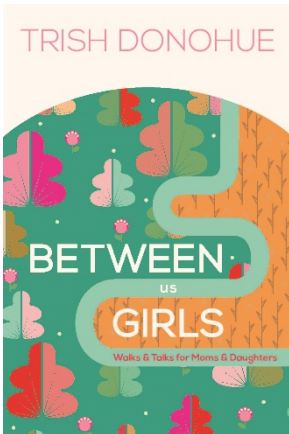


An interview with Trish Donohue, Author of *Between Us Girls: Walks and Talks for Moms and Daughters*



The relationship girls have with their mothers greatly impacts the women they become, and for busy moms in the thick of the parenting years that reality can seem overwhelming. Author Trish Donohue brings guidance for women who want to disciple their daughters but don't know where to start in *Between Us Girls: Walks and Talks for Moms and Daughters* (New Growth Press/June 6, 2016).

As a mom to two girls, Donohue knows the kinds of questions women asks themselves when considering their influence on their daughters: *Am I being a good example? What are the most critical life lessons and spiritual insights I should be imparting to them? Am I getting through to them?* Balancing these concerns with the hectic nature of daily life can feel daunting, which is why Donohue wrote this guide filled with gospel-driven talks, or “walks” designed to be completed one-on-one, and covering a wide variety of topics.

Q: You describe *Between Us Girls* not as a devotional, but as a conversation guide for moms and daughters. Tell us more about the format of your new book.

The format of the book is designed to take moms and daughters on a walk together: a walk that winds through the crazy terrain of girlhood, is guided by the truths of scripture and offers places along the way to rest and talk. Christian moms desire to be close to their daughters, but too often they find themselves lecturing and correcting — or finally planning a special time together only to realize they aren't really sure what to talk about.

This book includes 26 talks (called “walks” in the book to fit the theme) that moms and daughters can have together. If they meet weekly, they will be done in six months. If they meet bi-weekly, they will finish in a year. In each walk, they will be reading and discussing what God's Word says about a particular issue, asking each other real life questions (both silly and serious), sharing triumphs, struggles and goals, and making plans to help each other apply what they learn in the coming week. As moms and girls get to know God and his ways better, they'll get to know each other better as well — just like friends do after they've hiked some incredible trails together.

Q: How do you recommend moms use this book with their daughters?

I recommend setting aside a special time to meet every week or two. They should grab *Between Us Girls* and their Bibles and find a private place; it could be a cozy spot at home, a coffee shop or a picnic table at the park. A fun drink or snack will help the cause but isn't necessary. Moms should jump right into the book, reading the chapter to their daughters. Whenever a question is asked, whether it's directed to moms or girls, stop and answer it. Each answer will help build trust and fellowship in their relationships. When asked to look up a Bible verse, it's important to look it up right then instead of waiting for later. The pattern of searching the scriptures together while talking is purposeful. In all situations, moms should want to build a habit of looking to God's Word first. Shortcuts aren't allowed; they won't deliver moms and daughters to the destination!

Moms should make a point to talk through the application suggestions offered at the end of each walk as well. They will turn thought into action, and that's another important pattern to learn.

Q: Each chapter or “walk” is organized into four sections. What are the areas you cover during each walk?

Each walk explores a different topic, but each moves through the same four sections. After a fun intro, we stroll through “The Garden,” which is God's original plan for a particular topic. Then we trudge through “The Weeds” section, which shows how sin has made a mess of things. We keep hiking and pass “The Hill,” which refers to the Hill of Calvary, or the cross, and learn how Jesus' finished work on the cross redeems all things and makes them new again. We finish up in “The Field,” which is where we sow seed, or apply all the things we learned to the practical day-to-day life God has given us.

Q: What are some of the topics you cover in *Between Us Girls*?

There are 26 topics, and just like a real hiker, it's fun to tackle a difficult climb, then stick to an easier one the next time. That's why I mixed it up. Readers will hit foundational topics such as the gospel, prayers, church and trials, but there are also lighter topics such as flair, friendships and stuff. There are also culturally relevant topics including technology and clothes. The book also addresses vulnerable areas such as doubts, feelings, changes and weaknesses. There is quite a variety because there is lots to talk about!



Q: How can a mom be sure she's addressing the right topics with her daughter on a regular basis?

This can be difficult with a busy life and family, and moms ultimately need to trust that the Holy Spirit will guide them as they seek to train up their daughters. If moms find they regularly talk through lots of issues with their daughters and seek out God's truth in the Bible, they don't even need a book like this. But if they feel unsure about whether they're hitting the relevant topics and would like to build a stronger relationship with their daughters, *Between Us Girls* can help. As a pattern of communication is formed, it'll be easier to jump into other issues as they come up. Even after finishing this book, I would encourage maintaining a regular time for connecting by putting it on the calendar. I think moms might be surprised what conversations arise.

Q: As you know, all moms are busy. In what ways did you keep this in mind when writing *Between Us Girls*?

Most moms know how easy it is to miss these valuable times with their daughters. They also know what it's like to plan them and then realize they're absolutely braindead and can't think of anything worthwhile to say. Consider this book a cheat sheet. No prep is needed. The talks tell moms exactly what to read together from the Bible, lead readers through the topic and provide questions that will make moms and daughters laugh, think and get to know each other better than ever before. The walks even help plan ways to apply what they've learned together.

Q: Why is it important for each walk not just to be about discussing life issues but also about building relationship? How can mothers make sure that happens?

Building relationship is important because moms want these conversations to continue! They don't just want to download some good information into their daughters' brains and check off a box that says, "Done. Good parenting accomplished." They need to build relationships that allow them to walk through life together, laugh at their weaknesses, embrace vulnerability and spur one another on.

Daughters will be much more likely to share their hearts when their moms go first. The interactive questions in this book allow mothers to share their own struggles and joys, then prompt daughters to do the same. Moms will be sharing things they learned growing up, silly fears, weaknesses and wisdom. Daughters will be sharing too, and that will begin to build a relationship based on God's Word. Together they can handle new issues as they arise.

Q: What advice do you have for mothers who don't have good relationship with their daughters? Can they use a tool like this?

All moms know the perfect mother/daughter pair who seems to be sharing every moment, laughing together, making great memories and somehow always looking adorable in the process. They are immediately aware of the struggles in their own relationships with their daughters. When those struggles are deep, it can seem scary to pick up a tool like this. What if it doesn't work? What if she thinks it's boring? What if she rejects her mom?

Yes, moms struggling with their relationships can absolutely use a tool like this, and I would tell them they don't have to be best friends to honor God in their relationships with their daughters. Moms have the opportunity to be a picture of God's steadfast love to their daughters. Their initiative and efforts toward their daughters echo God's initiative toward us.

If their daughters sit quietly through the walks, that's fine; they're still hearing the truth of God's Word. If they won't be vulnerable with their moms, moms can lead by example and be vulnerable with them. If they get

halfway through a walk and the conversation seems to be leading elsewhere, that's fine. Who knows where the Lord will lead? But moms shouldn't let fear keep them from pursuing and discipling their daughters. And moms shouldn't evaluate their effectiveness by what they see with their eyes. God is the one who does the work.

Q: Of all the walks in *Between Us Girls*, which one would you say is the most important and why?

Without a doubt, it's Walk #2, "Our Foundation." Both moms and daughters feel the need for many things in life, but the greatest need is to be reconciled to God through the death of his Son. If they get this and nothing else, they've gotten the most important thing. But in addition, the gospel gives everyone what they need to live fruitful lives for God. That's why each talk includes a section on how to apply the gospel to that particular topic. It's not enough to just help daughters comprehend that Jesus died on the cross for their sins; moms need to teach them how the good news speaks into each situation they encounter.

Q: What is the best way for mothers to approach some of the more uncomfortable topics in the book, such as modesty and purity?

With candor and confidence. If moms are embarrassed and uncomfortable talking about these issues, daughters will be too. But if moms jump in, explaining that these issues are important just like the others, daughters will most likely follow suit. It's also important to set an example of vulnerability. Moms can't ask their daughters to share something personal until they have. Being an example of humility will set the stage and invite their daughters into a safe conversation. Even if they don't share as openly as they'd like, they've still learned from scripture together and opened up a big conversation. That is progress!

Q: Can *Between Us Girls* be used in situations other than a mother/daughter relationship?

Absolutely. By simply skipping the mother/daughter titles, the book can be used in a variety of ways, and I applaud women who desire to disciple girls in their lives! The book could easily be used in any one-on-one context, and it could also be used in a small group, where a leader is going through it with a number of girls.

Q: When a mom and daughter finish *Between Us Girls*, what do you hope has developed in both of their lives?

I hope they will see that the gospel changes all of life, that God's Word speaks into every situation, that God's design of girlhood is beautiful, that their relationship is a precious gift, that they know and love each other better than ever and that there are miles of trails to continue to explore together!

Learn more about *Between Us Girls* and Trish Donohue at www.newgrowthpress.com.