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Parents Connection Class Overview

This class was designed by Andrew Thompson. Andrew is the youth minister at the Rose Hill Church of Christ in Columbus, GA. Find Andrew on Facebook (www.facebook.com/andrewt519), Twitter & Instagram (@andrewt519).

This class was designed as a way to build a support network among the parents by talking about issues that the kids in our youth ministry were facing. The class was structured to be discussion oriented, so parents were allowed to have feedback with one another.

This was not a parenting class. The intent was to provide tools and resources to the parents to help them discuss/face issues with their kids. The perspective that was given to them was one from a Youth Minister's standpoint. Parents were allowed to suggest topics that their kids were dealing with, so they could get feedback in those areas such as dating and puberty.

The class was unique in that it had a wide range of parents who were at different life stages. Each parent who had a child 18 years and younger was invited to the class. I, also, personally invited some respected couples from our congregation who had grown children to be a part of the class and impart their wisdom upon us. This made for some great discussions! It also showed the difference in generations and society. The issues the older parents dealt with were much different than what parents, today, deal with.

I hope this series blesses your ministry and that it helps to build strong bonds among your parents but also a greater respect for you, as a teacher or youth minister, because you thought it was important to spend time with them discussing how to spiritually equip their kids.

Be blessed!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Thompson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Parents Class — Week 1

- I. Introduction
 - a. Allow each person to state their name and children (age).
 - b. What's the purpose of this class?
 - i. Build a support network
 - ii. Build relationship with parents
 - iii. Round table discussion of issues your child is/will face and about the home. I'll ask you questions, you ask me questions, and we will learn from one another.
 - iv. This is NOT a parenting class – I will speak from a youth minister perspective. Families have been invited to give their advice as parents.
- II. Train up a child...
 - a. Train up a child in the way he should go even when he is old he will not depart from it. – Proverbs 22:6
 - b. The issues our youth are facing are much different than even when I was a teenager. Today, they are dealing with the ever growing world of internet and social media, modesty issue, a bigger realm of peer pressure, and it goes on and on...
 - i. Ask parents w/ grown children – What were some of the biggest issues you dealt with in being a parent?
 - ii. Ask parents w/ grown children – What were the biggest issues that your children dealt with growing up?
 - iii. Ask Parents – What currently are the biggest issues you face?
 - c. Simply put – The writer in Proverbs says we need to prepare our kids for what they have been called to do, the things they will face, issues that will arise and teach them the way God would have them to go. The more we can do now with our kids, our hope is greater that they will not depart from what they were taught and know (This is not a fool proof plan)
 - d. Ask parents – How adequate/inadequate do you feel in dealing with today's issues? Would you feel more adequate if resources were readily available for you to use?
 - e. Ask families w/ grown children – Do you feel you were ready to deal with the issues that popped up in your family? Would it have helped you to be better prepared if more resources had been provided to you (say, through the church)?
- III. Resource
 - a. The Sticky Faith Guide for Your Family – Dr. Kara Powell
 - i. What's Sticky Faith? It's the idea of building a faith in our kids that will last even once they graduate high school.
 - ii. Who is Kara Powell? She works for the Fuller Youth Institute and was part of the research team that brought up the Sticky Faith series after studying teens from many different congregations across the US and following them into their college years. (Research facts are listed on the back of the book)

- iii. Sticky Faith is what has helped mold and shape our youth group.
I've read the Sticky Faith book for youth ministers and parents.
- iv. This book is a practical guide for building a sticky faith plan for your family based on the fact that Parents are one of the primary influences on building a lasting faith in their children. It is intended to help you feel more comfortable in your home to help build faith in your children since Parents are the primary spiritual leaders in their children's life.
- v. Disclaimer: This book does have some denominational ideas in it, but there are a lot of good ideas for you, as parent, that can be used.

IV. Next Week

- a. We will talk about Equipping the Home and discuss how comfortable you are in the role of spiritual leader for your children. We will discuss how we could do a better job in our homes to supplement the youth ministry at Rose Hill.
- b. We will discuss upcoming resources that will be provided to help build confidence in the home to have more faith discussions with your children.

Parents Class – Week 2

“Equipping the Home”

Parts of lesson adapted from “The Sticky Faith Guide to Your Family” – Kara Powell, Chapter 8

- I. Equipping the Home
 - a. Train up a child in the way he should go even when he is old he will not depart from it. – Proverbs 22:6
 - i. Simply put – The writer in Proverbs says we need to prepare our kids for what they have been called to do, the things they will face, issues that will arise and teach them the way God would have them to go. The more we can do now with our kids, our hope is greater that they will not depart from what they were taught and know (This is not a fool proof plan)
 - ii. It’s never too early to start and it’s never too late
 - b. Deut. 6:4-7 – Moses proclaims to Israel, *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”*
 - i. Moses tasked the parents with teaching their children the command to love the Lord. Parents were and always will be one of the primary influences on building a lasting faith.
 - c. In Chapter 24 of Joshua, we see children struggling to serve the Lord because of whom their father’s served and we see Joshua make a bold proclamation for his family. He had summoned all the tribes of Israel together with their leaders and spoke to them. “Hey, long ago I know your fathers lived in many different places where they served other gods but through Abraham God brought your fathers together and out of the land of Egypt. God has done great things for your family.” **Beginning in v. 14** Joshua says, *“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. V. 15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*
 - i. Joshua basically says... Are you going to follow in your father’s footsteps and serve these other gods or are you going to serve the God who brought your family out of Egypt. No matter what you decide, Me and my family – we are going to serve the Lord!

- d. Parents, how comfortable do you feel being in the spiritual leader role for your children? And what are some ways your kids see spirituality in you?
- e. How would you define spiritual leader? What are ways a parent can establish themselves as a spiritual leader?

II. Faith Conversations

a. In Deut. Moses called for parents to have faith conversations with their children. A lot of times we skip over opportunities to discuss our faith or why we do certain things because it makes us feel awkward. Ultimately in order to face the issues that our youth will face, we have to be open to have conversations w/ them and talk them through it. The more faith conversations we have, the less awkward it will be.

b. For Example: My parents would always ask me about bible class and the conversation would go something like this... "How was class this morning?" "Fine" "Did you learn anything?" "Sure" "Well, what did you talk about?" "Noah" "What about Noah?" "He was a good man, built an ark, saved people... now, what are we eating for lunch?" Ever had those conversations?

- You've probably got the same typical responses. Asking these questions are good, so keep asking. It's even better when you can share your own answers to questions. The picture is painted by God in Deut. 6:7. parents are to share about faith when you "sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." In other words, as much as you can whenever you have a chance. Look for opportunities to share with them.

c. Why is it important to have faith building conversations?

d. When is it important to have these conversations?

- after anything spiritual related to help them understand why it is important to do the things we do (especially when you force them to participate). "Because I said so" or "Because God says so" isn't a valid excuse when it comes to building faith.

- the more open you can be with your child about doubts and struggles with your own faith, the more open your children will be to having conversations with you when issues arise.

e. (Parents w/ grown children) Did you find it particularly easy or difficult to have faith conversations with you children? Why?

- Did you have a set time everyday to discuss something spiritual? (family devo time, issues during the day, life, etc.)

- (Parents) Do you currently have a time each day that you set aside for faith conversations? Why do you think it is important to set time aside everyday or most days for these conversations?

*Research says that in order to get in a routine of talking faith in the home that families need to set aside the same time, same place, each day, or at least most days. This is important, as well as, looking for opportunities to bring up faith such as after

service projects, or Exposure Youth Camp, bible class, VBS, time w/
church family, etc.

III. New Resource

a. I know that each family is not always comfortable setting time aside for family devotional time, because you may not always know what to say.

b. This week's resource is an upcoming resource – Beginning the first Sunday in January, I will be producing weekly home devotionals that will give you a guideline for devotionals each evening. Every Sunday you will pick up a new devotional sheet.

c. You can take this guide to mold it to fit your own family or use it exactly how it is written. However you use it, my prayer is that this will help get your family, if they are not already, in a routine to have these conversations each night.

d. IF you would like me or one of our family's to come in and model how to do a family devotional to help you get started, we can help you in that way, as well.

Questions? Additional Comments?

Next Week: "It takes a village" – Surrounding our kids with mentors

Parents Class – Week 3

“It Takes a Village”

Adapted from “The Sticky Faith Guide to Your Family” – Kara Powell, Chapter 6

- I. Introduction
 - a. You’ve heard the old saying, “It takes a village to raise a child”.
 - i. How true do you believe that saying is?
 - b. Studies show that those who stayed in church following their high school graduation was able to name 5 adults who impacted their spiritual development. Family, friends, and church leaders all fall into this category.
 - c. When I think of the village concept, I think of Timothy. Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1 and he says in v. 5 ***I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.***
 - i. Timothy had strong influences in his life when it came to his faith, his mom and grandmother. First you see, a parent was an influence and now you have extended family that also influenced his faith. I wonder what Timothy would have been without those influences?
 - ii. Then Paul reminds Timothy towards the end of the letter (3:14-15) ***“...continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”*** Timothy’s mom and grandmother get credit for training up Timothy in the way he should go in hopes that as he got older, he would not depart from it, which is the reminder Paul gives.
- II. Practical Application
 - a. So, the idea is that we need to find ways to connect our youth with adults, family, and church members who will impact their spiritual development. Adults who know your kids’ names, who pray for them, who show up occasionally to your kids’ extra-curricular activities. Adults who can form a web of support to catch them when they fall
 - b. Also, in return it will provide you a support network of people who will become closely associated with your family that will help in times of crisis and need.
 - i. Sounds easy, but how do we do that? How do parents actively seek to connect their children to impactful adults? Thoughts?
 1. Share the adults who were in my life growing up that I still stay in contact with today – how we got connected, etc.
 - c. Intergenerational connections are important, but they tend to be the hardest thing to do; therefore, they become infrequent if not absent in a child’s life.
 - i. The church can be a tool for the intergenerational connections. In our ministry we strive to make these connections, but the parents will also need to be intentional in providing this for their children.

Parents Class – Week 4

Social Media/Internet – Part 1

*This topic generated a lot of discussion

- I. Introduction
 - a. Take the quiz and let's see how much you know about Social Media apps and websites.
 - b. What is Social Media?
 - i. websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
 - c. What are the positives to Social Media?
 - i. Matthew 28:19; Matthew 5:14-16;
 - ii. Spreading the word of God, Encouraging Others, and Stand up for what is right
 - d. What are the negatives to Social Media?
- II. Parental Involvement in Social Media
 - a. Do you know which Social Media platforms that your child is on?
 - b. What struggles do you believe your children have when it comes to Social Media?
 - i. Being a different person (even in our youth group).
 - c. What are some rules you have in your home when it comes to Social Media?
 - d. In regards to Social Media, do you have any questions for me?
 - e. General Rules:
 - i. Be where your kids are.
 - ii. Have their passwords.
 - iii. Periodic phone checks.
 - iv. Stay on top of the game. (Kids are always trying to stay 3 steps ahead of their parents)
- III. Resource
 - a. Handout on Top 15 social media sites that teens our using. (Attached at the end of packet)

Social Media Quiz

Parent Connection Class – Week 4

*Please place a checkmark next to the Social Media sites/apps that you are aware of or have heard of.

___ Facebook

___ MySpace

___ Twitter

___ WhatsApp

___ Instagram

___ Yo.

___ Snapchat

___ TimeHop

___ Yik Yak

___ Scrap

___ Voxel

___ YouTube

___ Ask.FM

___ Viber

___ Google+

___ Waze

___ GroupMe

___ Tinder

___ Foursquare

___ Tango

___ FanCred

___ Find my Friends

___ Kik Messenger

___ LINE

___ Swarm

___ Hangouts

___ Pinterest

___ Secrets

___ Tumblr

___ Shots

___ Vine

___ WeChat

___ Wanelo

___ WeHeartIt

___ Whisper

___ Medium

___ Omegle

___ About.me

___ OoVoo

___ Flickr

___ Skype

___ LinkedIn

Parents Class – Week 5

Social Media/Internet – Part 2

- I. Be Careful Little Eyes What You See
 - a. There are over 68 million daily searches for pornography in the United States. That's 25% of all daily searches (IFR, 2006).
 - b. The sex industry is largest and most profitable industry in the world.
 - c. Pornhub receives over 1.68 million visits per hour. (Pornhub, 2013)
 - d. The United States is the top producer of pornographic dvds and web material
 - e. Every 39 minutes a new porn film is created in the United States.
 - f. A recent study found that seven out of ten youth have been unwillingly exposed to pornography in the United States (Carroll et al, 2008).
 - g. Following first exposure, the largest consumer group of internet pornography is boys between the ages of 12-17.
 - h. Does this shock you/worry you?
 - i. We have kids in our youth group that is struggling with this very thing. We need to find ways to hold our families accountable for what they see online and on their phones.
- II. What does God say?
 - a. 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. – John 2:15-17
 - b. Colossians 3:5 also says, “put to death there what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry
 - i. What are some signs that your child maybe viewing inappropriate things on their phones or computer?
 1. Increased secretiveness or defensiveness, increased pop-up ads, unusual charges on phone bill or credit card, increased sexual curiosity

- ii. We know that God desires us to do His will. However, with the internet sometimes the struggle is a private one. How do we make the use of internet/computers, etc. more public in our homes?
- iii. How do we help our kids and sometimes the parents be accountable to what they see online?

III. Resources

- a. K9 Web Protection
- b. Covenant Eyes: Internet Accountability and Filtering
- c. X3 Watch

Parents Class – Week 6

Dating

- I. What to tell your kid when it comes to dating?
 - a. As the Youth Minister, this is advice that I give them.
 - i. Dating someone who does not share the morals and values as you, is dangerous.
 1. I Corinthians 15:33 “Do not be misled: bad company corrupts good morals”
 2. More often than not we cannot “fix” the person we are dating, and we have to accept them the way they are, so wouldn’t you want someone who loves God in the same way you do and wants to worship Him the same way you do and live out your life together serving God?
 3. Although it’s confusing... aren’t we called to bring people to know Christ? Yes, we are but dating is a new spectrum where you end up trying to be pleasing to the person you are “madly in love with”
 4. This statement alone will also affect the future of their children. If one parent is not religious, the likelihood of the child growing up and becoming non-religious has a high percentage.
 5. Agree or Disagree?
 - ii. Dating in high school is a joke – Don’t waste your time. (Like that will happen)
 1. How many of you married your high school sweetheart?
 2. More often than not, people do not marry their high school sweetheart.
 3. I share with the kids that high school is a perfect time to focus on building your relationship with God (because outside of that nothing else matters), to build your friendships, and through those friendships share the love of God with them.
 4. I believe dating in high school is important, it’s a time where you figure out exactly what you are looking for in a partner, but I don’t think it should be the “be all, end all” that dating in high school has become.
 5. Agree or disagree?
 - iii. Test them
 1. See who they really are, what they think about church, God, etc.
 2. Invite them to church and Invite them to pray – If they are uncomfortable doing those things with you, then they are probably not the person for you. If they ask questions about church and prayer, what a great opportunity to share with them.

3. Proverbs 19:2- "Desire without knowledge is not good..."
 4. You may want to date this person but based on what... do you know them?
 5. Agree or disagree?
- b. To adults w/ grown children: How did you approach the subject of dating?
 - c. Parents: What guidelines/boundaries have you set or will you set for dating with your children?
- II. Resources
- a. "Dateable: Are you? Are they?" by Justin Lookadoo
 - b. "Boundaries for Dating" by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
 - c. "B4UD8" by Haley and Michael DiMarco
 - d. "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" by Joshua Harris
 - e. "Sex is not the problem. (lust is)" by Joshua Harris

Parents Class - Week 7

Modesty

- I. What to tell your kid when it comes to modesty?
 - a. As the Youth Minister, this is advice that I give them.
 - i. Galatians 3:27 "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." How's that for dress? It's simple, but we want people to see Christ in us.
 - ii. 1 Peter 1:14-16 "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
 - iii. What's the dress code? Holiness.
 - iv. The "dress code" is one of respect, of honor, one worthy of wearing His Name, of dignity, one of, I daresay, evangelism. Because really, that's what it is, right? The whole issue of dress is an advertising issue.
 - v. People know we are Christians – they take notice – what are we advertising? Christ or ourselves?
 - vi. Share story heard at M2Y conference of man who repented, shared his struggle, and gave a challenge to girls.
- II. Work Session
 - a. Let's work on a reasonable dress code for our youth group.
 - i. (I do realize I don't have to buy clothes for our youth and do not understand the difficulty that may provide for parents)
 - ii. This will be the dress code – designed by the parents – that our ministry will use.
 - iii. For events not involving water: what would you think is a reasonable dress code? Remember – it's about advertising.
 - iv. For events involving water: what is a reasonable dress code?
- III. Resources
 - a. <http://jlggerhardt.tumblr.com/modesty>
 - i. A 10 session study on modesty via an inside-out approach
 - ii. Pay what you think is fair
 - iii. Can be used for guys or girls and is a refreshing and more in touch with what teens need to hear on the subject.

Parents Class — Week 8

Faith Discussion Groups

During this week, we combined the parents and kids class to have faith discussion groups. We mixed up parents with other kids in the youth group to have some intergenerational interaction. There was a brief devotional/introduction to the class but most of the time was spent in the discussion groups. You can tailor this week to how you see fit. This was one of our better weeks because of the interactions the adults had with other kids and that faith sharing back and forth.

(You may want to establish some ground rules, because adults can overtake a conversation)

Faith Discussion Groups

This group is designed to strengthen our spiritual community by sharing with others our faith and how it works in our lives. Each person should share, please give ample time for people to share without quickly moving on to the next question.

1. Each member introduces themselves and share a little about their life.
2. How would you define faith? (Hebrews 11:1)
3. How would you define faith as it pertains to your life?
4. What is the role of faith in your life?
5. How has faith helped you to overcome said obstacles and challenges?
6. What advice would you give to someone who may go through the same trials?
7. Where have you seen God in your life?
8. How has God played a role in your greatest victories?
9. Was God there with you during your struggles and/or did you allow Him to be there?
10. How has faith and God helped you to be where you are today?

**Ask someone to lead a prayer for your group that includes asking God to strengthen our spiritual family, our relationships with one another, and our faith in God plus any additional prayer requests your group may have.*

Parents Class – Week 9

“The P Word”

I. Overview of Puberty

- a. A subject we don't like to talk about but we need to talk about. We have a youth group full of kids going through puberty – What are we saying to them about the changes?
- b. Puberty is a very awkward time for kids. They are experiencing things that they've never experienced before.
- c. It affects their physical development, cognitive development, and biological development (mood swings, hormones, etc.)
- d. It affects them emotionally as it is the beginning of detachment from parents, which affects the parents, as well.
- e. They shift from wanting parental relations to more peer focused relations.
- f. (And really, we could spend several weeks on this topic alone discussing the different areas in which they are changing)
- g. Puberty derives from the Latin word “pubertas”, which means “adult.” Technically, the term refers to the period during which an individual becomes capable of sexual reproduction.
- h. Puberty has five chief physical characteristics (Marshall, 1978):
 - i. A rapid acceleration in growth, resulting in dramatic increases in both height and weight.
 - ii. The development of primary sex characteristics including the further development of sex glands.
 - iii. The development of secondary sex characteristics. (genitals and breasts)
 - iv. Changes in body composition – specifically, in the quantity and distribution of fat and muscle.
 - v. Changes in the circulatory and respiratory systems, which lead to increased strength and tolerance for exercise.
- i. What triggers puberty for males and females?
 - i. For males the onset of puberty begins with nocturnal emission (wet dream).
 - ii. For females, people will say it begins with their first period. However, physical development begins before that occurs.
- j. When does puberty occur?
 - i. It can occur as early as age 7 in girls and 9 ½ in boys.
 - ii. It can occur as late as age 13 in girls and 13 ½ in boys.

II. Discussion

- a. Communication is the key to overcoming most situations. It goes back to earlier when we were talking about faith based conversations that will help open up your kids to having faith conversations. The more open you can be in talking to kids about puberty, the more comfortable they will be.
- b. How have you talked to your kids about puberty?
- c. If your kids have already gone through it, how did you handle it? How did you talk to them?
- d. Parents w/ grown children – What was the toughest part about that time period for you and/or your kids?

III. What can you do?

- a. Pray for wisdom (James 1:5; I Thess. 5:17)
- b. Be willing to be uncomfortable.
- c. Be open about your experienced with puberty.

Parents Class – Week 10

“Walking the Walk”

Week 10 was a personal lesson dealing with issues that I am having in our ministry with non-committed, uninterested parents. So, I took that last week and spoke from the heart to the parents and asked them to play a bigger role not only in their child’s life but in our ministry, as well. We have already begun to see some fruits from this lesson in particular. I would encourage you to do the same with your parents, but address issues you, as a youth minister, are dealing with when it comes to your families. The key is in the delivery – make sure it comes across in a loving and concerned way.

I. Introduction

- a. This lesson comes from my heart. As you know, I am now the Youth and Family minister which means not only am I trying to help our kids be the best spiritually that they can be, my role is to also equip our families with what they need to be partners in our ministry and to lead your kids in a spiritual way.
- b. I want you to know up front that I am very passionate about what I do and sometimes that passion comes across very forthcoming/abbrasive. I, also, want you to know that this lesson is intended to step on toes, but not break them.
- c. What I want to share with you is expectations of families in our youth ministry because I have high expectations for our kids and our families because I want us all to give our best for the cause of Christ.
- d. The most important thing you can do as a parent to help in our ministry is to lead by example – It is pointless to expect your child to be involved in our ministry, to go to church, etc. if you are not willing to do it yourself.
 - i. We started this class with Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way they should go and when they are older they shall not depart from it.”
 - ii. It all starts in the home. I think Roy Johnson made an excellent point when he talked about L2L with us – He said, “You can’t tell your child to go read the bible while you watch the Super Bowl.”
 - iii. Meaning – if your child does not see you Walking the Walk, then how can we expect them to do something you are not willing to do yourself?
 - iv. My dad always said when it comes to his business that he does not ask his employees to do anything that he would not be willing to do. This approach is the same when dealing with our kids spiritual walk.

- e. Let me share a few things that I would like for you as parents to understand when it comes to our ministry, your partnership in ministry, and expectations that I have for our families.

II. Expectations/Purpose

- a. We strive to do everything for a purpose. God has always had expectations for his people, and more than anything, we should want to please Him.
- b. In fact everything we do can fit under these 3 phrases: Seek God, Serve Others, and Go into the world!
- c. Seek God
 - i. We want for each family to commit to attend bible class and worship every Sunday and Wednesday. Why? Because we learn to seek God in our learning.
 - 1. Why is this Expected? God expects us to make His church a priority. When we fall into “a habit of neglecting to meet together,” we will begin to slip spiritually.
 - a. Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
 - b. Matthew 6:33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”
 - c. Christ considered the church to be so important that He died for it. (“Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...” Ephesians 5:25)
 - 2. How can we help to meet this expectation? By providing rides for people who can't provide a ride for themselves. We have church members who live all over the area and many of them could swing by and pick you and your family up at your house without any trouble whatsoever. All you have to do is let us know if you need a ride! Let's make it happen
 - ii. We want you and your family to grow in your relationship with God.
 - 1. Why is this Expected?
 - a. Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

- b. 1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- c. 2 Peter 1:5-8 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- d. Hebrews 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

2. How can we help to meet this expectation?

- a. By providing relevant education material to your students.
- b. Through family devotionals that are available each week.
- c. Having a class full of parents periodically for growth together.
- d. Providing opportunities for the family to grow in a setting away from the home.
- e. Providing workshops for the family to grow spiritually – such as Family Forward Workshop

d. Serve Others

- i. We want you to find a place to serve in the body.

1. Why is this expected?

- a. Everybody that's in the body is somebody and matters to the body!
- b. 1 Corinthians 12:18-20 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

2. How you can meet this expectation:
 - a. Encourage your students to be a part of the Student Leader meetings/team
 - b. Be willing to pick up students and drive them to events/class/worship when they aren't able to get a ride.
 - c. Be a part of the Planning Advisory Committee
 - d. Encourage your students to participate in worship, especially 5th Sunday night worship.
 - e. Men, be willing to lead in worship (be the example).
 - f. Find your niche/interest and get involved. God's work is never finished.
- ii. We want you and your family to connect with at least 5 people in the church.
 1. Why is this Expected?
 - a. The New Testament church made a habit of being together and building relationships.
 - b. Acts 2:41-47 "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."
 - c. While you won't find a specific Bible verse that says "Thou shalt be connected with at least 7 people in the church," you will find the extensive research and work done in books like "Family-Based Youth Ministry," "Sticky Faith," "Clear Choices for Churches," and "A Sense of Belonging" are all in agreement with this statement:

- d. “Every person consulted in the Sticky Faith survey who managed to form at least 5 new friendships within the congregation remained faithful. Those who formed fewer than 3 friendships dropped out.”
 - e. We want to do everything we can to help you make strong connections with God’s people so that our students will have a faith that will be sustainable well beyond their teenage years.
2. How to help you meet this expectation:
- a. We have purposefully planned and put into place several ways to help make 5 meaningful connections including youth visitations, primetimer ministry events, and the young pros sports challenge.
- iii. We want each family and student to give of their time in serving our community.
1. Why is this expected?
- a. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus.
 - b. ‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’” Matthew 25:35-36
 - c. “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those in the house hold of faith.” Galatians 6:10
2. How can we help you to meet this expectation:
- a. We provide opportunities for each family and student to serve throughout the year. To be the hands and feet of Jesus by giving of our time. This includes: Loaves and Fishes Dinner, Impact Workcamp, Primetimers dinner, brown bag, and more!
- e. Go into the world!
- i. We want you and your family to tell people about the Lord and His church.
1. Why is this expected?
- a. Jesus’ model for the church requires saved people to save people!
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given

to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

2. How we want to help you meet this expectation:
 - a. Providing mission trips. (Youth missions or church missions)
 - b. We also purposely plan events on the calendar each year designed to be perfect opportunities to bring friends that may or may not be connected to the church. For example; Bring a Friend Night, Retreats, Church Camp, Girls/Guys Night Out, and lots more – you get the idea!
 - c. In the future, by offering time to teach those who are interested on how to lead their friends to the Lord.
 - d. Providing opportunities for families to invite friends and family to be a part of an event – such as, Family Forward, Lads to Leaders, etc.
- ii. We want your student to develop a faith that thrives into the college years and beyond.
 1. Why is this Expected?
 - a. According to the research done in “Sticky Faith,” between 40-70% of students who leave their faith in the college years never return.
 - b. Eventually we want students to leave the youth group, but not the church! God expects His followers to be committed to Him until the day we die.
 - c. Revelation 2:10 “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
 2. How we can help you to meet this expectation:
 - a. Several items mentioned above deal with connecting students to people who care about their souls (Youth minister, youth deacon, elders, Youth Houses, the youth group, church members, etc.)
 - b. Providing college visits for our high school age
 - c. We are also excited to offer a college age class on Sundays and Wednesdays that meets in the Conference Room. Where they will see some familiar faces.

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another”

Romans 12:4-5

*Pray on what we talked about today. I believe in our ministry but if I don't have the backing of the parents then there is no point in my being here. Please make an effort today to be committed to the things we have discussed, find how you can be involved – could be simply picking a kid up for church, be committed to growth as a family by attending bible study and worship on a regular basis, find time to serve together with the youth group or with your family... above all be committed to your relationship with Christ and be that example for your kids so they will also be committed to their relationship with Christ, also.

***Handout for Week 4.**

(This is always changing but was current as of March 17, 2015)

Top 15 Apps for Teens – What You Need to Know

Twitter is a microblogging site that allows users to post brief, 140-character messages -- called "tweets" -- and follow other users' activities.

Why it's popular

Teens like using it to share quick tidbits about their lives with friends. It's also great for keeping up with what's going on in the world -- breaking news, celebrity gossip, etc.

What parents need to know

- **Public tweets are the norm for teens.** Though you can choose to keep your tweets private, most teens report having public accounts (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2013). Talk to your kids about what they post and how a post can spread far and fast.
- **Updates appear immediately.** Even though you can remove tweets, your followers can still read what you wrote until it's gone. This can get kids in trouble if they say something in the heat of the moment.
- **It's a promotional tool for celebs.** Twitter reels teens in with behind-the-scenes access to celebrities' lives, adding a whole new dimension to celebrity worship. You may want to point out how much marketing strategy goes into the tweets of those they admire.

2. Instagram is a platform that lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos -- either publicly or with a network of followers.

Why it's popular

Instagram unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos. Instagram also lets you apply fun filters and effects to your photos, making them look high-quality and artistic.

What parents need to know

- **Teens are on the lookout for "Likes."** Similar to Facebook, teens may measure the "success" of their photos -- even their self-worth -- by the number of likes or comments they receive. Posting a photo or video can be problematic if teens post it to validate their popularity.
- **Public photos are the default.** Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public unless privacy settings are adjusted. Hashtags and location info can make photos even more visible to communities beyond a teen's followers if his or her account is public.
- **Private messaging is now an option.** Instagram Direct allows users to send "private messages" to up to 15 mutual friends. These pics don't show up on their public feeds. Although there's nothing wrong with group chat, kids may be more likely to share inappropriate stuff with their inner circles. Also, strangers can send private messages to users; kids then choose to open the message and view or discard the attached picture.
- **Mature content can slip in.** The terms of service specify that users should be at least 13 years old and shouldn't post partially nude or sexually suggestive photos -- but they don't address violence, swear words, or drugs.

3. Snapchat is a messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear.

Why it's popular

Snapchat's creators intended the app's fleeting images to be a way for teens to share fun, light moments without the risk of having them go public. And that's what most teens use it for: sending goofy or embarrassing photos to one another. Snapchats also seem to send and load much "faster" than email or text.

What parents need to know

- **Many schools have yet to block it**, which is one reason why teens like it so much (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2013).
- **It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever.** Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. (For example, the person on the receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears.) Snapchats can even be recovered. After a major hack in December 2013 and a settlement with the FTC, Snapchat has clarified their privacy policy, but teens should stay wary.

- **It can make sexting seem OK.** The seemingly risk-free messaging might encourage users to share pictures containing inappropriate content.

4. Tumblr is like a cross between a blog and Twitter: It's a streaming scrapbook of text, photos, and/or videos and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or "tumblelogs," that can be seen by anyone online (if made public).

Why it's popular

Many teens have tumblrs for personal use -- sharing photos, videos, musings, and things they find funny with their friends. Tumblelogs with funny memes and gifs often go viral online, as well (case in point: "Texts from Hillary").

What parents need to know

- **Porn is easy to find.** This online hangout is hip and creative but sometimes raunchy. Pornographic images and videos, depictions of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.
- **Privacy can be guarded, but only through an awkward workaround.** The first profile a member creates is public and viewable by anyone on the Internet. Members who desire full privacy have to create a *second* profile, which they're able to password protect.
- **Posts are often copied and shared.** Reblogging on Tumblr is similar to re-tweeting: A post that's reblogged from one tumblelog then appears on another. Many teens like -- and in fact, want -- their posts reblogged. But do you really want your kids' words and photos on someone else's page?

5. Google+ is Google's social network, which is now open to teens. It has attempted to improve on Facebook's friend concept -- using "circles" that give users more control about what they share with whom.

Why it's popular

Teens aren't wild about Google+ yet. But many feel that their parents are more accepting of it because they associate it with schoolwork. One popular aspect of Google + is the addition of real-time video chats in Hangouts (virtual gatherings with approved friends), and some schools may use Google Docs for classroom assignments.

What parents need to know

- **Teens can limit who sees certain posts by using "circles."** Friends, acquaintances, and the general public can all be placed in different circles. If you're friends with your kid on Google+, know that you may be in a different "circle" than their friends (and therefore seeing different information).
- **Google+ takes teens' safety seriously.** Google+ created age-appropriate privacy default settings for any users whose registration information shows them to be teens. It also automatically reminds them about who may be seeing their posts (if they're posting on public or extended circles).
- **Data tracking and targeting are concerns.** Google+ activity (what you post and search for and who you connect with) is shared across Google services including Gmail and YouTube. This information is used for targeting ads to the user. Users can't opt out of this type of sharing across Google services.

6. Vine is a social media app that lets users post and watch looping six-second video clips. This Twitter-owned service has developed a unique community of people who post videos that are often creative and funny -- and sometimes thought-provoking.

Why it's popular

Videos run the gamut from stop-motion clips of puzzles doing and undoing themselves to six-second skits showing how a teen wakes up on a school day vs. a day during summer. Teens usually use Vine to create and share silly videos of themselves and/or their friends and family.

What parents need to know

- **It's full of inappropriate videos.** In three minutes of random searching, we came across a clip full of full-frontal male nudity, a woman in a fishnet shirt with her breasts exposed, and people blowing marijuana smoke into each other's mouths. There's a lot of funny, clever expression on Vine, but much of it isn't appropriate for kids.
- **There are significant privacy concerns.** The videos you post, the accounts you follow, and the comments you make on videos are all public by default. But you *can* adjust your settings to protect your posts; only followers will see them, and you have to approve new followers.
- **Parents can be star performers (without knowing).** If your teens film you being goofy or silly, you may want to talk about whether they plan to share it.

7. Wanelo (Want, Need, Love) combines shopping, fashion blogging, and social networking all in one. It's very popular among teens, allowing them to discover, share, and buy products they like.

Why it's popular

Teens keep up with the latest styles by browsing Wanelo's "trending" feed, which aggregates the items that are most popular across the site. They can also cultivate their own style through the "My Feed" function, which displays content from the users, brands, and stores they follow.

What parents need to know

- **If you like it, you can buy it.** Users can purchase almost anything they see on Wanelo by clicking through to products' original sites. As one user tweeted, "#Wanelo you can have all of my money! #obsessed."
- **Brand names are prominent.** Upon registering, users are required to follow at least three "stores" (for example, Forever21 or Marc Jacobs) and at least three "people" (many are other everyday people in Wanelo's network, but there are also publications like *Seventeen* magazine).
- **There's plenty of mature clothing.** You may not love what kids find and put on their wish lists. Wanelo could lead to even more arguments over what your teen can and can't wear.

8. Kik Messenger is an app-based alternative to standard texting that kids use for social networking. It's free to use but has lots of ads.

Why it's popular

It's fast and has no message limits, character limits, or fees if you just use the basic features, making it decidedly more fun in many ways than SMS texting.

What parents need to know

- **It's too easy to "copy all."** Kik's ability to link to other Kik-enabled apps within itself is a way to drive "app adoption" (purchases) from its users for developers. The app also encourages new registrants to invite everyone in their phone's address book to join Kik, since users can only message those who also have the app.

- **There's some stranger danger.** An app named *OinkText*, linked to Kik, allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with. There's also a Kik community blog where users can submit photos of themselves and screenshots of messages (sometimes displaying users' full names) to contests.
- **It uses real names.** Teens' usernames identify them on Kik, so they shouldn't use their full real name as their username.

9. Oovoo is a free video, voice, and messaging app. Users can have group chats with up to 12 people for free. (The premium version removes ads from the service.)

Why it's popular

Teens mostly use Oovoo to hang out with friends. Many log on after school and keep it up while doing homework. Oovoo can be great for group studying and it makes it easy for kids to receive "face to face" homework help from classmates.

What parents need to know

- **You can only chat with approved friends.** Users can only communicate with those on their approved "contact list," which can help ease parents' safety concerns.
- **It can be distracting.** Because the service makes video chatting so affordable and accessible, it can also be addictive. A conversation with your kids about multitasking may be in order.
- **Kids still prefer in-person communication.** Though apps like Oovoo make it easier than ever to video chat with friends, research shows that kids still value face-to-face conversations over online ones -- especially when it comes to sensitive topics. Still, they sometimes find it hard to log off when all of their friends are on.

10. Yik Yak is a free, location-aware, social-networking app that lets users post "anything and everything" anonymously through brief, Twitter-like comments, which are distributed to the geographically nearest 500 people who are also signed in to the app.

Why it's popular

Kids can find out opinions, secrets, rumors, and more. Plus, they'll get the bonus thrill of knowing all these have come from a 1.5-mile radius (maybe even from the kids at the desks in front of them!).

What parents need to know

- **It reveals your location.** By default, exactly where you are is shown unless you toggle location sharing off. Each time you open the app, GPS updates your location.
- **It's a mixed bag of trouble.** This app has it all: cyberbullying, explicit sexual content, unintended location sharing, and exposure to explicit information about drugs and alcohol.
- **Some schools have banned access.** Some teens have used the app to threaten others, causing school lockdowns and more. Its gossipy and sometimes cruel nature can be toxic to a high school environment, so administrators are cracking down.

11. Ask.fm is a social site that lets kids ask questions and answer those posted by other users -- sometimes anonymously.

Why it's popular

Although there are some friendly interactions on Ask.fm -- Q&As about favorite foods or crushes, for example -- there are lots of mean comments and some creepy sexual posts. This iffy content is part of the site's appeal for teens.

What parents need to know

- **Bullying is a major concern.** The British news website MailOnline reported that the site has been linked to the suicides of several teens. Talk to your teens about cyberbullying and how anonymity can encourage mean behavior.
- **Anonymous answers are optional.** Users can decide whether to allow anonymous posts and can remove their answers from streaming to decrease their profile's visibility. If your teens do use the site, they'd be best turning off anonymous answers and keeping themselves out of the live stream.
- **Q&As can appear on Facebook.** Syncing with Facebook means that a much wider audience can see those Q&As.

12. WhatsApp lets users send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.

Why it's popular

The price is right; for teens who have a hard time keeping within the limits of a standard texting plan, the ability to send unlimited messages for free is a definite bonus.

What parents need to know

- **It's for users 16 and over.** Lots of younger teens seem to be using the app, but this age minimum has been set by WhatsApp.
- **It can be pushy.** After you sign up, it automatically connects you to all the people in your address book who also are using WhatsApp. Beyond that, the app often encourages you to add friends who haven't yet signed up.
- **Kids may need some limits.** Although unlimited texting may save you cash, capping kids' communication can help them stay focused on the more important transmissions.

13. Omegle is a chat site (and app) that puts two strangers together in their choice of a text chat or video chat room.

Why it's popular

Being anonymous can be very attractive to teens, and Omegle provides a no-fuss opportunity to make connections. Its "interest boxes" also let users filter potential chat partners by shared interests.

What parents need to know

- **Users get paired up with strangers.** That's the whole premise of the app. And there's no registration required.
- **This is NOT an app for kids and teens.** Omegle is filled with people searching for sexual chat. Some prefer to do so live. Others offer links to porn sites.
- **Language is a big issue.** Since the chats are anonymous, they're often much more explicit than those with a user who can be identified might be.

14. Yo. is a bare-bones social app that sends a short text message to friends and family, simply reading "Yo" (and speaking the word aloud). That's it.

Why it's popular

This admittedly silly concept has taken off big-time since the app's release in mid-2014.

Although it may not seem like much, this single word has the potential to let friends and family know you're thinking of them and just wanted to say, you know, "Yo."

What parents need to know

- **It's relatively harmless -- but watch out for hackers.** The app's simple design and explosive popularity has made it a target for hackers.
- **Yo. may be a flash in the pan.** Although your kid may be obsessed with sending "yo" greetings to everyone in her address book today, tomorrow could be a different story, as apps like this tend to have a shorter lifespan.

15. Whisper is a social "confessional" app that allows users to post whatever's on their minds, paired with an image.

Why it's popular

With all the emotions running through teens, anonymous outlets give them freedom to share their feelings without fear of judgment.

What parents need to know

- **Whispers are often sexual in nature.** Some users use the app to try to hook up with someone nearby, while others post "confessions" of desire. Lots of eye-catching nearly nude pics accompany these shared secrets.
- **Content can be dark.** People normally don't confess sunshine and rainbows; common Whisper topics include insecurity, depression, substance abuse, and various lies told to employers and teachers.
- **Although it's anonymous to start, it may not stay that way.** The app encourages users to exchange personal information in the "Meet Up" section.