

MOVING UP TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

PLANNING A MOVING UP TO MIDDLE SCHOOL CELEBRATION



FROM BESTSELLING TEEN AUTHORS

JONATHAN & ERICA CATHERMAN

Moving Up to Middle School Celebration

Planning a *Moving Up to Middle School Celebration* is a fun and meaningful way to help your son or daughter transition between elementary and middle school. Yet, in these difficult times, it's hard to practice physical distancing while remaining socially connected. Few aspects of life remain "normal," which is proving to be particularly disappointing for many students who see themselves missing out on highly anticipated school parties and family celebrations marking their graduation from elementary school.

This is why we have put together a *Moving Up to Middle School Celebration Guide* to help families creatively honor their child's next step in schooling while also keeping a healthy distance until the demands of COVID-19 have passed. Planning a *Moving Up to Middle School Celebration* that includes family, friends, teachers, coaches, and mentors digitally and through notes will offer a unique experience for your student.

What Makes a Great Moving Up to Middle School Celebration?

Make your student the main focus. Keep conversation about how COVID-19 has spoiled usual party plans to a minimum. Instead, focus on what makes your student wonderful and someone to celebrate. This party is all about the student and his or her achievements in:

- school
- clubs
- athletics
- arts
- gaming
- volunteerism

Family and friends get to attend virtually. Without opening your home, you can still welcome family and friends to attend your party.

- Schedule a video gathering on Zoom, Google Hangouts, or another digital meeting platform. Consider planning different events with the different groups of people involved in your student's life. Host one meeting for family, another for friends, and still another for teachers, coaches, and mentors.
- Have people send your student written messages. Personalized emails and handwritten notes or cards delivered to your mailbox show your student that others are celebrating the graduate. Collecting these messages in an album allows your student to reread the encouraging words from friends and family in the days, weeks, and years to come.

Make a public announcement. Let others know this is a momentous time for your student and your family.

- Mail printed announcements to your friends and family. Popular with high school graduates, online printers offer a variety of customizable card layouts that can be edited to say, Moving Up To Middle School.
- Update your social media profile picture to an image of your soon-to-be middle schooler, your spouse, and you.
- Write a post about how proud you are of your grad. Ask friends to respond with an encouraging comment that can be shared with your student.
- Create a large collage of your student's favorite things that can be displayed on your home's front door or in a street-facing window. Show the neighbors your student is headed to middle school and you are proud of all that was accomplished through the elementary school years.

Include favorite things. Any good celebration includes important people, great food, fun drinks, and plenty of party favors.

- Gather the family in your home together for a special meal you know your student will love.
- Take pictures of the table setting, your family eating together, and of your student enjoying the dessert of his or her dreams.
- If your student receives any gifts, have your student pose with the gifts and send a picture to the giver both to say thank you and for them to share with others.

Share some wise advice. The odds are high that your student has more than a few questions about what middle school is going to be like. From changing classes to changing clothes for gym, making new friends to avoiding bullies, how much homework to expect to ways of handling the unexpected, now is a great time for your student to ask some questions. The good news is, you don't need to know all the answers. Do assure them you'll help them find some solid "Do This, Not That" advice to help to ease any anxiety about walking onto a new campus next fall. Here are some recommendations for answering your student's most pressing Moving Up to Middle School questions.

- Share a funny story about your middle school days. Stay away from any lectures or negative "When I was your age..." comparisons. Instead, try to see things from your child's perspective and share a few good things you remember about your middle school years.
- Ask family and friends who have students already in middle school to share their "Do This, Not That" advice. Better yet, have their middle schooler share the advice with your student—virtually, of course.
- Give your student a copy of *The Manual to Middle School* or *The Girls' Guide to Conquering Middle School* book. Both books are packed full of real-world advice, stories, jokes, and 200 comic-like illustrations covering 100 topics relevant to middle schoolers.

DISCOVER MORE GREAT RESOURCES FROM THE CATHERMANS



JONATHAN CATHERMAN is a sociologist, educator, and international bestselling author who speaks worldwide to diverse audiences of all ages. He is the author of the #1 and #2 bestselling teen books *The Manual to Manhood* and *The Manual to Middle School*. Erica Catherman works with young women as an advocate for gender equality in sports, a coach/mentor to middle school, high school, and college students, and as a community volunteer. She is the author (with Jonathan)

of *The Girls' Guide to Conquering Life* and *The Girls' Guide to Conquering Middle School*.

THE CATHERMANS are passionate about building up the next great generation. Together they founded and direct the 1M Mentoring Foundation which provides effective and affordable life skills and character mentoring resources to organizations dedicated to guiding youth to become confident and capable adults.

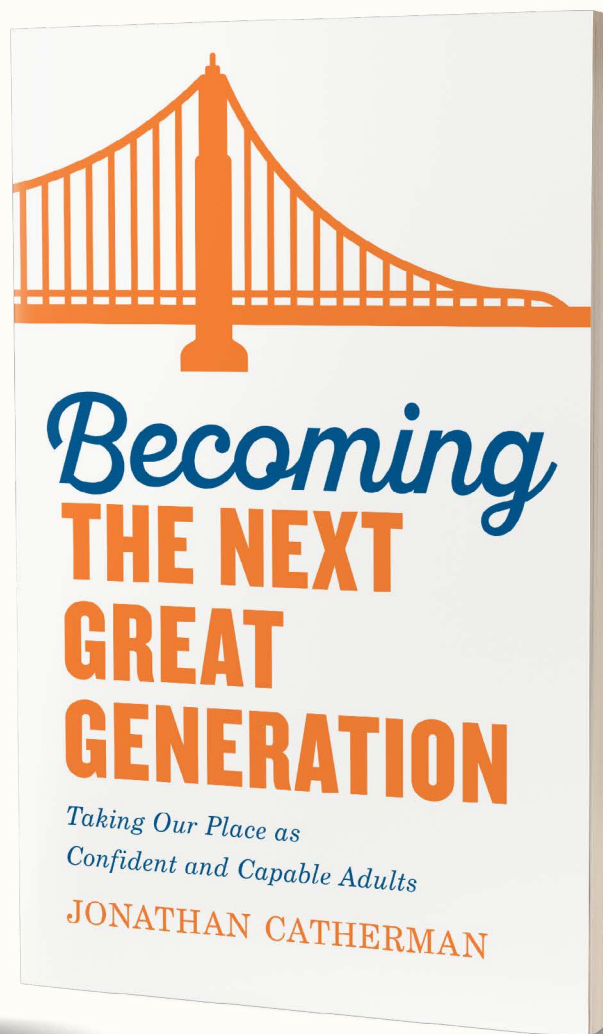
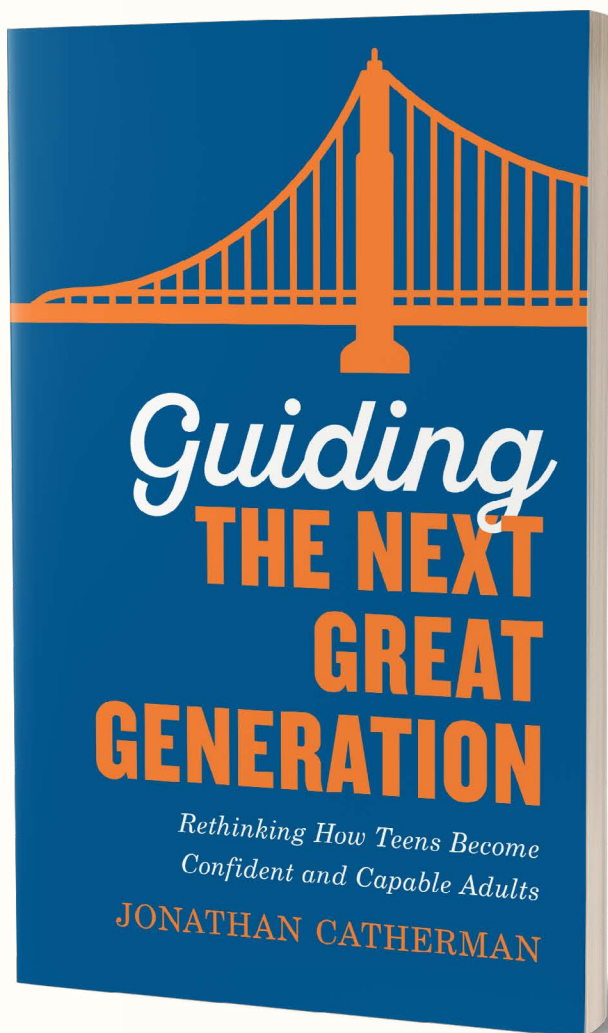
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