

## THE DRIVING CONTRACT

*This year our Birthday Faith Experience is centered on building trust through a driving contract.*

### **This is not about driving.**

That might surprise you, but it is the truth. This experience with your teenager signifies way more than just driving.

There is a shift in your relationship, where your teenager will spend much more time away from you than with you. When they drive a car, they experience their first significant amount of freedom.

That freedom also represents the first opportunity for you to gauge their moral compass. How will they handle making their own decisions apart from you?

- Will they be smart?
- Will they be safe?
- Will they fail miserably?
- Will they surprise you?

This Driving Contract is not about driving; it is about establishing a system for your teenager to both build trust and restore broken trust with you.

What your teenager wants more than anything is freedom. What you want more than anything is for them to be trustworthy. Therefore, if they earn your trust, you are unleashed to reward them with freedom.

This Driving Contract will give you the opportunity to do three very important things:


### **Teach your teenager how to safely operate a car**

Communicate clearly to your teenager, so as to avoid confusion, about what your expectations for them are while driving


Establish a system to strengthen your relationship with them through both building and restoring trust

You should see this conversation about driving as nothing more than a huge ramp to a greater conversation (i.e. What is our plan for slowly giving to you the freedom of a young adult? What is our plan for restoring trust when it is broken?).

You are giving them more than a set of keys; you are giving them your trust. Don't miss this parenting opportunity that the Driving Contract offers.



## Here are some very practical thoughts to set you up for success with the Driving Contract:

- Communicate to your teenager that this Driving Contract is mainly about establishing an opportunity to build trust and restore broken trust during the driving adventure.
  - Completing a Driving Contract with your teenager will not magically prevent your teenager from making a mistake while driving, but it will create crystal clear communication and outline a plan for restoring broken trust.
  - Blank spots are provided in the contract for you to add any expectations that you would like. Other potential expectations you might choose to add are: a statement that says parents, not the teenager, are owners of the car; a statement about whether or not you will allow your teenager to drive with passengers; a statement about “racing” or reckless driving; a statement about how loud to play the radio; a statement about eating while driving; or a statement about driving when they are emotional or upset.
  - The portion of the contract that deals with consequences is left blank on purpose. If this is truly going to be a two-sided conversation, you should let your teenager be a part of the process of deciding consequences. You ultimately decide what they will be, but your teenager will be more likely to honor them if they helped to come up with them.
  - We suggest that you do not allow siblings or others to be a part of this Birthday Faith Experience, so that there is less distraction and more focus on your new driver.
  - Display the Driving Contract in the house and give a copy to the teenager for them to keep.
  - Make sure to follow up and communicate when trust is restored.
  - If at all possible, make sure both parents are a part of this contract. If parents are separated or divorced, it would be a huge “win” if they were able to work together to complete this contract with their teenager. It would communicate a lot of security to the teenager as well.
  - You might want to review, revise, and re-sign this Driving Contract each year around your teenager’s birthday to make sure that it remains relevant and builds clear communication, which is the purpose.
  - Share with your teenager that the leading cause of death among teenagers is auto accidents. It accounts for over 1/3 of all teen deaths each year. Therefore, it is extremely important that they take safety seriously.
- 

## WHAT'S GOING ON WITH MY FIFTEEN YEAR-OLD?

Turning fifteen usually means you're on to high school experience or almost there. This is the last main stage of the adolescent journey. Take a peek into the world of most fifteen year-olds.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- There is a heightened sensitivity to appearance and its social value.
- Boys and girls have a propensity to diet.
- Upper body strength begins to develop in boys.
- Boys and girls level out in height.
- Girls have fully developed physically into their adult bodies.
- Boys have more of a growth spurt to continue.
- Sexual desire is awakened, and the temptation to be sexually active is common.
- They have a need to develop exercise routines and healthy habits.

### EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your fifteen year-old may:

- Have a desire for more control over aspects of their life
- Have a more evident "adult" personality
- Have an idealistic viewpoint of the world at large
- Love to try new things in an effort to discover identity
- Obtain a strong sense of accomplishment from being involved in various activities
- Be easily "bored"
- Exhibit impulsive behavior with friends and peers
- Not respond to adult lectures, feeling they know better what is going on than the adult does
- Become better at setting and achieving goals

### RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Have a desire for more control over aspects of their life
- Have a more evident "adult" personality
- Have an idealistic viewpoint of the world at large
- Love to try new things in an effort to discover identity
- Obtain a strong sense of accomplishment from being involved in various activities
- Be easily "bored"
- Exhibit impulsive behavior with friends and peers
- Not respond to adult lectures, feeling they know better what is going on than the adult does
- Become better at setting and achieving goals

### SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Their capacity for self-discipline increases.
- Summer camps and mission experiences influence them spiritually because of the peer connections that those events create.
- They begin to imagine what life would be like as an adult away from their parents, and they begin deciding whether or not their faith will be a part of that.
- The ability to fully process abstract thoughts gives them the ability to engage God personally.
- Rather than being told what to believe, they need spiritual leaders to ask their opinions and let them develop their beliefs.
- Their interest and commitment to faith change rapidly back and forth, signaling an internal struggle on whether or not to accept it.






# C O N T R A C T

## THE GOAL OF THIS CONTRACT IS TO:

- Clearly Communicate the expectations and desires of both the parent and the teenager about driving a vehicle.
- Allow both parent and teenager to understand that this is a huge opportunity to build trust in their relationship and grow closer.
- Make a plan for when trust is broken, so that it can be restored allowing the relationship between parent and teenager to grow.
- Agree together ahead of time how to handle the unexpected events like speeding tickets, car accidents, and a broken down car.

## IN ORDER TO BUILD TRUST IN OUR FAMILY AND TO HONOR GOD IN OUR HOME WE AGREE THAT OUR TEENAGER WILL BE EXPECTED TO...

- Inform my Parents of where I am when I am away from them by calling or texting. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
  - Observe and Obey speed limits and other traffic laws while driving. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
  - Ask permission to drive until my Parents choose to no longer require this of me. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
  - Wear my seat belt and require those that ride with me to do the same. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
  - Refuse to use the cell phone to text while driving so I can stay focused. I will pull over if I need to use my an electronic device that might distract me. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
  - I will not use and definitely will not drive under the influence of alcohol/drugs. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
  - If I am in an accident of any kind (even if it seems minor) I will contact my parents and will not leave the scene of the accident unless my parents or the police give permission. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
- I will inform my parents any time that I am pulled over for warnings, tickets, or any interaction with the police. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
- I understand that hiding this from them is a break of trust in our relationship. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
  - I will not allow any other person to drive my car without the permission of my parents. **x**\_\_\_\_\_
- 



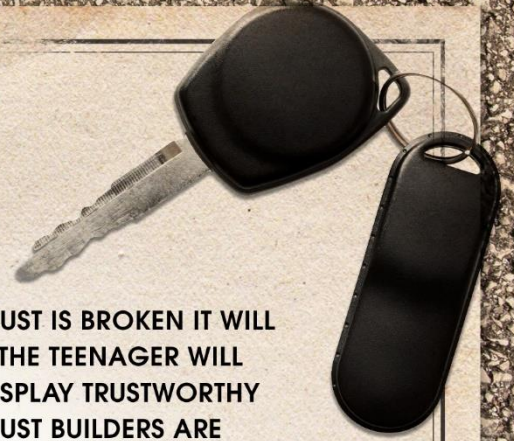


*On this page you can add additional conditions for your agreement.*

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ x
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ x
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ x
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ x
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ x
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ x
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ x







**BOTH PARENTS AND TEENAGER AGREE THAT IF AND WHEN TRUST IS BROKEN IT WILL BE RESTORED. THERE ARE TWO PARTS TO RESTORING TRUST. THE TEENAGER WILL EXPERIENCE A CONSEQUENCE FIRST AND THEN THEY WILL DISPLAY TRUSTWORTHY BEHAVIOR FOR A SET PERIOD OF TIME. ONCE THOSE TWO TRUST BUILDERS ARE COMPLETE THEN TRUST WILL BE RESTORED IN THE RELATIONSHIP.**

Trust Builder #1- What is the agreed consequence of breaking the above agreement?

---

---

---

Trust Builder #2- What is the agreed period of time that the teenager must display responsible behavior before trust is restored. (make sure it is a reasonable amount of time that sets the teenager up for success)

---

---

---

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teenager's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_





# MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Monthly

Date last Completed / Mileage

<b>BRAKES</b>	Check fluid level. Report any issues when stopping. (vibration, weak pedal, etc.)				
<b>OIL</b>	Check level on dipstick and add as needed. Change every 3000 to 5000 miles.				
<b>TIRES</b>	Check air pressure cold (not driven for at least 3 hours). Inspect tread for wear.				
<b>RADIATOR/ COOLANT</b>	Check antifreeze level in radiator/reservoir. Add as needed. If significant, check for leaks.				
<b>LIGHTS</b>	Check all lights (headlights, brake, parking, turn signals, backup) for correct functionality.				
<b>HOSES/BELTS</b>	Inspect hoses for leaks/bulges. Check belts for cracks/wear.				

