

S D | Y C E

Forum for Pastors at the 2008 Minister's And Spouse Retreat

TODAY'S TEEN

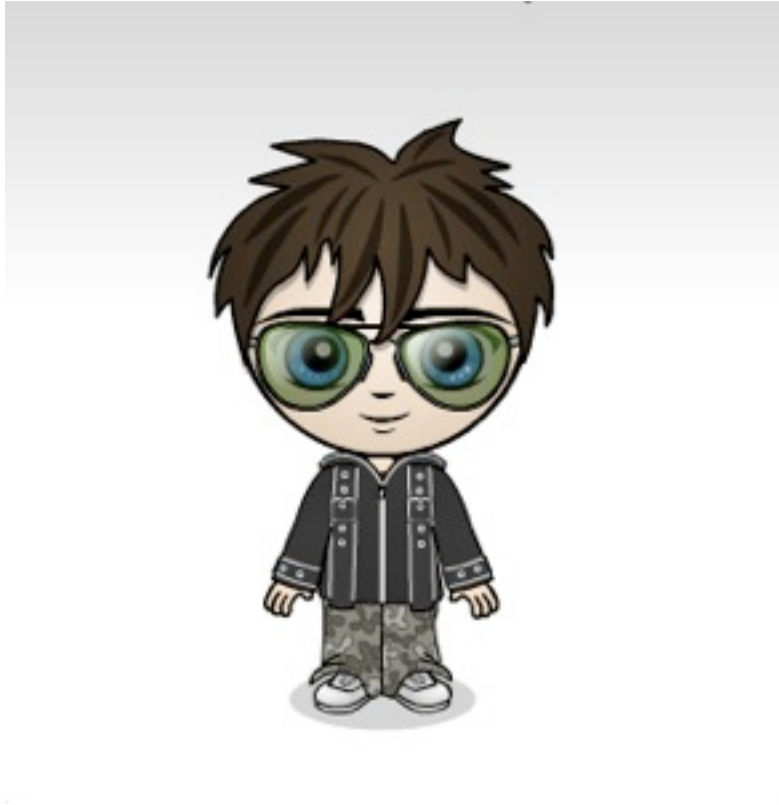


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Digital Teen - Social Networking & Virtual Worlds

Synopsis

Today's teen will not remember what life was like without the internet. They have come to expect that products, events, friends, and family will have a web presence. One of the latest trends we see is in the area of social networking and virtual worlds.

Information

Social Networking - Users get an account and can post images, video, personal information about themselves. This information can be read by others or the general public depending on the site and user settings. Popular sites include www.facebook.com, www.myspace.com, www.twitter.com, www.flickr.com and a host of blog sites.

Virtual Worlds - Users join these sites and interact with other "Avatars" (digital representations of the person). In these virtual worlds people can purchase clothing, attend activities, foster relationships, and more. Popular sites include: www.stardoll.com (over 20M members), www.habbo.com, www.clubpenguin.com.



myspace.com



stardoll.com



the-n.com (nighttime tv network for teens)

Panel Questions

- How have facebook, myspace, and youtube affected today's teen and how we minister to them?
- Why are these mediums so important to today's teen?
- What are some of the most potentially dangerous trends?
- With virtual worlds that offer fantasy versions of realities they cannot yet experience (freedom to shop for clothes, furnish their room, attend prom, flirt, and more) how does that affect their development. What happens when they experience the real version???
- Part of the draw of these virtual worlds is they can perceive to be someone/something they are not in real life. What are some of the keys of ministry that we must teach and live to help them with this?
- What ministry unique ministry opportunities do we have because of the social networking / virtual worlds?

Digital Teen - Cell Phones

Synopsis

From party lines to web-enabled cell phones our telecommunications have come a long way. Nearly 50% of teens age 10-13 have their own phone. These phones not only allow them to stay connected to parents and friends, but to capture images and video that can be immediately uploaded to social networking sites and viewed around the world in a matter of seconds. (50% (3 billion) of the world's population has cellular connectivity, it will take about 2 years for the next billion - fall 2007)¹

Information

www.kajeet.com - branch of sprint marketing/selling phones for kids. claiming ability to teach responsibility, find your kids via the GPS enabled handsets, allows voice and texting features.

If teens are forced to give up items of importance, the cell phone would be the last to go.²

Why teens have phones - according to parents:

- 77% to contact a parent if they need something (permission to spend money, need a ride home from practice, etc)
- 76% for an emergency
- 63% as a leash (allows the parent to track them at any time)
- 52% keep in touch with family
- 35% keep in touch with friends

Why teens want/own a phone - according to teens:³

- 77% convenience factor
- 75% emergency situations
- 41% to get admiration of friends

How does owning a cell phone make them feel?

- 71% feel connected to friends, (63%) to family
- 61% feel responsible
- 31% important, (30%) fashionable, (27%) trendy



Panel Questions

We learn from these statistics that a cell phone is much more than an electronic device. It is less of a fashion statement or trend than it is a means to stay connected and prove a level of responsibility. This exposes a need and desire in the fabric of the teen culture that is being met by Verizon and LG.

- What are ways that our churches, pastors, and parents can improve our opportunities for connection and responsibility?
- Share some ideas of how the proliferation of cell phones and text messaging can be used to reach people.

¹ http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/jan_chipchase_on_our_mobile_phones.html

² <http://www.ypulse.com/the-ten-biggest-themes-of-what-teens-want/>

*<http://www.cellular-news.com/story/27539.php>

Digital Teen - Technology Overload/Dangers

Synopsis

Teen girls spend about seven hours a week in front of the television and about four hours online. Boys spend about eight hours watching television and six hours a week playing video games. On average of 10-13 year olds, 55% have a video game console, 52% an MP3 player, 45% a cell phone.⁴

Information:

- According to CBS News, teens spend about 2.9 hours a day online and about the same amount in front of the television. However, the internet can be used for research and homework assistance.⁵
- Only about 53% of households have rules about TV watching. Of the 47% that do have rules only about 20% (about 10 homes in 100) actually enforce the rules "most" of the time." Kids are spending the equivalent of a full-time work week using media.⁶
- 25% of teens in a relationship communicate with their boyfriend/girlfriend between midnight and 5:00 am via cell phone or text.⁷
- Teens are now multitasking their media requiring a change from "impression" to "engagement" - because of the vast number of distractions people must be engaged - can you spot the difference - to get their attention (Is this a Middle Schooler - game)



Panel Questions:

- In a world where most parents know less about the power of the technology they put in the hands of their teenager (many times completely unsupervised), how can we help keep these teens from dangerous behavior?
- What are the warning signs parents should be looking for?

⁴ http://www.youthintelligence.com/TweenReport_sample.pdf

⁵ http://www.marketingvox.com/teens_spend_time_in_equal_measure_on_web_tv-021980/

⁶ <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia030905nr.cfm>

⁷ http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/living/2003644903_textsleep31.html

Types of Teens

Synopsis

Generation X, Generation Y... we've given all kinds of names to generations of teens in an effort to categorize and summarize their behavior. However each teen is different and unique in their needs and character. Are there certain attributes that help us know how to better minister to teens? What are the descriptors that we should be looking for?

We must be careful not to stereotype and label teenagers - that is not the goal of this section, but rather to understand the natural groupings that rise to the surface as we survey the masses in order to better minister to them.

Information

Much of the information in this section (the entire report for that matter) has been obtained from teen marketing research firms. It seems corporations and product lines want the same thing that we do - the attention of this generation. These marketing firms realize that though each teen is different and desires to be known as unique there are certain threads or "Trends" that bind them together into common groups. Here is one study's grouping of 10 types of teens.⁸



Beauty Queens/Kings
Jocks
Health Nuts

Flirts
Teacher's Pet
Nerds

Dramatics
Gossips
Perfectionists

Emos: quite possibly the hardest to describe ([ABC](#), [Web](#)) - most dangerous because they claim they feel nothing and have no emotion. They may resort to self-mutilation as a means of attempting to "feel."

NOTE: This list has not been provided to label teens but rather to help understand their personality and actions may swing one direction. Knowing their type will help you be able to keep them in balance.

Panel Questions

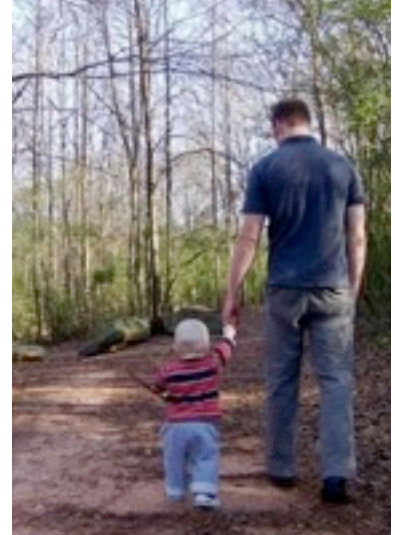
- Some types of teens are easier to minister to than others. What advise would you give to churches that will help them be prepared if teens show up that are difficult to minister to?
- Becoming a mentor to a student is a has a powerful impact. What are some practical ways we can encourage mentoring in our church?
- What would you say to leaders that may struggle with ministry to people who aren't "my type" or who don't fit in with they current "type" of the group?
- How can we help the church overcome aversions to certain "types" of teens and give them adequate ministry?

⁸ http://teen-culture.suite101.com/article.cfm/10_types_of_teenagers
sdlyce

Teen's View of Adults / Authority

Synopsis

Today's teen is growing up in a society where authority is questioned and it's savvy to put them down. People in the main-stream media show little or no respect for people in authority (in particular governmental leaders, or people who disagree with them) They feel like they know more than adults do, and in the case of technology, many times do. So what is their view of the person in the role of pastor? How do they view parents? Do they respect authority?



Information

Who is your role model? Who do you look up to and respect?⁹

- 65% - a parent
- 9% - a sibling
- 9% - another family member
- 8% - movie / tv star
- 4% - a teacher
- 1% - religious leader, sports player, friend
- <1% - a political leader

In a recent discussion with some students I learned that teenagers do respect adults / parents, but do not typically follow just because the person is "in authority" or because they are older as was the case years ago. Instead they need the answer to "Why?" We should not view their question as disrespect or challenging authority, but rather as a hunger to learn. Additionally, it is a test - a test to see if the leader is more concerned about the task / assignment or about imparting knowledge and a mentoring relationship. Today's teen value relationship and desperately want it in horizontal and vertical measures.

Panel Questions

- Many adults find it easier to carry on a conversation with other adults and are uncomfortable conversing casually with teens. What advice would you give to adults in the church regarding how to have a meaningful conversation with the teens in the church?
- The other side of the coin; Most teens don't expect that adults will want to communicate with them and so they busy themselves in connection with peers. What keys have you found to be valuable in breaking through that perception?
- Do you feel teenagers respect and look up to authority / adults in general?
- What do adults need to do in order to gain the respect of teenagers?
- What are some practical ways to connect teens and adults in the church?

⁹ http://www.youthintelligence.com/TweenReport_sample.pdf
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Positive Power of Teens

Synopsis

Today more than ever teenagers care about their world and the people they share it with.

Information: #9 Social Activism Through Consumption

Howard Handler (chief marketing officer of virgin mobile) spent some time on this, mentioning the Intelligence Group's "Cassandra Report" as providing him the insight of "activism light." It's the idea that teens are extremely socially aware, but favour participation through their consumption choices, because they believe *corporations are more effective agents of change than governments*.

The foundation point is that teens care about the world like crazy. The Alloy stat states that 66% of teens are worried about the state of the world and feel socially responsible. Moreover, teens want to represent themselves as well-rounded. Forty-nine percent say that marketing influences them if the company is socially responsible. Areas like animal friendly production and environmentally safe manufacturing are right up there. Teens are highly supportive of things like recycling, educating their friends and volunteering, but a lot more skeptical that it will make a difference.¹⁰

Causes of Resound: Helping the poor and sick, protecting animals, stopping violence, protecting the environment.



environment.



end hunger/provide water



protect the helpless

Panel Questions

- What evidence of the positive power of teens have you seen in your youth ministry recently?
- A healthy youth ministry must actively enlist youth into ministry now. What methods have you found to be the most effective in releasing them in this area?
- The quote above mentions teens trusting corporations before government when it comes to impacting the world in a positive way. What are methods a church can use to show they too care about the world around them?

¹⁰ <http://www.ypulse.com/the-ten-biggest-themes-of-what-teens-want/>
sdlyce

Teens and Money

Synopsis

Marketers Say: “We’ve seen tweens progress from a consumer group with a significant *influence* on their family’s purse strings to a full-fledged tween revolution that is today. Right now, tweens are the darlings of the music and entertainment industry, a new consumer segment for the mobile phone business and big players with the new virtual works and social networking sites that are being launched at record speeds.”¹¹

Information

- 63% of tweens get an allowance or earn money
- Boys earn \$9.16 and spend \$13.99 each week
- Girls earn \$10.17 and spend 11.80 each week
- **Teens in the Red:** It appears that youth are acting on what has been modeled for them: spend now, pay later¹²
- Students as young as 16 are getting personalized “pre-approved” credit card mail.
- Over 80% of graduating seniors have a credit card before they have a job.¹³
- Major players recognize the spending power and brand loyalty of this 7-13 year old group include: Activision, American Eagle, Best Buy, Coca-Cola, Cosmopolitan Magazine, ESPN, Kohl’s, Microsoft, MTV, NBC, Nike, Nissan, Nokia, Revlon, Sony, US Cellular, Verizon, Visa, Scion/Toyota, and many more.
- 22.8 million teens in the US spending \$209 billion (\$916 per teenager - if my math is correct)



number one teen store



number one tween girl items



video games: number one tween boy items

Panel Questions

- How can we properly instruct and show our teens how to manage money/credit?
- What lessons should be taught from the pulpit (adult and youth) that will help them with earning, spending, giving, and saving their money?
- How can we more effectively develop healthy money habits in our teens that will inspire them to use their money to make a difference in the world?
- What are the most effective methods you have found to teach about money in your ministry?

¹¹ http://www.youthintelligence.com/TweenReport_sample.pdf

¹² <http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/SavingandDebt/ManageDebt/HowTeensGetSuckedIntoCreditCardDebt.aspx>

¹³ <http://www.daveramsey.com/etc/cms/index.cfm?intContentID=3592>

Additional Topics and Resources for Further Study

Topics

- Teens and sexuality (see next page)
- Pharm parties
- Teen Discipline: What is appropriate, how severe do we get?
- Cyberbullying
- Benefits of teen mentoring (how to do it effectively)
- Substance abuse
- Current risky behaviors (ghost riding the whip,¹⁴ space monkey¹⁵)
- Who's influencing your teen?

Resources

- [Marketers of Cool](#) - PBS Video:
- [Growing up Online](#) - PBS Video:
- [Communication Strategies for Teens](#):
- [Parenting and Educational Resources](#):
- National Study of Youth and Religion - www.youthandreligion.org
- [The Delinquents: A Spate of Rhino Killings](#): 60 Minutes II report
- Many of the statistics and information (unless otherwise noted) was gleaned from www.youthintelligence.com a firm that studies market trends in teens and tweens to better help corporations project the products and advertising strategies that are needed in the coming months and years. They participate in a conference held annually entitled "What Teens Want ([referenced above](#)). These firms are studying the youth generation from a secular standpoint but give an accurate snapshot of the teenagers in our world today.
 - [Mom Intelligence Sample](#)
 - [Cassandra Report Sample](#)
 - [Tween Report Sample](#)
 - [Y Work Sample](#)
- [Center for Parent Youth Understanding](#)
- [Channel One](#) - Education and News or Advertising Giant
- Books and Recommended Reading
 - King Me: What Every Boy wants and needs from his Father (Steve Farrar)
 - Parenting with Love and Logic - Foster W. Cline
 - Grace Based Parenting - Dr. Tim Kimmel
 - Have a New Kid by Friday - Dr. Kevin Leman
 - Transforming Kids Into Spiritual Champions - George Barna
 - Uncensored: Dating, Friendship, and Sex - Jeanne Mayo
 - Help! I'm Raising My Kids While Doing Ministry - Josh Mayo

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_ride

¹⁵ <http://www.stop-the-choking-game.com/en/home.html>

Resources on Teens and Sex

Topics for Study

- Premarital Sex/Abstinence
- Oral Sex
- Pornography
- School Dance Issues (Grinding)
- Dating
- Beating Temptation
- Helping parents have “The Talk”
- Attire and Modesty
- Proper inter-gender relations
- Joking about opposite sex



Resources

- www.silverringthing.com - Abstinence ministry
- www.unspokenministries.com/ Ministry to Homosexual community
- www.citizenlink.org/FOSI/homosexuality/ Focus on the Family Article
- "[Uncensored - Dating, Friendship, and Sex](#)" by Jeanne Mayo - Chapter 24
- "[Truth and Tolerance](#)" by Scott Davis and Mike Ensley
- "[101 Frequently Asked Questions about Homosexuality](#)" by Mike Haley
- www.exodusyouth.net - a great resource for leaders and teens affected by homosexual issues.
- [Brian Pingle](#) - Director of Student Ministries at NCU - done presentations on this issue
- www.4parents.gov - may not agree with all viewpoints expressed.