



TEENAGE FAITH

Connor loved God. . . as a child. When Connor became a teenager his interest in following Jesus began to fade. Instead of growing in his faith in Jesus Christ, Connor was more interested in embracing and living out the cultural narrative on identity, beliefs, and behaviors. As a result, Dad and Mom had moved from happiness to heartbreak whenever they read the words of 3 John 4: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." What was happening to Connor?

Children from birth to age ten generally have a blind-faith tendency to accept without question the values and beliefs of parents. While they don't have a deep knowledge of biblical facts and theological truth, they do believe in the simple facts and truths which are taught by Mom and Dad, then reinforced at church. But it won't necessarily stay that way in adolescence. Armed with a newfound ability to think, evaluate, and solve problems on their own, teenagers

oftentimes begin to question the values and beliefs they have previously accepted. They will take what you have painstakingly and faithfully handed down to them and put it to the test. . . which me must realize is oftentimes a very important step towards embracing the Christian faith as their own.

The questioning attitude of a teenage child who has been raised and instructed in the faith can be the most challenging and disheartening aspect of Christian parenting. I know several parents who have weathered this storm to watch their children grow up with a faith that has become their own. In fact, many of them have embraced the storm knowing that in the long run, their child will be better for having gone through the difficulty. When I ask them how they got through it, they consistently offer these simple and valuable suggestions to parents who are still facing this challenge:

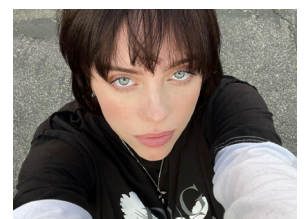
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YOUTH CULTURE

HOT QUOTE

As a woman, I think porn is a disgrace. I used to watch a lot of porn, to be honest. I started watching porn when I was 11. I thought that's how you learned how to have sex. I think it really destroyed my brain and I feel incredibly devastated that I was exposed to such much porn. I'm so angry that porn is so loved.

Billie Eilish, discussing her unhealthy relationship with pornography.
The Howard Stern Show
December 13, 2021.



"THE QUESTIONING ATTITUDE OF A TEENAGE CHILD WHO HAS BEEN RAISED AND INSTRUCTED IN THE FAITH CAN BE THE MOST CHALLENGING AND DISHEARTENING ASPECT OF CHRISTIAN PARENTING."

- Be diligent in teaching young children by precept and example. Talk about your faith. Spend time together learning to read and understand God's Word. By doing so you will help your children build a strong foundation. This is a non-negotiable, as the culture is catechizing our kids 24/7 in a narrative on life that is opposed to the Gospel.
- Don't be upset when your children start to ask questions. Rejecting the faith of your childhood is very different from asking honest questions and expressing doubt. A teen's struggle to find answers is a step on the road to spiritual growth. If you don't know the answer, go with your teen to where you can find the answer together.
- Encourage your teen to be a vital part of your church. Teens benefit from interaction with older Christians who in the context of a loving relationship, freely share with vulnerability and honesty the Godly wisdom that comes with advanced years and spiritual maturity.
- Openly share your own doubts and struggles. Teenagers value authenticity and vulnerability in parents and other adults. Sharing our doubts with our children allows them to see us in our full humanity and dependence on God.
- Never, ever forget that spiritual growth is a process. If you are a Christian parent, your level of faith, spiritual maturity, and understanding is not the same as when you were a teenager. You've gone through a long process of growth that is still continuing. Show grace and patience as your kids walk that same road to Christian maturity.
- Remember that spiritual maturity is born out of struggle. God always redeems horrible situations to bring His good out of our rebellious bad. What the wrecker of this world hopes will undo us, God uses for our good and His glory!
- Never stop praying for your kids. We can never be successful in force-feeding faith to our kids. We cannot drag our kids screaming and kicking into God's Kingdom. We can only teach them and answer their questions. The rest is in God's hands. Salvation is of the Lord (Psalm 3:8).

WALT MUELLER
CPYU President



FROM THE NEWS

DISCUSSING CULTURAL ISSUES

Parents, are you at a loss for what to talk about at the dinner table with your children and teens?

Are you wondering how to bring the light of the truths of God's Word to shine on the cultural issues and realities that are influencing your kids? The marketing research folks at Piper Sandler recently released their list of the top ten political and social issues kids are thinking about and trying to navigate today. Listen to this list of issues and work to start and seize opportunities to talk about each. The number one issue for our kids at the present moment is the environment. The Scriptures certainly speak about creation care and stewardship of the earth. The remaining issues are racial equality, the situation in Afghanistan, the Coronavirus, Abortion, President Joe Biden, the economy, women's rights, gas prices, and finally, LGBTQ rights. Ask your kids to list what it is they care about the most. Then, search God's Word together for His perspective on the issues. This is a great way to nurture your kids.



TRENDS:



Dabbing Cannabis

When electronic cigarettes first hit the U.S. market back in 2006, health experts began to raise warnings regarding the dangers related to these new smoking devices. It didn't take long for marijuana users to adopt the device as another way to get a buzz from ingesting cannabis extracts. A new study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics* found that marijuana vaping by school-aged adolescents doubled between 2013 and 2020. In addition, the number of adolescents who reported vaping marijuana in the prior 30 days saw a seven-fold increase during that same time-period. Our kids are especially drawn to cannabis oils, which when vaped deliver a more intense high through what's known as "dabbing." In fact, dabbing the oils in this manner delivers a potency three to five times greater than smoking dried herbal marijuana. With one in three 12th graders reporting that they've vaped marijuana, we need to turn up the intensity of our monitoring and warning.



LATEST RESEARCH:

Sexting and Nudes

With the pandemic leading kids to spend more time online, it's not surprising that researchers have found that from 2019 to 2020, there was a two-fold increase in children between the ages of nine and twelve reporting that they sent nudes and other self-generated sexual materials. In fact, 17% of all kids ages nine to

seventeen say they have shared nudes. This increase was more pronounced among pre-teens and boys. One in four boys ages nine to twelve now say that is normal to share nudes, which is a 10% increase over the prior year. Among the nine to seventeen year olds who say they shared nude photos, half reported sending those images to someone they had not met in real life, and 41% believed they were sending the nude images to an adult.

All in all, these numbers are increasing. This serves as a reminder to teach online safety, monitor our kids online time, and to teach the proper place and practice of God's good design for his gift of sexuality.



QUICKSTATS



The share of teens who felt lonely in the U.S. jumped from 18% in 2012 to 37% in 2018.

(Journal of Adolescence)

Half of 10 to 12-year-olds and a third of those between 7-9 now use digital devices to engage with others on social media. Despite this, 1 in 6 parents with children on social media don't use parental controls, while 2 in 5 say it's "too time consuming" to monitor their kids' internet use.

(University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health)

TOP 10



WAYS U.S. CHILDREN INTERNET USERS CONSUME CONTENT

1. Watch YouTube
2. Watch Video on Demand
3. Gaming
4. Use Social Media
5. Watch TV (live or recorded)
6. Watch other Online Videos
7. Listen to the Radio
8. Watch Content on other Apps
9. Go to the Cinema
10. Read Magazines/Catalogs

August 19, 2021

Source: eMarketer/
Precise TV and
Giraffe Insights, "Kids &
the Screen: Changing the
Channel"



INTEGRITY

by WALT MUELLER

The dictionary defines integrity as "firm adherence to a code of moral values" and "the quality of being complete or undivided." Integrity describes a life that is united in a complete and consistent whole. An integrated life is one where words, thoughts and actions consistently reflect the will of God for our lives. It is a life where one's faith in God is woven in and through every area of life, including all that one does. . . even when no one else is looking.

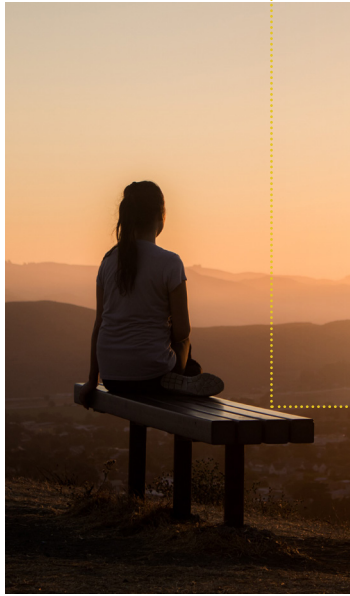
What can we do to counter the loss of integrity in today's youth culture and lives of our kids?

First, take stock of yourself and take corrective action where necessary.

Second, map out a lifestyle of 24/7 integrity where your faith intersects with and permeates all of life. Live out your faith in your marriage, vocation, play, media use, sexuality, and conversation.

And finally, map out a life of integrity for your kids by pointing out and challenging their duplicity in the context of a loving and supportive relationship.

FROM THE WORD



he reality is that in spite of your hopes and dreams for a pain-free and smooth-sailing New Year, the next twelve months will be much like all the months you've already experienced over the course of your life. There will be days filled with joy and gladness, and there will be days when you have to work through heartache and difficulty. We live in a broken world and we can expect trouble.

But the good news is that the story does not stop there. We are not left hopeless. Instead, we can celebrate the coming of Christ into this broken world to make all things new. Through his life, death, and resurrection, we can know that the trials and sorrows that we experience in this life are limited to this earth only. In John 16:33, Jesus tells us that trials and sorrows are to be expected. But he follows those words up with a powerful "but"! He tells us that we can "take heart" in the knowledge that he has overcome the world.

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth, you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

As a parent, you will experience your own trials and sorrows. You will also live through the trials and sorrows of your kids. Read and meditate on John 16:33. Ask the Lord to grant you the peace to endure any trials and sorrows you may face this year. Ask him to help you see beyond those things into the hope of eternal glory that he has promised.

PODCAST



Youth Culture Matters

A CPYU PODCAST

Youth Culture Matters

is a long-format podcast from CPYU hosted by Walt Mueller.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 142:

"YOUTH WORKERS POSE TOUGH QUESTIONS TO A COUNSELOR" WITH JULIE LOWE

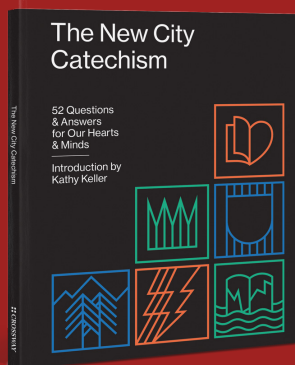
LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/PODCAST



Ask the Lord to grant you the peace to endure any trials and sorrows you may face this year. Ask him to help you see beyond those things into the hope of eternal glory that he has promised.

Walt Mueller

HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

Throughout the history of the church, Christians have used catechisms—collections of questions and answers designed for memorization and recitation—to teach others the core doctrines of the faith. *The New City Catechism* is a modern-day resource aimed at reintroducing this ancient method of teaching to Christians today.

This short book lays out 52 questions and answers related to God, human nature, sin, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and more. Whether used devotionally, recited orally, or memorized over the course of a year, families, churches, small groups, and Christian schools will treasure this as a valuable tool for teaching the core doctrines of the Christian faith to children and adults alike.

Additional resources are available in the form of *The New City Catechism Devotional* as well as *The New City Catechism Curriculum*. Each question in the devotional features a relevant Scripture reading, a short prayer, and a devotional commentary written by contemporary pastors, including John Piper, Timothy Keller, and Kevin DeYoung, and historical figures, such as Augustine, John Calvin, Martin Luther, and many others.