No excessive phone calls or excessive emotion. (*Allow them to set the tone.*)
- “I think it would be better if you did it this way.” (*Part of them branching out is learning by trial and error. If you feel the need to correct, try asking in a question, “Have you thought about doing it this way?”*)
- “I was fine. You will be too.” (*Every student is different and may need varying levels of attention and guidance beginning the college transition.*)
- “I’ll fix it for you. Don’t worry!” (*Don’t fix their problems and do things like call their professors, call them to wake them up, or jump into a situation that may not be ideal, but doesn’t need your involvement.*)
- “You never call me or text me! Why don’t you need me anymore?” (*No projecting guilt on their lack of calling or conversation when they do call.*)
- After any misstep, saying: “I told you so,” “You should have listened to me,” or “I know what I’m talking about.”
- “We all went to dinner tonight and missed you!” Or, “Wish you were here and we could all go to the movies tonight!” (*Avoid text guilt. They need to be fully present where they are and not feeling guilty for taking something away from you.*)

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