

Your Timeline

Materials: 2 pieces of rope or string about 4 feet long
1 pair of scissors

Can I have 2 volunteers? Please come up front. Okay, I need each of you to take and hold the opposite ends of this string. This string represents our lives – your life. Did you know that the average American lives to be 79 years old? To make it easy, let's round that off to 80; it just sounds better.

How many of those 80 years do we really spend with our children? I mean, after high school many of them will leave for college or the military or even to simply start their own adult lives. Heck, by that point many of us can't wait until they move out! This "Right of Passage" generally happens at the age of 18, but again, to make this simple, let's round it off to 20. 20 years out of 80 we get to spend with our kids – that's only a 1/4 of their lives. So, let's cut off 75% of this string. That's a lot to be taken away...

All right, 20 years. In the beginning, how much of being a parent is fun? Sleepless nights, constantly changing dirty diapers, covered in spit-up. Then we graduate to a mess of food everywhere – in their hair, all over their clothes, painted on the highchair tray. Let's be honest, for about the first 5 years of most children's lives, parents can't have that real person-to-person conversation. But then as kids become school-age, they really start asking questions and are ready to learn bigger concepts. I know it's condensing this period, but let's call the first 5 the "Baby Years" and cut them off the string. 5 years out of 20 leaves 15. 25% gone.

Anyone here have teenagers or even pre-teens? The Tweens? Most people know the stereotype of this age group: leave me alone! Around the age of 11 or 12, to be seen with parents, let alone showing any affection like a hug or a kiss, isn't cool. Don't be a chaperone on a trip, don't drop them off too close to school where you might be seen. For the most part, there's often minimal interaction "I don't know. Fine. I don't need your help. Give me money." Sometimes, that's about it. I hope your relationships are better than that because even if they won't admit it, teens still need their parents, yet let's call these the "Lost Years." I said this often starts about age 11 or 12. Again, to make it easy, let's round it to age 10. That means we cut off ages 10 to 20. 2/3 gone.

Look at what we have left: this itty-bitty nub. Compare that to what we started with. 5 years out of 80 to really spend with our children, be close to them, and have a big influence on their lives. Guess what? Those years are right now – the Cub Scout years. Imagine how much time you can spend together, how many memories you can make, and how much of a lifelong bond you'll have by being their Cub Scout Leader.