



THE PARENT UPDATE

West Side Youth Ministry

March Parent Update

Jake Greer

Hey WSYM! Spring is HERE!!! Whoo Hoo! Break out the shorts and flip-flops! But...keep the snow gear close. You never know. Ha!

We're excited about the Spring and Summer for the WSYM and we hope you are too! Remember to check out our website and online calendar for up-to-date information. There is also now an online REGISTRATION page for you to sign up for upcoming events. Online payments are coming soon! You DO need to register NOW for Teen Week and Impact, and also for our upcoming trip to Young Christians' Weekend at Silver Dollar City. All of which are outstanding opportunities for fun and spiritual growth!

Get ready! We've got some exciting announcements coming soon about the Summer!!!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Breakaway

Sunday, March 20, 2016 at 2:00 PM to Monday, March 21, 2016 at 4:00 PM

Overnight work trip to Camp Caudle. Sign up at westsideyouthministry.org/registration. Free.

Young Christians' Weekend

Friday, April 1, 2016 at 5:00 PM to Sunday, April 3, 2016 at 9:00 PM

@ Silver Dollar City. Live bands, powerful workshops, national speakers and some of the world's greatest thrill rides. \$60 + cost of food. Sign up at westsideyouthministry.org/registration.

Impact 2016

Monday, June 20, 2016 at 8:00 AM to Saturday, June 25, 2016 at 5:00 PM

@ Lipscomb designed to provide an atmosphere for teens that enables the development of a personal faith, which will impact their world for Christ. Cost: \$110+3 meals. Sign up at westsideyouthministry.org/registration.

Need more info? Email me at jake@westsidear.org or visit us at www.westsideyouthministry.org

Culture Snapshot: Texting Affects Girls More Negatively Than Boys

HomeWord.com

It's no surprise that today's teenagers view texting apps as their most popular form of communication. A recent study from the American Psychological Association was conducted to gauge differences and affects of the way boys and girls text.

Among the findings:

- Both boys and girls send about the same number of texts daily.
- Boys text primarily to communicate information.
- Girls text primarily for social connection, and convey more emotional content.
- Girls are more likely than boys to become compulsive texters.
- Girls who are compulsive texters see a greater decline in academic performance than boys.
- Compulsive texting in girls affects mental health more negatively than compulsive texting in boys.

The researchers theorize that the more negative affects of texting in girls is likely connected to the greater social and emotional content of their posts.

What Can Parents Do?

- Be proactive in setting guidelines for smartphone texting with your teens and tweens. The sooner you begin establishing boundaries with your kids, the better.
- Be sure to set expectations for overnight usage for phones. Our recommendation: establish a location in your home to dock/charge all smartphones overnight. Establish a no overnight usage policy for everyone (including parents) and the times (like 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.) for when the phones are off-limits.
- Monitor the amount of texting by your teen. Creating the understanding that you will periodically check how much your teen texts can help motivate her or him to be responsible.
- Be an advocate for your teen to experience more face-to-face interaction with their friends. This helps them to build important life social skills and can help cut down on the perceived need for texting.
- Evaluate whether your teen is demonstrating any signs of compulsive texting. Beyond the obvious observation of a teen's continuous texting, keep an eye on other signs such as frequent distraction while performing everyday tasks (especially homework), declining academic performance, increased anxiety, tiredness, and lack of sleep.

Bad Fads: Teens and the Duct Tape Challenge

HomeWord.com

Many people across all ages are drawn to participate in social media "challenges", and teenagers are no exception. Do you remember recent fads like the Ice-Bucket Challenge, and the Fire

Challenge? Currently, the Duct Tape Challenge is popular, and a quick search on YouTube reveals thousands of videos that have been posted. The challenge involves wrapping duct tape around a person's body and seeing how long it takes for the person to escape.

Some fads like the "Fire Challenge" are inherently dumb and dangerous. Others, like the Ice-Bucket Challenge are benign in nature and participants rally around a worthy cause. The "Duct Tape Challenge" appears on the surface to be in this less risky category.

Yet, in the world of adolescence, not much is simple and common sense does not always carry the day. Science tells us that teen brains are wired for thrill seeking and risk-taking, which aligns nicely with faddish challenges. To this, add the component of peer pressure plus teens' desires for affirmation and fame delivered through viral social media, and challenges make a perfect fit for teen participation.

But a very real problem is that teens don't always assess potential consequences in advance, or take steps to minimize risks, and as a result are susceptible to dangers that may not be obvious, but exist nonetheless.

This seems to have been the issue recently when a Washington State teen took the Duct Tape Challenge, but things went horribly wrong. Two peers wrapped a 14-year-old boy's hands and legs with duct tape and waited for him to escape. As the boy struggled to free himself, he fell forward and hit his head on the corner of a window frame, and then slammed his head onto the concrete floor. The boy's eye socket and cheek bone were broken and the trauma caused brain bleeding. The boy required emergency surgery, and lost the sight in his left eye.

Talking Points for Discussion Between Parents and Teens:

- Ask your teens if they know any friends or peers who have taken the Duct Tape Challenge.
- Ask your teens if they have seen any Duct Tape Challenge videos online. If they have, ask them about what they think about what they've seen.
- Use the Washington State teen's story as a case study to highlight potential risks of seemingly benign faddish challenges.
- Talk about the role peer pressure plays in tempting kids to take risks.
- Talk about the role that seeking validation from others plays when teens post videos like these to social media sites.

3 Simple Parenting Tips You Don't Typically Hear

Jonathan McKee at TheSource4Parents.com

As a parenting author, I've seen hundreds of parenting books and read countless articles. Often, they are echoing the same principles. I'm not knocking it... I've written numerous articles about the biggies that parents often neglect, like spending more time with your kids. But here are 3 tips you don't typically hear:

1. Wanna be a good dad? Then be a good husband first.

Want your kids to feel safe, loved and valued? Then work on your marriage. We're seeing more research emerging about one of the best predictors of cognitive success being emotional stability of the home environment. Bioengineering expert Dr. John Medina said it like this, "Do you want to know how to get your kid into Harvard? Go home and love your wife."

It's this simple. When our kids are young, they are searching for clues in their home to see if they are safe. "Children look to their parents and the relationship they have with each other to assess whether that's true or not," Medina says.

2. No Rules by 17½

Most people would agree toddlers need a lot of guidance. If your 2-year-old starts heading for the road when a semi-truck is coming... not many dads would say, "Leave him be. He'll learn!" At the opposite end of the spectrum, everyone knows when our teens turn 18, they can legally move out and do whatever they want. The tricky part for parents is that time in between. How much guidance and control do we assert, especially in those teenage years?

The answer is "a segue." Start with heavy guidance and slowly segue towards less control, with a goal of "no rules by 17½." Sure, you could wait until 18... but why? Why not have them totally free while still under the safety of your shadow?

I tried this principle with my oldest daughter, starting with realistic guardrails, then giving more trust over the years, and eventually parenting our 17-year-old like an 18-year-old. She is 18-years-old and on her own now... and it's really no big deal. She's been making decisions for a while now.

3. Real Life Reality Shows

Parents are always looking for teaching moments. When real life hardships appear, don't be scared to talk about what you experienced. If your sister is getting a divorce, ask your teenagers what they think. What can they learn from the situation?

Real life isn't always a huge crisis. Yesterday I was driving down the road and came upon a lady trying to back her boat into a driveway... and it became quickly and painfully obvious she didn't know how to back a trailer. Cars began lining up and honking. I pulled over, walked over to her with a smile and asked, "Would you like some help?" She happily got out of the car and let me take a crack at it. Moments like these are fun to dialogue about with your kids. Don't lecture, just ask questions: "Why do you think people were so upset with her?" "How should people respond when they see someone struggling like that?" "What are ways we can show love to people in stressful situations?" "How could you help someone in need?"

Look for these real life discussion moments, or even watch entertainment together that springboards discussion about real life.