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Sticking Up for Who I Am: Answers to the Emotional Issues Teenagers Raise

Gwendolyn Mitchell Diaz
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Today's teenagers face not only immediate peer pressures involving looks, fitting in, drugs, alcohol, and sex, they also face the difficulties of a rapidly approaching future that's filled with worries related to unemployment, terrorism, and war. For teens who have developed a spiritual side, which may not be viewed as cool by their peers, standing up for their beliefs can make the daunting teen years even more unnerving. In this book, the author offers calm and practical advice as well as a sympathetic voice for teens and parents who face the difficulties of living a life of belief.

Diaz, a writer, speaker, former missionary's kid, and mother of four boys, has written four other books for parents and teens, including Sticking Up for What is Right. In her new book, she addresses her readers as if speaking to her sons, using examples from her own teenage years and those of her children to illustrate her points. As hard as it may be, Diaz believes, it's necessary to come to terms with the God inside in order to live with the outside world. Accepting God into one's life does not guarantee a life of ease, but it will make any pain suffered along the way more productive and worthwhile. Life will never be free of the human emotions of pain, fear, sadness, and anger, but, she says, developing a relationship with God will allow teens (and their parents) to have somewhere to turn when life deals its toughest cards.

Diaz doesn't sugarcoat the reality of the growing-up years, but neither does she forget to offer hope: "Tough stuff is going to come into our lives. There is no way we can escape it-and no one is exempt! … God always has a purpose for the pain that He permits to enter our lives. If He can't use it, He won't allow it." This plain, straightforward style is a good choice for this type of book, giving it the feel of common sense and kindly advice. She explains what teens can expect from a relationship with God and why it will help them through difficult times.

With all that teens and their parents face today, a calm and trustworthy approach such as Diaz's will provide much-needed comfort and help, especially to families who already believe or who are pursuing deeper spirituality in their lives. Teens facing social issues related to their religious beliefs will find this book especially helpful.
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