

CPYU PARENT PAGE

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"You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully. Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees!"
- Psalm 119:4&5 (NLT)

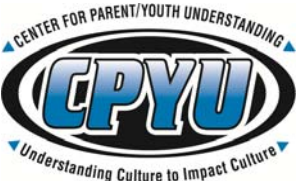
TOP 10 TRENDING TOPICS ON TWITTER FOR 2011 SOURCE: WHAT THE TREND?

1. Justin Bieber
2. Soccer/Football
3. Lady Gaga
4. NBA
5. Jonas Brothers
6. Christmas
7. Super Junior
8. Britney Spears
9. Japan Earthquake
10. One Direction

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

"I'm happy to finally have an adult in my life that leads by example. I had some crazy adults in my life, so it's about time I got one that inspired me."

- Pearl Jam singer Eddie Vedder regarding fellow musician Neil Young in "Pearl Jam Twenty" (PBS, October 2011)



TALK, DON'T RUN

We cannot deny the potent power of media to manipulate, influence, and shape our children and teens. The lessons they learn from music, television, and movies during their wonder years form the foundation for the way they will look at the world for the rest of their lives. Faced with this real danger, many of us make the mistake of responding by going to extremes. . . assuming that if we tell them to "turn it off," the influence and problem will magically disappear. This may be the easiest and most time-efficient response, but it does nothing to help your kids learn for themselves how to watch and listen with discernment.

You may have been tempted to run into your teenager's room to smash their TV, disconnect their laptop from the wireless connection, and throw their iPod into a fire. Is this approach healthy? I don't think so.

First, it equates the world of media to a ticking bomb. But not all media is bad. Although there are certain messages and themes that must be dealt with, we shouldn't throw the baby out with the bath water.

Second, this approach is totally unrealistic. There is no way that we can successfully separate our children and teens from the media's influence. All they have to do is walk out the door to play with a friend, pick up the phone, or go to school, and they'll interact with peers that are living in a media-saturated world.

Third, by virtue of the fact that parents make all their teen's media decisions for them, their teens will miss out on the opportunity to learn how to make good judgments for themselves. Granted, there are times when parents must exercise their right to say "no." But sometimes we forget that adolescence is a bridge from childhood to adulthood. We need to honor our

CPYU TREND ALERT: FREON HUFFING

If you know anything at all about today's youth culture, you know it's a world full of ideas and pressures that feed adolescent curiosity and risk-taking tendencies. Now, we're learning that we need to be aware of another dangerous drug trend that's on the rise. This time it's kids huffing Freon, the gas found in air conditioning systems. Inhaling this dangerous gas freezes the lungs and causes a very rapid high that resembles intoxication by alcohol. A report from the American

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teens' developing ability to think for themselves by walking them through the decision-making process. It is important for them to understand the whys behind our nos. If we want them to develop the ability to discover, discern, and decide on their own, we need to give them reasons, not just restrictions. In effect, we are teaching them to "defuse the bombs" that the media throw our way, therefore eliminating the need to run in fear. This is a valuable skill that they can pass on to others, including your grandchildren. A little formula we've used in our home is this: *When they are young we think for them. As they get older and reach the teenage years we think with, so that when they are released from our care and into adulthood, they are able to think for themselves.*

Fourth, I have seen this approach used enough times to know that it has the potential to destroy family unity and lead kids into rebellion. The apostle Paul speaks to this type of approach in Ephesians 6:4 when he says, "Do not exasperate your children" (NIV). While Paul is not encouraging parents to forsake their responsibility or undermining their authority, he is warning against inciting a state of perpetual resentment in our kids.

Fifth, this "run for your life" approach is theologically wrong. It denies the biblical truth that the creative talents of every musician, artist, and media creator come from the God who created them all. It denies that media might from time to time contain a reflection of what is good, true, honorable, and right.

When our only approach is to tell our children to "run for your life," we are disobedient to God, we do a disservice to our children, and we fail to see the good potential in media.

Association of Poison Control Centers says that Freon huffing killed at least two teens in 2009, and sent more than 2000 other teenagers to the emergency room. Experts warn that kids will try inhaling anything if they think it will give them a high. Huffing Freon might only be done once, but it's so dangerous that it can kill even when done just one time. This is another danger unique to the times that must be discussed with our kids.

LATEST RESEARCH: ALCOHOL ADS ON RADIO

Back in 2003, trade groups within the alcohol industry agreed to voluntarily place alcohol ads in media outlets only when underage youth represent thirty percent or less of the audience. Critics have said that these measures are not enough, as greater measures need to be taken to keep alcohol promotions and marketing away from a very vulnerable and impressionable audience of children and teens. Recent research from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public

Health has concluded that nearly one out of every eleven radio ads for alcoholic beverages failed to comply with the industry's voluntary standards. We agree that marketing standards need to change. But here at CPYU we also want to sound the horn and call parents, youth workers, and teachers to be more diligent in teaching children and teens how to think Christianly about all the ads they see and hear. Marketing sells both product and a worldview. Talk with your kids about the ridiculous and empty promises made by alcohol advertising.



Want more information about your kids and their world? Visit us on the web at www.cpyu.org and subscribe to our free weekly e-Update!



FROM THE WORD

Sometimes Scripture is about Scripture. That's the case in Psalm 119, the longest Psalm in the Bible. The Psalmist delights in God's Word in ways that should inspire and prompt us to do the same. Because our families live in a world that tugs on our hearts and calls for us to place our allegiance in a variety of false gods, we must pursue the resolve the Psalmist shows in the Psalm's opening verses.

The Psalmist recognizes that God calls us to a lifestyle characterized by an undivided heart. An undivided heart is one that relentlessly pursues deeper understanding of the truths of God's word, believing them to be

true. Then, the heart pursues a life of passionately and wisely living out those truths in every nook and cranny of life. It is a weaving together of one's belief *and* one's behavior. Our overwhelming desire in life should be to "keep your commandments carefully" (v.4) and to act in ways that "consistently reflect your decrees" (v.5).

Always remember – the way in which you live speaks louder than your words. Your teenagers are watching. Live as God has called you to live and your watching children will be given the gift of a clear example of what it means to do the same.

IN THE NEWS: CHEATING SCANDALS

We live in a world where standards of right and wrong are disappearing and disappearing fast. It's becoming more and more like those times in the Bible where we read that "everyone did what was right in their own eyes." This certainly is true when we look at trends related to cheating. In recent months, we've read about high-profile SAT cheating scandals, like the one involving an Emory University student who took the SAT for several other students at his own Long Island High School, all for fifteen hundred to two-thousand dollars per test! More recently, we've

heard about a standardized test cheating scandal involving teachers rather than students. It seems that teachers in the Atlanta public schools have caved to pressure to raise student test scores by raising those scores through cheating. In this case, the students are innocent but they have to live with the stigma and consequences of inflated scores. The Scriptures call followers of Jesus to live honestly. Cheating is wrong. Are we teaching our kids to pursue those things that are good, true, honorable, and right?

