

ZION'S FAITH AT HOME MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

theParentLinkSM



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Guide Children's Media Choices

With the explosion of technology now available, it seems like children are always plugged in, zoned out, or wired for sound. They spend less time outside, have shorter attention spans, and are exposed to online dangers such as pornography. On the positive side, technology has expanded children's knowledge and opportunities. They learn teamwork, problem-solving, and communication skills. Technology has also boosted activism among today's young people.



Although children may seem like "experts" when it comes to technology and new media, parents are still responsible for supervising what their kids are exposed to—and for how long. Two keys are moderation and interaction. These tips can help you limit and monitor what your kids see and hear:

Strategically set up your equipment and schedules. Keep televisions out of children's bedrooms, and place the computer in an accessible family area. Make media time contingent on the completion of chores and homework. Plan alternate activities, including physical ones.

Establish digital-free zones. Agree on days and times (such as dinner, family night, Sundays, etc.) when no one—including adults—is allowed to check e-mail or use any form of media.

Watch and listen to TV shows, movies, and music together. Talk about the issues that come up. Tie them into faith and provide a biblical worldview for children to consider as they use technology.

What's Up in Our Wired World?

- The average young American spends nearly every waking minute in front of an electronic device. Kids ages 8 to 18 spend more than 7.5 hours a day using computers or smart phones or watching TV. And because they multitask, they pack almost 11 hours of media content into that time.
(Kaiser Family Foundation)
- 87% of parents play video games with their kids at least occasionally.
(Yahoo! Shine)
- 20% of young people admit they've engaged in "sexting"— emailing or receiving nude photos or videos.
(Associated Press-MTV)

PowerSource



Ask God:

1. For wisdom as you oversee your children's media "diet."
2. To help your kids make good decisions about technology.
3. To show you ways to use technology in positive, family-building ways.

Parenting Insights

In *Children's Ministry Magazine*, online expert Tracy Carpenter explores some ways that technology is impacting young hearts and minds.

- **Shifting relationships—** Although kids still belong to social groups, the emphasis is no longer on face-to-face gatherings. Preteens, wired for relationships, now think in terms of their "audience" rather than their peer group.
- **Trying on identities—** Children express their developing personalities through social-networking sites and online role-playing. Preteens, emulating "cool," may try to outdo one another with suggestive images.
- **Providing "TMI"—** Young people still forming judgment and boundaries are sharing too much private information in very public ways.



First Communion

During the season of Lent the second grade students will be preparing for First Communion. Classes will be held March 13th & 20th during the Sunday school hour. Parents and Godparents are invited to join their children as they prepare to receive this Sacrament. March 27th during the Sunday school hour join us in the Sanctuary for pictures and final instruction.

First Communion will be at the 11:00 am worship service with a reception following.

God's Blessings to:

Family Experience:

Say What?

Encourage your family members to stay in constant communication with God by using these experiences from Group's *Hands-On Bible*:

- **Listen Up**—Read aloud Exodus 19: 1-9, 16-25. Say: "God spoke to Moses in a powerful voice. But most people would never say they've heard God speaking aloud." Brainstorm ways God speaks to us today; for example, through the Bible, through other Christians, to our hearts. Read aloud John 16: 13-15. Have family members each take a Bible to a place where they can be alone. Say: "Pray about school, home, a problem—anything! Open your Bible and read. Ask God to help you hear what he wants you to say." After 10 minutes, share your experiences. Say: "Sometimes God will speak to you loud and clear. Sometimes you won't even know God said anything until later. But God is talking. Just keep listening!"
- **"Excuse Me..."**—Talk about ways we get other people's attention these days and how it feels to fail to "connect" with someone. Then play this game to help you start thinking about God's voice. Have family members each think up a line from a movie or TV show. Then take turns saying the line using the same voice the character has. See who can guess the movie or show, as well as the character. Then ask: "How did you recognize the voices and programs?" Read 1 Samuel 3: 1-10. Ask: "Why did it take Samuel awhile to figure out who was talking? What are some ways God gets our attention? How can we recognize God's voice?"

Faith at Home Ministries

support for parents and youth!

Because sexuality is a gift from God, Zion is hosting the "Sex has a Price Tag" video to equip and nurture households in ways that promote healthy stewardship of this gift. All middle school and high school youth and their parents/guardians are invited to attend.

- **May 1st 6:00pm in the Parish House:** Preview of "Sex has a Price Tag" video, open to adults only.
- **May 22nd: 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm:** Dinner (potluck) and "Sex has a Price Tag" video for families 6th grade – 12th grade.

Discover Ways to Renew the 'Spark' of Kids' Faith

"Apathy is a sort of living oblivion," wrote 19th-century editor Horace Greeley. A common refrain from

many parents is that their teenagers are lackluster, or hard to “fire up”—especially when it comes to God and the church. Ironically, the apathy epidemic today just may have its roots in over activity.

“With so much going on for school and traveling teams, [kids] have no time for church, youth groups, and even family time,” says one youth minister in *Group Magazine’s* “State of Youth Ministry” report. “Kids are getting pulled in so many directions.” Other respondents said their biggest struggles are kids whose lives are compartmentalized and who don’t make Christ a priority for daily living.

Youth ministers said they’re dying for teenagers who are engaged and passionate about their faith, ready and willing to commit their lives to Jesus. On the positive side, they said they’ve noticed a hunger among today’s teenagers for “deeper” things, as well as a move from “flash” to substance.

So how can you fan the flames of your kids’ faith and convince them to invest in it 100 percent? First, lift up your teenagers in prayer often. The Holy Spirit is the one with the power to change hearts and lives. Next, make faith applicable to everyday life. Don’t limit talk of God to Sundays. Tie in Scripture to issues that kids face at home, at school, and in their activities and jobs. Make Christ a priority in your own life, and show kids by example what a committed Christian walk looks like. If necessary, cut back your busy schedule to focus more on God. Finally, harness kids’ hunger to go deeper by asking them tough questions and issuing spiritual challenges. Teenagers seeking a cause won’t find a better one than Christ.

Veteran youth pastor Jason Ostrander offers these tips for breaking through with kids who are jaded, bored, or apathetic:

- 1. Be yourself.** When you are who you say you are, unengaged kids are likely to crack open their windows wider. Doing an honest assessment of yourself will turn into a priceless gift to yourself and your kids.
- 2. Be a passionate, engaged observer.** Spend time studying your teenagers and work hard to understand what makes them tick. If we’re not fully awake to our kids, we’re just as dead as they are. Jesus always paid remarkable attention to the details people unconsciously revealed to him.
- 3. Don’t treat kids or spending time with them like just another box on your to-do list.** The last thing kids want to be is your latest project.
- 4. Take a risk.** Engage teenagers through their (sometimes) hidden passions by providing a niche for them to succeed or grow. Often they need something beyond the “status quo” to get them going.

Senior High Youth

Happenings in the Faith Café:

9:45am to 10:45am

“LIVE” conversations! Spiritual Habits? We will focus on this acronym for the month of March!

HABITS

Hang Out with God Psalm 1

Accountable Friendships Psalm 133

Bible Memorization Psalm 119:11

Involvement within the Church Body Psalm 78: 70-72

Listening Psalm 24: 1

Studying Scripture Psalm 119: 13-16

Parents: We know from experience that those who follow Christ after they graduate from youth ministry are those who have learned to feed themselves spiritually. Please let us help your student learn how to “feed” themselves! Build their faith in God. Bring them to the Faith Café! 9:45 to 10:45! Opened most Sundays!

Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Attack indifference by using these discussion starters with your teenagers:

1. What things or people are you most excited about right now? Do God and your faith excite you? Why or why not?
2. Which of your beliefs are you the most and the least passionate about, and why? What inspires you to stand up for something or someone?
3. In what ways is living a Christian life an adventure? What "equipment" is needed to embark on this trip?
 1. What would you say to a friend who had lost his or her "spark" for God?

Jesus counseled His disciples, "hold to my teaching and then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32.

High School Sunday Night Bible Study

When: 7 to 8 pm most Sundays

Where: Faith Café

Why: Building our Faith through the study of "THE WORD".

Living Word

The focus of *Living Word* is to make Jesus the center of your life. We can do that through:

inWord: Digging deeper into God's Word,
upWord: Living life in daily worship and prayer,
outWord: Serving others in Christ's name and
forWord: Sharing Jesus Christ with other people.

During the month of March we will be learning more about Moses and The Kings.

- ✠ What is one thing you worried about lately? A move? A tough choice? A relationship? How did you handle the worry? Were you frightened? Did you pray? Looking back, how did God help you through it?
- ✠ Read and highlight the encouraging words God gave to Joshua on the edge of the Promised Land in Joshua 1:9. Write "Be Strong!" Now read and highlight 1 Samuel 3:10. The boy Samuel heard God calling in the night. This was his response. Write "Good Answer!" in the margin. Is that the response you give to God when the voice of the Spirit stirs you in the night?

What's Coming Up?

March 19th: A Walk through the New Testament. Please look for information at church and in the Horizon about this great one day class. For 8th graders this is a wonderful class to take since you will not be studying the New Testament in Living Word. To sign-up please call Kelly Mullin.

March 20th: Lutherhaven Meeting for 6th-8th graders and their parents! This is an informational meeting to learn more about Lutherhaven and to sign up to attend with our church! Questions? Please call Kelly Mullin at 253-631-0100 or kmullin.zionkent@comcast.net.



March 9: Ash Wednesday Worship Service, 7:00pm

March 13: First Communion class #1

March 16: Soup Suppers and Holden Evening Prayer Services begin. Dinner is at 6:00pm and worship starts at 7:00pm. Bring the whole family!

March 19: A Walk through the New Testament

March 20: First Communion class #2; Lutherhaven Meeting for 6th -8th grade

March 27: Celebrating First Communion with our 2nd graders at the 11:00am worship service.

April 17: Faith at Home Lunch and Egg Hunt, Come join the fun!