

# The Pressure to Succeed

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Young people encounter stress every day, as do adults: at school, at home, at work, in their activities, and in their social interactions. Help them navigate the pressure to succeed.

## For

Teen Family

## Season

Winter

## Needed

Bible; Symptoms of Stress worksheet; pens; articles: [Identifying Signs of Stress in Your Children and Teens](#) and [Stress by Generation](#)



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## Prepare in Advance

- Before leading this activity, read the two articles listed above.
- Mark your Bible at: Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6; John 14:27; and Exodus 18:17-18.
- Make a copy of the Symptoms of Stress worksheet for each family member.
- Bring a pen for each person

## Activity Plan

1. Gather family members and say this prayer aloud:

*God, thank you creating us to live well and faithfully. Help us to navigate the stressful experiences in our lives in healthy ways. Amen.*

2. Give each family member a copy of the Symptoms of Stress worksheet and a pen. Have family members work individually to complete Part 1. After all have finished, ask if anyone would like to read what he or she wrote. Explain that it's important to be aware of which symptoms we experience so we can do something to lower our stress level before it reaches an unhealthy level.
3. Ask someone to read aloud Exodus 18:17-18 from your Bible or the text below. Discuss: What is Moses' father-in-law concerned about? When has someone said something similar to you? How did you respond?

*Exodus 18:17-18: Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone."*

4. Ask family members to complete Part 2 of the Symptoms of Stress worksheet. After all have finished, ask each family member to tell about one thing he or she wrote. Affirm that each person faces stress, including the stress that comes from the pressure to succeed.
5. Referring to information in the articles you read and the experiences of family members, talk about healthy ways to manage stress. (For example, exercise, spending time with friends and family, prayer, serving others, healthy diet, music or art, having realistic goals.) Which are the favorite strategies of your family? Talk about how you can support each other in coping with stress.
6. Ask someone to read aloud Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6; and John 14:27 from your Bible or the text below. Invite family members to sum up the teaching in these verses in ten words or less.



Matthew 11:28-30: *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Philippians 4:6: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

John 14:27: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*



# Symptoms of Stress

## Part 1

Check the ways your body typically responds to stress. Mark all that apply.

- Feeling irritable or angry
- Fatigue or exhaustion
- Feeling a lack of interest, motivation, or energy
- Headache
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Feeling as though I could cry
- Upset stomach or indigestion
- Muscles feel tense or sore
- Change in appetite
- Trouble sleeping
- Have trouble concentrating on work or schoolwork
- Other:
- Other:

## Part 2

What are the top three sources or causes of stress in your life today?

1.

2.

3.

