

Navigating the Teen Years: Anxiety, Angst, and Achievement
Sodalitas 2020
Catherine Saylor

1. Anxiety: Intense Adolescent Emotions

“These bitter sorrows of childhood!—when sorrow is all new and strange, when hope has not yet got wings to fly beyond the days and weeks, and the space from summer to summer seems measureless.”

“What could she do but sob? She sat as helpless and despairing among her black locks as Ajax among the slaughtered sheep...Surely if we could recall that early bitterness, and the dim guesses, the strangely perspectiveless conception of life that gave the bitterness its intensity, we should not pooh-pooh the griefs of our children.”

-- George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*

- Antidote to anxiety: PERSPECTIVE
- Feelings pass.
- “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.” Psalm 30:5

2. Angst (Spiritual anxiety, or Scrupulosity)

- B&W thinkers can fixate on the Ten Commandments or definitions of sin.
- Antidote to angst: DIVINE FILIATION
- Our children need to be taught that they are beloved children of God.
- “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” 1 John 3:1
- Allow asking forgiveness only for clear wrongdoing, not things that “might be a sin.”
- “As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12

3. Achievement Anxiety (Academic Perfectionism)

- Qualify the phrase “do your best” so that it is not taken literally.
- Antidote to Perfectionism: CHRISTIAN SERVICE TO GOD AND NEIGHBOR

4. Anxiety in siblings

- Mark 4:26-27...we scatter the seed.
- Prayers for anxiety