

Parents Workshop Outline

Kyra White

COM 632

Dr. Hepburn

4-21-2024

Parents Workshop Outline

Topic: Children, Teens, and Parental Concerns and the Church in the Digital Age

Location: Restored Souls Church Activity Center

Date of Presentation: 4-21-2024

Presenter: Kyra White

Time: 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Purpose: To provide parents with vital and useful information about how to navigate concerns about their children and teens' use of digital media and technology. There will be both scholarly and biblical resources used throughout each session, so please feel free to take notes. We have provided pens and notebooks, however, you are welcome to use any mobile note-taking device as well.

Workshop Schedule

8:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m. -Registration

9:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m. -Breakfast Meet & Greet

—

9:45-10:30 a.m. *Session 1-Parents Just Don't Understand: The State of Parent-Child*

Communication: Parents/Guardians, how many times have you had to tell your child/teen to put their phone away during family time? Oftentimes, this request is met with mumbling and grumbling, followed by eyerolls or irritated sighs. You don't understand—what is it about their phones that is more important than breakfast/dinner? This also annoys you deeply, which in turn leads to disagreements, or further failures to connect with your child/teen. What can be done to circumvent this? This session will discuss the importance of parent-child communication, and how parents/guardians can work with technology rather than fight against it.

Biblical verses: Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 4:6

10:45 a.m. -11:00 a.m. *Rest/Break*

11:05 a.m.-11:55 a.m. *Session 2- Modern Family: Digital Technology & Impacts on the*

Family Unit: The previous session was essentially a caveat into this next session, which dives deeper into digital technology's impact on the family unit. Modern technology has certainly made communication more seamless, however, it has also dampened communication as well, especially within family dynamics. This session will cover how parents/guardians can be more intentional about having "tech-free" family time in the household, while also covering concerns and issues that parents/guardians have about digital technology and its impact on their children and family. Some concerns that will be addressed are: limiting screen time for family time, online safety, and how parents can manage their *own* relationship with digital media technology.

Biblical verses: 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Proverbs 1:8; Ephesians 6:4

12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. Lunch

****1:15 p.m.-2:15 p.m. *Session 3- UNlikeable: Social Media's Impact on Adolescent Self***

Image: Social media has ingrained itself into every aspect of our lives: school, work, and yes, church. In fact, a lot of people look to social media to inform them about what is trendy in regards to fashion, music, or even streaming. There is no denying social media's influence on all of us, but there is one group in particular that is more likely to be influenced by social media: adolescents. According to the U.S. Surgeon General (2023), up to 95% of adolescents between the ages of 13-17 use a social media platform. Additionally, approximately 40% of children between the ages of 8-12 use social media (U.S. Surgeon General, 2023). Though research about social media's impact on adolescents is ever-evolving, there is evidence that may indicate a correlation between an adolescent's social media use and their perception of self.

The correlation between adolescent's social media use and their perception of themselves can simply be found in how much attention goes into how they present themselves online. According to Mann & Blumberg (2022), "communication via social media typically entails deciding what aspects of the self to share and how to best share them with known and unknown others which refers to one's self-presentation." The concept of self-presentation contributes to adolescents' overall concept of self, which is key to their development. However, adolescents' usage of social media can influence their self-presentation, as they are often exposed to their peers' ideas of how they should present themselves, in addition to their peers' own self-presentation (Mann & Blumberg, 2022). This sparks an important question that you, the parent/guardian, can ask your child/teen: ***How do you present yourself online?***

So, what happens to the psyche of the child/adolescent when their self-presentation online does not equal their IRL self-presentation? First, let's examine the positive. Mann & Blumberg (2022) suggests that adolescents that focus on attaining "positive and realistic possible selves" are more likely to display signs of higher self-esteem. What does this look like, you may ask? Your child may post an opinion about the latest Taylor Swift album, perhaps from an unbiased viewpoint, presenting themselves as not only a music lover, but arguably, a music critic. However, there are negative implications of adolescents and their online self-presentation. Let's take a look at this brief TEDx Talk presented by Katanu Mbevi where she discusses some of the impacts of social media on the youth.

Video: [Impact of Social Media on the Youth by Katanu Mbevi](#)

As parents, all we want to do is to protect our children from any harm in the world—strangers in a white van, the boogeyman, or too much candy just to name a few. But what if the boogeyman comes in the form of their own negative self-perception? What if the strangers

in the van are really strangers that our children idolize on Instagram because of how many followers they have amassed, or how many likes they get from posting their achievements? How can we, as Christian parents, ensure that children can enjoy social media without the need to compare themselves to others on the internet? First, we look to the Bible.

Bible verses: Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-18

Your children should be reminded that their existence is so much more than what they present on social media. No amount of likes, comments, or overall engagement will amount to God’s love for them, as well as your love for them. Validate their feelings and let them know that yes, it is tough to not feel the pressure to put out “your best self” to fit secular standards of validation. Watch for signs of sadness, anxiety, or certain trigger phrases such as “I’ll never be ___ as them” or “I wish I had ___.” To make things more simplified, I provided the following chart of some common phrases that you may hear your child say, and what you can say as a positive rebuttal to them, with the associated scripture.

Common Phrases	You Say	Scripture
“I wish my life was as perfect as my friends’.”	What makes you feel this way? Social media can be deceiving; we only get a glimpse into others’ lives.	Galatians 1:10 2 Corinthians 10:12
“Ugh, they’re so pretty/cool. I wish I was more like them.”	You are so pretty/cool! Is there a reason why you feel this way?	Psalm 139:13-14
“How did they get so many followers? I wish I had that many!”	Your following does not equate to how cool/popular you are. You are one of the coolest kids I know!	Romans 12:2

Here is an additional resource that you can refer to when navigating conversations with your children about social media and the unhealthy social comparisons that may arise. In the

following video, Dr. Kimberly Alexander discusses the social media trap, and how parents can help their children have a healthier relationship with social media.

[Video: Social Media and Self-Esteem](#)

I will close out the presentation by challenging the parents to consider their own behaviors and actions on social media. Do they find themselves saying their insecurities aloud? Do they overthink the pictures they post? Are they modeling a positive relationship with social media—one their children can look up to?

2:20 p.m.-3:00 p.m. *Rest/Break*

3:05 p.m.-4:00 p.m. *Session 4-Final Session: REPOST-* We covered a lot of information over the course of the workshop, and by this time, you should feel equipped to handle any concerns you initially had prior to these jam-packed sessions. The purpose of this final session is to be a debrief of what we learned, followed by a series of fun exercises that relate back to the topics covered in each session: the state of parent-child communication, digital technology's effects on the family unit, and social media's impact on adolescent self-image. The exercises will include jeopardy, trivia, and a role play exercise where parents will pair up and take on the role of parent or child, and simulate conversations relating to social media, digital media technology, and everyday life. The final session will close out with a brief Q&A session and prayer.

References

- Child Mind Institute. (2022, July 8). *Social media and self-esteem - Body image | Depression | Mental health | Child Mind Institute* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://youtu.be/3xbHq7UsozA?si=nCkXIg3H9Wd8JL2V>
- Mann, R. B., & Blumberg, F. (2022). Adolescents and social media: The effects of frequency of use, self-presentation, social comparison, and self esteem on possible self imagery. *Acta Psychologica*, 228.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001691822001445?via%3Dihub>
- TED x Talks. (2020, January 14). *Impact of social media on youth | Katanu Mbevi | TEDxYouth@BrookhouseSchool* [Video]. YouTube.
https://youtu.be/soHn6t_jjIw?si=uZDP2DeuXWzQCfOG
- U.S. Surgeon General. (2023). *Social Media and Youth Mental Health*.
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-youth-mental-health-social-media-advisory.pdf>